





On the life of, and the character of Isaac And now, as we come at the end of chapter 6 We see the plot that Isaac is in the centre of Continuing to develop So, we'll pick up at verse 34 of chapter 26 And we'll read through to verse 17 of chapter 27 We're all tempted to follow you now With that peace box Genesis chapter 26 Verse 34 This is God's word When Esau was 40 years old He took Judith, the daughter of Beri The Hittite, to be his wife And Basemath, the daughter of Erlon, the Hittite And they made life bitter For Isaac and Rebekah When Isaac was old And his eyes were dim So that he could not see He called Esau, his older son And said to him, My son And he answered, Here I am He said, Behold, I am old I do not know the day of my death Now then, take your weapons Your quiver and your bow And go out to the field And hunt game for me And prepare for me delicious food Such as I love And bring it to me So that I may eat That my soul may bless you Before I die Now Rebekah was listening When Isaac spoke to his son Esau So when Esau went to the field To hunt for game And bring it Rebekah said to her son Jacob I heard your father speak To your brother Esau Bring me game And prepare for me delicious food That I may eat it And bless you before the Lord Before I die Now therefore, my son Obey my voice As I command you Go to the flock And bring me two good young goats So that I may prepare from them Delicious food For your father Such as he loves And you shall bring it To your father to eat So that he may bless you Before he dies But Jacob said to Rebekah His mother Behold, my brother Esau Is a hairy man And I am smooth A smooth man Perhaps my father Will feel me And I shall Seem to be mocking him And bring a curse upon myself And not a blessing His mother said to him Let your curse be on me, my son Only obey my voice And go Bring them to me So he went And took them And brought them to his mother And his mother prepared Delicious food Such as his father loved Then Rebekah Took the best garments Of Esau Her older son Which were with her In the house And put them on Jacob Her younger son And the skins Of the young goats She put on his hands And on the smooth part Of his neck And she put the delicious food

[ 15 : 17 ] And the bread Which she prepared Into the hand Of her son Jacob Amen And may God bless That reading Of his word to us We're going to sing Again From Psalm 51 Psalm 51 We'll pick up Again at verse 7 And we'll sing Down to verse 13 Of the psalm Do thy with hyssop Sprinkle me I shall be cleansed So ye wash thou me And then I shall be Whiter than the snow And we'll sing Down to verse 13 Then will I teach Thy ways unto Those that transgressors Be And those that sinners are Shall then be turned Unto thee We'll sing these verses We'll stand to sing To God's praise Do thou with this Soft spring O me I shall be Cleansed store

Ye wash thou me And then I shall Be whiter Than the snow Of gladness And of joyfulness Make me to hear Thy voice That snow Is very Most rich Thou hast broken May rejoice All my Iniquities Water Thy face I From My

Sin Create Our King Our Glory New AriseNINGNING!

NING!NING!NING!NING!NING!NING!NING!NING!NING!NING! Life is spent, be saved.

Then will I teach highways unto Those that transgressors be And those that sinners are shut then Eternal comes to thee We'll turn back to the passage that we read together and as we go there we'll pray once more.

[ 18 : 56 ] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the word that we have read. And we pray for help. We pray for guidance. We pray that you would illuminate our minds as we study your word.

That we would understand all that is before us that relates to events that happened a long time ago in a place far from here. And yet we pray also that you would apply the truths of scripture to our lives and that you would help us to hear and see and understand how you are speaking to us.

Your word is relevant to every part of our lives and all scripture, as it says, is God-breathed. And it's useful for teaching and correcting and rebuking and encouraging and so on.

So we ask, Lord, that you would be at work in our lives. We thank you for the psalm that we've sung. We thank you that you're the God who knows us and you see us as we are.

You see us with our sin. And yet we thank you that as we confess our sin, as the psalmist did in that psalm, that there is forgiveness and there is the joy of your salvation of us.

[ 20 : 13 ] So we ask, Lord, that you would cleanse us again as we come into your presence, the holy God. We ask that you would look upon us in mercy.

We pray that you would cleanse us from our sin. We pray that we would be those who acknowledge that we are sinners, but that we would be turned unto Jesus, the saviour of sinners, the one who

laid down his life so that we can be forgiven.

Amen. So help us, Lord, we pray, as we study your word. We pray for those who study your word, who open your word in other places too. And we ask that you would bless them.

We pray for Duncan as he preaches in Leaverborough tonight. We pray for Farrakhar as he preaches in Scalpy. We ask that you would help them, that you would equip them for the task that you have set before them this evening.

And for the congregations that you would be moving there as we pray that you would be moving here also. We ask, Lord, for the denominations around us as well, for the Church of Scotland and for the Free Presbyterian Church in Tarbert here, that you would bless the word as it goes forth there today also, and that you would be working to draw many people to the Lord Jesus.

[ 21 : 30 ] And we ask, Lord, that you would be working there as we pray. You would be working in us to make those who are your people, your children, more like the Lord Jesus.

We pray for those who, as they think about the week ahead, may have anxiety or who may be apprehensive. We ask, Lord, that you would settle them in their minds for those who may be concerned about different things, that you would bless them and that you would meet them.

We thank you that you are the one who calls us to cast all our cares upon you because you care for us. So for those starting work, we ask that your hand would be upon them.

For those who are maybe going from here back to study or away to study for the first time even in the next week or so, we pray that you would be with them.

We pray for Natalie as she heads away this week and for Ellie Kate as she perhaps follows on soon afterwards and Anna and for others, Lord, who will go back out to study after studying for a number of years.

[ 22 : 36 ] We pray that you would go with them and that you would bless them, that you would lead them, that you would guide them. And for those who study here at home who are coming perhaps towards the end of their studies and are thinking about the prospects of work as well, we ask that you would guide and that you would lead.

We thank you for the promise. That as we acknowledge you, you will direct our path. So we pray for all those who are in that position.

We pray for Scott and for Fiona and for the girls. We thank you for them being with us. And as Scott prepares to head off tomorrow to Edinburgh to study for the week, we ask that you would equip them also and help them in the studies.

And we ask that you would bless them as a family as they seek to serve you and seek to walk in the path of obedience at this time. And we pray, Lord, as we've been instructed, as we have been told by Jesus, even in the passages that we've looked at in past week, that the harvest is plentiful.

We see still, more so than ever, that the labourers are few. So we pray, Lord, that you would be sending labourers out into the harvest, that many more people here and across the world will hear the good news about Jesus.

[ 23 : 52 ] We pray again for Angus as he travels today and over these next few days, that as he heads away from here, that you would be with him on his travels, that it would be straightforward, that it would be safe, and that he and Kirsty, as they continue to serve you, would know your blessing, your equipping for that task.

So hear our prayers and continue with us, we pray, in this service. Enable us to worship you in spirit and in truth. And we ask all this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. George Verwer was the founding member, the president, the CEO, I'm not sure what his title was, of the mission organisation Operation Mobilisation.

He passed away, I think it was last year, but he was a well-known and somewhat eccentric character.

He wrote books, some of the books are here in the church, just in the wall behind me here. He travelled widely and his life's focus was on bringing the good news about Jesus to all nations.

[ 25 : 15 ] And I was thinking back, and I think it must have been about eight years ago, that he came to Tarbert. We had invitation to receive him and have him speak, and we accepted that.

And he came to Tarbert, I remember the night that he came, he had dinner with us, which was an interesting experience, not one that I'll go into in any great depth. And after he had dinner with us, he spoke at the community centre before we were in this building.

And I don't remember much of what he said on that night as he spoke in the community centre, but the thing that I've never forgotten was one of the terms that he used in the talk that evening. He spoke about messiology. Not messiology. Messiology is the study of Christian mission. It's a term that we're familiar with.

But he said, I'm not talking about messiology. He says, I'm talking about messiology. So what was messiology? Well, he went on to explain it.

[ 26 : 24 ] And it was the wonder of how God works to progress his mission, even in the mess of this world and in the mess of our lives.

Verwer said, paraphrasing here, no matter where he went in the world, wherever he went, whatever he looked at in terms of denominations and groups of Christians, he says, wherever you go, there is mess.

Christians falling out with each other. Christians making a mess of mission. And yet Verwer said, in the mess, using messy people from all nations, God is still working.

And that was the case eight years ago. It is still the case tonight. And it was also the case if we rewind the clock all the way back to Genesis chapter 27.

So I want to look tonight at the passage that we read from the end of Genesis 26 through to the first half of Genesis 27.

[ 27 : 42 ] There's three things that we'll see in the time we'll finish verse seven. The YF kicks off tonight. Three things that we'll see in the time that we have. The first thing we see is unwise relationships, point number one.

We see Esau entering into unwise relationships. The second thing we see that takes us into chapter 27 is Isaac and Esau scheming to get the blessing.

And in the third point, the last point for this evening, is we see in response to Isaac and Esau scheming to get the blessing, we see Rebecca and Jacob counter-scheming to get the blessing.

So these three points. First of all, then unwise relationships. So verse 34 of Genesis 26. When Esau was 40 years old, he took Judith, the daughter of Beerli, the Hittite, to be his wife, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebecca.

Now we're only in Genesis 26, but if we were to glance back even through the chapters previous in this first book of the Bible, we see numerous unwise relationships that God's people enter into.

[ 29 : 15 ] We see difficult home situations. We see troubled marriages. And this was another one. So we see here that Esau takes two wives.

That's the first problem. God's plan, his design for marriage was very clear. It's laid out in Genesis chapter 2. And it's one man and one woman, husband and wife.

That was God's design for marriage. It was back then. It has been ever since. It always will be. No matter how the culture may contest it, that was, that is God's design for marriage.

One man, one woman. And yet we're only this far into Genesis and already that design has been tampered with.

It's been set aside and Esau, he takes not one wife in this verse here, he takes two wives. So he's going against God's design and to make things worse, these wives were Hittites, we're told their nationality.

[ 30 : 26 ] So one of the commentators says this, just to give us an insight into the Hittites. He says, the religion of the Hittites was a pluralistic worship of nature. They believed in various gods over the elements of earth, sky, weather, etc.

And these gods were often listed as witnesses on treaties and oaths. As in most other pagan societies, this nature worship led them to despicable practices which brought the wrath of the true God on them.

So these were the people that Esau chose his wives from. And clearly these women, they were not wife material in the eyes of God.

But Esau obviously saw them, they caught his eye, he desired them, and he didn't care much about anything but that.

So God's word is set aside. The advice likely that he was receiving from his parents, if he was getting that, was also set aside.

[ 31 : 44 ] And he just did what he wanted to do. And the result, as we're told in verse 35, is that there was bitterness. and the family.

Application for this point is not hard to work out. And the application in terms of the principle is we need to be careful about the relationships that we enter into. people. So we've got a number of young people in the service tonight. One of the people in the service this morning, who's been coming back and forth over the years, is saying your average age is going down.

Your age is going up, MacLeod, but your average age is going down in the congregation. And we've seen that a bit. So for the young people here, most of you probably are beginning to get to the stage where there's, you know, there's situations in school and we hear about this one going out with that one and that one going out with the next one and she fancies you and he's interested.

There's all this chat that goes on on Snapchat, things that's a mystery to me. I don't know what on earth it is. But when you are thinking, young people, about whether you should go out with this person or not, don't just think about how good looking they are.

[ 33 : 20 ] Think about this. Will this person, if I go out with them, or if I accept their invitation to go and get a coffee or whatever, will this person take me closer to Jesus or will this person take me further away from Jesus?

Ask that question, even if you're in first, second, third year, even younger. Will this person take me closer to Jesus or will this person maybe cause me to drift a little?

And then there's the Christians who are maybe just a little bit further on. Christians who are considering marriage. Grace became 16 today. She can't buy cigarettes but she can get married. Christians who are considering marriage, then we're to ask the question as we consider the prospect of marriage, is this person someone that I can worship God with?

Are we on the same wavelength spiritually? Can we, if we become a couple for life, can we commit to walking with the Lord together and glorifying God with our lives?

So these are questions that we need to be asking right from the teenage years in school into the twenties where we're starting to think about the person.

[ 34 : 58 ] And then right through life, even in terms of friendships and business relationships, every meaningful relationship that we enter into and we commit to, it has an impact on our lives.

the people that we spend time with, they will have an influence on us. So we're not to become monks and nuns and withdraw, but we need to be careful to be wise and not unwise in the relationships that we enter into, in the relationships that we nurture.

that's what Esau didn't do. Esau enters into unwise relationships, that's the first thing we see here. Second point is it takes us into the next part of the story and we're just following the plot really in this chapter. Isaac and Esau scheme to get the blessing.

So we've seen this in past chapters, this blessing that we've been talking about. And we see the plot here in verses 1 through to verse 4 as Isaac and Esau scheme to get the blessing.

[ 36 : 21 ] So verse 1, when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son. Remember in the family there's this bad dynamic in the family.

Husband and wife are not, they're not in the best place in the relationship and there's favoritism in this family. So Esau is favored by his father, Isaac, and Jacob is favored by his mother, Rebekah, and it's causing all kinds of trouble.

So when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau, his older son, and said to him, my son. And he answered, here I am.

He said, behold, I am old, I do not know the day of my death. Now one of the commentators, Baldwin, tells us that this was a formula.

This is what it says, behold, I am old, I do not know the day of my death, was a deathbed formula, which corresponded to our last will and testament.

[ 37 : 30 ] So what Isaac is doing is he's pulling an Esau and he's saying, I want to make my will. Now then, verse 3, he says, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field and hunt game for me and prepare for me delicious food such as I love and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before you die.

So Isaac preparing his will in this section, that was a normal thing to do. A father would gather his sons around him to bless them before he died.

That was something that was expected, that was part of life. But what Isaac is doing in this section is not normal.

For one, Isaac, he's preparing his will, but he's not on his death bed. He actually lives for 40 years after this time.

And secondly, in this scene, Isaac, he doesn't call his sons, plural, to gather around him as he seeks to prepare his will, as he talks about the blessing.

[ 38 : 49 ] There's only one son that's present, that's Esau. The third thing that's abnormal, that's strange here, is that this seems to all be done in secret.

It's a secret ceremony. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, who should certainly be in on this, is nowhere to be seen. The fourth thing that's unusual is that there are no witnesses.

This is a legal transaction. And there are no witnesses. So in actual fact, what Isaac is doing is not kosher, it's not legal.

So when we look in on this, there's a series of things in this transaction that are just not right. So what's going on here?

Why the secrecy? Why is Isaac telling Esau, close the door, come in, we're having a private chat.

Why the secrecy? Why the urgency?

[ 39 : 55 ] Why is he doing this 40 years before his death? And why the irregularity of no witnesses?

Well, the answer to all these questions is because this is a plot. This is a scheme, it's a scam. This is a scheme that was being worked out in order that the special blessing would be given to Esau, his favorite son.

And we might ask the question, why is that wrong? And there are various reasons that it's wrong, but the main reason we could maybe cite here is because it went against God's word.

God had said in Genesis 25 and verse 23 that the older son would serve the younger son.

But Isaac didn't like that. He wanted his favorite son to have the blessing. Even if it wasn't fair, even if it wasn't above board, even if it went against God's revealed will and his word, Isaac wanted what Isaac wanted.

[ 41 : 23 ] And he wanted the blessing to go to his favorite son. hence the scheme. Two quotes from commentators just to give a little bit more details on this.

Duguid, the commentator says, Isaac was seeking to circumvent God's word in favor of his desires and preferences. Otherwise, why conduct the ceremony in secret in the bedroom instead of in front of the whole family?

The transfer of the blessing should surely have been part of a devotional service, in front of the whole household, not one parent craftily outmanoeuvring the other. He is as scheming and self-centered as Jacob.

Isaac loved Esau for what he could do for his senses, cooking up tasty country food for him to enjoy. In a fitting judgment, he ended up sadly deceived by the very senses he sought to satisfy. And Dale Ralph Davis gives a little bit more perspective on this. He says, Isaac can't see, but he still lived by his senses. Taste, verse 4.

[ 42 : 36 ] Touch, verse 11, 16, 22, 23. Smell, verse 27, and hearing, verse 22. But this is Dale Ralph Davis' words, not mine.

He says, he's a stubborn old coot. without doubt, he knew the word God had spoken, and yet he flies in the face of it. Isaac places pallet over promise.

He is the patron saint of all who say, I don't really care what the word of God says. I will follow my own feelings.

So how do we take this in terms of application? Well, we could stand back from this, and we could point the finger in judgment at Isaac for the scheme, or we could point the finger at Isaac and then also frown in the direction of Esau for going along with this.

But actually what we're seeing in this section, I think, is a reflection of ourselves. As I look at this, I see in many ways a reflection of myself.

[ 44 : 00 ] Because how often do we plot and scheme and just organize things a little so that we can get what we want so that we can get the advantage in all kinds of realms of life?

You've never done that? How often do we turn away from God's word because we just want to do because we want what we want to do?

even simple things like we could be having a conversation, we could be in a meeting, we could be in a family situation, and the temperature is starting to rise because things aren't going our way, or somebody's saying something that's really irritating us.

Now what does God's word say? It says be patient. It says bear with one another in love. But deep within us, as the fire starts to burn, what do we want to do?

We just want to blow the stack. And sometimes we do. God's word is clear, and yet there are situations, even mundane things like that, where we just want to do what we just want to do.

[ 45 : 24 ] And it's a reflection of what we see here in Isaac and Esau. So I think the best response that we can make in application here is to confess that we often do the same thing as Isaac and Esau.

The better response in application is for us to seek forgiveness for often falling to the same sins as we're reading here.

The best response here is to confess sin and to ask for God's help as we go off into a new week. Eveson, the commentator, says, husbands and fathers should seek to order their families according to God's word.

Be open, consult your wife, and act together. If Isaac had done that, we wouldn't be reading the story. But Isaac just wanted to do what he wanted to do.

So Isaac and Esau schemed to get the blessing. And the final point here, as we see this story develop, the plot thicken. Rebekah and Jacob counter-schemed to get the blessing.

[ 46 : 46 ] Verse 5. Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. It's worth noting here that Isaac and Rebekah don't seem to be speaking.

Sometimes that happens in relationships. The conversation starts to thin out. There can be tension, there can be differences of opinion, and the conversation seems to dry up.

There's no conversation here between Rebekah and Isaac until verse 46. And by verse 46, everything has spun way out of control.

So Isaac and Rebekah, they're not speaking, but Rebekah is listening. So we can picture her at the door, and she's listening to this secret conversation between Isaac and Esau.

And as she listens and as she hears the plot, she doesn't like what she hears. So what does she do? Well, what she should have done was just go and speak to her husband.

[ 47 : 54 ] Once Esau went out, she should have gone to speak to her husband about what she heard and what she didn't like, but she doesn't do this. There's radio silence.

And in the radio silence, things get worse. So a very basic marriage guidance, counselling tip here is a husband and wife should speak to each other.

We should put our phones down, we should switch off the TV, we should speak to each other, and especially when there's tension, especially if there is a point of disagreement.

I know that hardly ever happens ever in a marriage, but just imagine it did. In that situation, it's good to talk. It's not good to do what Isaac and Rebecca did, and go silent.

So Rebecca, she's heard the conversation, she's heard the scheme, the plot, between Isaac and Esau, and she in a panic runs off to find Jacob to try to secretly reverse the plans of her husband.

[ 49 : 06 ] So halfway through verse five, so when Esau went to the field to hunt for a game and bring it, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, bring me game, prepare me delicious food so that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die.

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you, says Rebecca. Go to the flock, bring me two good young goats so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves, and you shall bring it to your father to eat so that he may bless you before he dies.

So there's Rebecca's plan. There's the counter scheme and it's clever, it's underhand, it's dishonest, it's deceitful, and Rebecca, she's formulated this, and now she's shared it with Jacob.

So the ball's in Jacob's court, so what will he do? verse 11, but Jacob said to Rebecca, his mother, now, if we hit pause for just a moment, we might think, maybe Jacob at last is going to do the right thing, because so far as we've seen Jacob, he is a twister, he's a schemer, he's dishonest, he's deceitful, he's not a likeable character, and we're thinking, as Rebecca shares this deceitful plan with Jacob, Jacob seems to interrupt her, and he's got something he wants to say, and within us we're saying to ourselves, maybe Jacob at last is going to do the right thing, maybe Jacob is going to gently and respectfully challenge his mother about the dishonesty of this, and say, come on, let's not go down this road, let's call a family meeting, but that is not what's in

Jacob's mind, Jacob seems consistently unconcerned about deceit, dishonesty, Jacob is just wanting to fine tune the details, Jacob wants to make sure that he himself is not at risk in all of this, he wants to cover himself, so he says, verse 11, behold my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a

smooth man, perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse upon myself, and not a blessing, he's concerned about this, we've got this picture of smooth Jacob, and hairy, crofter, Esau, Jacob's saying, what happens if he reaches out and he touches me and he feels the smooth skin, then I'm done for, his mother said to him, let your curse be on me, my son, only obey my voice and go, bring them to me, and so

[ 52 : 23 ] Jacob, again, just such a hard character to like, his mother says, if there's a risk, if anyone's going to have to take the fall, I'll take it, and he, the gallant son, says, that's fine, as long as I am at risk here, if you're at risk, that's fine, we'll proceed on that basis, so he went, verse 14, and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food such as his father loved, then Rebecca took the best garments of Esau, her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob, her younger son, and the skins of the young goat she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck, and she put the delicious food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son, Jacob.

Hit pause again for a moment, ask the question, question, why is Rebecca doing what she's doing? What's her motivation in going to such great lengths to make sure that Jacob, and not Esau, gets the blessing?

We can't be absolutely sure, because we're not told for sure. It might be that it's just as bald and plain as this is the sinful outworking of her favoritism.

She loved one son more than the other, she loved Jacob more than Esau, and she wants Esau to be put down, she wants Jacob to come out on top, and so this is her plan, that might have been her motivation, it's just purely sinful.

[ 54 : 20 ] Or it could be that she wants her family to obey God's word. God had said, remember, Genesis 25, 23, the older son would serve the younger son.

And now it seems, as Rebecca is looking in on this plan, this scheme, it seems that God's word and God's will is under threat, and so it seems that she is going to work and intervene in order to try to help God out, in order to make sure that God's will, God's plan prevails.

That might have been her motivation, but we don't know. But whatever her motivation, she's doing the wrong thing, even if she had good reason and motivation for what she did, the means did not justify the end or the reverse of that.

You know the phrase. What she was doing could not be justified even if it was with a desire to make sure that God's word and will prevails.

Because the fact was and the fact is that God is more than able to work out his will and his purpose without her scheming, deceitful, sinful interference.

[ 56 : 04 ] and yet as we look on this, once more we're seeing a reflection of our own hearts.

Dugard, the commentator, says, how often do our fears that God will not act dominate our lives and lead us to do things that we shouldn't or simply to worry and fret sinfully.

Dale Ralph Davis says, Rebecca cannot wait and let God sort things out. She must intervene and put things right. Rebecca, says, Ralph Davis, is the patron saint of all who serve a helpless God who has no hands but our hands and no resources but our schemes.

So again, we're looking in the mirror. We're seeing ourselves and as we do, we need to repent we need to repent of the many times that we fret and we stress and we worry and we try to engineer things rather than trust God.

We need to repent of the many times that we scheme and interfere rather than leave things believing that God will do the right thing.

[ 58 : 05 ] So did Rebecca's scheme work? Well, you'll have to come back next week to see the outcome of that. But just as a takeaway as we finish, let's simply just take the encouragement of this.

We're only halfway through the story of chapter 27, but we see mess, we see unworthy people who are acting in dishonest ways sinners, and yet they're God's people.

Sinners, but they're God's people. And we could fast forward all the way to Hebrews chapter 11, and we will see that in spite of all their sin, their names are not edited out of the hall of faith.

death. So even in the mess, and even in the darkness, God is still working. That's the lesson, and that's the application to take into our lives.

Even when we can't see how God is going to reverse a situation, we can trust him, because he's always working.

[ 59 : 39 ] even in the darkest hour, he's still working, and that's most clearly illustrated at Calvary.

So we want a reassurance of the wonder and the height of God's ways. We just go back to the cross again and again and again, because at the cross, it looked like everything was dark.

It looked like all hope was gone, and yet in the darkness, God was working out his plan in the most amazing way.

His plan at Calvary was being worked out, that plan to save us from our sin, and to give us life everlasting.

So, let's trust the God of Abraham and Isaac, and even Jacob.

[ 60 : 51 ] Let's worship him, and ask him to use us, even us, with all our mess, for his glory.

And we'll pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, and we thank you for your ways, which are perfect.

We thank you that even through our lives, even in spite of us at times, you are able to work for your glory, and for the good of your people.

So, help us to trust you, not to fret, not to worry, not to interfere, not to use our flawed ways, and our so-called wisdom, to try to salvage what we think are your plans.

Help us, Lord, to trust you, and we ask that you would be working in our lives, in this place, for your glory, for the encouragement of your people, for the salvation of souls.

[ 61 : 58 ] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 1209. My heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my pain.

who my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my name, who loved the depths of my distress, grace, and gave me life again.

Who crushed my curse of sinfulness, and clothed me with his light, and wrote his love of righteousness, with power upon my heart.

My heart is filled with thankfulness to him who holds beside, who floods my weaknesses with strength, and causes fears to cry, whose every promise is in love, for every step I take, pain, sustaining me with arms of love, and crowning me with grace.

My heart is filled with thankfulness to him who reigns upon, whose wisdom is my perfect peace, whose very thought is love, for every day I have honor, is given by the King, so I will give my life, my all, to love and follow him.

[ 64 : 21 ] May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.