

Pay Attention to My Voice

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's good to see you guys. Good to worship with you. Please turn your Bibles to Exodus chapter 23. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it is my joy and honor to preach God's word to you.

This morning, we've been going through a series in the book of Exodus. If you don't have a Bible, if you raise your hand, we'll be happy to bring one over to you that you can use while you're here. Exodus chapter 23. We'll be looking at verses 20 to 33.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Father, we love your word.

Because in your word, we hear your voice. Because in your word, we meet Jesus, our Savior.

Because in your word, we are sharpened and equipped, complete for every good work.

And so we pay attention to your word again this morning. Address us as you always do. Glorify your name.

[1 : 38] Exalt your son, Jesus. Bring sinners who are dead in their trespasses to life through the proclamation of your word.

And fill us with an awareness, an intense awareness of your care and your love toward us, as revealed in this passage.

In Jesus' name we ask. Amen. If you are able, please stand for the reading of God's word from Exodus 23, 20 to 33. Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.

Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.

But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

[3 : 10] When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces.

You shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you.

None shall miscarry or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days. I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you, and I will send hornets before you which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you.

I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possessed the land.

And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates. For I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.

[4 : 37] You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Many of you are familiar with the announcement that the flight attendant makes after everyone has boarded a plane.

Say, please direct your attention to the flight attendant in the cabin when we review important safety information. If you're like me, I rarely see anyone paying attention to the flight attendant.

Some people are looking out the window. Some people are sleeping already. Some people are, many, most of them, looking at their phones. That may or may not be in airplane mode.

And some people are listening to music. They're reading books. Very few people are actually looking at the flight attendant. Sometimes I've wondered what it would feel like to be the flight attendant. Telling passengers important safety information and nobody's paying attention.

[5 : 53] You know, why am I even doing this? And there are several reasons why people don't pay attention. One reason is that it's familiar. You've heard it before.

Second reason is that people don't expect any mishap to happen on the flight. So they dismiss the safety instructions as a mere formality.

Something that they have to do for legal reasons. I just spoke with a friend this past week who told me that when he was younger, he was on a plane, and as the plane was flying, one of the engines blew out.

And they could see out the window one of the engines on fire. And the pilot had to make an emergency landing. And panic obviously gripped the entire plane.

And I can assure you that not a few people on that plane in that very moment regretted not paying any attention to the flight attendant's safety instructions.

[6 : 53] The word of God is familiar to many of us. And frankly, there are some people out there who don't think that obedience to God's word makes much of a difference.

So they gloss over it when they read the Bible, or don't read it at all, or hardly pay any attention. But what if we really believe that the obedience to the word, to God's word, is a matter of life and death? Something that determines our eternal destiny. Would we pay attention then? We should pay attention to the voice of the Lord as he leads us attentively into the promised land.

That's the main point of this passage. We're going to first look at the precept, what God commands, and then the promise, what God assures us will happen, and then the pardon. I mentioned to you last week that verse 13 is the crux, the center point of the preceding passage.

It said, The main function of all the laws that we have seen in the book of Exodus is to keep the covenant relationship between God and his people intact, to help the Israelites be faithful, and to keep their allegiance to Yahweh.

[8 : 17] And the main exhortation to pay attention from that preceding passage is repeated again and again in this passage. God promises to send an angel, which in Hebrew simply means messenger, to go before the Israelites, to go before them into the promised land.

And then he says in verse 21, Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.

I will circle back to the idea of pardoning transgression later on. But verse 22 repeats that main command to pay attention. But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

The word obey is a translation of the Hebrew word that means to listen. Just as in English, the word listen can have the nuance of hearing something as well as obeying something, listen to me, for example, when parents say to their kids.

These two verses are emphasizing listening, paying attention to the voice of the Lord, the word of the Lord. And there's a reciprocal relationship between God's guarding of Israel, which we saw in verse 21, and Israel's paying attention to him.

[9 : 35] So it says, in verse 20, it says that the Lord guards them into the promised land. That's the same word that's translated in verse 21 as pay attention.

As God sends his angel to guard them on the way, we are to guard the word of God in our hearts because, as Psalm 119 says, we keep our way pure by guarding it according to his word.

If we want to be guarded on the way to the promised land, then we must guard the way of the Lord and not stray from it. That's because God's word keeps us and guards us.

If you keep to the path, in other words, the path will keep you. But if you stray from the path, you stray into harm's way. This is more than a quid pro quo.

God is not saying, you do me a favor and I will do you a favor. God doesn't need any favors from his people. God is saying, listen to my voice and obey my word because my word alone leads you to salvation.

[10 : 41] This word is what keeps you and saves you. Do you guard the word of God like a precious treasure in your life? Do you pay attention to the word of God like your life depends on it?

God drives this point home still further in verses 23 to 25. When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces.

You shall serve the Lord your God. There are three specific prohibitions here. After God drives out the nations and brings Israel into the possession of the promised land, they shall not, one, bow down to the foreign gods and two, they shall not serve them and three, they shall not do as they do, meaning they are not to follow the customs of the people who worship these idols.

Instead, they must serve Yahweh, the Lord their God. And a severe warning is attached to this at the end of this passage in verses 32 to 33.

You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land lest they make you sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

[12:06] Compromise leads to apostasy. If the idol worshipers are allowed to remain in the land, they will lead God's people into sin and into idolatry.

If they make a covenant with the false gods of the Canaanites, they are breaking their covenant with Yahweh. We know from the later books in the Old Testament that the Israelites, in fact, do not keep this warning, heed this warning.

They do let the Canaanites dwell among them. You know, there might be several reasons why they let that happen. They might have said to themselves, oh, what harm can they do? They're a conquered people.

We've already defeated them. We can assimilate them into our culture and religion. We know one reason for sure is that they thought the Canaanites could be useful to them because they reduced them to forced labor.

They used them as a resource, even though God told them not to keep them in the land. They thought that they were strong enough to resist the pull of idolatry, but they ended up falling into it.

[13:16] The same fate befalls those of us who make light of sin and temptation. Don't overestimate your strength and self-control.

Jesus teaches us to pray, lead us not into temptation for a reason. Don't flirt with temptations. Flee from them. Cast them away.

Don't go near the idols. Christian author Johnny Erickson Tata has said this in one of her writings. She said that sin spreads this way. Though gradually, though no one remembers exactly how it happened, the unthinkable becomes tolerable and then acceptable and then legal and then applaudable.

Sin makes an imperceptible progress into your heart. So flee from it. Cast it away. Worship is a zero-sum game.

[14:22] Jesus says in Matthew 6, 24, no one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. If a wife cheats on her husband, a sensible man is not going to let his wife keep doing that.

He's going to confront her and issue an ultimatum and say you must make a choice. It's either going to be me or it's going to be him. There is a cosmic spiritual battle being waged and to deprive God of the glory and worship that he alone deserves is idolatry.

There's no such thing as neutral ground. That's why God says in the second commandment that he is a jealous God. He says in Isaiah 42, 8, I am the Lord. That is my name and I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

There is no neutral ground when it comes to worship. To be an agnostic is to not serve the Lord. You've made your choice.

And it means that you have thrown your lot with the false gods of this world. But the Lord says, if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

[15:46] If you choose the Lord's side, then he will fight for you. If you choose the idols of the pagan nations, then you will find yourself fighting against the Lord.

Because there are only two sides in this spiritual war. Jesus says in Luke 11, 23, whoever is not with me is against me. Andrew Murray in his book, Absolute Surrender, makes the connection that in the book of Matthew, there are two occasions when Jesus uses the word deny.

He says in Matthew 16, 24, he tells Peter and the other disciples, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. And then later in Matthew 26, 34, he tells Peter, you will deny me three times. Those are the two options presented to all of humanity. Either we deny ourselves to follow Christ or we deny Christ to serve ourselves.

Which will it be? Are you trying to have it both ways? Are you trying to live for God and live for yourself? Are you trying to please God and enjoy the pleasures of this sinful world?

[17:02] Are you trying to serve the Lord while also serving the idols of other religions? God's word teaches us that that is impossible. We must make a choice.

That's the precept. Now let's get the promise. If you look at the promises of verses 25 to 33, the choice is a no-brainer. Look at the wonderful promises of God in verses 25 to 26.

You shall serve the Lord your God and he will bless your bread and your water and I will take sickness away from among you. None shall miscarry or be barren in your land.

I will fulfill the number of your days. These are beautiful verses because they reveal God's heart toward us. Some of you have been homeless and have known hunger in your life.

Some of you know what it's like to be sick and hurting, whether that's with cancer or a stroke or COVID or depression or arthritis or a pinched nerve.

[18:14] some of you know the grief of miscarriage to experience the joy of expecting a child only to meet crushing disappointment.

Some of you know the pain of barrenness. to so wish to have a child to hold in your own arms and to love and yet year after year goes by without even a sign of pregnancy.

some of you have lost loved ones to untimely deaths. Those who did not fulfill the number of their days.

All of these pains are marks of a sinful and fallen world. They reflect our alienation from God our creator but they do not reflect God's heart for you.

God promised the Israelites that should they faithfully keep the covenant that they have made with him they should have his unfailing provision and protection over them and that was his heart.

[19:41] He wanted to lavish his people with these blessings. He wanted to protect his people. He wanted to provide for his people. That's why he says again and again pay attention to my word.

listen to my word obey my word so that I can lavish these blessings on you. That's the heart of the Lord. So if you are in the midst of suffering and affliction you may go to God with your honest questions and you can groan before him and you can lay your complaints before him but as you do that remember his heart toward you.

Lamentations 32-33 teaches us that though God does cause grief at times he will again have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

The same verses say also that when God afflicts us and grieves us he does not do so quote from his heart.

Though we may not always understand the sovereign purposes of God behind our suffering we can always be assured of his heart toward his people. And if God is protecting his people it necessarily means that he fights against their enemies.

[21:06] So he says in verses 27-28 I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you and I will send hornets before you which shall drive out the Hivites the Canaanites and the Hittites from before you.

The word drive out is a key word here that occurs four times in verses 28-31 and the goal is complete expulsion of the idol worshippers from the land of Canaan lest they be a snare to the Israelites and lead them astray to sin.

God's cleansing the land of its sin and idolatry. That's why he says earlier in verse 23 he will blot them out efface them from Canaan land. But God is not going to drive out the nations in one fell swoop.

It says in verses 29-30 I will not drive them out from before you in one year lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you.

Little by little I will drive them out from before you until you have increased and possessed the land.

It's a very interesting statement. Even the pace at which God drives out the nations is very deliberate.

[22 : 19] he demonstrates his wisdom and care for his people. According to verse 31 the promised land that God is giving them will have as its border from the Red Sea to the north and the Sea of the Philistines which is the Mediterranean Sea to the north.

And then it's going to stretch all the way to the Euphrates River in the east and from the Sinai Peninsula the Sinai wilderness in the west. That's a sprawling territory that encompasses part or all of modern day Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

So if all the idolatry nations occupying these lands are driven out all at once, vast swaths of the land will remain unoccupied for generations because Israel is not numerous enough to fill the land.

During that time the land will become desolate and the wild beasts will multiply making it perhaps uninhabitable. So even our perceived slowness on God's part to fulfill his promise is an expression of God's patience and God's care.

Does God seem slow in answering your prayers? Does God seem slow in fulfilling the promises he's made to you? Is your business not growing as quickly as you'd like it to?

[23 : 55] Is your career not taking off as quickly as you had envisioned? Are you not getting married or having children as quickly as you had hoped? Did you think that you'd be in full-time vocational ministry by this stage of your life?

God knows our God's reasons for these seeming delays in our lives but these verses are a helpful reminder to trust in God's wisdom.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness but is patient toward you. God knows exactly what we can handle.

God knows our weaknesses and limitations. It's important to notice here who the primary agent of the driving out of the nations is.

Look at verses 29 to 30 again. Twice it says, I will drive them out. Of the four instances of the verb drive out, only one of them, verse 31, has as its subject the word you, the Israelites.

[25 : 06] So that does tell us that Israelites have a role to play. They do have a responsibility. They do have to go to war and be a part of the driving out of the nations. But three out of the four times, the subject of the verb is the Lord himself or the thing that the Lord is sending.

And that's where the theological weight of this passage is. It's the Lord who will ultimately drive out these pagan nations out of the promised land. In particular, there are two things that the Lord will send in order to drive out these nations.

First, verse 27 says, I will send my terror before you. And verse 28 says, I will send hornets before you. The terror that the Lord sends likely refers to the dread and panic that overtake the enemies of God as they hear Israel approaching and learn of how the Lord has previously delivered them and fought on their behalf in the past.

the result of this terror that God sends ahead of the Israelites is that it throws them into confusion, it says, and all the people against whom they shall come. And the Lord, it says, will make all their enemies turn their backs to them.

So that expression to turn their backs to them is more literally, I will give all your enemies to you by the neck. That's the literal expression. Since the word neck is often associated in Hebrew with the back of the head, to turn the neck is to turn your head away from someone.

[26 : 35] So the translators assume that it means them turning their backs and running away is what they assumed. But I think it's more likely that the expression is closer to the English idiom, having someone by the throat.

Because the verb used here is not turn, it doesn't say turn your neck, it says I will give them to you by the neck. So it's not a picture of flight, but it's a picture of subjugation.

And surrender. Similar to how Jacob blesses his son Judah in Genesis 49, 8, saying your hands shall be on the neck of your enemies.

God is going to hand over their enemies to the Israelites. It's the second expression in verse 28 that paints a picture of flight, of the enemies fleeing. It says, and I will send hornets before you which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites from before you.

That's when they flee. If you look at the footnote in your ESV Bibles after the word hornets, it tells you that it can also be translated the hornet in the singular.

[27 : 41] In Hebrew, the word is singular. But because the translators couldn't make sense of a single hornet driving out the nations, they assumed it must be hornets, must be collective.

So that's how they translated it. However, I don't think it's referring to literal hornets for a couple reasons. One, because the word hornet is singular here and not plural. And the two other times this promise is repeated in Deuteronomy 7.20 and Joshua 24.12, in both of those places the word hornet is also singular. Two, later, when the Israelites actually drive out the Hivites and the Canaanites and the Hittites, there is no mention of God ever sending hornets. And then three, verses 27 and 28 structurally parallel each other. I will send my terror before you, and then I will send the hornet before you. Since the expression sending my terror employs figurative language, you can't literally send terror like a messenger. I think it's likely that the parallel phrase, send the hornet, is also figurative. [28 : 50] Just as when a person is chased by a hornet, the person flees, the hornet of the Lord will drive out the idolatrous nation from Canaan.

But that still begs the question, what exactly is the hornet who terrorizes the enemies of God? There's only one other word in this passage that is also the object of the verb send, and that's in verse 20.

behold, I send an angel before you. Which parallels, I will send my terror before you. Which parallels, I will send the hornet before you. It's the angel of the Lord, the messenger of the Lord, who goes before the Israelites to strike fear into the hearts of all of God's enemies. It's the angel of the Lord himself who goes before them to make them flee and to drive them out before the Israelites. Later on, in Joshua 24, 12, as the Israelites reflect on how God has fulfilled this promise, the Lord says this, and I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites.

[30 : 11] It was not by your sword or by your bow. Again, the emphasis here is that as long as Israel remains loyally aligned to the Lord, this is the Lord's battle, and he will fight on their behalf and win.

Yes, the Israelites will use their swords and bows, but God makes it unmistakably clear the battle was not won by your bow and your sword. It was my hornet.

It was my terror. It was my messenger. The decisive agent here is the angel of the Lord, not the Israelites. That brings us to my final point, the pardon and the mysterious identity of this angel of the Lord.

As I've said before, when we come across the word angel in the Bible, we should not immediately think of images of Cupid. Valentine's Day is coming up.

You know that picture of Cupid, the little baby angel with the wings and an arrow. You should not think of that or think of this winged cherub. That's not what an angel is like. The word angel simply means messenger.

[31 : 20] It could refer to all kinds of messengers. It could refer to human messenger. It could refer to angelic messengers. But often it is a spiritual being sent by God. But in this passage, we see evidence that this angel of the Lord is no mere angel.

For example, in verse 22, the voice of the angel of the Lord and what the Lord himself says are conflated. He says, if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say.

What the angel of the Lord says is what the Lord says. And in verse 21, warns Israelites about rebelling against the angel of the Lord this way. for he will not pardon your transgression for my name is in him.

It does not say that the messenger speaks in the name of God. It says that Yahweh's name is in him. For that reason, this angel of the Lord has the authority and the power to pardon transgression.

And we know from the gospels, Mark 2, 7 and Luke 5, 21, that no one can forgive sins. But God alone. So we've seen this blurring of the lines between Yahweh and the angel of Yahweh before.

[32 : 42] If you remember from Exodus chapter 3, verse 2, it said that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire and out of a mist of a bush. That's the angel of the Lord. But in that very same passage, just a couple lines down, it says that the Lord saw and God called to Moses out of the bush.

And he says, do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I am, says the angel of Yahweh. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

The angel of the Lord is here very closely identified with Yahweh himself. Similarly, later in Joshua 5, 13 to 15, as Israelites are readying themselves for the conquest of the land of Canaan, we actually see this angel of the Lord that God has sent.

And this is what it says. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us or for our adversaries?

And he said, no, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, what does my Lord say to his servant? [34 : 00] And get this. And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, take off your sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy.

And Joshua did so. There's a fascinating parallel between the burning bush and this commander of the Lord's army. In both places, the angel of the Lord tells the man to take off the sandals because it's holy ground and they do it.

In Joshua passage, the Joshua actually worships the angel. In other places in the Bible, whenever men try to worship an angel, the angel stops them.

Like in Revelation 22, 8, 9, he says to John, you must not worship me because I'm a fellow servant with you and your brother, the prophets. Worship God. But why does this angel of the Lord not say that?

Because he's not just an angel. This angel is a manifestation of Yahweh himself.

[35 : 11] Both the Old and New Testaments are clear that man cannot see Yahweh and live. And yet, Yahweh reveals himself and appears as the angel of the Lord so people can see him.

The angel of the Lord is in this sense a visible manifestation of the invisible God. Distinct from Yahweh himself and yet one and the same.

This is why many pastors and theologians make the connection that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is in fact the pre- incarnate form of Jesus. Jesus appeared before he took on human flesh.

Jesus appearing with the sword in his hand to go before his people to drive out the enemies. It's an appearance of God.

Appearance of the Son of God. It's Jesus, the eternal word of God, who goes before the Israelites to fight their battles ahead of them and drive out the nations before them.

[36 : 17] Imagine being in their shoes. We know from Deuteronomy 7, 7 that when God first chose the Israelites, they were quote, the fewest of all peoples. They were not a mighty throng. And they were nomads and wanderers in the wilderness for 40 years.

What kind of weapons do they have? Their enemies have chariots of iron, it says in Judges 119.

When Sinatra, king of Assyria, invades Judah, he mocks God's people this way.

In Isaiah 36, 8, I will give you 2,000 horses if you are able on your part to set riders on them. You can't even put trained riders on the horses I give you for free.

What power do you have to oppose me? In their own strength, the Israelites are a feeble army.

Who are they to stand against all the nations of Canaan?

The key to their victory is not their own might, but the Lord Jesus who fights for them.

[37 : 25] And the same is true for us believers in the new covenant. Despite all the promises and warnings of this passage, the Israelites failed to pay attention to the voice of the Lord.

In Judges 1, we are told over and over again that the Israelites did not drive out the Canaanites. Israelites did not drive out the Canaanites. Israelites did not drive out the Canaanites. Again and again and again.

And this is the verdict of the angel of the Lord in Judges 2, 1 to 3. I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said I will never break my covenant with you and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land and you shall break down their altars.

But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? So now I say I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides and their gods shall be a snare to you.

This is in fact what happens. God does fulfill his promise. He does bring them into the promised land. However, because they let the Canaanites dwell with them instead of driving them out, they become a thorn in their side.

[38 : 39] They ensnare them with their idolatry and eventually their apostasy leads to their exile and dispossession of the land from the land. Sin was the root.

Sin had separated Israel from God. Sin had kept them from the protections and provisions of the covenant. And it's for that reason that God sends Jesus once more to go before his people, this time in human flesh to defeat sin and death once and for all and bring us forever into a covenant relationship with God.

Sin and Satan are too powerful of an enemy for us to fight in our own strength. Can you imagine being faced with the fortress of the enemy, the gates of Hades?

He has all the dirt on you. He knows everything you have done, all the ways in which you have sinned, all the ways in which you have broken the covenant with God who has given you only good things.

And he bars your way and says, no, you may not enter into God's promised land.

[40 : 09] But we have a champion. We have the Lord, the angel of Yahweh. Jesus Christ with the sword in his hand goes before us and fights that battle for us.

And he defeats sin and death once and for all on the cross. He crushes the serpent's head underneath his feet so that he can give us the right to be children of God so that he can lead us in to the promised land.

That's why in Mark 2, 5, Jesus pronounces to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

It said here, the angel of the Lord will not pardon your transgression because my name is in him. What's the difference? The Lord who is just and holy cannot pardon transgression without payment. But Jesus pardons our transgressions because he has made satisfaction. Because he has made atonement. Because he has paid for it on the cross.

[41 : 34] And he has won that battle decisively. And that's the promised land that we have to look forward to. The author of Hebrews in chapter 11 makes the connection that the promised land that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob look forward to is not the literal promised land, the physical land of Israel in the Middle East.

But rather it's a city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God. The promised land of the Old Testament was merely a type, a foreshadowing of the ultimate promised land, our heavenly inheritance, the kingdom that we inherit as God's people.

And we are right now pilgrims journeying toward that promised land. Right now we feel like aliens. Right now we feel away from home. But one day we will be home.

And it says when that day comes, Revelation 21, for he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. All these wonderful promises of God in his past fulfilled eternally.

[43 : 00] That's what we are headed to. So brothers and sisters, let's lay aside every weight and sin, which so clings so closely and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Our heavenly father waits us in our home. So let's pay attention to his voice and follow his guidance all the way.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Father, we desire nothing more than to be home with you, Lord.

Lord. To know your eternal love perfectly. To rest in your arms.

To hear you say, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master. But Lord, we know that the race is not over.

[44 : 27] We need to press on. And to that end, we must pay attention to your voice. And follow your voice. So Lord, incline our ears and our hearts toward your word.

Lord, make us a people, a church that cherishes and guards your word in our hearts. Thank you, Father, for sending Jesus, our champion, our representative, our warrior, our king, who fights for us. We love you. We worship you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.