

Lessons from a List

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to Ezra chapter 2 as we continue our study on this book today.

Today's sermon will cover the entire chapter, though I will not read the entire chapter. But once you're there, just look through it to see. It's a long list with many names.

We'll talk about that in a second. But Ezra chapter 2, there are Bibles in the pews if you don't have a Bible to follow along with us this morning. And if you don't have a Bible at all, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our church to you in our hopes that you'll continue to be reading God's Word.

I am going to read chapter 2, verses 1 through 2, and then jump down to verses 64 through 70 and read those. So if you are there with me, would you please stand as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

Again, Ezra chapter 2, read verses 1 through 2 and 64 through 70. Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried captive to Babylonia.

[1 : 23] They returned to Jerusalem and Judea, each to his own town. They came with Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemiah, Saraiah, Realiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpar, Bigvi, Rehum, and Ba'ana.

Verse 64. The whole assembly together was 42,360, besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337.

And they had 200 male and female singers. Their horses were 736. Their mules were 245. Their camels were 435.

And their donkeys were 6,720. Some of the heads of the families, when they came to the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God to erect it on its site.

According to their ability, they gave to the treasury of the work 61,000 derrickes of gold, 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priest garments. Now the priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and all of the rest of Israel in their towns.

[2 : 38] May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? I'm sure that some of you, hopefully many of you, are immersed in some kind of read the Bible in a year plan.

I'm likewise sure that as you read through Old Testament books with a long list of hard to pronounce Hebrew names, like we see in Ezra 2, you either skim through it or you skip over it, wondering what spiritual benefit such a lengthy list of names could possibly have for you.

Well, one benefit maybe is that we have some expectant mothers in our church, and there's definitely some unique names that you could choose from in this chapter.

Little baby Asgad or Gasm or Babuk have a nice ring to it. Babuk means bottle, excuse me, and babies drink bottles.

So, there's that. Ezra 2 is also the sort of passage that expository preachers are likewise, or tempted, I should say, to skip over.

[4 : 11] Kind of like the opening credits of movies, especially the older movies. Remember those? It seemed like there was just like five minutes of just a list of names of people who worked on the film, and thankfully for us, we have a fast-forward button.

We can go through all of that stuff because, honestly, we just don't care about the people who made the movie as much as we're ready to see some action. Now, there's quite a bit more action in this book once we get to chapter 3.

But on the surface, as we look at chapter 2, there doesn't seem to be any activity or words that would do us much spiritual good.

So, it seems. There doesn't seem to be much theological meat for us to chew on and digest as we look at this long list of peculiar names.

We might look at a passage like this and wonder, why would God take up so much space in the Bible for a list like this? Why would God provide these details and the names of these people who most of them never show up in the Bible again?

[5 : 28] It seems like all this information God gives in chapter 2 could basically be summarized in verse 64. The whole assembly together was 42,360.

We're obviously not going to skip over this chapter, but we will take more of a 30,000-foot view of it and see the big picture instead of getting more down into the weeds.

But we won't skip over it because my conviction is that God has a purpose for the words he inspired in this text and in every text from Genesis to Revelation.

As Scripture says, we read in 2 Timothy 3, 16-17, All Scripture, all of it is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

And I actually get more excited to preach through passages like this one because it's extremely rewarding to find the treasures hidden under the surface, which further solidifies my belief that the Bible is the Word of God.

[6 : 45] It is inerrant. It is truth. And the truth it contains, even in a book like Ezra, written 2,500 years ago, are still extremely applicable to our day and our time.

And what we'll see this morning, this main idea for our morning sermon is this. God remembers his people and is faithful in fulfilling his promises to them. God remembers his people and is faithful in fulfilling his promises to them.

God is able to fulfill his promises because, as we saw last week in chapter 1, he is sovereign over all things, the big events, the major players, and the small details, and the little people.

Ezra records how God sovereignly ordained the rise and the fall of nations to accomplish his will.

And the primary message of Ezra is that God orchestrated the past grim situation, Israel's exile and their captivity, and would continue to work through a pagan nation and a pagan king and his successor to give his people hope for the future.

Ezra begins in 538 B.C. Cyrus, the king of Persia, the new world power on the rise after the fall of Babylon, issued a decree permitting the people of God, who were in exile to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild his temple.

[8 : 21] God stirred Cyrus' heart. He stirred his spirit to make this decree and fulfillment of promises that he had made in Isaiah and in Jeremiah.

Israel's time in exile was a time of disciplining, as God was purifying and purging his people of their idolatrous ways.

Some of God's people died in exile. Others prospered in Babylon. But a remnant of that remnant had their hearts stirred by God to return to Jerusalem and rebuild, to rebuild the temple that the Babylonians had demolished and desecrated.

Ezra writes chapter 2 in retrospect. He's writing about these people who made this journey years after it happened. But he doesn't provide any details about the journey.

We don't know how long the journey took. We don't know if those gods stirred to return came back in one big traveling party or if they left in smaller groups at different times.

[9 : 40] We don't know what kind of stops they made along the way. We don't know what kind of obstacles they may have encountered as they returned home. We don't know how many children were with them.

These details are left out. Just as the gospel writers spend half their accounts of Jesus' life recording his final week.

So Ezra focuses only on the things that are particularly important and relevant for redemptive history. And those relevant things are a list of long names and numbers.

Talking about those who returned. And through these names and numbers, we are reminded that God remembers his people and God fulfills his promises to them.

He did not abandon them in exile. He remembers his people and the promises that he made. God will, or God still, I should say, stirs the hearts of people today to turn to him in faith, to follow him in pursuit of accomplishing his will.

[10:52] And he continues to rule sovereignly over all things as he moves them toward the end that he has ordained from the beginning. God's people then looked forward to the fulfillment of the promised Messiah.

And God's people today look forward to the fulfillment of the Messiah's return. As we wait for him to come back, we remember that God is in control.

God has a plan. And that God is faithful to keep his promises. And the promises that he has made that have not yet been fulfilled, we know, we trust, we believe, we're faithful that God will keep his word.

God is faithful. You should trust him. And I believe that Ezra chapter 2 is about faithfulness. God's faithfulness and the faithfulness of his people.

And there's two lessons from this list that emerge. And the first lesson is this. God is faithful to preserve his people. God is faithful to preserve his people.

[12:07] I want to look again at verse 1. Now, these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried captive to Babylonia.

They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town. And what follows then is a well-organized list in which Ezra categorizes the names of those who returned.

Now, before looking at the spiritual and practical lessons God has for us in these verses, it's important for us to understand a little bit more about who some of these people were.

In verse 2, Ezra lists the names of the leaders. Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemiah, Saraiah, Realiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpah, Bigvay, Rabum, Nehemiah, there's a good name for a baby maybe, Ba'ana.

That's 11 names. But now, there's actually, there were actually 12 names. Nehemiah records the same list as Ezra in chapter 7 of his book, but his list has 12 names.

[13:17] And the name that Ezra has not, or is not appearing in our scripture is the name of Nahamani. And we think that the reason why there's 11 and not 12 is that it was just a simple scribal error.

The number 12 is significant because it represents the 12 tribes of Israel. It's significant also because we know that Jesus had 12 disciples.

But the most important name in this list is the name Zerubbabel as it pertains to God's preservation of his people.

Zerubbabel means offspring of Babylon. More importantly, Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin, making him a descendant of King David.

Zerubbabel was not sent back to Jerusalem as a king, but as a governor under Persia's control. He was responsible to oversee the reconstruction efforts taking place in Jerusalem with the help of Yeshua, the high priest.

[14:27] Now, we're getting a little ahead of ourselves in this book, but after about 14 months to get settled in the land, the Jewish people began rebuilding the temple in earnest.

And it wasn't long before they were opposed by their adversaries in the surrounding lands who were eventually successful in postponing their work.

When the temple reconstruction was brought to a halt, only the foundation had been completed, and it revealed that this temple was much smaller, was going to be much smaller than the original, which severely disappointed those who remembered the original structure.

The prophet Haggai addressed their disappointment in Haggai chapter 2, verses 3 through 4. Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?

How do you see it now? It is not as nothing in your eyes, or is it not as nothing in your eyes? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord.

[15:41] Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts.

The prophet Zechariah received a vision from God during this time, which was meant to give Zerubbabel encouragement in Zechariah 4, 6 through 10. Then he said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain, and he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of grace, grace to it.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. Despite the sinfulness of his people, which resulted in their exile and culminated in the destruction of the temple, God has kept his covenant with David, which is recorded in 2 Samuel 7.

[17 : 00] And in that covenant, God promises that David's son will succeed him as Israel's king, and that Solomon will build the temple.

And then his promise begins to expand. And we see that in 2 Samuel 7, 13 and 16. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

The promise that David's house, kingdom, and throne would be established forever, established that through David, God would send a Messiah to rule and to reign forever.

So now let's pull all of this together. These people in Ezra saw the destruction of their holy city and temple.

[18 : 08] They were marched off into captivity, probably at a young age. There they saw the wicked nation of Babylon continue to prosper. And maybe they wondered, what about the promises?

Didn't God say he would preserve our nation? Didn't God say he would establish the throne of David forever? I'm sure they were tempted to doubt God's promises, to preserve their people and fulfill what he said he would do.

But then Babylon falls to Persia. And then Cyrus issues a decree telling them to go home and to rebuild the temple.

And then they lay the foundations and they realize this new temple isn't going to be like the old one. They mourn. And they weep, I think, for the good old days.

They're grief-stricken over what has been lost. And the reality that this new temple won't be as glamorous as the first. They feel despair.

[19 : 23] And to me, it's as if God is saying to them through his prophets, Stop it. Snap out of it. Look at Zerubbabel, descendant of David.

And know, I am a God who keeps my promises. I am a God who preserves my people. I have better things planned for your future.

The Messiah will come. Although Zerubbabel's temple was smaller and less glamorous than Solomon's, God said that it would have greater glory, that there would be greater glory for it. In Haggai chapter 2 verse 9, The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.

And that glory was bestowed on Zerubbabel's temple centuries later in the fulfillment of God's promise when Jesus Christ, his son, the Messiah, entered it and graced its courts with his presence, the very presence of God.

[20 : 38] Remember how Jesus' adversaries challenged him when he purified the temple. They challenged his authority to do that. And Jesus said to them, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.

And of course we know that he was speaking of himself. He was speaking about his crucifixion, his atoning work on the cross to set his people free from sin, to give them eternal life, to give them a true and living hope, to make them, them, temples of the Holy Spirit, sealing them, preserving them, keeping them forever, that they will one day reign with him eternally.

Jesus said in John 10, 27 through 29, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand. Church, we have something better than God's people had back in Ezra's time.

We live on the other side of the cross. We have the benefit of looking back and seeing even more of God's promises fulfilled. We have the benefit of knowing Jesus, our prophet, our priest and king risen from the dead, coming again, reigning eternally, a plan ordained from the beginning of time, the snake crusher, the curse breaker, the lion of Judah who sits on the eternal throne.

[22 : 23] And what he saves, he keeps. He keeps his promises. And that truth should make you a person of great courage.

And that truth should make you a person of great faith. That's the first lesson. Now here's the second. God's people must be faithful in pursuing his will.

God is faithful to preserve. And we must be faithful to pursue his will. Verses 2 through 20 is a list of various family names and their numbers.

Verses 21 through 35 lists various Judean cities and the numbers returning from them. Verses 36 through 39 is a list of four clans of priests.

Verse 40 lists the Levites who served as their helpers. And this group along with the singers and the gatekeepers and the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants are listed in verses 41 through 58.

[23 : 24] And they would not have much to do until the temple was rebuilt. And even when it was rebuilt, the work they did in the temple would go largely unnoticed by everyone else.

These were not glamorous positions. But they were needed. You know, there's a lot of people in the church who do things in service to our community that often go unnoticed and underappreciated. Like our nursery workers who are right now caring for many of our young ones so that parents can participate in the worship service.

There's nothing glamorous about changing diapers or being spit up on. But the work they do is important.

It makes me think of the Sunday school teachers we have, the Awana and the youth volunteers, the people who set up tables and chairs, the people who make coffee and set out donuts on Sunday morning, greeters at the doors who hand out bulletins.

[24 : 37] It makes me think of people who make phone calls and who send text messages and who put a loving arm around someone in need of encouragement. All those things and more.

go unnoticed by most of us. There's nothing glamorous about any of those things. But God notices. God notices.

A task doesn't need to be glamorous for God to notice it. Jesus noticed the poor widow in the temple who dropped her minuscule gift, two copper coins, into the offering box.

Not much in the eyes of the world, but he knew her motivation, and her small act is recorded in God's Word. How about Lazarus' sister Mary, who anointed Jesus' head with expensive ointment, which the disciples saw as wasteful, but Jesus said that her less-than-glamorous act would be proclaimed in the whole world.

And at that time, they had no idea that Bartlesville, Oklahoma existed. Jesus was right. In Colossians, the Apostle Paul reminds Christians that God always sees what we do and our motivation for doing it.

[25 : 58] And he encourages us with these words, Colossians 3, 23 through 24. Whatever you do, whatever you do, glamorous or not, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. I remember, this was years ago, at our church in Leavenworth, there was a couple who joined our congregation, and the husband was a graduate of VMI.

He was a high-ranking officer in the Army, and he was pretty mature in his faith. And soon after joining our church, he approached me, and he asked how he could serve.

And I, just kind of looking at him and knowing what I knew about him, told him more about the glamorous things that he could do, teaching maybe, or leading in different ways, stuff like that.

And he kind of nodded his head. And then he said to me, I noticed that our church doesn't have a dumpster. Who takes out the trash?

[27 : 13] And I explained that we had an older, retired gentleman who emptied our trash cans. He put the trash bags in the back of his pickup and hauled them out to the street and unloaded them. And then he asked me, do you think that he would be willing to let me do that?

And I said, I'm sure that he will. And he did. And that man became our garbage man. Nobody knew it.

Nobody noticed. I would see him out there from time to time putting our garbage out on the curb. And I would think to myself, there's a person who works heartily for the Lord and not for men.

It doesn't need to be glamorous for God to notice. And it doesn't need to be glamorous for it to matter. In chapter 2, as we record, different groups of people with different responsibilities. Some of those responsibilities were more high-profile responsibilities. Others weren't. And they would largely go unnoticed. But look at how Ezra describes them all in chapter 3, verse 1.
[28 : 22] When the seventh month came and the children of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.

They gathered as one man. These people were united in their purpose. And collectively, they achieved more as a community than they ever could have achieved on their own as individuals. They were united in their purpose. They were faithful to pursue God's will. There were obstacles, yes, but God blessed their efforts. And you know, nothing has changed for us today. The New Testament often describes the church as a body, as the body of Christ. One place we see that is in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 16.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and the teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

[29 : 42] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with it, with which it is equipped.

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. A healthy church, a thriving church, is one where God's people are faithful to pursue God's will. They are faithful to put their spiritual gifts to use in service to others, knowing that ultimately they are being used in service to God who gave them, to them.

And collectively, we are able to accomplish more than we ever could apart. If anyone didn't need a team, it was Jesus.

Yet he chose to surround himself with people who were blessed to be a part of his ministry and fulfillment of God's redeeming purposes.

[30 : 59] Ezra chapter 2 reveals order, it reveals commitment, vision, direction, and a plan uniting a people whose hearts were stirred by God to accomplish his will.

And again, we can reach more and we can accomplish more together as we pursue the Lord's will until he returns. Well, what is that will?

I think in one place we see it very clearly is Matthew 28, 18 through 20. Last words of our Lord to his disciples before he ascended back to heaven. Jesus came to them and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

We are here, church, to testify to the truth. We are here to call sinners to repent and turn to Jesus Christ for salvation.

[32 : 07] We are here to stir one another up to love and good works. We are here to be a pillar and buttress of truth in a culture that has exchanged the truth of God for a lie and is crumbling all around us.

I believe that especially in our younger generations, there is a realization that the things of this world cannot satisfy the longings of their hearts.

And you know what? for many of them, they've never heard the gospel before. They are depressed and they are despairing.

They need us. Our nation needs us. Our world needs us. And what they need us to be is the kind of church God has commanded us to be in His Word.

not fighting, not bickering, not making mountains out of molehills, but focused together as one, pursuing the Lord's will and being faithful to Him, doing it together.

[33 : 28] Look again with me at verses 68 through 69. Some of the heads of families when they came to the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem made freewill offerings for the house of God to erect it on its site.

According to their ability, they gave to the treasury of the work. 61,000 derricks of gold, 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priest garments, which are also expensive.

In pursuing God's will, the people were willing to part with their treasures. They knew again God had stirred their hearts to return to Jerusalem and rebuild. And their primary concern in all of this was not for themselves, not what's in it for me, holding back money or something to ensure that they had an ability to buy a house or rent a house once they got to where God was sending them. Their primary focus wasn't on their houses, but on God's house. And they gave freely and according to their ability. And in this way, they demonstrated what and who their faith was truly in. How about you? To what extent are you committed to advancing God's kingdom on this earth? Are you as willing to part with your earthly treasures in pursuit of being obedient and faithful to accomplish God's will?

[34 : 51] We can come up with a number of excuses for withholding our treasures and convince ourselves that we're right to do so until we consider what God gave to us to save us, his only son.

Romans 8, 32 says, He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? God's people must be faithful to pursue God's will in the work he's called them to do.

no matter how little notice they might get from it. And he's called his people to be generous financially to support and to provide the resources that are needed to do what needs doing.

Now there's one final group that I haven't mentioned yet in this long list that Ezra gives to us in chapter 2 and it's those he mentions in verses 59 through 63.

I'm going to read verses 62 through 63. 63. These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies but they were not found there and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.

[36 : 09] The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until there should be a priest to console Urim and Thummim.

this was a group who believed they had ancestral connections and family ties to the priest who served in the temple prior to the exile but no record could be found to support their claim.

you could imagine in a way being at a store and being ready to check out and you reach for your wallet and it's not there or even worse imagine that you're in a foreign country and your trip is over and it's time to return home and you're at the airport you're ready to go through security and you realize that I cannot find my passport that kind of panic sets in that's what these people were experiencing at this point they were temporarily suspended from duty even though they were permitted to return but as far as we know the evidence was never found and their suspension from duty in the temple became permanent think with me about a couple of things here first how wonderful would it be to know that your name was recorded in Ezra 2 to be included among those whom

God stirred and who were faithful in obeying his will your name would be recorded for future generations the descendants of those faithful men and women would have descendants who could look back and see the names of their ancestors printed in God's word how awesome second think about how sad it must have been for this group who though their names are printed they are recorded as those who could not apparently and did not find the evidence to prove their connection to the priesthood Jesus talked about another list he talked about another book with another list of names that is far greater to have your name recorded in and much much worse to have your name left out of in Luke 10

Jesus hears the report of the 72 that he sent out to do his will and they came back with amazing reports and Jesus says to them in verse 20 nevertheless do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven in Philippians 4 3 the apostle Paul talks about those who labored side by side with him fellow workers whose names he say are in the book of life the author of Hebrews writes about the heavenly Jerusalem and those who will one day assemble there whose names are enrolled in heaven and then in Revelation 21 22 through 27 we read this future events and I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the

[40 : 00] Lamb by its light will the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day and there will be no night there they will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations now read this part but nothing unclean will ever enter it nor anyone

who does what is detestable or false but only only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life these are the citizens of the future heavenly community in the future city of God who will experience the glory of heaven eternally they are those whose names are recorded in this book those whose names will be found on this list is your name going to be in that book will your name be a part of that list if you have trusted in

Jesus in Jesus alone for salvation having turned from your sins in repentance and in faith to him who he is and what he's done and the Bible says that your name is in that book and it will be in that book forever but if it's not there then you are here by God's grace and he has ordained for you to hear this word to hear his gospel to turn to him in faith and trust in him that your name will be written in that book because if it is not your eternal soul will spend its eternity apart from God apart from his grace apart from his love in hell forever and so he says to you today it's the day of salvation for you it's not about who you are it's not about going on some journey or some conquest it's you realizing you're a sinner it's you seeing your need for salvation and knowing that Jesus the son of God is the only one who can provide it through his sinless life his sacrificial death and his resurrection on the third day and if you will turn to him in faith you will be saved and your name will be written forever in this book and all the glories of heaven belong to you so how should we adjust to this passage

I think it's this for those of us who know the Lord for those of us who have been saved be a faithful participant in the community of God and the work he is doing be a faithful participant in the community of God and the work that he is doing to be a faithful participant you must be faithfully present you must be faithfully willing and you also must be willing to let others participate in the work that you're doing in the church we do and we accomplish more together than we ever could apart God is faithful despite what we're seeing in this world he will preserve his people to the end that he has ordained and until that time God's people must be faithful to pursue his will to give him glory knowing that when the end comes all that we do whether it's changing diapers in the nursery whether it's taking out garbage for the church it matters and God notices let's pray

Lord your word is deep and God there's even more here in Ezra 2 that we could spend months years digging through and find more treasures about you about who you are God today we've seen and we've been reminded that you're a God who preserves his people Lord I pray that for for us your people today your people in this nation in this state in this city at this time that your word today will have encouraged us to be faithful and remembering that Lord though the world seems like it is spinning spinning into spiraling downward spinning out of control that you are sovereign and that you're in control that we have nothing to fear because you keep your people and you keep the promises that you made to them

God I pray also that as we've seen in your word that we would be faithful to you that we would be willing to do what you've called us to do no matter what it might be no matter what how prestigious the position might be no matter how unnoticed it might go Lord that we would know that we do it for you and you notice God I pray for Highland Park that we would be one that we would be united as these people were Lord I pray that for your church the church that we would be together that we would be united in what you've called us to do and not allow the enemy to distract us by small things that distract our focus from where it should be God the world needs your church to be the kind of church that you've called it to be and Lord I pray for our church that we would be one where your will is being done as we pursue it together for your glory for your honor we need your help in Jesus name we trust you provided amen