

## **The Stones Cry Out: Sir, We Would See Jesus**

**John 12:20-26**

**By Claude McRoberts**

Please turn in your Bibles to the gospel of John, chapter 12. You'll find this on page 899 in the pew Bible so you are without excuse. If you don't have your own copy, then if you would, please reach for one in the pew so that you'll have this reading before you. It is the very mind of God in print. It is infallible and inerrant and we are the privileged ones to have it, so may we all have a copy open before us. And before we read, let's ask for God's help in understanding it.

*Father, we bow ourselves down before you as even we have this morning already, prostrated ourselves before our King and our God, the One with whom You have now given us a relationship through the Lord Jesus. And we pray that You would, by Your Spirit, give us now the eyes to see, that You would give us ears to hear. We pray that we might hear truth, some of us for the first time, others many, many times before, with a heart that can hear truth and be set free. We ask that our eyes, especially this morning, especially in this text and in one verse in particular, that by Your grace You would have us to see the Lord Jesus. And we make our prayer in His name alone, amen.*

In John chapter 12 beginning in verse 20. We'll read through verse 26:

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast some were Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Thus ends the reading this morning. All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the Word of our God shall stand forever.

There's no way I can adequately express appreciation to be standing here this

morning. I thank Ligon, I thank the session for the invitation, the honor itself to stand here behind what we affectionately refer to as “the sacred desk,” and so in any pulpit, the pulpit, but in particular this very influential pulpit. It's a great honor for me to be standing here. When I first thought of any kind of message or thoughts, just to scratch the service, to sit down and start thinking about this morning, I wrote down that celebration is good. It is. Celebration is a wonderful thing. We're in the midst of a celebratory thing right now in our lives with graduations and milestones. It's that time of year. We celebrate everything from graduations, maybe with some older children, to perhaps even no conduct marks with the smaller children. You know, that's time to celebrate — you know, no conduct marks this week! Victories, touchdowns, even though now we're told by the powers that be that there is such a thing as excessive celebration and it's a penalty, and we Presbyterians are not too guilty, or are very guilty of that very often anyway, of excessive celebration. But we have reason, certainly, and I'm presumptuous to say “we” and “our” this morning. I'm with you in this as this being my home church, sending church in a sense. I'm very grateful for that. We celebrate these events like this — birthdays, anniversaries as well — and if done properly, which is another good Presbyterian word, then it can be quite convicting. When celebration is done with integrity, when celebration is done with honor, and when it's done with humility, rather than the eyes being on myself and seeing from whence comes my blessings, in all of life but particularly in a celebration of 175 years, as I said when it's done with integrity, and done with dignity, then it can be quite the reality check.

I'll tell you who knew how to celebrate in the Bible, and one among many, the one was King David. When David felt reason to celebrate, David would dance, we know. David would pray; David would worship. David would pray; David would sing. David would write — David would write poetry, read poetry. And when we so often think of David our first impression, the first thing we conjure up in our mind is what David did for Israel and we think of the shepherd-child made king, we think of the obedient son made king, we think of the young man, the child actually, the one who slays the giant. And we say the one who became the king of Israel, we think of those — I mentioned the musician, the poet — we think of the man after God's own heart. We think of the one who had the courage — he had the courage in battle, the sword in his fist, and he was the shepherd that brought security and peace to Israel which they so desperately needed and prayed for rest and peace and a joy. And they had it in this king, David.

But you know what really made David special? It really was not what David did for Israel. Dare I say, that what really made David special was not what David did for God. What really made David special, it's a good reminder this morning, what made David special was what God had done for David because in 2 Samuel 7, where He makes this covenant — if you're not familiar with 2 Samuel 7, jot that down and say, “I'm going to go back and read the entire chapter this afternoon.” It will bless you. It is beautiful. And God says to David, as David has said to God, and he says, “You know, I want to build a house for You. I want there to be a

place for Your presence. I want it to be beautiful. I want to be the one to do this.” And via the prophet, Nathan, God says, in essence, to David, “David, you’re not going to build My house for Me. Now your son, he’ll build the house for Me, but you, David, are not going to build a house for Me, rather I’m going to build a house for you.” What God was saying through Nathan was, “I’m going to make you a dynasty. You talk about a house? I’m going to make your whole family, I’m going to make your whole lineage, I’m going to make it so there is someone from your descendants that will be seated on your throne forever and ever and ever. Now your sons, in particular, your sons will mess up. Your sons will sin and I’ll discipline them; I’ll deal with them. But not one year will go by forever and ever that you will not have one of your descendents on the throne. And not only in this world but in another world, in another place, there will always be one of your descendents.”

You know how David celebrated? And maybe we need to be reminded of this too — it wasn’t an end-zone, touchdown kind of celebration, not that that’s unbiblical, or maybe it is if it’s against the rules! But David sat before the ark of God in all of his humility. You know what he said? “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family that You have brought me thus far?” That’s celebration. That’s humility mixed with celebration. “Who am I, O LORD, and who is my family that You have brought us thus far?” Same tenor as Psalm 8 when he writes, “O LORD, our LORD, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” And he later says in that psalm, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” That is celebration. And that’s what we’re doing. When David had an event like that it swelled his heart with dancing, it swelling his heart with praise and gratitude. And that’s what we’re about here in the last month and this morning, is to celebrate a grand event, 175 years no less. But it causes our hearts to dance and swell but not with pride, God forbid. There’s no reason to be prideful. But because of what He has done for us that it would swell with gratitude — 175 years.

So there’s a group of people — I’m not sure exactly how that group started, but they would call this man named Peter Donan and say, “We want you to plant a church for us in Jackson, Mississippi in 1837. Speaking of having done this properly, I’ve read in *The First Epistle* and I’ve talked to my family and I’ve heard the various celebrations that have gone on and a lot of it has been historical but let me just mention a few. The fact that there was Donan, and then when Hallsy, as we read about him and his life was a dynamic individual, and it was under his leadership and his preaching in particular that First Presbyterian began to really grow and see some life there. And then Lowry - I was interested in reading about L.A. Lowry, only two and a half years or so who died of yellow fever. John Hunter, again, a vigorous, very faithful, able preacher. Now what’s been talked about and what’s so encouraging is, and it’s something again that you can be so thankful, twelve ministers in 175 years. What can you say? But do you realize that in the first eighteen years there were already five ministers? So it makes it even more impressive to realize that once you get to Hutton in 1895, you’re already talking about a generation that some who are even sitting here who knew

his ministry. That is phenomenal. That is again the grace of God. A generation — I think a generation is officially twenty-seven years, so we'd say twenty-seven, thirty years that you have only known now five ministers over 4.3 generations. A gift from the Lord.

Hutton, and if you go back and read you see the consistency of calling men who were dedicated to God's Word, preaching, prayer, and pastoral care — Gerard Lowe. I didn't know Gerard Lowe. I wasn't born yet but I was frightened by his portrait nonetheless because I ate lunch in Lowe hall for six years and would look at that portrait and — now it was a Lucille Ball show, actually. I don't know if you remember this portrait. I think it was of Mr. Mooney if I'm not mistaken, but there were eyes and it followed you wherever you went. And as a child I had really bad nightmares about that episode of the Lucille Ball show. And so this morning when I came in, I tried to get here just a little early because I wanted to go to Lowe Hall and see his portrait hanging there and I couldn't find his portrait. And low and behold, Ligon and I are walking down the hall going to the eight-thirty service, and down at the end of the hall just in a prominent position, there's Gerard Lowe looking at me all the way as I came in! It's like, "I remember you as a child!"

John Reed Miller, I slept through his last four years of ministry here on the back row in the balcony up there. My mom would let me - I said this at eight-thirty too - that my sisters, I doubt they were allowed to put their head on their mom's lap and stretch out but "Prince Claude" (laughter) was allowed to do that and so I slept during John Reed Miller's ministry here. But by God's grace and His providence, moved in across the street in seminary from John Reed Miller. My dad said, "You know who that is, don't you?" And so I went over and got to know him, actually, and he gave me books and encouragement and advice as a seminary student.

Don Patterson, I slept the next thirteen years — I'm just kidding. That's not a joke against him; that's my own heart! My dad would pinch me and leave bruises. I'll speak to the young people — if you ever want to stand up here one day just sleep through church and time the morning prayer. I did all of that. Actually, Dr. Patterson, who prayed beautiful pastoral prayers as I recall, he disciplined my dad. He, in a way that my dad wouldn't realize what Don Patterson was even doing. And what I see, in the benefit for me in my life, was that God was preparing my dad to have a minister-son. We've talked about that a number of times. He ministered a lot to my mom, pastored her in her illness, and then even as the later years when I was in Clarksdale, he came and did a missions conference. He brought Faith Promise to Clarksdale at First Presbyterian there and his son, Jim, and I are friends now and through ministry and missions. I'm very, very thankful for Dr. Patterson's life.

When I wrote down James M. Baird, I was going through this history and I wrote his name down, honestly I began to sob, in my office, alone, I don't cry that often, but boy, it was one of those shoulder-shaking cries because for one thing I

wouldn't be where I am today, ministry I'm in today, if it hadn't been for Dr. Baird. He also ministered to my mother. He buried my mother; he did her funeral. He hired me to do the junior high work here and when he did I can remember him sitting down across from his desk and his saying, "Love God and love people." Almost as if, "That's all I'm asking you to do. You're going to be on staff here — I'm just telling you, love God and love people." And I never forgot that and I saw it in his life. And I've seen him and you know him well enough to know he's really a man; he's a man's man. And he taught me a lot in ministry about the fact that you can be a man and be a pastor at the same time. And not only so, you can be a man and talk about your quote-unquote, "Mrs. Jane," you know, meaning your wife and family. You can actually be in the ministry and put your family first. I took that from Dr. Baird and his life. And he did, literally, the church in Montgomery had already been turned down three times if that tells you anything, they had offered, extended an invitation to three other ministers and so they prayed and fasted, the pulpit committee did, and at the end of their fast they received a letter from Dr. Baird about me, undeserving as I am. And I've been able to rear my children there in a Christian education for twelve years and just absolutely love where we are.

And I have to really watch the time but at eight-thirty I did my impression of Dr. Baird so I've got to tell you, because — there were actually two instances in particular besides the voicemails he would leave me, we've since laughed among friends that will remain nameless here, who's left many voicemails. I've left many a voicemail as Dr. Baird and people thought Dr. Baird had called them. But what you have to do when you do an impression, you have to be able to say, "Men, we need men, men!" It's just this one after the other fragmented sentences! But he left, well besides the fact I was in the youth house one time on Christmas Eve, I don't know why — I was single and in seminary and I guess that's what single, seminarians do on Christmas Eve — and my light lit up on my phone and I knew it was him because it was an internal phone deal and I picked it up and I said, "Hello," and he was like, "Hey, big guy!" I was like, "Yes, sir," "You lead worship tonight, my office, five-o'clock." So that frightened me to death! But the other messages that he would leave on my machine were these, "Big guy! Jim Baird! You call me! You call me!" Click! You know! So I'd call him back, fear and trembling!

J. Ligon Duncan III — you know, what do you say with a guy who's got 175 years behind him in a church situation and a friend and a mentor too? But the fact that God has given you a man that is, just the privilege — it is Ligon but it's the sense of the history too, that you're part of this history and God has given you a man that is committed to the Word and prayer and preaching and the sacraments and God's means of growing a church and piety and training up elders, training up leaders in the church so that his aim is that he leave the church better than he found it. What a gift. What a blessing.

So what do you say? How do you charge him, or charge us, or you as a

congregation? I was reminded and read in my study in Bismarck who was a very cunning German statesman in the 19th century, he said, "We cannot create the stream of time, we only navigate upon it." We don't create the stream of time, that's God. We only navigate upon it, so that when we celebrate 175 years the posture before the ark, before the presence of God in Christ Jesus, that I prostrate myself before Him and I say, "Who am I, O GOD, who is my family, that You are mindful, that You have brought us thus far?" That's a sense of deep, abiding humility, to understand that whether my name is Ligon Duncan or someone who just shows up and maybe you wonder if even you're known by anybody else in the church, that you are still, no matter who you are, this little miniscule part of God's stream of time, that First Presbyterian Church is just a blip, it's just a little blip on the screen of God's timeline, of His history.

You can mention, as we've done, and just through seven or eight of the twelve ministers and be thankful for that and you think about the ruling elders and the deacons and the WIC presidents and the Sunday School teachers and seminary professors and you just think, "Well these are the high profile of First Presbyterian Church." What about 175 years of widows, constantly, faithfully, pouring into First Presbyterian Church to put their widow's mite in the plate to find peace? What about faithful prayer warriors for 175 years who have been nudged in the night by the Spirit of God to wake up and pray that — did I say Trinity at one point? I don't know — but First Presbyterian Church, to pray for the church. What about those, and this has happened in Montgomery at Trinity, where someone's nudged by the Spirit in the middle of the night to get out of bed and actually go to the physical campus of the church and put their hands on the bricks of the building and pray out the spirits of evil and pray in the Spirit of God, pray down heaven upon that church? Who's to say 175 years, how many prayer warriors, how many people have prayed and fasted and nobody knew it but God and that individual? The ministers who've walked the pews before the sun comes up, maybe a Saturday morning, maybe a Sabbath morning, and they've walked down, they walk through and they remember where you sit, and they pray for you by name, and they know what you're going through and they're praying. The ruling elders, the teaching elders who have lost sleep because they didn't want to lose that unrepentant member.

175 years of constant, unmitigated, irrefutable spiritual warfare, not to mention physically, when you think of those who flooded into the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church between 1861 and 1865, 1914, to 1919, 1941 to 1945, 1950 to 1953, the early 60's through mid 70's, the 1990 and 1991, 9-11, where they come into the present, praying for our sons, praying for our daughters, praying for our husbands, our wives, our parents, to come home, to get home safe and sound, victorious. 175 years.

The woman who attended over all these years and she cried sitting in the pew because her non-spiritual husband had missed yet another sermon she knew he so desperately needed. For 175 years there's been people like that who have

come and sat here sick and lonely and depressed, and children who have sat in these pews disillusioned by their mom and dad's last argument, scared to death, or who have perhaps even did, endure a divorce in this sanctuary. This is the only place they felt safe, the only place they were secure. Living stones in a spiritual house. You see, it's so much bigger, so much grander, it's more sacred than this sanctuary, it's more intriguing than what's written on paper about 175 year history. It's about the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit building up this spiritual house of living stones, some with great gifts, very strong, some weak, some frail, some with many flaws and yet they join this cloud of witnesses that we read about in Hebrews 12 — “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father on the throne of God.” This cloud of witnesses that are making up this spiritual house, and some of them now are dead but they are alive spiritually, and some are sitting here right now.

And the message to Ligon and the message to the ministers and the message that this church will send for another 175 years is, “Sir, we would see Jesus. We’re not interested in you. We want to know about Jesus. I've come here to hear about Jesus.” You know in this passage we read, this is post-anointing Jesus with the oil, Mary wiped the expensive perfume with her hair and even post-triumphal entry, these Greeks come and they have this request of Philip, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” And Philip went and told Andrew and Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

If you walk into the pulpit area in Trinity in Montgomery we have an area — it used to be the Flower Room, we still call it the Flower Room, and there's not a lot of traffic in there and I go that way to get into the pulpit. And so it's easy for me to be alone there before I open the door to go in. So I like to — I'm very ritualistic, especially on Sunday mornings. And so I'll get on my knees and I'll pray as Spurgeon did, “I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Spirit. And only God can change the heart of a man.” And then I will physically make myself smile, not that I don't love where I am, I just want my countenance to be a certain way. You know when you walk in and I put my things in the pulpit so that I'm ready when it's my turn there, and then I sit down. I have the bulletin and I put my hands under it. You know Presbyterians don't lift their hands up in public so I keep it under the bulletin and I ask God to take it one more time, “This is for You.” And then the first thing, and Ligon's been there and knows, but the first thing that a minister sits down and looks up is this framed calligraphy of, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” I try to smile again, you know, and say, “This is it.” It's a reminder that they're not here to see me, it's not about my personality or my agenda or my philosophy or how-to's. People are saying, “I have gotten here because I need Jesus. I want, I want to see Him crucified. I want you to preach Him, I want you to preach the foolishness of the cross to me.”

Professors James Denney of Glasgow actually has these sentences framed and put on the wall of the Presbyterian vestry. He said, "No man can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time." Second sentence, "No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and Christ is mighty to save." It's impossible. You cannot draw attention to yourself and Jesus at the same time. These Greeks, they didn't want to, they weren't just looking to see Him at a distance or be introduced, they wanted an audience with Jesus. They wanted to sit down, they wanted time, they wanted to find out what He was about and possibly be a follower. So if we were doing a straight exposition of this you'd learn a lot more about the text but you'd learn that actually the answer was, "Yes, but... Yes, you want to be a part of Me, yes you want to embrace Me, yes you want to be a Christian, you want to be like Me, yes you can, but you must join Me in this hour, this hour that is at hand, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection, the ascension." And He says, after that, "I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies it bears much fruit."

If ministers today in our pulpits would heed just the one request, just the one little simple request, "Sir, we would see Jesus," we might see revival in our lifetime, maybe. If we could just have ministers that it's not about them but it's about Jesus, it's not about their stories but it's about the Word of God. And we could have ministers that fill our pulpits that it's not about flattery and it's not about prestige and it's not about some position in the church or the community or even sharing my Christian experiences with you, but rather Jesus Christ and Him crucified. As foolish as it seems, if we could just have that and have a life that backs that up, it's what I know Ligon's committed to. That's what I love about that and his pursuits is that it's a lifestyle behind the Gospel of prayer and fasting and spiritual warfare and praying down heaven, praying down the Spirit of God and embracing the loneliness of the ministry by embracing the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ as my all in all, perhaps then we'd see Holy Ghost revival.

It's easy especially for you to sit where you're sitting and say, "You know, that's where, it needs to start in the pulpit; it needs to start in the pulpit." And that's true, I don't deny that, but it starts with the Christian, the real Christian, people that understand. It's not about, as Ligon prayed a moment ago, it's not about this world it's about another world. My citizenship is in another place. Some of those people. When they hear the Word and they join this kind of minister, they don't critique by the way he dresses or the way he parts his hair, articulates things or how long his sermons are, okay, that's the unspiritual man. Let's just say, that's the unspiritual man. We're talking about revival, we're talking about a congregation who prays and fasts and joins in that spiritual battle and wants to do warfare with that minister and is willing to walk that lonely road and be different and be counted strange and unusual in this fancy, Disney world in which we live so often, only then will we see revival.

And those of you who are sitting in the pews demand that we see Christ and you



ask, you say, "You know, I asked to see Jesus, what did I get?" And be honest. The minister, the minister is just the conduit. He's just a tool, he's a mouthpiece. It's the Word and the Spirit, so what the minister — and I'm not a walker, by the way and I never get away from my notes, but a minister that we're describing wants to get as far over here as he possibly can because there's nothing about him that he wants in his flesh, in his pride, he doesn't want to somehow hinder the light of the Bright Morning Star who is Jesus Christ. And so here's the minister. We don't call this a stage, I know, but if it were liken to a stage and there was a curtain, the minister's back here. I mean, he wants all the attention on Christ. He wants to be like John the Baptist and say, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." He wants to be like Peter who says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." He wants to be like Thomas and say, "My Lord and My God," and bow down to Christ. He wants to be like Nathaniel, the same thing. And you know Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" We always think she's scurrying around before she had faith. She said, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah who was to come." It's what you demand of this person who stands here, that you're saying with boldness to Ligon and others to say, "Unto us a Child has been born, a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders, and His name is Wonderful and Counselor, and Mighty God, Prince of Peace. Preach Him! Preach Him to us! We desperately need Jesus. We need rest. We need peace."

That's where I'd like for us to go, well, we don't have any time left but the remainder of time that I will monopolize this time, is that I would like to go through about fifteen different scenarios and I would like you to think to yourself, "Is he talking about me?" And I want to give you Jesus. I want you to say to me, "Sir, I am really," and you fill in the blank, and I want you to say, "I want to see Jesus." And I count this the greatest privilege in all the world. And I'm going to invite you, though it may not be the typical practice at First Church to get on your knees because I'm going to do it right here. Anybody that feels uncomfortable, I'm going to set your mind at ease. This is not strange; it's very Biblical. Those who are physically able and willing who want to, to get on your knees, and let me lead us through some scenarios, you asked to see Jesus, and you find healing, you find hope.

You may be here this morning and you are, you are flat out a notorious sinner and everybody knows it. You know it, your family knows it, this church knows it, Jackson may know it. You're stiff-necked and you're very hardened. And I want to remind you, you think I'm fixing to hellfire and brimstone you, I'm not. I'm going to tell you what Jesus said to the woman who committed adultery. "Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, sin no more."

Maybe you're very, very moral, very decent, you do everything right in Jackson to be considered one to be respected but you don't understand the Gospel, you never have. You wonder, in your heart of hearts, you really, really wonder if I'm

truly saved. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

You may be in bondage to self today. You may have a certain appetite, a lust, an addiction, some bad habit, you know it's bad. You long to be free. You know what Jesus said? "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Maybe this morning you're in need of guidance. You need to make a decision. You want care. And you know what He says? "I'm the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me. Just as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father, I lay down My life for the sheep."

You may have come to church today and admittedly you really wonder if you're going to make it. You wonder if you're going to be able to finish well. You don't want to be an embarrassment to your family. You wonder if you're going to persevere. You know what Jesus said? "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life and they will never perish. And no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

You may fear what's on the other side, you may fear dying, you're afraid of death. And Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. No man who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die." Do you believe this?

Do you doubt His love for you this morning? Have you ever wondered, "He could never love someone like me"? Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I'll come back. Again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am there you may be also." You say, "I don't know how to go there." He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but through Me."

You say, "I wish I knew I had eternal life. I want to be free from this." "This is eternal life that they may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

You say, "I want an advocate. I don't have anyone standing beside me. John says for Him, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

Are you tired and worn out? The world just won't do it for you, will it? We try. Oh how hard you try. I know because I live in Montgomery and I grew up in Jackson

so I know what it's like. You know what Jesus said? "I am the Bread of Life." You're not going to find it anywhere but in Him. Quit running. He says, "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Do you feel alone? Do you even wonder if this body is really your family? "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear and Son and you shall call His name, Immanuel, which means 'God with us.'"

Are you sick? Prognosis ominous? We have a thirty-six year old daughter of our church eaten up with cancer right now. She's at UAB. You know what Jesus says? He's the Physician.

Has depression set in? The cloud that's so thick? Promises of God seem unattainable? He says, "I'm the Prince of Peace. I'm the Prince of Life."

You feel off balance? You think the ground underneath you is shaky? He says, "I'm a Rock. I'm a sure foundation. I'm the stone."

Are you a skeptic? He's the Messiah. Are you a skeptic? He's the Rabbi.

You say you wish to see Jesus? You want to look in the rearview mirror of 175 years and look forward to another 175 for this place? He's the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the glory of Israel, the head of the Church, the Bright Morning Star, the Amen, the Passover, the Resurrection, the Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Savior, Lord, Friend, Master, the Gate, the Door, the Fountain, the Gift of God, the Author of Salvation, the Blessed and only Ruler, the Branch of Jesse, the Bridegroom, Chosen of God, Consolation of Israel, the Cornerstone, my Deliverer, Desire of all the nations, Faithful and True, the Firstborn, the Foundation, the Fountain, the Gift of God, the Good Shepherd, the Head of the Church, the Heir of all things, the High Priest, the Hope of Glory, the Great I Am, the Judge, the King, the Lamb of God, the Lord of the dead and the living, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Master, the Mediator, the Messiah, the Mighty God, the One and Only, the Son of Man, the Resurrection, the True Vine.

If we might, before we sing, just remain in this posture before Him and I'll quickly close to say to you — do you realize how privileged you are? No one hardly has the privileges that you have and that I have to be a part of a dimmer switch ministry, which is a ministry that sheds light brighter and brighter and brighter as the years go by upon the only one, true, strong, loyal, wise, Friend who can give what Jackson, Mississippi so desperately needs and that is rest and peace.

We will stand together and sing 353, "For All the Saints."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, descend and rest in your hearts until the day breaks and all these

shadows flee away. Amen.

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