

The Journey Home

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[0 : 00] Turn your Bible to Ezra chapter 8.

This morning's sermon will cover verses 21 through 36. Ezra chapter 8, verses 21 through 36. And Ezra is speaking here and he says,

And he listened to our entreaty. Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen with them. And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there presented had offered, their present had offered.

I weighed out into their hands 650 talents of silver and silver vessels worth 200 talents and 100 talents of gold, 20 bowls of gold worth 1,000 derrick and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold.

And I said to them, You are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the Lord, the God of your fathers.

[2 : 20] Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of the fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem within the chambers of the house of the Lord.

So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God. Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem.

The hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. We came to Jerusalem, and there we remained three days.

On the fourth day, within the house of God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Miramoth, the priest, son of Uriah, and with him was Eleazar, the son of Phinehas, and with them were the Levites, Jozabad, the son of Yeshua, and Noadiah, the son of Ben-Nui.

The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded. At that time, those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel.

[3 : 24] Twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering, twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the Lord.

They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps, and to the governors of the province beyond the river, and they aided the people and the house of God. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word.

Would you please be seated? In the Bible, God teaches us to trust him.

He commands us to follow him, to obey him, and to exercise faith in him, especially when our circumstances or our situations tempt us not to.

Hebrews 11.1 says, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. In verse 6, the author of Hebrews adds, And without faith in him, it is impossible to please him.

[4 : 28] For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists, and he rewards those who seek him. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that seeking God's will should be our greatest priority.

Instead of being anxious about what we don't know and about what we don't have, we are commanded to put our faith in God. We are commanded to put our faith in him and trust in the truth that he has revealed to us.

As Matthew 6.33, Jesus said there in the Sermon on the Mount, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

So God expects we trust him, we seek him, and we exercise faith in him, especially in those situations and in those circumstances where we are tempted not to do that.

Choosing instead to rely on ourselves and letting our desire for comfort and safety be the things that guide us instead of him. In those moments of uncertainty, we must choose to rely on the guides that God has given us instead of ourselves.

[5 : 45] And one of those guides is the Bible. Psalm 119.105 says, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Bible guides us by illuminating our path. It teaches us the way to go. It instructs us to rely on God's guidance instead of relying on ourselves.

As Psalm 3.5-6 says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

The other guide God has given to us is the Holy Spirit. In John 16.13, Jesus said to his disciples, When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

The Holy Spirit reminds us of God's word, prompts us to obey his instruction, and points us in the direction that we should go as we seek God's will for our lives.

[7 : 03] When I was a youth pastor, I thought of a creative way to communicate this principle to my students. And so I went to Walmart and I purchased every mousetrap that they had.

That night, at youth group, I found a narrow hallway in our church and I set up those traps. I set those traps and I spread them out. There was no straight path that you could take from point A to point B without running into a mousetrap.

And I led the students to the hallway and told them to partner with another student. Then I told them, take off your shoes and take off your socks.

And I handed out blindfolds to each group. I instructed one of the students to tie the blindfold around their eyes. And the unblindfolded student's task was to guide their partner through the mousetraps and safely to the other side, using only their voice.

Once the blindfolded student had made it safely through the mousetrap maze, they were to switch places. And the student who was unblindfolded would be blindfolded as they were led back through the maze.

[8 : 27] It was a pretty effective object lesson. No one got hurt. So everyone, please remove your shoes and your socks and form lines by these two doors.

I'm just joking. Where last we left Ezra, he, along with the five to 8,000 Jews gathered by the river that runs to Ahava, were prepared to embark on the four-month journey that would take them through dangerous territory as they traveled back to the promised land.

And if you remember, as Ezra records the names of the Jews returning from the exile with him, he realized that an important group was missing. The Levites were missing.

And so a delegation was formed to seek them out and to encourage them to make the trip back and to fulfill God's role for them in the temple and to fulfill God's purpose and plan for their family.

And that effort was successful. Now it was time to actually make the journey to Jerusalem. And from our text this morning, we are reminded of an important principle that God communicates to us throughout his word.

[9 : 55] And that is the main idea for this morning's message, that God guides those who seek him. God guides those who seek him. Remember, Ezra grew up in exile.

He did not grow up in Jerusalem, in Israel. He was not a part of the first group that had returned and rebuilt the temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians. In chapter 7 and verse 6 of Ezra, it tells us that he was a man, a young man, who studied God's word and was skilled in his ability to understand it and to apply it.

So much so that he gained the notice of King Artaxerxes, the king of Persia. And Artaxerxes was moved in his heart by God to grant Ezra the task to return to Jerusalem along with the Jews who were in exile who wanted to go back with him.

And his mission was to teach and to govern the people living in Jerusalem according to the word of God.

For Ezra and the thousands of Jews returning with him, this was a journey of faith. They were saying farewell to the life that they had known to embark on a journey with many unknowns.

[11 : 20] The journey ahead was fraught with many potential problems. For one, they were carrying a large sum of money without an armed escort to protect them.

Bandits often hid in the areas that they would be traveling through. The returning Jews would have been easy pickings for them. In addition, they were returning with children.

There was a potential for them to get lost or worse. And on top of all of that was just the logistics of this journey with all of these different people that Ezra had to deal with.

this man, Ezra, had a lot on his plate. He had a lot that he could be anxious about. But he was a man who learned that God guides those who seek him.

He knew that God called him to go back to Jerusalem and he trusted that God would bring them back, bring him and those who were traveling with him safely to their destination.

[12 : 28] Maybe you aren't embarking on a journey like that this morning, a journey like the one of Ezra in our text, but you are on a journey.

The Bible tells us that this world is not our home. In the book of 1 Peter, Peter identifies his audience in chapter 1, verse 1.

After identifying himself, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, he says, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The recipients of Peter's first letter were persecuted Jewish Christians who were forced to leave Jerusalem and were now residing in Asia Minor.

But in the next chapter, Peter refers to them again, these physical exiles as sojourners and he uses it in a spiritual sense.

He says in chapter 2, verse 11, beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

[13 : 39] Peter's appeal for holiness was based on their new identity in Christ. They were Christians. They were bought with the blood of Jesus and they were made heirs with him for eternity.

Their true citizenship was in Christ, with Christ, in heaven. And so they were to live in this world according to the truths and the values and the standards of their permanent home which was in heaven.

Paul reiterated this theme in Philippians 3, 20-21 speaking to us Christians, but our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Christians are earthly travelers who serve presently as Christ's ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5, 20 says, therefore, we, Christians, are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. The world is not the Christian's home. The knowledge that we are on a journey to our permanent home in heaven should change how we view our lives.

[15 : 10] It should change how we view our possessions. It should change our priorities which again Jesus said that our top priority in this life should be to seek the kingdom of God and to seek his righteousness.

Or if you're a Christian, our text this morning reminds you that God guides those who seek him.

Ezra was about to embark on a long journey with many potential dangers lurking ahead.

Ezra knew that the best thing to do regarding his present circumstance was to seek God and to ask God for his help that he would guide them on the journey and that he would bring them safely home.

If you feel confused, doubtful, fearful, or just tired of it all this morning or maybe if you feel uncertain about tomorrow, about the future, about what lies ahead, whatever the case may be, God has a word for you this morning.

He calls you to seek him and he promises you that if you do, he will guide you.

[16 : 35] If you're not a Christian, we're glad that you're here. God has a word for you this morning too. Jesus said that we are all traveling, all of us, believer and unbeliever alike, we are all traveling through this world and we are all headed towards one of two destinations.

He says there's two gates that we can enter through that take us along two different paths that lead to two different destinations.

This morning he's calling you to enter through the narrow gate and to journey along the narrow path because that gate and that path is the one and the only one that leads to eternal life.

And Jesus Christ is that gate that you must enter through to receive eternal life. The other gate and the other path is wider and it's easier to traverse.

But its end, Jesus says, is destruction. it results in eternal forever separation from God and from his goodness from his grace.

[17 : 51] And so I hope that today you will turn to him in faith and that he will save you. I pray that you will seek him and be guided by him through this life into his everlasting kingdom in heaven.

God guides those who seek him. Our text today gives four principles about God's guidance and those who truly seek him.

Principle number one, God guides those who go where he sends them. God guides those who go where he sends them. Another thing we learn about God in scripture is that God is a God who sends.

He is a God who often tells people to go. Sometimes God tells people to go in order to save them. God told Noah and his family to go inside the ark once it had been completed to save them from the flood waters of his wrath.

God sent an angel to tell Joseph and Mary to take their infant son Jesus and go to Egypt to protect him from Herod who wanted to kill Jesus.

[19 : 08] Sometimes God tells people to leave what is comfortable and to travel to a distant land and he doesn't give them much details about that place where he's calling them to go as was the case with Abraham.

God sometimes asks people to leave. Sometimes he forces them to depart as was the case with the Hebrews in the end of the end God ensured that his prophet arrived at the place where he intended him to be.

The first Christians in Jerusalem were forced to flee the city after persecution broke out against them. They left behind so many things but they did not leave the gospel behind.

And as they went they continued to proclaim it. They continued to walk in obedience to what Jesus had commanded to go to the nations to share the good news of who he is and what he's done with the result that many were saved.

Jesus in his earthly ministry was always telling people to go. He told the rich young ruler to go and sell everything that he had and then followed him.

[20 : 27] People who came to him for healing were often told by him go now your faith has made you well. After his crucifixion and his resurrection before he ascended back into heaven Jesus commanded his disciples to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel to make disciples and to teach them to obey all that he had instructed and all that he had commanded.

But understand this please that God is a God who often tells us to go and our going is a part of his redemptive plan as was the case for Ezra.

Ezra knows what God's will is for his life he knows that it's for him to go to Jerusalem everyone returning with him is gathered and now they're ready to depart but before they leave Ezra redirects their focus away from the journey ahead and the potential dangers ahead and he redirects their focus back to God in verse 21 at the beginning it says then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava in the Bible prayer always accompanies fasting the Bible records many instances where a person or a group of people abstain from food and drink to focus their hearts and their minds on their need for God's help God's provision God's instruction and God's preparation I preached the message on that not long ago and so if you have more questions or interest in fasting I encourage you to go to our website and listen to that message but understand that fasting is not commanded it can be helpful to focus our attention on

God and our need for him now for some that fasting is something that that they probably should not do because of their health considerations so be wise and perhaps fast from something else anything else if fasting from that thing will help you to better focus your attention on God and your need for him and his help but here Ezra calls for a fast and in the rest of verse 21 we learn why that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves and our children and all our goods this trip again came with great risk but Ezra trusted that God guides those who seek him I don't doubt that Ezra believed that but I think maybe at this time he must have felt at least a little bit anxious wouldn't you so so I think this fast was necessary for him also to quiet his mind to calm his nerves as well as everyone else that they would focus their complete attention on

God who sends and who delivers his people the God who walks with us in the valley of the shadow of death the God who restores our hope in him when we feel that hope is lost Ezra knew it was God's will to send him and those going with him back to Jerusalem but here he humbly seeks God's help to guide his people through the journey that is ahead now I imagine that in this large group of 5 to 8 thousand people at least some of them must have thought that this fast was an unnecessary delay they were ready to go now what are we waiting for let's go now what we learn from scripture that God is a sending God we also learn from scripture that God is a patient

[24 : 44] God God is patient with sinners Romans 2 4 or do you preserve on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance Jesus Christ right now is interceding for us in heaven and he's being patient patiently awaiting the moment of his return Hebrews 10 12 through 13 says but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet patience is a fruit of the spirit it is something that should characterize all who follow Jesus and who are indwelt by his Holy Spirit as a result of salvation God is patient and the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of patience within us and when we are patient as

Ezra was patient we give time for God to work in our hearts in our homes and in our church we lay down our schedule we sacrifice it to the Lord and we trust in his perfect timing so Ezra may have been anxious one thing we do know from Ezra is that he was a man of great faith look again with me at verse 22 he says for I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way since we had told the king the hand of our God is for good on all who seek him and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him I wonder and I kind of think that maybe Ezra put himself in this place on purpose it's easy to say you have faith in position where you have your faith put to the test

I think this was Ezra's way to express his faith in God to Artaxerxes and now his faith was being put to the test there was no turning back and if you think about it faith is not truly faith unless it is lived and Ezra was living his faith here God calls us to go now he may not be calling you to leave the state or the country but he is calling you Christian to go next door to the person who lives by you he's calling you to go to the person who works next to you he's calling you students to go to those who sit next to you in class Jesus was sent by God the father to come to sinful people people who hated him people who rejected him people who would kill him but in his going he made the way of salvation for us he came to save us to guide us to the new

Jerusalem that awaits those who have trusted in him for salvation if you're trusting in Jesus now for eternity can't you trust in his guidance for everything else because that's a pretty big thing to be trusting Jesus for can't you trust him for all the other smaller things Ezra is writing this book about these events after they happened and so here he's reflecting on these events knowing what had already occurred he trusted that God guides those who seek him and who go where he sends them in verse 23 he says so we fasted and implored our God for this and he listened to our entreaty and as I was thinking about Ezra and these people's preparation for this journey this week it made me think about our coming to Highland Park it was a quick turn of events ask those who were here I think it was about a three month search and it wasn't long maybe six months or less that we were leaving

Leavenworth to come here to Bartlesville and I remember I had friends in ministry who were concerned for me about such a quick search in my quick response to come they thought that you know maybe I was overlooking things that I shouldn't have but in that short time through prayer I know on my part and on the part of the search team in that short time through prayer through reading the word through seeking other counsel it was clear that it was God's will for me and for my family to come here to Highland Park I mean it was like the path was just completely cleared there was no reason for us not to go and I'm glad that we came so go where God sends you and stay where God wants to keep you but no matter where you are going or staying seek

[30 : 21] God and he will guide you now the second principle God guides those who guard what he entrusts to them in Ezra 24 through 30 he assigns the priest the task to carry and guard the treasure received from King Artaxerxes to be used for the house of God biblical scholars differ on how much they think the treasure!

would be worth today some estimate that the gold weighed close to four tons and the silver weighed close to 25 tons that weight in gold and silver today would be worth over 200 million dollars could

you imagine being responsible to carry and to guard 200 million dollars along a four month journey for me when I have a hundred dollar bill in my pocket I get nervous about that I couldn't imagine having 200 million dollars Ezra was an official of the king in keeping records of what funds were sent and what actually arrived was essential to display that he was a man who could be trusted and that he was a man who was honest because he knew that that would ultimately reflect on the Lord and it would also reflect on his earthly master who was King Artaxerxes at least in the sense of his having authority over him in government in Matthew 13 44 through 46 Jesus shared a couple parables about an extremely valuable treasure in Matthew 13 44 he says the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up that in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field again he says the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it in these parables the hidden treasure and the pearl of great value both picture salvation as something hidden from most people but that contains a value so great that the one who finds it sells everything that they have in order to possess it in second corinthians the apostle paul describes the ministry given to him by jesus as a precious treasure second corinthians 4 7 he says but we have this treasure in jars of clay using jars of clay as an illustration for himself just a nothing small useless clay pot that is easily replaceable but

I have this great treasure inside of me to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us wherever the Holy Spirit told Paul to go Paul went and as he went he experienced affliction and suffering and rejection but he also experienced the power of God working through him to bring spiritually dead people back to life as he showcased to them this treasure that he had the gospel of Jesus Christ and he instructed Timothy a young pastor to do the same in 1st Timothy 6 20 he writes to him oh Timothy guard the deposit entrusted to you avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge for by professing it some have swerved from the faith Paul's treasure was Timothy's treasure the deposit the treasure

Timothy was to guard was the gospel the truth of the gospel the divine revelation of God was committed into his care there were many false teachers deceivers swindlers disguised as wolves in sheep's clothing that continues to be the case today they were Satan's instruments to pollute this treasure this gospel with lies and deceptions to confuse and lead people astray Timothy was to guard against them guard this treasure the Bible calls all of us as Christians to do the same it's not just for pastors it's not just for theologians it's for all of us 1 Thessalonians 2 3 through 4 says friend we have a much greater treasure than the 200 million dollars that the priests were carrying we have a much greater stewardship to guard this treasure that has been entrusted to us by

[35 : 43] God in verses 28 and 30 Ezra tells the priest guarding the treasure this you are holy to the Lord and the vessels are holy and the silver and the gold are a free will offering to the Lord the God of your fathers guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the Lord in other words he is saying here guard and keep this treasure which does not belong to you which belongs to God and keep it safe don't think about taking any of it for yourself because a day is going to come at the end of this journey when you must give an account for it friend a day is coming for us when we will give an account before the king of kings and our great high priest

Jesus Christ for our lives and the gospel treasure that he has entrusted to us 1st Corinthians 3 11 through 15 talk about this for no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ speaking to believers here now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold silver precious stones wood hay straw each one's work will become manifest for the day will disclose it because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done if the work that anyone has done or has built on the foundation survives he will receive a reward if anyone's work is burned up he will suffer loss though he himself will be saved but only as through fire every believer will give an account this judgment doesn't determine salvation which is by faith alone but rather is a time when believers must give an accounting before the Lord of their lives and how they served him with their lives how they guarded this treasure he entrusted them with our position in Christ is the foundation spoken of in 1 Corinthians 3 11 through 15 and that which we build upon that foundation can be the gold silver and precious stones treasures of good works done in Christ's name obedience and fruitfulness in our lives dedicated spiritual service to glorify God to build up his church or what we build on the foundation may be instead wood hay and stubble worthless things frivolous things shallow activity that has no real

spiritual value wasted time the judgment seat of Christ will reveal this this isn't maybe this is going to happen to you the gold silver and precious stones in the lives of believers will survive God's refining fire and believers will be rewarded I don't know what those rewards are but they will be rewarded based upon those good works that they did not to be saved but because they were saved and they treasured Christ and it will be based upon how faithful they were to serve him 1st corinthians 9 14 through 17 how faithful they were to obey him in the great commission Matthew 28 18 through 20 how victorious they were in their efforts to put sin to death in their lives Romans 6 1 through 4 how well they controlled their tongues James 3 1 through 9 how faithful they were to guard the deposit entrusted to them by Jesus we will you will have to give an account for your actions for your life the fire of God's judgment will completely burn up the wood and the hay and the stubble of the words and the things that we did that had no real or absolutely no eternal value so then each of us

Romans 14 12 says will give an account of himself to God and so I ask you are you seeking God's guidance with your life are you going where God is sending you are you guarding what God has entrusted to you are you ready for that day when you will give an account now the third principle God guides those who give what doesn't belong to them God guides those who give what doesn't belong to them now I'm going to move more quickly at this point but what we need to see in these verses is God's faithfulness to guide his people safely home and their faithfulness to give all of their offering that they received to be used in service to God and to accomplish his will God is a sending God God is a patient

[41 : 25] God God is a God who trusts us with the treasure of the gospel to guard it with how we live God is also a giving God God so loved the world we can all say it that he gave his only son to those who hated him to those who rejected him to those who made an enemy of him he sent his only son he gave him his greatest treasure Jesus Christ who gave his life on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins whoever believes in him will receive eternal life they receive salvation they are spared from his wrath if you have not received the gift of God's grace this morning he offers it to you he offers it to you if you have received it then give what earthly treasures you have to advance his kingdom on this earth knowing that that is the kind of thing that will last for eternity jim elliott missionary said who gave his life sharing the gospel on the mission field he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose and honestly nothing that you truly have or that

I have nothing truly belongs to us it all belongs to God God guides those who seek him he guides those who give what doesn't belong to them to advance his kingdom for his glory and for our good now the fourth principle God guides those who express gratitude to him God guides those who express gratitude to him the journey was over the journey that Ezra and the people took began with worship in Babylon as they sought God's guidance and protection it was a journey that ended in worship in Jerusalem as the people expressed their gratitude for God for having safely brought them to their destination again Christian the world is not your home we are fellow travelers making our way through a sin cursed world as we go we serve as ambassadors for Christ inviting others to make the journey with us and make no doubt about it Jesus often said this journey is hard it was a hard journey for Ezra such is the case for us but the one thing we repeatedly hear through these verses is that God's hand is upon those who seek him God's hand is upon his children whom he saved to guide them to the new Jerusalem described in the book of Revelation where we read that God will dry every eye there will be no more tears no more fear no more discouragement no more wrestling with doubt or depression or anything else we will be in the presence of the Lord forever so we must go we must guard we must give and we must be grateful to the

God who seeks the lost and who saves us who gives us eternal life and who entrusts us with the precious treasure of the gospel to go to share the good news of who he is knowing that God keeps his promises and his promises are true he is a God who keeps his word so how should we adjust to what we have just heard I think well it's this seek God's guidance seek God's guidance pretty simple but how often do you do it how often when you are in a situation where you are feeling anxious afraid doubtful concerned do you actually go to God first in prayer how often whenever you're making a major decision in life whatever it may be how often do you go to God's word also to seek his will how often do you turn to somebody else in the church for wise counsel to help you make the right decision as you seek the

Lord's will seek God's guidance to to help and wherever God tells you to go and whatever God tells you to do do it it might be hard but I'm here to tell you that it's worth it go where God sends you stay where God keeps You in all things seek him and he'll guide you if you're here this morning and you realize that you're not saved you realize that you are on the path that leads to destruction again I'm glad you're here and you've heard the gospel that God in his love and his grace sent his greatest treasure Jesus Christ his only son to die on the cross in your place and for your sins and to receive this precious gift of salvation doesn't mean that you have to take some kind of great journey doesn't mean that you have to do all these different things to clean yourself up in preparation to receive it no you just turn to him away from your sins and repentance and you turn to him in faith and you'll be saved and you'll have eternal life if you are saved

[48 : 02] I encourage you that maybe this morning during our time of invitation you need to acknowledge and repent that you haven't sought God's guidance or maybe there's something going on in your life right now that you're struggling with and you realize you haven't sought God in the ways that you should as you seek to make that decision or be obedient to whatever it may be and I encourage you to come and pray I'll be down here whatever the case may be I'd love to pray for you if you would like me to do that and that's what I encourage you to do this morning God guides those who seek him let's pray Lord we are thankful for you God we're thankful for your salvation we're thankful for your patience Lord we're thankful for the privilege that we have to be entrusted with the truth of the gospel God we're so thankful to know that in this life no matter what is going on with us or around us that you are a

God whom we can trust and Lord when the road ahead seems uncertain and when there's things ahead that we are afraid of God we learn from your word this morning that the best thing that we can do is to humble ourselves to seek your help and your guidance with the promise that you'll provide it Lord we know that this world is not our home but too often we act as if it is too often Lord the decisions that we make and the things that we don't do in disobedience to you are motivated by this thought that this is our permanent place of residence when it isn't God remind us all that we are sojourners in this world we are on a journey and you are guiding us and you will bring us safely home and Lord that should give us confidence and courage that should make us people of great faith

Lord remind us of this truth that we would be those things and that we would do well for you with the lives that you've given to us and the treasure that you've entrusted us with and we ask that you would receive all the glory and all the honor for it because you are worthy we pray these things in Jesus name amen Thank you.