

Father God, we are here to sing and to pray and to be in your word and to celebrate and to worship. We are so grateful for the place that you have given us to do all of this. We are so grateful for all that we have to share with so many others. We are so grateful especially for our salvation that is made possible through you, your sacrifice that you made for us. You are the cornerstone of who we are. You're the cornerstone of what we are. You are the pastor and the teacher of this church and of the church universal. We pray your Holy Spirit would lead us in all things this day and that we will indeed find that joy in the Lord and enthusiasm that can only come by the power of your Holy Spirit in us in Jesus name. All right, Ms. Wanda, read your first one. Okay, I picked Matthew 14 29 31 and the reason I chose this for sure was because Jesus was calling me down the path that was scary. I pondered it and then Jesus took my hand and walked with me. It showed me that even in the path, if the path is dark and scary, if you grab Jesus's hand, he lights the path and calms you. "Come," he said, "that Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. Thank you. I am always fascinated how different pieces of scripture, different passages and different verses affect different people. That's exactly why we call it the living word because as Paul teaches, our spirit blends with God's Holy Spirit and God's Holy Spirit leads us in all understanding and wisdom. You've heard this preached a couple of different ways from me and Wanda's interpretation that she cleans to when she needs to is in the middle of that storm, she has the hand of Jesus to calm her. That passage, as we know, we just preached a little while ago to demonstrate the sovereignty of Jesus over nature. We have a couple of things going on. We have the storm and we have the disciples at that time terrified in the boat and then we have the presence of Jesus in bodily form walking on the water toward the boat. So now we know that he is sovereign over nature because you and I can't do that. I believe I used the line, "Find me a human being that can do that and we'll call off this sermon series because he alone is not worthy, there's others that can do it." But what we're talking about here and what is often used in this passage is the idea that Peter's faith kept his feet on the water, on top of the water, and when he began to look around and worry about what was happening and worry about the storm, he took his eyes off of Jesus and into the water he would go. We see that that is in fact a very, very valid interpretation because he said, "Lord, save me." Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, verse 31, "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And we press this point all the time here at Church Down and Jesus has the words that are being interpreted here, not just "you of little faith," he calls his disciples "little people of faith," like "little faiths." He uses it as a noun and he says, "You little people of faith," or "you people of little faith, why do you doubt?" Not only all of the things that had come before, but for crying out loud they just watched Jesus walk through the storm on the top of the water and they listened to his promise, "Step out in faith and you will be okay." And then Peter experienced the fulfillment of that promise. He stepped out in faith and he was okay. And here's the human condition, then he wasn't. And you can apply that, I'm sure, almost every day of your life and you're walking strongly with the Lord and you feel his presence. You're in Scripture, you're singing songs until you're not, until the guy cuts you off or until somebody calls or until whatever the case may be and then all of a sudden Jesus doesn't matter, God's Holy Spirit within you doesn't matter, only you finding your own satisfaction in that situation matters. And that's wrong. We do it and hopefully on the other side of it we realized that was wrong and hopefully through our sanctification it doesn't happen that often anymore and it's not that extreme anymore, but you're never not going to be both sinner and saint. You're not ever going to be while your heart is beating on this earth covered by Jesus's righteousness. You have no righteousness of your own, so you will be in that position. The key is again knowing that, repenting and coming back. We hear, "When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down, then those who were in the boat worshiped him saying, 'You are truly the Son of God.'" And that kind of, I don't know what the word, it kind of irritates me. I know that the Lord is doing this for our edification. He's showing us, I mean, we're just finishing up the Old Testament. When you go through that every year you realize how

deeply, incredibly flawed God's people were and are. How far away. We just read a passage in which they were rediscovering, they rebuilt the temple, rediscovering the scriptures and they went through a period where they just read the scriptures all day, every day, to sort of relearn that and they realized that they had not celebrated the Feast of Cabernet Hymels for a thousand years, a thousand years. And it never ceases to amaze me how far they fell and how constantly God's grace was available to them, God's power was available to them. We do that as Christians all the time, do we not? All the time. And so over and over again in the Old Testament, over and over again in the New Testament, we read these passages. Do you believe this? Why do you have so little faith? I do believe, help me in my unbelief. Time and time again, and especially with the disciples and later on in the letters, through the miracles and the things that are done, the people are experiencing the very power of God and then they walk away. And I know that it's there for my edification, your edification, so we may be reminded, right, God is swatting a fly with a sledgehammer and trying to get this across to his people, that this is who you are and you can be better, but this is who you are. So indeed it is a passage that talks about keeping your eyes on Jesus and maintaining your faith. And I would encourage you to especially and intentionally think of that whenever you don't want to. Whenever you want to turn to that person and tell them off so that you feel satisfied, intentionally think of this scripture because that's not the faith that you keep. Amen. Good one. Thank you. This is the one that I've not been looking forward to because like I said, if you heard the live stream, Josh is going to be more used to watching the live stream. I can just see him googling, "What is the most obscure scripture ever in the Bible?" I would never say that. You would never. He did say, "Give me more credit than that." But I do appreciate him volunteering. Again, if you would like to say a little bit about what it means to you or you can just randomly just read it. Okay. So I got Job 23 verses 8, 9, and 10. Okay, go ahead. So it's always been a verse. I don't know how I ever found it but I just at one point I read it and so it's one of those verses that is always a faith verse for me. Like, hey listen, it's, it might not be able to see what's going on right now but it's going on and he's there so I'll suck it up and keep going. So here it is, "But if I go to the east, he's not there. If I go to the west, I don't find him. When he isn't working the north, I do not see him. When he returns, when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. What he knows is the way I take him. When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." That's really good. Wasn't that better? No. And I saw that that's leading, so turn this on again. Because we keep coming back to probably one of the, I mean, obviously every week I preach salvation and I preach the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross and nearly every week, if not every week, we talk about faith and we just got done talking about faith. Now we can set aside all of the world-changing theology in Job. We talked about that when we studied Job. We said one of the biggest contributions that Job makes and why we're here and why it's here in our canon is to shift the thinking that gods are not totally sovereign to the fact that Yahweh, God, is totally sovereign. That he is a choice maker and that he will do as he wills. Before that, and as is argued in Job, you must have done something wrong, you're being cursed. If you were to do something right, you would be rewarded. And that is the old theology. That's transactional. And so we do things for God and a god and we expect things in return. And that's preached in the Christian church today. We talk about the prosperity gospels and all those different false teachings about how and who God is. But this is what Job, the whole book of Job sets out to change. Yahweh is not an idol. Yahweh is not in the pantheon of any set of gods from any culture. Yahweh is sovereign overall. He can do what he wills, when he wills. And when we read this, we read from the beginning of 28, "People know where to mine silver and how to refine gold. They know where to dig iron from the earth and how to smell copper from rock. They know how to shine light in the darkness and explore the farthest regions of the earth as they search in the dark for ore. They sink a mine shaft into the earth far from where anyone lives. They descend on ropes swinging back and forth. Food is grown on the earth above but down below the earth is melted by fire. Here the rocks contain precious lapses lazuli and the dust contains gold. These are treasures no bird or prey can see. No wild animal has walked upon these treasures. No lion has ever set a fall there." I was reading Job 28. I told you! I told you! Because I was like, "That's not what it says before." And then I kept on rolling. Thank you.

[Laughter] "My complaint is still a bitter one and I try hard not to groan aloud. If only I knew where to find God, I would go to his court, I would lay out my case and present my arguments. Then I would listen to his reply and understand what he says to me. Would he use his great power to argue with me? No, he would give me a fair hearing. Honest people can reason with him so I would be forever acquitted by my judge. I go east but he is not there. I go west but I cannot find him. I do not see him in the north for he is hidden. I look to the south but he is concealed. But he knows where I am going and that when he tests me I will come out as pure as gold. For I have stayed on God's paths, I have followed his ways and not turned aside. I have not departed from his commands but have treasured his words more than daily food. But once he has made his decision who can change his mind? Whatever he wants to do he does." Now we're getting to the heart of the issue. "So he will do to me whatever he has planned. He controls my destiny. No wonder I am so terrified in his presence when I think of it terror grips me. God has made me sick at heart. The Almighty has terrified me. Darkness is all around me. Thick, impenetrable darkness is everywhere." Now we know. Job is walking this fine line of coming out of the idea that I don't understand why this is happening to me because I have walked in the pathways of God. I am truly a righteous man. We learned that God even calls him a righteous man. But through all of his trials and through all of the arguments that he's heard thus far he's learning that that's not the reason for his success or his failure. He's coming to terms with the idea that it is God and God alone who decides what will happen to him and for him. You do not control the power of God. The power of God, God's sovereignty is over you. And Job is beginning to learn this because we read in the passage that Josh read, "I can't find him anywhere." But we never read in Job that "I can't find him anywhere so I completely give up my faith." "I can't find him anywhere. All these terrible things have happened to me." His wife tells him to curse God and die. But he doesn't. And that's the core scripture that Josh brought out his talking about. Job is quite literally learning this the hard way. When we talked about the storm and we talked about the hand of Jesus, Job is experiencing the sovereignty of God over his life. He's like, "This isn't working the way everybody says it should work. I'm good. I get rewards. I'm bad. I get condemned. This is happening upside down because I have been good and bad things are happening." Why? Because God chose to do that. And then he goes one step further here in 23, "So I search for God to present my case and I find him nowhere." And as I said as the Psalms read time and time again we read throughout scripture. Does that break off your faith in God? I had yet another individual this week's talk about, and it's one of my groups, say that God is silent. God is never silent. Open your Bible and read it. God is never silent. If you're lacking faith in that way, open your Bible and read it. Find a short plan to read. Find a Gospel to read. Hear the word of God. Fill your head and heart with the word of God. There are going to be moments when you look to the east and you look to the west and you look to the sky and you can't seem to see him or grasp what he's trying to do over your life. But is that a faith breaker for you? Again, to teach this lesson to us, God is once again swatting a fly with the sledgehammer. Look at everything that happens to Job. And he's teaching us that through it all Job comes to terms with the fact that it's happening because God said God said so. And I don't have control over that. And then there's always the argument, well that's wrong, Pastor Brian, because at the end God, Job, did good and then God gave him all this stuff. No, God restored it onto Job. What was his? Double. He restored it. It wasn't a gift for being good. He restored what God had taken from him. God restored. Why? Because he wanted to. Not because Job was a good boy and saw through all of his trials. And we need to understand that very very clearly. God giveth and God taketh away. He's always present. Through our New Testament eyes we know that because we have our holy scriptures. Good one. Good one. Jobism is the two books that really blow up theology and really take it from the ancient days into what we understand, right? Yahweh, who Yahweh is, are Leviticus and Job. Those are books that just changed the world and changed the way human beings thought about God. Not gods anymore. God and who he is. And he is sovereign, creator, redeemer, sustainer. Good stuff. I'm ready. I did not realize when I was asked to do this I'd be up here facing you, usually I'm facing the wall. Anyway, just a little back story. The last couple years I have done that Bible, read the Bible through in a year, and this year like Jeff decided to

lead it and I just kind of like was obligated to do it again. My husband was in charge. I just felt that way and it just was not like I don't I just I wasn't into it. Like I'm just being honest. I was trying to do it. I read it the first two years I read it through like with a Bible in front of me and this year I'm like I just I'm going to just try to listen to it you know I'm going to do the audio version. I found out like that is not for me. I cannot I just can't comprehend when I listen to stuff like that, listen to anything. So yeah I'm just not an auditory learner. So I just I wanted to go deeper and a couple months ago I contacted a friend. Sorry there was no one from here but You have friends outside this congregation? I've been contacted this lady from our former church neither of us go there anymore but we remain friends and and we are going to Bible study together. It just worked out and it was just God's timing that we were both looking to study. So we're studying Ephesians and recently came on chapter three. He needs to be able to see. So the one verse I mean it's really the whole passage I don't want to be too long but the focus is like verse 10 is where I had my question but I can read further back just to give more context. So this is Paul he's in prison. He says surely you have heard about the administration and I hope this isn't too wordy whatever it's just it's kind of deep but shortly you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you that is the mystery made known to me by revelation as I have already written briefly and uses that word mystery several times in here. In reading this then you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of this power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people this grace was given me to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery for which for ages past was kept hidden in God who created all things. This is where I kind of had my question. His intent was that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. So it was really that verse 10 that just had um I was just like whoa what is that like through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms and actually that I just had that's where my question is like why are we the church making known something to the heavenly realms I don't know so there you go. The last one. The last one. No. And you were worried about me. Yeah. Before I forget we want to pray for our sister Cheryl. Cheryl I originally she had originally come to me and then she let me know last evening that she she had been progressively getting sicker through the week and she really wanted to come but then thank you Steph. Steph had indicated she had a question in the scripture and so I reached out to Steph last night at the last minute and so she stepped in with this. Again the content one I love the testimony as to why scriptures mean so much to you and the questions that you have and the idea of putting things into context and understanding and wanting to search more deeply into the scriptures for answers. Ephesians if you want to read the book of spiritual warfare read Ephesians. Ephesians is famous for Ephesians 6 right in the whole armor of God and but the book is about the church being a sanctuary of light a harbor of goodness in a dark and wicked and evil world. Sometimes when we read now Jesus casts out demons in the people that are around him we understand that all the battles that we face are really that between good and evil and the tip of the spear in that worldly global battle between good and evil is the church. Now not the church as though I've heard songs written about this when we'll go marching on and those sorts of things but it is the church and the teaching of who God is who Jesus is and who God's Holy Spirit is and how that works with you and in you. You will be the demonstration to the physical world which is inhabited by the demonic. If you are not of God then you are of the prince of this world as he's called. If you're not of God then you are of Satan and that's not to say that you all hail Satan bow down on the Satan worshiper it just means you are not in the kingdom of God and you are being led by your fleshly desires and the temptations that are placed in front of you and the

things that fill you up and make you feel whole and you and you and you and Satan says this roll with this. Those people who say oh I'm not going to I don't decide one way or the other I'm not an atheist I'm not an agnostic I just whatever I don't care you've made your decision that's your decision there isn't any gray area between this and this is what Paul's trying to get through in the entire book of Ephesians that every time you as a Christian a Holy Spirit-filled Christian interact with anyone inside the kingdom of God or outside of the kingdom of God you are engaging in spiritual well outside the kingdom of God engaging in spiritual warfare you are demonstrating the love and the power of God within you to somebody who doesn't have it somebody who's being guided by their own earthly desires which are guided by the Opposer of God's will the Satan right Satan and so everything every interaction that we have every way that we behave all the words that we speak who we are as Christians demonstrate to those who are not of the kingdom of God who God is when you are interacting with somebody who is not in the in the kingdom of God right Jeff right you were playing in Newberry town right that's a long way away they must be done they started dying oh wow that's too early for me but we're every time you're interacting with somebody who is not of the kingdom of God you are engaged in spiritual warfare because that individual who is being led tempted or maybe openly worshiping wickedness is experiencing God's Holy Spirit through you so that's how the church and the individuals who are part of the church are as I used the phrase the tip of the spear in all of this because without good teaching without good preaching without your willingness to go into the word and be and digest the word and be of the word and know who God is know about salvation able to answer all of the gotcha questions that are they're going to ask you then you're not going to be able to effectively engage that doesn't mean necessarily that it's a complete failure and you're a failure and all of those different things but it is the reason why we as a church gather not to sing and celebrate about ourselves or any other reason than to go deeply into the word of God bound by his Holy Spirit led by his Holy Spirit worship him learn grow become now we and when we go outside we engage and you don't have a choice all of the individuals that you will meet that are not of the kingdom of God you don't have a choice you are of God you are a child of God and whether they're openly displaying their wickedness or whether they're saying none of that I just don't none of it I don't I don't go on one side or the other it doesn't matter to me you are engaged because all of our battles are spiritual when I think of all of this he says well let's start at 10 and finish Galatians three God's purpose in all of this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places right when we look post pentecost Satan learns a couple of things upon the resurrection one he didn't win he thought he had a shot no sorry you're defeated and the demonic is defeated but just like a wounded animal the demonic is going to lash out and try to take down every last one of God's image bearers that it can and so the church is demonstrating you the temple of God's holy spirit are demonstrating to all of the wicked forces that seek to oppose God's will that you are of God that God is sovereign does that make sense this was his eternal plan which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord there is no longer a temple that we build where God's presence dwells you are the temple of the Lord do you not know that your body is the temple of the Lord right where you go he goes and every human being you engage with experiences him because of Christ and our faith in him we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence so please don't lose heart because of my trials here I am suffering for you so you should feel honored when I think of all this I fall to my knees and pray to the father the creator of everything in heaven and on earth I pray that from his glorious unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his spirit that's the only way then Christ will make his own in your hearts as you trust in him your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong and may you have the power to understand as all God's people should how wide how long how high and how deep his love is may you experience the love of Christ though it is too great to understand fully then you will be made complete with all of the fullness of life and power that comes from God now that's got to hit a different way when you when when you make that decision when you submit your will to his when you profess your faith you get all of that and Paul's writing this from a position of subjection in prison and he's feeling this he's feeling the mighty power of God as he's being

oppressed persecuted hurt and that should be an inspiration whenever we as followers of God have to simply go here or go there and do this and do that but we must understand that you're not just talking with the individual you're talking with the spirit that that individual is guided by and if it's not God's holy spirit then it is of the demonic it is of wickedness and that's what it means by the church we learn we grow we become now we can go we are the tip of the spear when we walk out of this into the mission field and speak with people who live a Christian life all of those things all of it is spiritual warfare final passage because I just love this we read it as a prayer often in here now all glory to God who is able through his mighty power at work within us to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think glory to him in the church and in Jesus Christ through all generations forever and ever amen thank you