

Chains of Protection, Love, and Opportunity

2023.07.02 Morning Sermon in Acts 21:31-40

³¹ Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another.

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. ³⁵ When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. ³⁶ For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"

³⁷ Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?" He replied, "Can you speak Greek?" ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" ³⁹ But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people." ⁴⁰ So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying,

Main idea: Even in believers' difficulties, the Lord is loving believers and employing them in the advance of His kingdom

Introduction: Why is this happening to me?

1. Chains of Protection

- Protection from earthly harm (in this case, murderous Jews—"seeking to kill him," v31)
- Protection from spiritual harm (in this case, sin against Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and Christ's breaking down the middle wall of separation)
- Receive your trials as good, because the One Who gives them is good.

2. Chains of Love

- The love of the Spirit: Who bound him to Christ in the first place (cf. 20:22), Who told the truth then carried it out, Who kept him from sin, Who conformed his circumstances to Christ's... murder mob at feast, witnesses can't agree, "away with him!"
- The love of the Lord Jesus: Who suffers with us (22:7, 18; cp. Mt 28:20) and conforms us to Himself
- Receive your trials as loving, because they come not only in the love that gave you the Son and the Spirit, and adoption in them—but also the loving, active fellowship of the Son and the Spirit. Let the fellowship of God sweeten your trials to you.

3. Chains of Opportunity

- "ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus"
- Captive audience, linguistic ability, citizenship
- The "Who" of providence determines the "why"s of providence and especially the "how" of our response to Him and to others.
- Take advantage of your circumstances to love Christ's Name unto Him, upon your brethren, and unto your neighbors.

Conclusion: Apply this to your own suffering. This is not just a case study, but the Word of God, lovingly recorded for your sake by the Spirit, Who seeks to glorify Christ in your life.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Acts 21, verses 31 through 40. These are God's words. Now, as they were seeking to kill him. News came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, They stopped beating Paul.

Then the commander came near and took him. And commanded him to be bound with two chains. And he asked who he was, and what he had done, And some among the multitude cried one thing. And some another. So when you're not, could not ascertain the truth because of the two molt, He commanded him to be taken into the barracks.

When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed after crying out away with him. Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, May I speak to you.

He replied. Can you speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who sometime ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out in the wilderness. But Paul said, I am a Jew. From Tarsus in Cilicia. A citizen. Of no mean city. And I implore you. Permit me to speak to the people.

So, when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand, to the people. And there was a great silence. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them. In the Hebrew language.

The census reading of God's inspired and inherent word. Rejoice to know. That he blesses to us the preaching of it by his spirit. Please be seated.

Why is this happening to me? It's a question. We sometimes ask often in seasons of suffering and trial, Perhaps in seasons also. Of great blessing. Praise God. There is. One great reason. That all is for the name of the Lord Jesus. We Remember this from the Lips of Paul.

Remember when they were pleading with him, not to go to Jerusalem because precisely what we have just read. The Holy Spirit had been saying would happen if he went up to Jerusalem. And yet he had said, Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready. Not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name.

Of the Lord Jesus. There's also another reason. Those of us who Uh, Have had interact with others who believe that God doesn't Plan the future or maybe even doesn't even know the future. Such dreadful and blasphemous things, but they're said even by people who profess to be Christians.

We're probably familiar with Ephesians one 11. That he works all things according to the council of his will. But the front half of that verse tells you what is one of the reasons behind all of the things that he works. In Him, that is in Christ. In Him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance being predestined and predestination is always to adoption.

It's always to sunshine. Romans 8, predestined to be conformed, to the image of his son earlier in this chapter in Ephesians 1 predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus. Now in if effusions, one verse 11 be Obtained. Any inheritance having been predestined According to the purpose of him.

Who works all things? According to the council of his will. And so, why is this happening to me, as At least these two answers every time. The glory of the name of the Lord Jesus. And that God would bring all those whom he has been determined to adopt as sons and conform to the sun in whom they are adopted conform them to his image and bring them into the inheritance that they have with him.

This is why. Everything happens. And if you Are in a situation now or have been recently or are being prepared in God's good providence. For one upcoming. You have the question. Why is this happening to me? There are those two answers, the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus.

And the adoption conforming and bringing into their inheritance of those whom. God has determined to have as children. In the Lord, Jesus. That's a big part of the why? Now. Paul wouldn't have had to ask. Why is this happening to me? It would have been very stunning to him.

To have the chains bound on his hand and bound on his feet. The Commander commanding him to be bound with two chains and the vision of Agabus with his own belt, back up and in Phillip's house and Caesarea clear in his mind, He knew. He was being bound for the name of the Lord Jesus.

But as we come out of last week's portion, In verses 15 to 30. We see many ways. In which these Chains were blessed to Paul for him. There are chains of protection. Change the protection. First of all, by the Romans, praise God. But also by the Spirit. There were chains of love.

The Romans in protect out of love, they Protected out of self-interest. So, nothing worse that you could do, if you were a garrison in charge of keeping Jews from getting rowdy then, to let Jerusalem, go haywire during a feast. And yet the Holy Spirit's purpose. Was in love. And he even ordered in his providence, many things that showed him.

His union with Christ and his sufferings. So in the second place, we'll see that they're chains of love. Within the third place. He saw those chains, his chains of opportunity. Yes, chains, the protection and chains of love. They're coming to him as part of God's bringing him in conformity to Christ and to, to come into his inheritance in Christ and hopefully, Bringing others through him.

Although this is a crowd primarily of Jews. And we're going to hear his. His testimony to them of the Lord Jesus, if God spares us to one another and another week, next Lord's day, But they were chains of opportunity. He was bound for the name of the Lord Jesus and he was going to take advantage.

Of the circumstances that he was in. As many believers have done. Throughout the centuries. They get changed to an unbelieving, persecutor That unbelieving persecutor just unwittingly bound himself to his own evangelist. And praise God. For chains of opportunity. So those three things And those three things are then true.

About all of our circumstances. Protection. Love. And opportunity. First, there would change the protection, the The Jews were seeking to kill him, so the They had been beating him the entire time. And word of mouth is as pretty fast, even before the internet, Uh, but the The word that.

There's an uproar at the temple that has to get to the garrison and the garrison has to get through the crowd and the entire time they've been beating Paul. Uh, when he gets When he gets Roman chains, instead of Jewish hands and clubs and whips and stones, he's happy for the exchange.

The, the Garrison makes show of binding him. The commander, commanding him to be bound with two chains, Make sure everybody can see. And yet, the Jews aren't giving up Uh, now that he's been bound hand and feet, he's not making good progress and The Jews are not pacified at all and so he's not ambulatory enough.

The soldiers have to end up carrying him This language of being led. Into. Into the barracks. When he reaches the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers. And then verse 37, then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks. There's leading and then there's leading.

This isn't taking him by the hand or telling him where to go, they were carrying the doubly bound man into the barracks. And yet, these chains were all There even in the behalf of the Romans. To protect him from earthly harm. These chains had also come on upon him.

From the Holy Spirit. To protect him from spiritual harm. And that's the worst, isn't it? You know, one sin Is more evil than a lifetime of suffering. For one sin, there will be a hell. An eternal hell Of suffering. And we don't appreciate enough. When God, interferences in our lives, to stop us even providentially even by chains, even by Jewish mobs.

Although that was the more painful one. But at least they dragged him back past the dividing wall. That he himself had written to the Ephesians that Jesus had broken down. Been reconciling us to God by the same blood. Drag him out of the temple and shut the doors. Lest he proceed, not only with the ceremonial observations that he's already made, but the blood sacrifice that was required at the end of the seven days.

All the one. Who wrote to the Corinthians that the new covenant was in the blood of the Lord Jesus. Probably the one. Modern scholarship. Notwithstanding. Use that word. Meaningfully. Who wrote Hebrews? Or at least have the doctrine of Hebrews by the Spirit, who wrote Hebrews. Knowing that the blood of Jesus is shed once for all.

He who is willing to be bound. And to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. He almost had a Peter moment, didn't he? And by the hands of Jews and the chains of the Romans. And when those chains goes on, he remembers He knows. Who it is? Who kept him from observing that dividing wall.

Who kept him from offering that blood sacrifice after Christ's. The Holy Spirit had prevented him. From despising, the name of the Lord Jesus. And people who are united to the Lord, Jesus. Because this has changed go on. He remembers the Holy Spirit, didn't. Just start telling me this when Agabus said it and Caesarea you remember, back in my leadus It had already happened enough times in chapter 20 and verses 22 to 23.

He says and see. Now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem not knowing the things that will happen to me there. Except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city So how many years at least three? You wouldn't really say that if it wasn't at least three, And then again, in In molitis and again, In.

Tire. And again. In caesarea. And he had this view back in chapter 20 verses 22 and 23. That it didn't matter what chains people put on him, because he was already bound. As a servant of christ, he is bound by the holy spirit to belong to the lord jesus christ.

To serve the lord jesus christ. And then the physical chains, get slapped on them. And he would remember, wouldn't you? If it had been prophesied to you in every city, five times, at least, That you would be chained and bound. And you had been, By god's grace viewing yourself as already bound and not fearing the slavery and not fearing death.

And then the chains are on. Remember the spirit did this? Spirit did this because he loves me. Spirit did this, because he loves christ spirit, did this because he loves his church, Not only did he? Bind him to christ's in the first place. And and not only did the the holy spirit.

Tell paul the truth that was going to happen and then it did happen. And so the holy spirit, doesn't just love him, but the holy spirit is faithful, he's truthful. He tells them how it's going to be. Like, when i have my five-year-old daughter. In the er, and They're gonna stab metal tubes with pointed edges in them to insert a rubber tube to Uh, remove some blood from her and put some fluids into her and It's going to be frightful and it's going to be painful and there's going to be burning when it happens.

Daddy tells her the truth. Doesn't say it's not going to hurt. It doesn't say just a little punk. No, he tells her what it's going to be like and then it happens. And she observes it happening and she understands why he's told her that too. And even the the pain when it happens, This is my daddy tells me the truth.

This is the apostle, isn't he? Who, at the end of his first missionary journey, went around to all the churches, encouraging them. By telling them through many tribulations. We must enter the kingdom of god. God tells us the truth. It tells Timothy. Not about the world, but about the church, And the many in the church who will profess a gospel of a christ who doesn't actually produce holy living.

Who makes believers who are walking in contradiction to their profession. Not struggling against their sin. But comfortable with their sin. And then just keep popping the spiritual morphine and take their justification pill over and over and over again. But there's no evidence of a union with christ. It's not even their medicine.

That pill belongs to those who believe in jesus who are unwell by the spirit, who do not walk. According to the flesh. But according to the spirit who are led by the spirit to put the death, the deeds of the body, And paul tells Timothy. There's going to be people who teach that in the churches and they're going to be people who love to hear it in the churches.

But you remember my doctrine and you remember my life and you follow those And it's going to hurt. Because everyone who desires us to live a godly life in christ jesus. Will suffer persecution. He's talking to Timothy about the church and it's ever since. As i'm going to even within the church, When the union with christ has preached, when free grace is preached, and when free grace that changes, the person from and by the virtue of their union with christ to preached One or another or all of those?

Either the godly life for the in christ jesus part. Either one will get you persecuted. But when it happens, Isn't it like when the chains came onto pulse arms? Paul's legs. And you look down and you say, My god tells me the truth. My father has told me the truth by his son, who condemned sin, in his flesh, both by his active, obedience showing, what i should have been, and by his passive obedience receiving, what i should have received.

Because i was not what i should have been. My father tells me the truth by my son by his son, his son tells me the truth, the spirit tells me the truth about myself, And praise god. He's told me the truth about myself. I'm encouraged, aren't i took? No, he's told me the truth about jesus.

He is god, who made all things and became a man. And in his humanity, he obeyed perfectly from the heart, every time, his whole life loving the lord is god with all his heart. So mind and strength, as a man, Loving his neighbor as himself. Loving his sheep. At laying down his life for them and enduring the wrath of god for them.

And i know those things. Because they come to me from the god who tells me the truth. How encouraging? Those chains must have been on his arms and on his legs. The love of the spirit who is faithful to tell us the truth who keeps us from sin? And then, in that moment you can see Or at least hope to help you.

You probably could. Most of you are probably familiar enough with the gospel accounts. Of jesus's trial and then especially before pilot and as the lord is, is going to his cross. Does it sound familiar? A feast in jerusalem. A mob that's in an uproar. Authorities who are trying to get charges to stick?

But some say one thing and some say another You can hardly get anything to stick. And what they're really upset about is that he spoke against the temple and against moses. And then, when the Roman authorities seem to try to be getting him out of it. The crowd gets more frenzied and they say the same language away with him.

Paul remembers. Well remembers, not just the truth about jesus. We know that this has brought him back to another scene in which it was already displayed once. And which It's been some time now. It's taking us a while to get to this point next. Would you remember that scene with the young pharisee?

And there was that. Freshly ordained deacon. Who was also from a Greek culture background. And so his home church was the synagogue of the freedmen. Which would have been Saul's home church. Now, we know him primarily as paul by The name he uses among the gentiles. He remembers the trial.

And he remembers the testimony.

You remembers the fellowship. That Stephen had. With the lord, jesus, who stood to receive him.

The holy spirit so coordinated it that he could see. That he is being conformed. To the sufferings of the lord, jesus. He he suffers with with us, this is something also that was on his mind. It's, it's tempting to just go into chapter, 22 and preach the The whole thing today.

I hope You will study it this week in the devotional and will come prepared to hear it, the lord's sparing us next week. But in, In verse 7 of the next chapter Saul Saul. Why are you persecuting me? His introduction to the lord. Jesus was in the context of finding out that the lord jesus.

Was so joined to his people that he took their persecutions as being done to him, And now, here he is. He was beaten for we don't know how long. Until the Romans got there. And the lord Jesus. We say it reverently. And the union with Christ. Or Lord Jesus and union with all.

Was beaten along with him.

The fellowship that he has with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord who had appeared to him multiple times, we mentioned. Uh, Paul the writing to Timothy the end, we're reading through 2nd Timothy. Now we're almost to these things. You remember how it is first defense, when Alexander the copper smith opposed him and the whole church turned against him You imagine?

This faithful preacher. And, Some prominent wealthy copper estimate. Opposed, and the whole church trends against him and the Lord stands with him. It wasn't the first time. He had been told by Anani. So here this again next week. That the Lord would appear to have been given him to see the just one.

And one of those times had been when he was back in Jerusalem, And Jesus had appeared to him and said, get out of here. That the Lord is with him. And suffers with him, does something that the Lord Jesus taught us in our baptisms, isn't it? It's been very hard.

For the apostles who had had him for the three years and we were thinking in the class and on the side of the the time that they had to serve the Lord Jesus but Also, the time that they had to have Jesus with them, Physically into attend to them.

And now he's about to ascend into heaven. And what does he say? He doesn't just say all authority in heaven. Has been given to me. He says, and on earth, That Jesus's authority is going to continue on earth. And he gives them a sign that the making of disciples is going to happen not by what they do on earth but by what Jesus does from heaven.

Because there wasn't supposed to be water. Baptism in the new covenant, at least not up until that point. Jesus's cousin had differentiated between his own ministry and Jesus's by what would be applied in baptism. John applied water. Jesus would apply the spirit and fire. But Jesus says, now there's going to be too pourings.

I want you to pour water on earth because I will be pouring the spirit from heaven. I will be with you for the making of those disciples. I will be with you for their obedience to all that I command Isn't that how he concludes it? He begins authority in heaven and authority on earth and he ends and surely.

I am with you always. This is the great announcement. Of water baptism. That Jesus is with us. So you don't have to have Jesus appear to you visibly as he did to Paul. You don't have to have. The Holy Spirit. To hold of another believer in every city, in five different cities.

And tell you the future about your life. So that when that future, particularly comes true, you say aha. The Holy Spirit did this and Jesus is with me. No, you have your baptism. And the reason the water was poured on you was because Jesus commanded it. Because even though he's in heaven, he has administering and exercising authority on earth for the making of disciples.

And for their growth in obedience to all that he has commanded by his fellowship with them and in your sufferings, he is with you. The middle of Romans 8. He says. We will be. Uh, we will inherit together with him if, for a little while we suffer together with him, and then we will be glorified together with him.

And the together with is actually a prefix that is attached to every each one of those verbs. So you can see union with Christ union with Christ union with Christ. And where does it start there in the middle of Romans 8? Sorry, for the sake of time, you can turn there or not.

Where does it start with suffering? We have a suffering savior. Who gives to his saints? To experience fellowship, within in our sufferings, Because we have a glorified savior. Who is going to give to his saints? To fellowship with him and his glory. And so, the chains are not just change the protection, their chains of love.

The love of the spirit, the love of the sun, the love of the father. Isn't that what we saw some weeks ago at the end of Matthew 6? He's saying, don't worry Don't worry about what you eat, what you will eat. Don't worry about what you will wear your father, the gentiles, the nation seek after these things.

Your father in heaven knows what he needs or what you need. And then the very last line. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Because we don't just need bread and we don't just need The right amount of bread and the proper clothing. We also need a proper amount of trouble.

Each day has From our father who loves us and knows what we need this corresponds to Hebrews chapter 12, doesn't it as well. The suffering that is necessary to produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness and the holiness without which we won't see the Lord. And the father, the who is not like earthly fathers, who discipline as seems well to them.

But the one who knows everything that is good. So he's got all of your days written out in his book before one of them come to me. And in every one of those days, there's this amount of bread, there's this amount of clothing and there's this amount of suffering and there's this amount of bread and this amount of clothing this amount and this amount of bread and this You're suffering in this particular, day is exactly what father.

Has planned for you. Who praise God for us? It doesn't happen to be being beaten within an inch of our life by a mob of Jews and chained up by Romans. But, Some of you have seen. A precipitous. Rise in hostility to Christ and his word and those who are his But if that day comes the suffering of that day will belong to what is written in that day.

For you. Not this one. Don't worry about tomorrow, sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Don't borrow Aren't you many of you? They're strongly against financial debt. Well, would you please be at least as strongly against trouble decked? And suffering, debt and anxiety. Don't borrow trouble from a future day when your father knew exactly how much to give you today.

Change the protection. Chains of love. Not just the wisdom of God but the fellowship. Especially of Jesus. And chains of opportunity. Chains of opportunity. It's wonderful, what being liberated? From self-interest and anxiety. Can do for you as a servant of Christ, as a servant of your brethren as a servant of your neighbor.

If you're walking in wisdom, you're not saying to be negligent or be poor stewards. Of your time or of your body and certainly not to neglect your own household, which would make you a denier of the faith and worse than an unbeliever. But still. Resting upon the lord. And not living out of anxiety and not living out of self-interest viewing, whatever suffering, whatever trial comes as coming in the protection of god, that comes in the love of god and the fellowship of the lord, jesus christ ministered to you by his spirit.

And suddenly you're a free man. All of these things that have weighed down your heart, and your mind that that we're coming from a lack of knowledge of the father, and the son, and the spirit in the daily troubles of your life, and the big ones that yet, come on a day of your life.

That's how we experience them. You're freed from that, you're free to do. What? To remember the other purpose for your troubles. Because they are not just to bring you into an inheritance with the lord jesus christ. They're also for the purpose that paul had identified to luke and company and those who had come with him from a Kaya and Asia.

And those who were Those in philips house in caesarea and those who had come down, From tire and it all those people there. You remember? Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? For i am willing, not only to be bound but also to die at jerusalem. For the name.

Of the lord jesus chains of opportunity. And boy, does he take advantage of everything? These soldiers. Uh, can't get away from him. Their captive by their duty. The jews can't get away from him. They're actually captive by their sin, aren't they? Well, why didn't they just, you know, So well, the Romans had got them.

We tried. We'll go home. We'll score brownie points with god by persecuting your christian some other day. Oh, they can't do that. Why? Because they're enraged, they're full of anger. They're perhaps full of bitterness. Like many of us often are My friend. Can't get over. Eventual, spirit hostas spirits.

It's aureus spirit, bitter, spirit. But they're captive by it. Politics advantage. He's got literally a captive audience, he takes advantage of his knowledge of the languages. You never know, dear children. You never know. Don't ask your mom. What uses this or what use, will this ever be? While you study.

Learn all that you can. About god's world. As you learn all that you can about god's word. So that you will have in your arsenal ever. So much to take advantage of The opportunity may come. When knowing greek and hebrew allows you to address both sides. We, we didn't.

But we didn't get to them, even being all the more silent. We'll see that next week, but we have the great silence at the end of our passage in verse 40 and then he speaks to them in Hebrew and they're even more silent than a great silence. Whatever that is.

Many of us can't imagine. And, He speaks greek. And then he uses his citizenship and we know he doesn't just use his citizenship because he has rights, he uses his citizenship because He knows that the Uh, the commander is going to consider himself to be in a bit of trouble.

Because he's commanded a citizen to be bound. We'll see that when he starts to hand him off, He ends paul off and he says, careful what you do with him, he's a citizen. Was really takes advantage. Just like you americans. You have rights, don't you? You have. This wonderful bill of rights and the first several amendments.

And you can speak how many christians in the history of christianity. Have been in god's providence, given a citizenship by which they literally, Are protected by their government to speak for jesus. It's very rare. Paul used his Romans citizenship, They took he took advantage of the captive audience. He took advantage of his education.

He took advantage of the providential opportunity that he had by being born a citizen. From a prominent city. What do you take advantage of? We've. Discussed captive audiences before you can still do the cashier's. Air pods, i'm sure have some use in the service of lord. But they're killing evangelism.

All the different places, elevators. The, the gym. All of the different places used to be able to talk to people. They stick their Force field in. And either they can't hear you or they hear what you're trying to talk to them about and they know they have the illusion of a force field.

So you're just pray and read and stuff really loudly because they couldn't hear you start. So obviously, you're not bothering them if you do your devotions super loudly. And if it's all evangelistic, And praying for your congregation. You will find captives. Some of you have captives for 18 or more years.

A captive audience for the gospel of jesus christ. And they actually have to listen to you and you don't have to buy the mayor bots.

You have all of these. Abilities and experiences that you get you an in here or an in there you have the place that you're called to work. With some captives there, maybe. You have family. There's some captives there, maybe. Chains of opportunity. You know, we have in scripture. Several of the greatest evangelistic, sermons are addresses.

Come by believers who are on trial. And that's continued into church history. You know, the Calvin's Institutes was originally a defense of the reformed faith in France addressed to the king. It ended up being much more for the help of the church and we can read and see. But he had an opportunity.

Here was something that was under attack. And in the day, the marketplace of ideas. You write treatises to the king. To inform him of who these people are. And what these people have done, like paul was asked, and we'll see that next week. Chains of opportunity. Because the reason the lord is doing, all things is not just to bring you.

Into your inheritance. And glorify the name of jesus in your life. But he's also gathering all of the others. Whom he's going to save and you don't know who they are. You just know that he does it in surprising places. To the most astonishing of sinners. Paul being example, a So i don't know what is happening to you.

But the holy spirit bringing you here today. To hear this portion of his word, this too is in his providence. Well, you're not apply these things to your own suffering. Maybe they're not yours. Maybe you don't know that you're being protected and loved and given opportunities because you haven't turned from yourself.

And your sin. To belonging to christ. And being bound to him. Being redeemed by him being redeemed for him. So we've heard a wonderful comforting encouraging motivating sermon and it doesn't even belong to you because you don't have jesus.

But then there are some of you who do or at least you profess, you do. But you come and you hear the comfort and the encouragement and you don't go home comforted and you don't go home encouraged and you hear the motivation and you don't go home. You don't go out and take the opportunities.

Will you not seek from the holy spirit to apply it to yourself? So that in every trial you see god protecting me. And every suffering you see, christ, loving me and the spirit having told me the truth and christ's suffering with me and bringing me to glory with him.

Every moment you're looking for the opportunities. To serve your master. You see this is not just a case study. Some of the purposes and opportunities and suffering. This is the word of god. Lovingly recorded for your sake by the spirit. Who has also called a man to preach these things to you.

Because the same spirit who told paul those things, the same christ who suffered with him, Has caused these things to be written and helped the preaching. And he helps hearers So that you may have fellowship with christ. And seek to glorify him. Forever. It's great.

Oh, our god. How he thank you for your love. For your love to peter. All that he learned and oh, you used his suffering and even his sinning. Granted him repentance. We thank you for your love particularly to paul just now. In the passage that you have caused us.

To hear preached and we worship you in the hearing. And we thank you for your love to each of us. Who believe in you we pray. Oh lord for any to whom these things. Do not belong by faith, in christ, by living reality of union, within Give them o lord to be jealous.

Give them to be provoked. To lay hold of you and not let go until you bless them. Grant that your spirit would produce that response on them. And the rest of us. Oh lord, give us not just to be hearers. Make your comfort and your love to penetrate. So that we might live in the sweetness of benefit with the lord jesus.

As those who have been released from anxiety and worried. To serve. And others. I'll do it for us. We ask in his name. Amen.