

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
“OUR MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION”
THOMAS HANSZ
March 7, 2014

One quick note on what Sig was saying. When was that? The Billy Graham Association was here in '93, I think it was? And when he left, Billy Graham said, “Pittsburgh has got to be the worst place for evangelism. This place is dead!” And I know that I came from a history of evangelizing businessmen, and tried to get things going, and I talked to Bruce, and Bruce said, “This is a tough town to evangelize. This is really not where it’s at.” And I talked to John Guest, and nothing was going on. And all of a sudden, last year, this one man, on his own, (and he had a good team around him), put on “For Men Only” down at the (unclear name), and it was a tremendous success, and they’re doing it again this year. Ed Glover at Urban Impact was talking the last three years about doing something for men. Last year, he put on “Man Up, Pittsburgh. Anybody can be a father, but it takes a man to be a dad.” Well, they’re doing it again this year. And then in August the Billy Graham Association is coming back, and Franklin Graham is going to deliver an outreach sermon down at the Consol Energy Center.

The amazing thing is, all these things are being coordinated. There are a couple of other groups that are working to (interact) and to group things together. So, wait a minute! How does this happen? Well, praise God, it’s happening, and maybe this history we’ve had of not being good with evangelism is that there are more people out there being ambassadors for Christ, and more hearts that are opening up to Him. So let’s keep that in our prayers, and see how Pittsburgh changes, and what the Lord can do to this community. So I just wanted to share that, and let’s get started.

Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank You that You are present in each one of us, and that we are Your tabernacle. We thank You that the Holy Spirit is alive, and is guiding us, and helping us to grow to be more like Christ each and every day. We thank You for the men who have undergone trials, who are facing trials, and we have these problems in front of us, and Lord, we thank You that we can support them, and ask You to give them Your grace, as they go through their illnesses, their problems. We just thank You that You are always with us, that You’ll never leave us or forsake us, and that You want us to grow to become more like Christ each and every day. So at this time together, we ask You to bless us. Richly increase our knowledge of You, and help us to be more like Christ, not for what we do, but for what He has done for us. And it’s through Him, and in His name we pray. Amen.

You know, I always think that we have all these requests, and if you look at our website, (Sig, you do a great job on that; thank you). What I miss a lot is, where are the praises? We have a lot of requests. Someone is getting an operation. Someone is sick. Someone has lost someone. But how about what has God done for us? We need to share

that, too, especially if you look at what was requested, and how God has met that request, and how God works in us. So let's make sure we always share our blessings, because there is no better way to praise God than to share what He has done. And we know that He is always active in each one of our lives, and we thank Him for that.

So let's turn to 2 Corinthians this morning, chapter 5. So we're going to start with verses 18-20

“So all this is from God.” Remember, we ended with “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone; the new has come. Now all this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you, on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

So that's what I want to talk about this morning. If God is reconciling ourselves to Him, how do we reconcile ourselves to Him? (Those two parts of it.) And yet we think, well, what do we have to do with it?

So first, I want to start out with this. There's a list on your outlines. I want to talk a little about our position before God, and what God has done for us.

Before we get to that, let me back up and read Romans 3:21-26. This talks more about our position in Christ. And as Paul says in Romans 3:21: “But now, apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all those who believe. For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood, through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed, for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

That's a lot! That's something Bruce could take up for a year, just on those verses; it's so packed. But there are five things that are important to look at in our position before God, and the first one would be justification. Most of us as young Christians recognize this, that we are justified before God. We have received justification, which is our standing before God, as the accused—some would say, No, we're not accused; we're guilty!—we are tried, and we are found guilty. But God says, “Forget it; you're righteous.” So He justifies us.

Number two. Then He redeems us. Redemption is the second aspect of our position before God, because we've been purchased with a price. It's like we were slaves, and we've been bought, and then set free. We were owned; we are not of ourselves, and so, we were ransomed, you might say, by God.

The third thing is forgiveness. And forgiveness is like a debtor who has had all of his debts paid. Somebody owes you money. "Never mind! It's on me. Forget it!" What a relief! Well, our debt is that, in our sins, we owe everything we have to God. We have no standing, and He says, "No, no; I know all the bad stuff you've done. I forgive you.

So we have justification, redemption, forgiveness, and then he adds adoption! With all this, He comes back and says, "You were not in My family. I'm going to adopt you as a son. I'm going to bring you into My family. I'm going to bring you close, because you were a stranger. No one liked you. I love you. I've redeemed you. I've bought you. And you are now My son.

And then for our talk this morning, the fifth thing is that we talk about reconciliation, two different parties that are brought together, two opposite ends of the spectrum that are now the same. It's like we were an enemy of God, and now we've been made a friend.

How does that happen? Why does He redeem us? Why does He take us from being an enemy? And if you read in Romans, there's a lot where we are at war with God. And you read closer, and you find out that He's at war with us, too! That's not a pretty situation.

But He has reconciled us to Himself, and that's what we want to take a look at today, this process of reconciliation, to bring two sides to agreement. And if you're like me, trying to reconcile your bank account, you've got your check book, and you've got your statement, and they don't agree. How do you bring them together? Sometimes, that's hard work. Think about what God has done to reconcile us to Himself, through the blood of Christ. And really, that's where it is, what Christ has done for us

So there are two aspects of reconciliation. One is the Godward side, and the other is the human side, because if we think back in our verse, He says, "We implore you, on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." What do I have to do? You see what Christ has done to reconcile the world to Him, and so you realize that it really is all by God.

Take a look at Ephesians 2:14-16, where Paul writes, "For He Himself" (Jesus) "is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself, He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God, through the cross, having put to death the enmity.

We were at war with God spiritually; we were at war with God. And through the cross, Christ paid that price, which then brings us together, so that we are one with God, but we're still in this body. That's part of the problem. Even Paul had a problem with that. "That which I would do I do not, that which I would not, I do. Oh, there is no help in me. But who is going to come to my rescue? It's Jesus.

It's important to realize that we have been redeemed and reconciled, brought back to God, as close as we can be. We don't have to think, "Well, I'm in God's house there and I'm down here." One of the things I really get a kick out of .. I forgot to bring it in, but remember that video that Bruce played for us a few weeks ago with Martyn Lloyd-Jones? What a phenomenal teacher he was! If anyone is interested in hearing more about him, by the way, you can go on his website. He has a foundation

<http://www.mljtrust.org>

Everything he has done is on video, or on tape. Someone gave me a book about a week before Bruce showed us that video, and one of the things he's talking about is in Psalm 62, where we're in the presence of God. That's something we forget about. David is saying, "I have set the LORD before me." And I know that whatever I'm doing, God is there with me. Now he doesn't use the same words that we would use today, but we forget that we are always in the presence of God. It's not that He's up there, like Bett Middler would sing, "God is watching." No! He's participating; He's leading. He's changing us. He's with us, and I don't think we always keep that in mind, that as I'm walking through my day's activities, He's there with me each and every minute. He doesn't leave me. Yes?

Participant: "I just want to say, not only is He with us, He's in us."

Tom: Well, yes. That's a good point, because a lot of times we use little phrases that sound very Christian, very good, like "Well, let's go before the Lord in prayer." Well, in one sense yes, but in another sense, he's here. This (the individual Christian) is His tabernacle. That's not the "Lord's house" over there, (referring to the church building.) A lot of people think that's a proper way to refer to a church. Here's the Lord's house. He tabernacles in each one of us. And we don't always keep that in the forefront of our minds. And I think that one of the problems we have in society today is that we have these nice phrases that sound good, but unconsciously they take our focus away from Him! Think about it. God lives in you. He is with you all the time. You are doing things in His presence. It makes me want to stop and think, "What am I doing? Am I obeying Him, not in commandments, but in spirit and truth?" And that's where I think He wants us to go. And that's where the Spirit is leading us, if we just step back and let Him lead. Good point! He's in us, all the time.

In 1 John 2, he starts off that chapter in verse 1. “If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” And again, in reconciliation, God has done it all, and Christ is that propitiation. He is the appeasement, you might say, to the wrath of God. Can you imagine? We know that God is a God of wrath, among other things, the 27 other attributes He has. He is a God of wrath, and yet His Son says, “Father, if You want me to do that, I’ll do it. I’ll give My life, and I’ll give My relationship to You, which has been from eternity, I’ll give it to You, and I’ll become sin for these guys. It blows your mind!

But wait a minute! Jesus never sinned. And a lot of times, that’s what we think of Him. Jesus led the perfect life because He never committed a sin, and that’s true. But think again on what the Bible says. Jesus Christ “knew no sin.” We know sin because we’re born in it! I don’t care how good we act day to day. Our bodies are a body of sin. We can’t get over that. But, because our seed comes from Adam, and that sin gets transferred down, the seed of Christ was from His Father, through a virgin, but nevertheless the male transfer. He knew no sin; He had no connection with sin. Yet He was in a human body, and He knew all the frustrations and trials that we go through. So He could relate to us, and He could be like us, yet without sin, not only not committing it, but not having any part of it. And then He says, “I’ll go to that cross. I’ll let them do whatever they can do to me, and kill me, but also I’ll take on their sin, and You’ll forsake me.” Separation from God; I can’t imagine that. When you’ve been with God all of eternity, then to be separated. Wow! He did that to reconcile us to the Father. It blows our minds! We don’t deserve it. But we have it. Praise God

So God has done it all for us, yet on the human side, if you go back to our verse in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 20, it says, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us. We beg you, on behalf of Christ, “be reconciled to God.”

Well, how can I be reconciled? What can I do to be reconciled with God? There’s only one thing that you can do, the verse being in the passive tense: “be reconciled.” So, if God has done it all, your job is to say, “Thank you,” to accept it, and not avoid it. And that’s the condition that mankind is in, because, remember, we’re talking about redemption, and reconciliation means we were enemies, and now if God has reconciled us to Himself, we’re no longer enemies. But as enemies, that world out there is full of guys like we used to be, men and women who are enemies of Christ, and they don’t know it. But try to preach Christ to them, and you find out pretty soon how much enmity there is. They don’t want to do it.

I get a kick out of the newscasts. Every so often, you see some protest about, currently, the scrap, beams and columns at the World Trade Center in the shape of a cross, and some group says, “You’ve got to take it out; you can’t have that!”, because they hate

the cross. They hate Christ. They're enemies of Christ. They don't want a reminder that they're without God. They'll do everything they can to defeat the Undefeatable, but they're at it, you know? I get amazed at that.

So, we are to accept what God has done for us, and having done that, we are becoming His ambassadors. Let's look at Colossians 1:19. In Colossians 1:19, Paul writes, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the Fullness to dwell in Him," (in Christ), "and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated, and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless, and beyond reproach." That's everything God has done.

Reading on: "If indeed you continue in the faith, firmly established and steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven." And that's our part, you know? To act on the faith God has given to us, and then to grow in that faith. Not that faith gets bigger, but it grows more mature. It gets deeper.

Starting at verses 15-20, that whole chapter of Colossians talks about the supremacy of Christ, and really gives you a good definition of Christ, and what He has done for us. It's almost like a separate creed by itself. "For Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers, or authorities. All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth, or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."

You know, you can see that forms a good part of the creeds that we have, especially the Nicene Creed. But that's a great group of verses to meditate on Christ, and how God has given His Son, and what He has done for us, and where He is in all this, that He's not just the "Jesus, meek and mild." You know, the thing we see in the Christian bookstores, and the little calendars and stuff like that. He's just a phenomenal, phenomenal Guy!

He has made it possible for our reconciliation. As we go back to verse 18 (of 2 Corinthians 5), "by all things of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." What does that mean to you? You're a minister of reconciliation

When I was taught by Evangelism Explosion, I'm supposed to be a guy going out there saving souls. That's not what the Bible says. Did you ever think about that, that you are a minister of reconciliation

Let me give you an example. I was on vacation last week, and I missed being here. And it's amazing; I do miss this gathering of brothers. This is really a great assembly of similar spirits. So I'm out in California, talking to some friends I hadn't seen in years, rejoicing in the fact that they've become Christians. And so we're talking about what it's like, and I said, "Well, there are good parts and bad parts." What's the bad part about being a Christian? Well, we've got these neighbors up the street who don't leave us alone. They're so glad that we've come to know Christ; now here's what we've got to do. They want us to conform to them. They want us to go to their church, they want us to do their things, they want us to abstain from the things they abstain from. They're always on our case! Wow! One of the things we talked about, whether or not we go to church that Sunday. They don't want to go to church, if that's what it means, being like them. They don't want to be like that' these are nice people. Why should they change

And I thought, "Hmm! Tony, just a second!" I went over to my wallet, came back, and said, "Listen! I've got something for you!" You know, this thing that says, "Your ministry is who you are, where you are. It's not where you belong to, but it's who Christ makes you, and how He uses you wherever you go. "Wow!" they said. "That's it!"

Now these are young Christians, but they can see what God's ministry is for us. They're handy little things; we have more if you ever want them. Then I went through and explained some of these things about "think, act, feel." And it's important to know, to base your knowledge on the Bible, on Scripture, and to stand on the word of God. Yes?

Participant: "Back to the text, verse 19 of 2 Corinthians (5.) 5:19 says, ""He's entrusted us."" So notice again that it's Him; it's God that is active. It's (unclear) with this metaphor of reconciliation. Here's Jesus building the church, which cannot fail. We (unclear) keep our thinking straight. He has entrusted me, as a believer; He cannot fail. So I think a lot of times, it's our thinking that is wrong."

Tom: That is wrong, because what is our thinking based on? What we feel, not what we know. And how deep is our knowledge? How much time do we spend gaining the word of God into our minds and into our hearts? I think again, going back to what we were talking about earlier, about the house of God, and so forth, these cute little phrases that we learn as Christians.

I did a design for a church one time, and going into their existing church, I went up to the pulpit and looked, and, right in back of the pulpit, there's a big piece of glass on the floor, and underneath the glass is this huge King James Bible that's opened up to John

3:16. I said, “Pastor, why do you put a Bible on the floor?” He says, “Because when I preach, I stand on the word of God!” (Laughter.)

Excuse me! Great phrases, but they get us off course. And it’s important (to) follow Christ and stay on course. He is our course. He is our true north. And we need to follow Him, and we need to base what we know on fact, not on feeling. Sometimes, I don’t feel so good. Sometimes, I’m not very happy. I don’t react to people the way I should. But praise God, He comes back, and He controls me. He is in charge, and I just have to say, “Thank you.” Yes

Participant: “Paul says He’s given us the message of reconciliation.”

Tom. “Yes.”

Participant: “God does the reconciling, but we tell the story. (unclear)”

Tom: That’s right. And what’s the capacity we have in giving that message? We are ambassadors! We don’t live here anymore! Our bodies are here, and they’ll probably stay here till Christ comes back. He redeems them—he’s already done that!—but He’ll come back and raise us from the dead, give us glorified bodies. But we are in heaven! That’s our home! And so He now says, “You’re an ambassador. You’re a foreigner. You don’t belong here, but you’re here on My behalf, to give the message that I’ve prepared, the message of reconciliation.

Participant: “An ambassador is someone who lives in a foreign land, but like you said, he gives that message, but he’s also a representative.

Tom: “Yes!”

Participant: He lives in that foreign land specifically as a foreign representative. We’re here to represent the kingdom of God, and so we are supposed to live in a manner worthy of our calling.

Tom: “That’s right!”

Participant: “We’re supposed to pursue holiness in our lives, and take that seriously, instead of just some casual thing. And in doing so, we will be living that life worthy of our calling, and it will represent the kingdom, and people will see that, and either they will not like it, and not want our message, or they will be drawn into it, and drawn towards us, and want to know more.”

Tom: We are the epistles, written by Christ, to the world. That’s what they see in us. And it’s not the dos and don’ts we follow. Again, some people think, “Well, I have to

obey God. Therefore, I will never drive over 55 miles an hour.” I think that someone who says that misses the point. No . . .

Participant: “In Ohio, it’s up to 70.” (Laughter.)

Tom: Well, if you go to Texas, you can’t drive under 80 miles an hour. (Laughter.) The guy that drives 80 in the right-hand lane is a slow driver, you know? But it’s a matter of taking into account the other person? I remember a few years ago Bruce was talking to us about that, and he mentioned that, if you see something on the floor, a piece of scrap paper, it’s your job to pick it up, because that benefits the other people. “Yeah, but I’m not a slave!” Oh? I’m not a servant? I’m a servant of Christ!

Participant: “Amen!”

Tom: So you humble yourself! And you (may) think, “Well, that’s a really small detail, don’t you think?” But it’s attitude; it’s where your heart is. And that’s what Christ sees, because it’s our ministry, who we are, where we are, how God has changed us, has made us to conform, and is making us to conform to the image of Christ, and that’s what people need to see.

Participant: “Immediately after the Bible study, I’m going to reconcile with my four wives.

Tom: “Well, good luck to you. There’s so much enmity we have, even in families, you know? Yes?”

Participant: “I think there are several ways to be at enmity. One is to yell at each other.”

Tom: (in a mock angry voice): “What the heck do you mean by that, huh?” (Laughter)

Participant: “The other is not to speak to each other.”

Tom: “Yeah!”

Participant: “So we sometimes think, “Well, I’m not yelling at God.” On the other hand, not to pay attention to God is equally hostile.”

Tom: How often have we done that? How many of us say, “Well, I’m just going to turn my back on God. I’m not going to say anything bad; I’m not going to say any names. I’m just going to ignore Him.” Yeah! We need to get into the Word, and find out what He has done, and is doing, and think, “Wow! All I can do is say, “Thank you.”

He is such a great Father to us. He has brought us into His family. He's taken us from the enemy, brought us into His household, and said, "I love you, and I'm going to treat you like a brother of Christ. "You're co-heirs with Jesus. What I'm going to give to Jesus I'm going to give to you, for eternity!" Well, the mind just stops at that point; it can't handle it! He is so good, so loving, that we can't imagine it!

So we are ambassadors for Christ, with the message of reconciliation, not so much of "Have you been saved? Do you want to feel good? Is life not going good for you? Go to Jesus; he'll turn it all around." No! It's not a matter of feeling good; it's a matter of, do you know where you are? And do you know the possibilities that God has laid out for you to bring you to Him? The message of reconciliation! That's our job as ambassadors. We don't think of things ourselves; we think what our Father has told us to do, as we are ambassadors. And we do what He wants us to do, not what we want to do, but it's not us. "For to me, to live is Christ, and then to die is gain." Of course, we'll go to heaven, but while we're here, it's being Christlike, and letting people see that.

So, in Ephesians, Paul wants us to be on the alert. Ephesians 6:18: "Be on the alert, with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. And pray on my behalf, that utterances may be given to me, in the opening of my mouth, to make known, with the boldness of the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." And I think Paul is kind of using this expression "he's an ambassador in chains" in several ways, because he's physically in chains, you know? He's a prisoner in Rome, and yet he's an ambassador for Christ, and being in chains, he's bound to Christ. You know, "the love of Christ controls me." Bruce was talking about last week, it constrains me, directs me. I'm within the control of Christ, to, again, be His ambassador. What a privilege! What a privilege

And it's even a little reflection—I saw this in Isaiah. The hint of this is what Isaiah is talking about in chapter 50, verse 4. "The LORD has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens me morning by morning. He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple." Yeah, that kind of helps me understand my role as an ambassador. Morning by morning, I listen to Him. I start my day off with Him. Realize that, again, it's not me, but it's Him using me. So what gets accomplished through me is by Him, and that I am just a disciple, and I'm giving the word to people out there, hopefully that will be disciples. I don't know who they are. But He wants us to give the Word to those that He has committed to Himself, who will hear and respond. And that's how He decides to use us. Yeah, that's the way it works

So, from the standpoint of the gospel, they are enemies. This is what Paul is talking about in Romans. People out there, even members of the church, that are not really on board with Christ. "But they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God

are irrevocable.” They are members of God’s household, who are yet to be saved. And that’s who we need to reach. They are members of God’s household

How? God will lead us. God will take us there. We just need to have the message for them, because that’s our job, ambassadors for Christ.

So the results of reconciliation, then, are summed up, I think, in what David says in Psalm 32. “How blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.” I don’t think David really understands how all that happened. But we can see that through Christ, and His shed blood, Christ has made it happen. We’re blessed! We have the blessings of God, and our transgressions are all past. Every mistake you’ve made, every sin you’ve committed, everything that you have not done correctly (is) wiped out. On this side (presumably Satan), He’s brought you to His (God’s) side

So God initiates the reconciliation; we do not, for originally we’re dead. We’re dead to Christ until He gives us new life, gives us faith, and in that process is reconciling us to Him. For in Romans 5, He says, “For while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exalt in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now have received the reconciliation.”

So, Jesus is going to return. And He’s going to return for those that have been reconciled, that He has redeemed. He’s not coming back for the sinners. He’s coming back for the redeemed, and taking the redeemed into eternity with Him. Can’t wait! It’s going to be a great time

So God has done everything. We can only respond to His love, and it is the fruit of God’s reconciliation that is imputed to us, (who) are being reconciled through Christ’s blood. I’m speechless. Yes/

Participant: “Everything you said is beautiful. I relate myself to this pen. This pen is dead, inanimate, like I was. Now, with Christ, I allowed Him to come in through that regeneration. If that pen were regenerated to life, it would say, “”Okay, Don. I’m going to allow you to do what you want to do with this, and take notes from the lesson that Tom gave me. That’s me, being obedient to the will of the Master, because I’m master over that. You know, that’s a lousy example, but I see myself in others. It’s like Duh! (unclear) And this pen can’t write notes for me.

Tom: “What would happen if that pen wrote by itself?”

Participant: “Oh, my word, I have no idea.” (Laughter.)

Tom: Any last comments? Well, again, thank you so much for being here, guys. Let's just pray and thank God.

Father, You have just done so much, and we can just pause and say, "Thank you." Help us to be ready at the opportunity You give us to be responders in the time that we need to do Your service. We ask You to go with us today. Thank you for our jobs. Thank You for our wives and our families, all that You have done for us, and the faith that we have. We especially thank You for Bruce and the teaching that we receive through Him over these past years, and ask You to be with Him, guide him, and bring him back safely to us next week. So in the name of Jesus Christ we thank you. Amen.