We Have No Excuse

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Date: 23 February 2025 Preacher: Jon Hochstetler

[0:00] It's good to be here today. It's wonderful to hear what God has spoken to our brothers that were part of the prison crusade.

I thought about just sharing the rest of the time about my experience there as well, but I think the Lord wants me to share a message. And I want to be obedient to that.

I could say a lot about prison as well, but it was very, very good for me to have been having the opportunity to be there again after about five or six years of not going.

They say it's addictive. I don't know if it's addiction or if it's a calling from God, but to be able to go and minister to those men, I'll just give one thing.

One thing that really spoke to me and just choked me up and made me cry was when I saw a whole row of men just on the front row and just worshiping the Lord.

[1:12] And the Lord just spoke again to me that those are my brothers. And they're sitting there with just tears running down their face and their hand up and just looking, you know, worshiping Jesus with a pure heart, I believe.

And then, you know, if you can visualize this, with most of them, their arms all tattooed and tattoos on their necks. Those are our brothers that God redeemed.

And that really ministered to me again. Yeah. Are they our brothers?

That God redeemed. Amen. And they were proclaiming it with enthusiasm and excitement. They were so excited. Prison meant so little to them because they were out of prison.

You get the meaning. They had been redeemed. Today I want to look at something that the Lord's been pressing on my heart and just not necessarily maybe my heart, but just reality of life and some of the experiences in the last couple of weeks, you know, maybe the last month.

[2:31] And the title is simply, We Are Without Excuse. You might think that it's a hard message or it's a condemning message.

It's not meant to be that. But I think it's scriptural. And I think it's actually loving to tell people that they're without excuse.

Maybe not just tell them, but in the end of the story, we are without excuse. And that's the title right there on the board.

And you'll notice that I had my wife write that in red, what Jesus said. Those are the words of Jesus. So we'll get to that in a little bit. But some of the excuses that we hear today about why I am the way that I am.

You know, we could all come up with something. We all have a few of those, don't we? We all have a past.

So what is the solution to our problems? Is the solution to become smart enough to properly diagnose the problems that we face?

To become intelligent enough to look at our past and try to figure out how, how did the devil have access into my life?

And, you know, and all those different things. And we try to, people do this. There's many counselors that will try and go into our past. And I want to be careful this morning what I say about these things and be accurate and not just my opinion.

But one of them, most common one is that, that people make an excuse for is like, my dad was mean and abusive.

Or my mom was controlling. Or the church I came from mistreated me and I feel hurt. That's a popular one. And I agree that sometimes we need to look at these things and we need to have compassion on people that are hurting.

[4:55] I'm by no means trying to be harsh about people that have a lot of pain and have gone through difficulty. We heard some, you know, speaking of prison, I mean, it's so full of pain and rejection from family and terrible stories.

And even some of the evangelists that shared their story to the inmates were just gripping. They were just, the one especially just really hit me.

I just, you sit there, you can't help but weep. Some of the stories that were shared of their personal lives, the abuse, the horrendous things that have happened.

And some of these inmates too, they've gone through terrible hardship. And maybe some sitting here or listening in have as well gone through very difficult things.

You know, I went through some difficulty in my childhood and growing up. But when I hear things that I heard last week, it's like, wow, I had it so nice in comparison.

So we've heard a lot of the painful things and the wounds that were created in people's lives and the scars that were created by mankind.

Some of the stories were just so heartbreaking. And God knows and He sees it all. and He wants to bring healing to your heart.

He wants to bring healing to our hearts. But what is the solution to man's dilemma? And that's what I want to talk about in a good part this morning.

It is not humanism. I'm going to have to say some of the things that it's not in order to say what it is. But it's not humanism. It's not human reasoning or psychology or philosophy or anything else that we can come up with that will deliver people that are in bondage.

Many Christians believe that Jesus came to earth and died on a cross to save us. But that's all Christ is, is a Savior. To save us from our sin.

[7:22] In other words, they don't believe that He is all we need. But I want to tell you today and proclaim that Jesus Christ is so much more and will do so much more in your life than to save you from hell.

I mean, that would be enough. But He is more than that. In Him we have life and many, many other things.

And we'll look to Scripture for our answers. Since Jesus came, we have no more excuse. And believe me, the excuses are many.

One of the things that's very popular today is that time will heal.

Time is not a healer. Time might be an avenue for being healed, but Jesus is the healer. I don't believe you'll find anywhere in Scripture where time is the healer.

[8:35] Things do get easier over time. I'm acknowledging that. But time itself is not the healer or the deliverer. Sometimes it takes time to work through things.

And God gives us that blessing of time. But time, Jesus is the healer, not time. Jesus delivers. He heals. He saves.

He restores. He blesses. He transforms. He gives us rest. He gives us peace. The message today is that Jesus is everything.

And in Him is everything that we ever need. He's the solution to every problem. You might get tired of me saying it, but He's the truth.

He's the way. He's the life. He gives us life. But we need to come to a place where we are done with excuses.

[9:35] I've heard so many of them. I get tired of them in our travels. You know, where people are just, well, this problem is so big. It's so, you know, you don't understand.

And yeah, I just, the more I hear that, the more I believe that Jesus is your answer. And it's all found and bound up in Him. So let's look at some Scripture in Romans 1, chapter 1, verse 20.

I'm going to look at a few of the verses about excuses. For the invisible things of Him from creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Did you know the Bible speaks against us having excuses? And here's one in Romans. Even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Next chapter, Romans 2, verse 2. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.

[10:51] I'm going to read a couple more verses here. For thou that judges doest the same things, but we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God, or despisest thou the richest of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God up, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

But after thy hardness and impenitent, impenitent, meaning stubborn, heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render or pay to every man according to his deeds.

Jesus will come back as a judge and let's not reject Him today. He is coming as a judge and we have no excuse.

There will be no excuse on judgment day that will stand except the blood of Jesus covering us. That's our only hope. Now let's turn to John 15, 22.

[12:25] Actually, I think it's that verse right there. These are Jesus' own words. He says in the King James it says, If I had not come and spoken to them, actually this is in the Amplified I believe, they would not have the guilt of their sin.

But now, now since I have come, he is saying, they have no excuse for their sin. Jesus is saying that since I have come, you have no excuse.

Has Jesus come? Has He been here? Has He died? Then we are without excuse. Jesus. So how do we know that this claim that Jesus is all we need is true?

How do we know that for sure? Is that settled in our hearts? That in every situation, every struggle, every problem, Jesus is the solution?

one thing is, Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. Without me, you can do nothing.

[13:41] Paul said, through Christ, I can do all things. My own words there, but through Christ who strengthens me. So through Christ, we can do all things.

Without Him, we can do nothing. Now let's turn to Colossians chapter 2. That's where most of my message will be from going forward.

Colossians 2, starting in verse 2. What about helping ourselves? What about being so strong and just having strength, having a willpower and all of those things?

What about each other? Don't we need each other? There's a real push for we need each other. We know that we believe that here, right?

We do need each other. That's why we're here today. Because we need the body. We need each other. But there can be a false balance in that where we try to get life from each other.

[14:56] We try to find answers in each other to the point where we don't need God. We're self-sufficient. You see what I'm saying? But we should be pointing each other to Christ.

A true counselor will always point people to the true counselor. I should say a good counselor, a good discipler, whatever you want to call it.

Colossians 2 verse 2 is where we'll start. Well, no, we'll just see. Let's see. Yeah, verse 2.

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Here it is. We need wisdom, we need knowledge, but it comes from God, it comes from Christ. It says, Paul says here, it's hid in Christ.

[16:08] So that's where we get it. If it's not coming from Him, then it's just humanism. Verse 4, And this I say, lest any man beguile you with enticing words.

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.

We might ask, how did we receive Christ? How do people receive Christ? When people come to Christ, they are broken. They are humble.

They are meek. They are many times silent. And then there's rejoicing. But we receive Christ. I believe we need to also be walking that way with Christ.

Rooted up, or rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Here is another warning for the church today.

[17:17] Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. some people have, just a note on this, verse 9, some people have believed that Christ is mixed, or He's partly God and partly man, so He's not really complete, or He's not really, but He became fully a man, but He is also fully God.

And in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The question that has been with me in the last month is whether Christ is actually sufficient for every situation, every problem.

And in my heart I believe that. But do we believe it enough to share that? Are we really convinced that in every situation that He is truly the answer for every problem?

Or do we need to mix in some philosophy, some wisdom of man that is not found in the Scriptures? Or do we need to mix, yes, the thoughts of man, wisdom from the world even, and then just add Jesus to make us sound spiritual and right?

[19:15] Do we just add Jesus? Someone recently told me not to push Jesus on people. They need our love too, or something like that.

Don't get too pushy with Jesus. Jesus. And we were talking about a very needy situation. And I was convinced, but it stopped me in my tracks for a moment.

Like, oh. And I think it was a test. From actually. I'm actually convinced that Jesus is the answer to this man's problem, to this situation.

me. Yes, we need wisdom. We need wisdom in how to present Christ.

That I agree with. But to say that somehow people get help and deliverance from what just comes out of me, like, if I love you enough, Tim, then you'll be a good person and you'll be free.

[20 : 24] No, I can't. I think that's where I said that my love won't even save a dog, much less another human. That flew out of my mouth before I even thought it, I think.

And I know it was funny, but I think it's true. Of course we as Christians are called to love and to have compassion.

God wants to work through us. We're not saying that, that that shouldn't be so. true. But true love from a believer will compel us to share Christ, even if it seems pushy at times.

True love will also allow Christ to flow through us and touch other people. But it's not the human love that we are going to push. It's the love of God that will change a heart.

God. It's His love. It's the revelation of who He is that people get a hold of is what will change them forever.

[21:34] Paul even said, I think to the Corinthians, that he doesn't want to hear anything other than Christ and Him crucified. He's saying, I don't want to hear about your smartness and your philosophies and your method of whatever you do.

Only what comes from Christ is what he's saying. That's all I want to hear in the church, is what Paul was saying to, I think, the Corinthians. So let's go on to the next verse in Colossians here.

Verse 10. Oh, wow. Here's the verse. I could have just read this verse and been done. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.

I think that's a key verse to tell people, to know it ourselves, that we are complete in Him. That word complete is completely whole.

David said in Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. I won't lack anything if He is my shepherd. If I know that Jesus loves me.

[22:53] And that song, like brothers shared, was so real to the inmates. Some of them could so identify. They probably knew that song as a little child. And here are grown men just singing away, Jesus loves me, in a prison full of men.

How much sense does that make to the carnal mind? but for them to realize that, yes, He loves you. They are completely whole.

We are complete in Him. Verse 11, in whom also you are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, and putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

Here in verse 11, Paul is talking about a spiritual circumcision of the heart, a new heart, a new life. The old life was buried, and your baptism symbolizes this.

[24:23] And baptism also symbolizes being raised up into a new life in Christ Jesus. As He is risen, so are we in Him.

Us that believe. And He nailed everything. that was against us to His cross, paying the price in full, and He triumphed over it.

Why are we picking it back up? Just a thought. Why are we picking up that old stuff? If He nailed it to His cross and He triumphed over it openly, and having spoilt principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an holy day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come.

But the body or the person is Christ. over and over we hear this. Christ. It's Christ. It's about Him. In verse 16, Paul is speaking of the Old Testament laws where they had specific laws to not eat pork and other foods and drinks about holy days, you know, the new moon and certain feasts and things like that, and then also even the Sabbath day.

you know, we could study these laws in detail and they're actually very interesting, you know, why they did what they did and exactly what the laws were.

You know, they all had a purpose. But what we know to be true in the new covenant, Paul is confirming here that those things, those laws were just a shadow of what was coming.

They had their purpose in their time, but now we have a new purpose, and the new takes over the old. The person, Paul says, is Christ.

The person. I want to do a quick illustration here. Enos, you want to come up here? I need somebody to help me.

This light is very bright, so don't be looking at it, and Jeffrey, don't be shining at it. You can actually probably just stay sitting right there. And why don't you turn face me?

[27:13] Something like that. Yeah. So let's see if we can get a shadow here, just for an illustration. Yeah, you have to, let's see, come a little closer maybe.

He is kind of big up there. No, I'm sorry, further away. There, now you look at me, let's see if there's a shadow. There you go. So how would it be if, you know, this shadow in the Old Testament, this is what they had.

They had a shadow of something to come. And that was the law. That was all the things that pertained to the law.

Things like eating meats, Sabbath keeping. We know the law. There's long lists of laws. And now in the New Testament, we know, what did Jesus say?

I didn't come to condemn the law. I came to fulfill it. But how would it be if there would be a young lady that would want to get to know Enos?

[28:23] And you'd like to get to know her, but you have a shadow. And all she does is just look at the shadow and wants to get to know the shadow and walk in the shadow and hug the shadow maybe even.

That's what people do today. They still want to look at the shadow. And they forget that, no, there's a person. He's been here.

He is here. He's a real person. It's Jesus. And he's alive and well. That's who we hug. You can sit down.

I think I made my point. The law was a shadow of who's coming. It all pointed to him. who's coming. He coming. He coming. He He He. He is a real person. It's Jesus. And he's alive and well. That's who we hug. You can sit down. I think I made my point. The law was a shadow of who's coming. It all pointed to him. had their purpose.

But now we have Jesus. Do we know him? Do we love him? Is Jesus revealed to us?

[29:42] I might do that in my office the next time. I just had a person there not that long ago and he was telling me how, yes, Jesus, but we really need to keep the Sabbath, the seventh day.

Just now thought of that. That would be a good illustration. Might have to call you in, Enos, and we'll do an illustration. He's a good person. He's a friend of mine, actually. Or do you want to really know Jesus?

verse 18 says, Let no man beguile you of your reward in voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind.

Here I believe we are being warned not to worship other spiritual things like angels, how about signs and wonders, visions, mysticism, desiring an emotional experience, you know, all those things.

And if God gives you an emotional experience, then praise him. But are we desiring after things? Especially visions is one that we often hear about.

[31:03] And was it a week or two weeks ago somewhere I was with people that they were just really quickly like, yes, may God give you a vision.

Well, if God wants to give you a vision, fine, but the Bible calls us to live by faith. In other words, people are telling other people that aren't believers that you don't need faith, you just need to see things.

I don't think that's the heart of God. If he wants you to have a vision, then that's sure, we'll take it. Not against somebody having a vision, but seeking after those things versus saying, Lord, I believe in you and I have faith in you.

And we put our trust in him and we walk by faith. We are called to walk by faith. Verse 19, and not holding the head from which all the body by joints and bands have nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God.

May there be an increase of God in our lives. Wherefore, if you being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, and handle not, which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men.

[32:37] Paul is asking the Colossian church that question, that if you have been crucified, if you are dead with Christ, then why do you have all these?

You know, people were plaguing them with rules and with law and the old covenant even. And Paul is addressing it very clearly. And then he goes on in verse 23, which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and they look humble like humility and neglecting of the body, not to honor, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.

You know, even if we put too much emphasis on being crucified to self. Now, I want to say this carefully because we know that we're to be dead with Christ and self is to be crucified.

But it can get off balance to where that becomes that I'm dead to self. People will do that.

They'll deny themselves. They'll even hurt themselves. They'll even kill themselves to try to please God. And it takes the focus away of who Jesus is.

[34:00] The life that we find in Christ. And Paul is, I believe, addressing that. It seems humble, neglecting of the body from having things.

Seems like a humble thing to do. making sure that the flesh doesn't get satisfied. But it can be something that is incorrect if that's the end of itself, if that's all it is, rather than allowing Christ to give us life.

When Christ gives us life, I believe that when we meet Christ and we have a revelation of Christ, the dying to self happens. There will be no lack of dying to self if we truly get a hold of who Christ is and we surrender to Him.

Otherwise, we just become religious. Many religions teach dying to self.

Not all, but many of them do, but they don't have Christ. May our lives exalt Him, not in what we can do to ourselves, but what He can do in us.

[35:30] That's the point I want to make. It's what Christ does in us. Again, in Colossians, or this chapter, verse 10, where it says, and you are complete in Him.

I want to emphasize this. That means exactly what it says. It means that He is sufficient for our need.

And everything from Matthew to Revelation speaks to the issue of the sufficiency of Christ. That was a statement that I didn't come up with. Somebody else did.

But it says, from Matthew to Revelation speaks to the issue of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. And how that He is all we need.

A couple more verses. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 29 it says, that no flesh should glory in His presence, but of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.

[36:34] who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

Also in Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9 it says, And He said unto me, this is Paul speaking of Christ, And He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly therefore, I will rather glory in my infirmities, my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. This is what Paul said about His grace.

Is His grace sufficient for us today? Ephesians 1, these are things that Paul spoke, you know, Colossians, Corinthians, and now Ephesians.

Ephesians 1 verse 3 says, We have in Christ been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. In Christ we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings.

[37:59] Hebrews 10 verse 14 says, For by one offering, or you could say by one sacrifice, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

And Jesus is that one offering. We know that. He is the one that makes us complete and perfect, fully restored, fully whole.

perfectly whole. So all these scriptures, they speak of the total sufficiency of Jesus Christ for every need, spiritually speaking, for every need, in time and in eternity.

There's no statement that, I don't think there's any statement that is more clear than Colossians 2 10 that says, you are complete in Him. Having the Lord Jesus Christ is to have everything needed in spiritual life for time and eternity.

To have Him is to have everything. Not to have Him is to have absolutely nothing at all. All joy, peace, meaning, value, purpose, hope, fulfillment in life now and forever is all bound up in Christ.

[39:30] And when a person receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they enter into an all-sufficient relationship with an all-sufficient Christ.

Again, that statement wasn't mine, but it is now. We claim that. We can claim that promise. I think that was John MacArthur that said that.

I'll read it again. And when a person receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they enter into an all-sufficient relationship with an all-sufficient Christ.

Where is Jesus sufficient for you this morning? Is He sufficient? Is He your go-to? Your automatic this is who I go to?

I'm in trouble. I have a need. No matter how small or how great. We are, after all, without excuse.

[40:33] And the reason we are without excuse is because He took our excuse away. He gave us Himself. He gave us Himself. He gave us all the provision.

How about our work? Problems at work? How about raising our children? How about finding a marriage partner? How about our marriage?

Other relationships? Church problems? Bitterness and unforgiveness? All those things that we sometimes have to deal with.

This morning we're not downplaying problems, even though it might sound that way in a sense. we're simply lifting up the solution. That's all.

The solution. Jesus is sufficient for everything that we face. He will heal every wound. He will heal every broken home, every broken marriage.

[41:41] Actually, you fill in the blank. He will have to give you a need. Whatever thing it is, he is sufficient for that need. I am so thankful that we have an answer to give to people.

I am so thankful this morning that I don't have to come up with something to give somebody a fix or come up with.

It doesn't mean that we don't need to receive wisdom from him, but he is the wisdom. Do we need knowledge? Yes, he is that knowledge. He is all and in all.

God saw it fit to make him head over everything. The question is this morning, will we allow him to touch what is broken?

Will we allow him? You know, we go to these inmates. We can tell them, we can talk till we're blue in the face, Joe. That's something that was funny in Honduras.

[42:51] But, we can talk to people until we're blue in the face about Jesus and all that, but in the end they have to make the choice. And it's the same way with us today.

Today we have to make that choice too. Will we allow him to touch what is broken? Or will we continue to protect that wound or that whatever it is that's wrong?

And make excuses of why I am the way I am? Why don't we just humble ourselves and cry out to the healer, the one that is the answer, the one that delivers, so that we can all be complete in him.

There's work that he still needs to do with me. And I want to just submit to him and recognize instead of making excuses, we can excuse ourselves right into hell.

that's a strong statement isn't it? But people do it. I am not accepting that Jesus, I'm not going to be forgiving my father or mother or whoever it is because they were, you don't know how bad they were to me.

[44:07] Those are excuses. And it'll keep us, those excuses will keep us from being what God wants us to be. Are we willing to allow Jesus to become fully sufficient and all that we need today?

You know, those people that do that, we see it, we witness it, we have done it, many are doing it, have made Jesus their all, surrendered their whole life to him.

And we have seen him come in and give them a brand new start, a brand new heart, a brand new person, even a new personality. You know, people that weren't friendly became friendly, people that were, whoever said it, cowards, became bold in Jesus.

We don't have to become something this morning, but we can allow him to make us something. Right? Does that make sense? Religion will try to make you something, but Jesus will take care of that.

The question is, what will we do with him? Will we allow him? Will we allow him to take over? And we just, it takes a humility and a brokenness, because that old nature wants to say, I'm okay, just don't be too pushy here.

[45:47] But Jesus wants to do that. Let's just stand for prayer. And if the Lord spoke to you today and you just feel like you need to make surrender, then you can do whatever you need to do

Pray, come up front if you want to, make a public statement by saying, I surrender all by coming up front, or kneel, or whatever it takes to meet God.

Father, we just come to you and we just thank you, Lord, for your word. Thank you so much, God, for what you've done in our hearts, even in this last week and two weeks, three weeks.

Lord, we just worship you this morning and thank you. Thank you that we don't have to come up with something that works to fix our problems. We just need to surrender to you, Lord Jesus.

You are the one that takes care of everything. You are the one that is sufficient for every problem. Everything that is broken, you want to heal and fix.

[46:57] It's our stubbornness that rejects that and says, no, I've got this. But, Lord, I pray that we would just have open hearts to you.

God, that we would allow you to come in and just be God in our life and help us to just fully surrender everything, every need, every problem, every lust problem, everything that exalts itself in the flesh.

Lord, I just pray that we would surrender those things to you, Lord Jesus. Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters. I pray for everyone that is listening to your word today, Lord, that you would just touch them and bless them, Lord.

God, that they would make you Lord of their life and be changed not only now but for all of eternity, be changed into the image of Christ. Thank you for the blood that you shed.

Thank you for taking away all the excuses and just standing there and wondering what we will do with you. Thank you, Lord, for your love.

[48:06] In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. God bless all of you.