

## 2 Samuel 21 - Getting rid of blood stains

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Great, let me read 2 Samuel 21 for us. During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years.
- So David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, it is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house. It's because he put the Gibeonites to death.
- The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now, the Gibeonites were not part of Israel, but were survivors of the Amorites. The Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, had tried to annihilate them.
- David asked the Gibeonites, what shall I do for you? How shall I make atonement so that you will bless the Lord's inheritance? The Gibeonites answered him, we have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death.
- What do you want me to do for you? David asked. They answered the king, as for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul, the Lord's chosen one.
- [ 1 : 1 9 ] So the king said, I will give them to you. The king spared Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan, son of Saul.
- But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Ai's daughter, Rizpa, whom she had born to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter, Merab, whom she had born to Adriel, son of Barzilia, the Mephalonites.
- He handed them over to the Gibeonites who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together. They were put to death during the first days of harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.
- Rizpa, daughter of Ai's, took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night.
- When David was told what Ai's daughter Rizpa, Saul's concubine, had done, he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh-Gilead.
- [ 2 : 3 2 ] They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth-Shan where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa. David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.
- They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul's father Kish at Zela in Benjamin and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer on behalf of the land.
- Once again, there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines and he became exhausted. And Ishbi Benob, one of the descendants of Raphah, whose bronze spearhead weighed 300 shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David.

But Abishai, son of Zariah, came to David's rescue. He struck the Philistine down and killed him. And David's men swore to him, saying, Never again will you go out with us to battle so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.

In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. At that time, Sibikai, the Hushite, killed Saph, one of the descendants of Raphah.

[ 3 : 49 ] In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhan, the son of Jair, the Bethlehemite, killed the brother of Goliath, the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man, six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, 24 in all. He was also descended from Raphah. When he taunted Israel, Jonathan, son of Shimei, David's brother, killed him.

These four were descendants of Raphah in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men. Well, this is the word of the Lord, and we're going to consider it together.

So let me pray very briefly and ask for the Lord's help. Father, as we come to look at this passage of the Bible, we recognise with all its complexities and confusions for us, it is your word, and you do speak clearly from it.

So please help us this morning, both me as I speak, all of us as we listen, to be good at listening to you. We pray. Speak, O Lord, we ask in Jesus' name.

[ 4 : 55 ] Amen. Amen. Now, if you've been with us before this morning, you will know that we are working our way through the book of 2 Samuel, and we've come to what essentially is the final lap of the book.

We've come to what is the writer's conclusion. So let me just point out to you as we start off that the material here is not chronological. In other words, chapter 21 does not follow chapter 20 in chronology.

It's not a history order in that sense. Rather, what you've got in chapters 21, right to the end of the book in chapter 24, is a conclusion, a summary or summing up of the book.

You can see that in a few ways. So I think probably, although the NIV tries to fudge it a little bit, I think it's probably Goliath's death in verse 19 that gets mentioned, and where Elhan is a family name for David and Jar is another name for Jesse, probably.

Another way, though, that you can see it is the really careful way that the writer has arranged his material. So you'll notice, because we just read it, that it starts with Saul's sin. This chapter is all about Saul's sin, and then it ends with some fighting men and a list of their mighty victories with this defeat of the giant with 12 fingers and 12 toes.

[ 6 : 16 ] Then at the end of the book, in chapter 24, you have, at the end, David's sin, in that he counted the people of Israel. And then before that, you get a list of David's mighty men as well.

So you've got a symmetry between what's going on in chapter 21, what goes on in chapter 24. And then right in the middle of all of that is David's song and his last words.

And that is the sort of summing up of the book of 2 Samuel. What I want to do with our time this morning is really just to zoom in on those opening 15 verses of chapter 21 and look at what they teach us about sin and salvation.

So the first thing to do is just to make sure we get the story straight in our minds. You'll find in verse 1 that there is a famine that's been going on for three years.

Year after year after year, the crops have failed, there's been no rain. And so David, we're told, seeks the face of the Lord. Presumably here, David instinctively understands that this is more than just a bit of bad luck, right?

[ 7 : 18 ] He understands that the crop failure is God trying to tell him something and say he seeks the Lord. It feels like to David a covenant curse, a curse from God.

And he's right because God tells him that there is a blood stain or blood guilt on Saul for killing the Gibeonites. Now, hopefully, in case you don't know, it's OK if you don't know, the Gibeonites, we are told who they are in verse 2.

The Gibeonites were a group of people who way back in Joshua's day, so Joshua led the people in the conquest of the land of Israel. The Gibeonites came to Joshua pretending to be from a really long way away.

The Gibeonites recognized that Joshua was conquering the land and defeating and destroying all the people there. So they put moldy bread in their bags and broken wineskins, pretend that they'd traveled a long, long way and said to Joshua, listen, I know that you're going to conquer this land and we're from a really long way away away, but please make peace with us.

And so Joshua did and he made a covenant with them not to wipe them out. But really, as it turns out, the Gibeonites had tricked Joshua and they were from close by, but still the covenant promise stood.

[ 8 : 28 ] And here what you find out is that Saul had broken the covenant promise. His zeal for Israel led him to try and kill the foreigners, the Gibeonites, who were amongst God's people because of that covenant.

And that covenant breaking by Saul led to a bloodstain, which led to a famine, which had been sent as divine punishment or curse for breaking the covenant.

Now, all that means that in the rest of the story, David tries to make atonement, as he calls it in verse three, and asked the Gibeonites, what can be done for you? How can we deal with this guilt of Saul?

Gibeonites recognize that this kind of sin can't be bought off lightly. You can't pretend that it didn't exist. And as essentially slaves in Israel, the Gibeonites had no authority to exact any punishment.

They couldn't demand money. They couldn't demand life for life or anything like that. So they had to go through David. And so after a bit of encouragement from David at the end of verse four, they summon the courage to suggest the plan that seven sons of Saul be hung on trees in Gibeah, the ancestral home of King Saul.

[ 9 : 37 ] David agrees to the plan at the end of verse six, and he spares Mephibosheth, who you might have met if you were with us several chapters ago, in earlier on in the book of 2 Samuel.

David suggests that two sons of Saul's concubine, Risper, including confusingly one who is also called Mephibosheth, and also five grandsons from Saul's daughter Merab.

They are hung on trees on the mountain, exposed before the Lord, and they die together at the beginning of the barley harvest. Risper, we're told, sets up a kind of mini camp on sackcloth while she waits for the redemption from the famine and the arrival of the rains.

When, in verse 11, that David finds out what Risper has done, he rewards her and honours her two sons and the other five men with a burial. And he collects Saul and Jonathan's bones and buries them in the tomb of Saul's father in Zela.

And the story is wrapped up with those words that after that God answered prayer on behalf of the land. Now, that's a really super quick run through the story, and I'm sure as you hear it, you think, maybe if you're like me, you think, what a crazy story.

[ 10 : 54 ] What a crazy place. And probably what you're thinking is, is it right, is it even moral that two sons and five grandsons are killed for Saul's wickedness and not for their own?

How can that be fair? Well, we will come to that, but what I want us to do is just focus our time on two words in the passage and just see together how they unlock what this story means for us and why it's here in the Bible and why we're looking at it this morning.

The first word to think about is this word, bloodstain, bloodstains. There in verse one, we looked at it briefly before, bloodstain. Interestingly, in verse two, we're told that it is Saul's zeal for the people, which is presumably a good thing for a king to have, that leads him to doing a wrong thing of breaking this promise.

Bloodstain comes from the passion that led to an action of breaking a promise, killing a group of people who he was supposed to protect. He was bound by a covenant to protect them. And the breaking of that covenant means then that there is bloodstain on Saul's house and the land is experiencing the curse as a result.

Now, it's worth thinking about this word some more because really the word that our Bibles translate, bloodstain, is really just the Hebrew word, blood.

[ 12 : 13 ]    Bloods, bloods. The word bloodstain or blood guilt, as it might appear in other versions of the English Bible, was a word that was made up by the earliest translators of our English Bibles.

It was there in 1535 in Coverdale's Bible. It was probably invented by Tyndale himself as an English word to translate this Hebrew word, blood, when it's used in this kind of way.

And he famously used it in Psalm 51, where David says, having killed Uriah the Hittite, he says, deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, Psalm 51.

Now, the reason, you might be thinking, why would you make up a word? Well, the reason is that the English word blood doesn't really cover what the Hebrew word blood means in this context.

You see, in the ancient world, blood is not just the red stuff that flows through your veins, and that's the extent of my medical knowledge about blood. Rather, blood in ancient times was your life.

[ 13 : 15 ]    It represented your life. Life was in the blood. Life and death are symbolized by blood. The blood carries your life. So that the priest sacrificing at the altar in Leviticus, he would collect the blood of the sacrifice and use it to sprinkle and cleanse the people and the altar.

Not because the blood itself was magically in a sense, but because the blood represented the life of the sacrifice that was given. They are parallel to one another.

Now, if you bring that back to verse one of our passage here, you can see the point, can't you? God's point in 2 Samuel 21 verse one is that there is blood on the house of Saul because the stains of the lives of the Gibeonites are hanging over Saul and his household and over the people.

The death blood has stained the moral standing of the people in the land. Now, back in Numbers 35, God warned people about this. It'll come up on the screen behind me.

Let me read it to you. Numbers 35 verse 33. Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land. Not because blood is like a dirty substance on the floor.

[ 14 : 31 ]    No, because it's the guilt, the life contained in the blood, which pollutes the land. And atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the Lord, dwell among the Israelites. Now, the context in Numbers is about individual murders and a thing called cities of refuge, but you can see how it links to our passage this morning, can't you?

Saul had effectively murdered the Gibeonites and the bloodstain was on his house and the land and the people, and that was a problem. Now, I realise that as you talk about this this morning, we are now in the language of the ancient Israel, aren't we?

We're in the language of the Bible, we're outside of our own context, and this might sound a little bit strange to us, but we don't talk like this, do we? And so maybe you're sitting here this morning thinking, well, this is all very interesting, Steve.

You maybe don't think that. You maybe think this is all not very interesting, Steve. But imagine that you're thinking, this is a very interesting, Steve, but what on earth does this have to do with us? Perhaps this is just a historical quirk, an interesting fact of history.

[ 15 : 41 ] But I want to suggest to you that though we might not use this language, we all do know what bloodstain is. We all know what blood guilt is. This whole case for reparations that has been in the news recently is because there's a sense in which, and a right way to put it would be that there is a bloodstain on Britain for what happened in the slave trade.

There is a guiltiness for the lives that were taken advantage of and killed, and now calling out for justice.

You could use the same idea to speak of the bloodstain on the Harrods store for the action of their boss in his serial abuse of female staff and guests, abusing his power, taking away their dignity, bringing bloodstain, to use this language, on the company itself.

And we know that, don't we? We might not use this word, bloodstain or blood guilt, but we instinctively know, don't we, that when life is treated as less than what it is worth, it leaves a stain, a mark, or a guilt on the people who did it.

Lives call out for justice. But here's the pinch for us in 2 Samuel chapter 21, is that we're not so much to see this as a condemnation of the slave trade, as wicked as that was, or Mohammed al-Fayed as wicked as he was, but we are to read it incredibly as our own bloodstain.

[ 17 : 15 ] You see, if you read 2 Samuel 21 in the light of the New Testament, you see that this kind of language is not just used of kings and nations, it's used of individuals, people like you, and people like me, where we cover ourselves in blood guilt, not just for the heinous sin of murder or slave trading, I guess that none of us have been involved in that, but for the regular everyday sin of selfishness, pride, lust, anger, disobedience to our parents, lying, refusal to take the worship of our God seriously.

all of those, Paul says in Romans 6 verse 23, he says, the wages of sin is death. We are blood guilty because of our sin.

Now maybe this morning, you think, wow, that's way too serious, right? How can we get blood guilt for lying, or disobedience to our parents, or just losing my temper in a totally rational way when something happened?

How can that leave me with the kind of blood guilt that you're talking about from 2 Samuel chapter 21? Well, really, that is because lying, anger, lust, disobedience to our parents is what?

A symptom. A symptom of a deeper problem, which is our sin. Sin, which is the inclination of our hearts to live for ourselves, to do our own thing, to disregard our maker.

[ 18 : 43 ] That brings blood guilt. Not so much because we've taken the life of another, but because we've taken our own lives which have been given to us, and we've used them for ourselves.

We have robbed God of the lives that he has given us, and lived them for ourselves when they were meant to be lived for him, and therefore, the wages of sin is death.

This is really, really important. Let me try and illustrate what I mean here with a slightly silly illustration, but hopefully it will help. I want you to imagine with me that you've been given a job as an Asda grocery delivery driver.

Okay? So, you turn up at the depot, and you are handed the keys of a brand new, not yet dented, Mercedes van to deliver groceries around northwest London.

And they hand you the keys, and they load up the van with all sorts of different kinds of groceries, and they say, right, here's a list of places that you're to go with this van that we've given to you so that you might deliver these groceries.

[ 19 : 50 ] And you need to go down the list and work your way around and deliver these groceries. You know the drill. You know what's going on. But then what you do is you sit in the van and you start the engine. You think, do you know what?

I've got a Mercedes van full of food. I'm going to drive to Brighton. I'm going to sit on the beach and have the picnic of my life. Right? So, that's exactly what you do. And then as you drive back, you've had this great picnic on the beach at Brighton.

Then you drive back and you think, well, I'm on the A406. Everyone races on the A406. I wonder what this Mercedes van is capable of, right? And so you crunch it down a few gears and you absolutely rag it on the A406 trying to burn off Jeff and his Skoda.

And, you know, you spin the wheels up. The gearbox is making a really funny whine because you've absolutely thrashed this van. And then you, then you pull back up in the depot.

Okay? So you've, you've been out for your day's work. You've eaten all the food and you've ragged the van on the A406 and you pull up at the depot. What do you expect them to say? You expect them to tell you off, don't you?

[ 20 : 53 ] More than that, you expect them to take the van off you and never give it back. Don't you? Because you have taken what was given to you for a purpose and have used it for a completely different one.

For your own selfish indulgement. and the Bible says that is exactly what we have done with the lives that God has given us.

That we have taken what God has given us, the life that he has given us, that has been handed to us by God for a specific purpose. You know, none of us this morning chose to be born, did we?

None of us did. None of us gave ourselves life. None of us own ourselves in that way. The truth is that lives are given to us that we might live for the glory of him who made us and live for his glory in all things.

Not because that spoils our joy, but because that's joy defined. Considering God our highest good, our greatest joy. But instead, we take the blood, the life, the van, if you like, of our lives and in zeal for our own joy.

[ 22 : 07 ] We use it for the moral equivalent of having a beach for ourselves on Brighton Beach and doing races up the 406. You know, we're more interested, aren't we, with our own glory than we are with God's.

We take his purpose for work and we make it about us and our fulfillment and our identity. You know, we say that we're motivated, but really what we are is addicted to our own glory.

We take sex, which God has given to us for our joy within the marriage of a man and a woman and we use it for our own selfish self-expression and satisfaction.

We take the material blessing of stuff and we hoard it as if it's trophies of our own self-interest. We take the blessing of family and of friendships and we make it an idol that prevents us from attending the worship of our Creator or gathering with His people.

And because of that, our van, if you like, or our blood, our lives are stained with guilt and are due to another, to the one who gave them to us.

[ 23 : 22 ] We must give them back. Let me say this morning, if you will not, if you don't understand this, the message of the Bible will remain mysterious to you.

The message of the Bible is that what's wrong with the world is not so much just a bit of immorality, right? The fact that you lost your temper with your mum and you swore at her, right, that did not break the universe.

The fact that you have got a speeding ticket, that is not the problem in the universe. That the problem in the universe, the reason that we, as humanity, are destined to death, hell, judgment, is because those things that we do wrong are a symptom of the fact that we have taken the lives which have been given to us by God and have used them for ourselves.

And in zeal for our own pleasure and joy, we have lived for our own glory. And all of us are in the same boat. And I don't know how you read these stories of the Old Testament for yourself, but when you read it, I wonder who you imagine you're like, right?

I always imagine myself to be the great hero in these stories. You know, I'm the guy who slayed the guy with six fingers on each hand, right? That's who I want to be.

[ 24 : 39 ] But actually, the story of 2 Samuel is that I'm sore and I have stained my life with blood guilt. And while there might not be three years of famine to make me wonder about it, still the carnage of the world around me, the carnage of the city that we live in, screams to us that a covenant has been broken.

All is not well. And 2 Samuel 21 invites you to be wise enough to go, what's wrong with the world? What's the promise that we've broken?

What's wrong? Where's the blood guilt? Where's the blood stain? And the Bible says it's here. It's in our hearts. Now that leads us on to the second word of the passage to think about, which is this word, atonement.

Atonement. The word is there in verse 3 if you look down, and David instinctively knows that blood stain requires atonement. In other words, to remove the stain of Saul's guilt, it needs justice.

It needs a putting of the record right. It can't just be like a kind of cover-up. Rather, before God the judge, something needs to happen.

[ 25 : 53 ] Now, we saw, didn't we, that the Gibeonites are slow to ask what they know needs to happen because they know that blood guilt can't be removed by a payment of money, but only by the shedding of blood.

In other words, legal justice, as we've been considering already, legal justice for blood guilt is the payment of blood. Life for life. Just like Numbers 35 said, only blood can wash away blood.

Only a life surrendered can pay for a life taken. You know, anything less is just legal fiction, right? It's just trying to cover it up. Now, I said before that you might have some questions about the way this ends up being done in 2 Samuel 21.

You know, I think the question that we're asking, isn't it, is it right for these seven innocent sons or grandsons to die for the sin of their father or their grandfather? You know, after all, doesn't the Old Testament tell us that children shouldn't be made to pay for the sins of their parents?

Now, in a way, that's one of those situations where our big question as we come to the Bible is not really the question the passage is answering, so we need to just be cautious. Really, there isn't, I don't think, an answer to that question.

[ 26 : 57 ] Some people, some scholars, you read and they tell you this is absolutely the right thing to do. Others are less convinced. You know, some people argue that maybe these seven sons, grandsons, were involved in the slaughter of the Gibeonites in some way.

Others say there's no reason to think that God approves of their death and that David was just trying to knock off a few more of Saul's household. Now, what are you supposed to think? Well, it's worth bearing in mind that as horrific as the death of these seven innocent sons might sound, it's likely that Saul and his men killed more Gibeonites than seven.

Probably more died in the famine as well. It's also worth remembering that we do still believe, don't we, in guilt by association. It's why, say, for example, Putin's family are being sanctioned even though they're not directly responsible for the war in Ukraine.

But the reality is that actually that question is not really answered in the passage. And that's not because the Bible is deliberately vague or doesn't anticipate that you might ask it. The reason that that question is not answered in your passage this morning is because it's not the point.

It's not the point. But what is the point? Well, the point is that the blood of the seven sons is, as it turns out, effective. It works. So Rizpah sits and waits for the fruits of the atonement as she waits for the rain to come and the rain does come.

[ 28 : 16 ] And God is referenced throughout the passage as being the one in front of whom the atonement is made. God is the one who is withholding the rains and God is the one who sends the rains at the end. God is the one who responds to the plea made in the bodies of these seven men.

You see, this is the point. Atonement for blood guilt in 2 Samuel 21 can only be made by the shedding of blood. The wages of sin is death.

Now, ponder on that for a moment. If what we have said is true, if you and I stand on the brink of eternal death, of hell in judgment for the crime of stealing our lives and living them for our own glory, then atonement, cleansing, forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, all those wonderful things can only be found if you can find someone who is willing to spill their blood for you.

Because anything less is not justice. Let me tell you this morning, this is why religion is so mad. It's crazy, isn't it? Can you imagine the idea that God would be satisfied with you praying five times a day to cover over the sin of stealing your life?

Wouldn't that be ridiculous? You know, that'd be like pulling up in the Mercedes van having ragged it down the A406 and eaten all the food in the back of it and say, don't worry, I polished the number plate at the back.

[ 29 : 51 ] What? Is that going to atone for what you've done? Don't be utterly ridiculous. That's not justice. Oh, you know, I attended church. I read my Bible.

I tried to be good. I was culturally a Christian. Anyone who asked me, I said I'm a Christian. Well, of course, that doesn't cover it, does it? If you are guilty of a bloodstain, you need to find someone who can spill their blood for you.

Which brings us to the good news, doesn't it, of the passage? Which is that 1,500 years after these events, you find a bleeding man on a cross. The truly innocent son from heaven, God in human flesh.

Not standing in a place of legal fiction or questionable justice, but planned in the mind of God from eternity past, where the sins of his people, their blood guilt, would be handed over to him.

Literally, imputed, counted to, given to, Jesus Christ, so that the innocent son, the one who knew no sin, might on the cross be made sin for us, so that in him we might know righteousness, forgiveness, grace, and mercy, that the reins of God's blessing might fall on us, so that while the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



[ 31 : 18 ] This is what the hymn writer means when he says, what riches of kindness he lavished on us. His blood was the payment, his life was the cost. We stood neath a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. It's why when we come in a moment to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we will say, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, says Jesus.

I spilt my blood for you to wash you of your blood guilt. The blood speaks of good news, atonement and forgiveness, the way back from guilt.

This then is the point for us, isn't it? 2 Samuel 21 sort of jars on us because of the innocent death of these seven sons for sins they didn't commit and it doesn't seem right. But the big story of the Bible, the story of the universe is of a true innocent son spilling his blood for you and me that we might be forgiven.

[ 32 : 31 ] That's the story. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.

Here's blood for me. Let me say this morning, if you have never trusted Christ, if you've never turned to him and said, Lord Jesus, please wash me clean with your blood.

Please take away my sin that I might know you and love you and live for you. If you've never done that, can I invite you to do that this morning? Don't delay and don't hesitate and don't pretend that you've done it when you've not.

Turn to Jesus and trust in him, his life for your life, his death for yours. And if you're a Christian this morning, 2 Samuel 21 serves, doesn't it, as a joyous reminder that in the Lord Jesus all your blood guilt is gone.

That in life and death you have nothing to fear because blood has been shed to wash away your blood guilt. If you're a Christian this morning and you're trusting in Christ, it is impossible for God to condemn you because it would be unjust because blood has already been shed.

[ 33 : 52 ] the payment has already been paid in Christ so you can be forgiven. So great floods of mercy and showers of goodness might come down on us.

And do you know what, Christian, this morning, this isn't a message that you're supposed to keep to yourself. This is the news our world is desperate to hear that there is freedom and forgiveness found in the innocent blood of Jesus shed for us on our behalf.

Let me pray and then we'll sing together as we respond. Let's just take a moment of silence and maybe you can respond in your own hearts to something you want to say to the Lord turning to him.

Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, I don't want to pretend that our sin doesn't matter, that we're better than we really are, that we have any hope in ourselves or our goodness or our good works.

But we thank you for the Lord Jesus who shed his blood for us that we might be fully, freely, forgiven, that we might be able to live lives for your praise and your glory.

[ 35 : 45 ] Thank you that Jesus has treated the cause, not just the symptoms, giving himself for us in our place that he might make us new people. Please, Lord, help us to continue to delight and find our joy in Christ.

We rejoice in what he's done for us and we thank you for him. Amen.