

The God of Sojourners

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[0 : 0 0] Great. We're just going to take a time to just pray as a church a little more about, we call this the pastoral prayer, just to really pray for the city, pray for the things that are also on God's heart. And so even though I'll be leading us, you know, out loud, just feel free to be praying in your own hearts, to amen to what I'm saying, to be praying under your own breath for what God is burdening you with. All right? So let's just take a time to really say, God, we can't do any of this without you. All right? Let's pray. Father, we just confess our need for you. And even this week, this morning, just the ease in which we are distracted, God, by honestly trivial things at the end of the day, things that do it with our own comfort, and our own pleasure, God. But this morning, we just want to come and look at you again, God.

What is on your heart? Who do you care about, God? And we know you love this world. You love the world so much that you sent your son to die for it, God. And you love this city. And God, Lord, we just, we just humble ourselves before you this morning and ask you to just change our city, God. We cry, how long, oh Lord, until you come back in glory, God. But in the meantime, we know, Lord, that you are in the process of making something new in this city, God. So this morning, we pray over the divisions.

We pray over the hurts. We pray over the fear. We pray over the anger, God, that is gripping our city right now. Lord, we pray over the elections that are happening as we speak right now. We pray for every polling station. We pray for all the people who are serving and volunteering. We pray for every candidate, God. No matter whether we agree with them or not, whether we're voting for them or not, we pray for them, God, because they were made in your image, Lord Jesus. We pray for everyone who will be voting, God. Would you just keep them safe? We pray for the police, Lord, who will be watching over the polling stations. Would you guide them, Lord? Would you watch over them, God? Lord, we need you in this time. We need you in all times, God. But right now, Lord, we just cry out to you on behalf of our city, Lord. Lord, would this day just be a day where your people shine? Even as they vote, as they talk to their friends, would they point them to the greatest hope that we have?

Eternity with you. Hope, joy, eternal joy. Adoption by the King of Kings. God, we give our city to you. And Father, we also just continue to pray for all the marginalized. In this time of political and social unrest, God, we also just, Lord, help us not to lose sight of those who are really just hidden, the minorities, the ethnic minorities. We talked about some today, but there's also the Nepali community, the South Asian community in Hong Kong, the refugees and asylum seekers, Lord, those who are trapped in red light districts all over Hong Kong, young single moms, teen moms who are just struggling to make ends meet and to take care of their infants, God. We need you, Lord. We need you to open our eyes to them. And Lord, would you just watch over them? Would you continue to minister to them supernaturally? Would your Holy Spirit just speak to them to know, to let them know that they are loved? They are known by their creator,

God. And Lord, use us as your people, as your hands and your feet to speak and to touch, Lord, to hold onto those who are hurting and who are broken, God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

[4 : 1 9] We're going to invite the scripture readers to come up to do our scripture reading and lead us in that. The scripture reading comes from Revelation and Deuteronomy. Please follow along in your bulletins or on the screen. From Revelation 7, we read, After this, I look and behold a great multitude that one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might to be our God forever and ever. Amen.

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, Who are these clothes and white robes, and from where have they come? I said to him, Sir, you know.

And he said to me, These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And from Deuteronomy 10, we read, And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good.

[6 : 35] Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heavens of heavens, the earth with all that it is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

Circumcise, therefore, the four skins of your heart and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.

This is the word of God. Amen. Thank you, Janet. Thank you, Gary. If you're new with us, we've been going through as a church the book of Revelation, and the closing book of the Bible, and it's been quite a journey.

[8 : 09] And I don't know if you've noticed, I think one thing that you've, if you've been following the series with us, the one thing that I think has kind of struck us, and has surprised us, is just how much of the book is actually about mission, and evangelism, and being a witness for the Lord Jesus.

We talked about martyrs, and people just speaking for the Lord, and prophesying on behalf of the Lord. And another interesting aspect, I think, that we've been hitting, is this vision of people from every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and language coming together.

And that's the passage from Revelation 7, that we just read. That's one really good example, of this idea, over and over in Revelation, we see this idea of people, uniting around, worshiping God.

And it's a beautiful image, isn't it? Because we all know the racism, and the division that's just racking, not even just Hong Kong, but across the world.

And here God is saying in Revelation, that actually, that's not the last word. History is actually moving in the direction, and that one day, everybody, every tribe, every tongue, all of God's people, no matter what your socioeconomic background is, no matter what your language is, no matter what your history is, that for those who call on Jesus' name, who worship Him, everyone will be united around the throne of God.

[9 : 40] So this is kind of just to show you that Revelation is kind of our framework. And even though today, we're not going to be focusing specifically on Revelation as our base text, that we're going to see throughout entire history of the Bible, that this doesn't just kind of happen out of the blue.

It's not just like one day, God wakes up and thinks, oh, it's a good idea for me to unite all peoples, and for me to eliminate racism. But actually, when we look at the Bible, all throughout history, God is a God who has loved all nations and all tongues and all tribes and languages.

And He's always wanted His people to reflect that as well. And so when we get to today's main passage in Deuteronomy, it's one of the foundational books of the Bible.

It's one of the earliest books of the Bible, right? And we go back to the very establishment of the people of Israel. And so you have the leader, Moses.

I think a lot of us know the story. So he's been raised up to lead the people out of captivity into Egypt. And now Moses is at the end of his journey, at the end of his ministry.

[10:55] And he's basically giving a final sort of exhortation, a final call to the people. And this is what Deuteronomy is really all about. And so he's kind of just recapping, giving a summary of all that God has done.

He's chosen you. He's taken you out of captivity in Egypt. He's performed these terrifying signs and wonders, you know, parting the Red Sea, defeating the Egyptians.

He's brought you faithfully through the wilderness. And now you are at the cusp of the promised land. And so he's been raised up to you. Now you're ready to step in.

And so when we get to this chapter, chapter 10 that we just read, this is all kind of wrapped up and summarized so beautifully. Just read with me again verse 14.

It says, Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. This description of God, he is the creator.

[12:00] Everything, the cosmos, the universe belongs to him. Yet, the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

And let's just fast forward to verse 17. We get this magnificent description of God. It says, For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, the awesome God who is not partial and takes no bribe.

And so you see, this is kind of God's calling card. This is him describing, he is the ultimate creator of the universe. He is just and fair and mighty and awesome.

And yet he has chosen this little insignificant people group in the ancient Near East to be his treasured possession.

And Israel hasn't done anything to deserve this favor. It was simply grace of God.

[13:13] And you see, that grace isn't just a New Testament idea. It's something that just runs through from the beginning to the end. You know, it's like a couple that adopts a child, an infant, and what has the infant done to deserve being adopted?

What did they do to be so qualified? Nothing, right? They chose, the parents chose to adopt them. The kid didn't earn anything.

And so maybe it makes sense why God would remind the people of his greatness and all he's done for him because God isn't just a loving, you know, parent that adopts an orphan, but God is the creator of the cosmos.

And he knows what is best for the people is for them to recognize that and to worship him. But here's where it gets a little, well, it's been interesting so far, but this is where it gets more interesting, I think.

Because immediately after verse 17, we get to verse 18, and it says this, God executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and he loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.

[14:27] And after all this majestic language about God's awesomeness and him being the creator and how he's chose you, Israel, to be his treasured possession, he kind of just talks about his sort of particular care for a few types of people.

And I think that's cause for us to take us to maybe pause here because maybe this is important to God. And when you read through the entire Bible, you'll actually realize that this isn't sort of a one-off anomaly.

Deuteronomy 10:18 is not an isolated incident, and these three groups of people are mentioned over and over and over again. It talks about the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, and also those who are generally poor.

And I think most of us can imagine, I think instinctively, okay, I can understand maybe why widows and orphans, they deserve special attention. But what about sojourners?

What's that all about? I don't even use that word ever. When's the last time you said sojourner before today, right? I didn't even really know what it meant until I looked it up in the dictionary.

[15:42] And so what is it? So we're going to spend the rest of this time really zeroing in on this word because if Deuteronomy 10:18 is really what it says, then we need to know what a sojourner is.

We need to know why this is close to God's heart and what it has to do with you and me today. So let's dig in a little deeper on this idea.

So in ancient times, a sojourner was basically someone who lived in a different nation. And you can think of a sojourner as someone who's a non-citizen.

So someone without the full rights, the full standing that a citizen of a nation would have. But in the ancient Near East, more or less, nations were pretty much consolidated on ethnic groups.

So if you were a sojourner, you were very much a foreigner. You know, it's not like an immigrant country like Canada where it's like a melting pot of nations and ethnicities already.

[16 : 46] And so if that's the case, if you're so foreign, why would a sojourner be a sojourner? Why would you go there? And I think you can imagine there are a bunch of reasons. They could be escaping war and famine.

Maybe some of them were just drawn to the people of Israel. They were drawn to the God of Israel. But you can perhaps imagine if you're just a sojourner in this foreign land with people who are so different from you, how sort of ostracized you might feel, how different you might feel.

Some of you guys perhaps have experienced a bit of that already. But it's not only that. Because more importantly, as a sojourner in biblical times, you would be very vulnerable from an economic standpoint.

So it's not just the social things. It's not just your cultural sort of comfort. But as in, from a financial and economic standpoint, you would be vulnerable. Because as a sojourner in these ancient times, you would have no land rights.

And that's important because in an agrarian society, land is food. And food is your livelihood. Right? Food is your life. And so maybe you can see why also the same thing applied to widows and the fatherless.

[18 : 05] Because the land rights were attached to the father, to the husband. If the father died and you had a widower and you had the fatherless, they would lose their livelihood.

They would lose their right to the land in that culture. So the point I'm trying to make here is that God didn't just kind of pick three random categories of people. It's that in this society, there was very specific reasons why he wants to execute justice for the fatherless and why he loves the widow and the sojourner.

What he's essentially saying is that I have a special concern for the most vulnerable in society. I have a special concern for the most vulnerable in society.

And so Deuteronomy 10 basically sums up who God is. It's fantastic. This one passage, God is the one true God, the creator of the universe. The God who loves his people, who loves his treasured possession and wants them to worship him.

But he's also specifically the God who loves and cares for the most vulnerable in society. And so in light of this, in light of this, Moses explains to the people, he challenges them and this is what the adequate response to this God is.

[19 : 31] You've seen who God is. He's shown you who he is. This is how we should respond. Let's read verse 12 together. You should fear the Lord your God. Seeing all these wonders and miracles, fear him.

He's not just your dad. He's not just your heavenly father. He's the king of kings. Walk in all his ways. Love him. Serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and keep the commandments.

Keep the statutes of the Lord which I am commanding you today for your good. And then verse 19, he commands, love the sojourner.

Therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. So if the people of Israel truly received God's love, they truly saw him and for who he really was, they would love him in response.

And that would necessarily include caring about what God cares about. So the blunt truth that is presented before Israel right now is that they could not say, if I was an Israelite, I could not say that I know God yet at the same time ignore the needs of the orphan, the widow, the sojourner.

[20 : 53] You know, this wasn't like a charitable bonus at the end of the year, where you get your charity in. You know, there were no tax receipts in ancient Israel. This was simply about hearing God, seeing him, and emulating him, following him, obeying him.

And that's why you have over and over again, as you know, the story of the Bible when Israel falls, when Israel is disobedient, you know, God challenges them. He's like, I hate your, if you read Isaiah, I've just been reminded of this this week.

You read Isaiah 1, God is saying, I hate your worship. I despise it. You can sing all the songs to me you want. You can give me all the money you want. You can pray all you want.

You can write the most beautiful sermon that you want. But if you don't love the downtrodden, if you don't love the poor, I hate your worship. It's meaningless to me. I despise it. Some serious language there. Now, as a Hong Konger, 21st century, I think it's easy for us to kind of distance ourselves from Israel, ancient Israel, and all the Old Testament laws, they seem irrelevant or distant.

[22 : 09] And it is true, we got to be careful that we don't just take Old Testament things that were written thousands of years ago for a different culture and just kind of like plop them into our context because it is different.

So we always have to look when we read the Bible, look for what is actually timeless. What is it that really is about God's character and who He is? What is He commanding us that is timeless? And I think when we look at Deuteronomy 10, we see this description of who God is, what He's done, His love for people, His love for the vulnerable, and those things, I believe, are entirely unchanging.

And so when I think about that and when I look about, look at our city today, I think we can see, even in our church, modern-day sojourners.

The context is different, right? But I think the vulnerabilities are very much the same in essence. And obviously, Hong Kong is a place of foreigners and, you know, expats, right?

[23 : 15] I think a lot of you guys fit in that category. And a lot of people don't have PR, permanent residency status here. But I don't think the sort of, there's a lot of nuance here.

I don't think if you're an expat in a typical sense, like you've come here as a iBanker from UK, I don't think you technically fit in the sojourner category that the Bibles talk about.

You know, we really do come from a place of privilege if you're a typical expat. Not all of you, but just generally. And you've come from a place of wealth you come here with a fantastic job.

You know, you're esteemed as a wonderful white person. You know, I can say that because my wife is white and I esteem her greatly. And let's be honest, right? You know, there's a little bit of that here.

And more importantly, you have a clear path to permanent residency, right? Seven years and you're good to go. And so, I don't think we're necessarily talking about you even though I love you as an expat.

[24 : 14] And then on the opposite end of the spectrum, we do have refugees and asylum seekers and that's a whole other issue and we definitely as a church need to be thinking about them and thinking about what our city is doing for these people.

But today is Helper's Appreciation Day and I believe God wants us to really consider the foreign domestic helpers in our midst as sojourners in a biblical sense.

And so, did you know, I was just looking this up and kind of doing some research that 10% of the working population in Hong Kong are actually foreign domestic helpers.

That comes up to about 400,000 helpers and some have been working here for decades. You know, some have been helpers here longer than some of you have been born.

It's pretty amazing, right? But let's be honest, right? In many ways they are treated as sojourners. In this hierarchical society they are seen as different.

[25 : 22] They are treated as different. Whether it's said or unsaid, that's the reality. And I'm not just talking about the racism or the prejudice or just the, you know, just the abuse even that happens verbally and physically.

I'm not just talking about that. We know that happens. Just read the news. Just Google it. But I'm talking about legally as a domestic helper you are literally treated as a different class of people in Hong Kong.

Some of you know this but if you don't let me just kind of refresh you. Six years ago the Court of Final Appeal ruled definitively that if you are a foreign domestic helper you have, you will never have the right of abode in Hong Kong.

You could stay here for 70 years if you want but you can never become a PR. And that was the policy of the government all along.

That was the structure that was set up but it's a little different when you have it written pretty much set in stone by the highest court of the land that you will never become one of us.

[26 : 31] You're a different class literally. And there's a lot of other little things and we can go into that but I think another one that obviously speaks to us is money and foreign domestic helpers they

have literally a different minimum wage as everybody else in Hong Kong and unfortunately it's not higher it's lower.

And so that just also I think speaks that there's a difference here and there's an obvious socioeconomic vulnerability there. but there's a one big one I think that really also underscores is the fact that foreign domestic helpers their legal status is completely based on the employer that recruits them that brings them over.

So you know if anything happens if the contract is terminated they need to leave in two weeks I think a lot of you guys know that already. And so you have an entire system where these helpers these sojourners come in and they're completely at the mercy of their employer.

And in this entire system from recruiting to agencies and you know all the lending and the sort of the loan sharks that happen there and just even their dependence on their employer I think this entire system just breeds a sense of vulnerability for them.

That they are very very I guess in a place of vulnerability they're at the mercy and they're so vulnerable to being taken advantage of right?

[28 : 06] Now I don't I've said a fair bit about that and I don't I don't think we need to hear any more from like a middle class Chinese Canadian man so I want to invite Jonah to come up Jonah come on up and Jonah is a she works as a foreign domestic helper in Hong Kong but more importantly Jonah is a just a beloved sister of Watermark and the FOF community group yes thank you and yeah it's just been so good to see her get involved and serve and so we're gonna hear a bit of Jonah's story today and just a heads up this isn't gonna be like the worst case scenario of everything that could happen bad to you know a helper this is just Jonah a sister in Christ she has a story to tell she has experience you know as a sister in Christ and also as a helper in Hong Kong and so we just want to hear her story and she's gonna tell us about Jesus amen so let's let me just pray for you really quick and let's dive in

God just thank you so much for Jonah and all the ladies who are in the FOF group thank you for her I just pray that you would use her right now speak through her humble her heart show her how beloved she is and how much of a powerful story that she has simply because the king of kings loves her and has anointed her to do good works so we pray these things in Jesus name amen Jonah tell us a bit about yourself tell us about how you ended up in Hong Kong and just your background oh it's working hi I'm Jonah I'm I'm I'm I came from Bagu City the college place in Philippines and I became a Christian

I became a Christian in Philippines and after that I moved to Kuwait I work I go to Kuwait for a work just like this a nanny and my work there is I enjoy a lot I enjoy my work I enjoy my work because I travel a lot with my employer they treat me like like as a part of their family because yeah they treat me like that but unfortunately I was involved with immorality in a godly relationship so I decided to go home and ask God forgiveness ask God for a second chance and that's why that's how I ended up here in How did you come to know the Lord Jesus how did you become a Christian I became a Christian I came from poor family and my parents cannot afford my tuition fee to go to school and I was so

I was so angry with my my parents and I I even said that there is no God if there is God why why we are poor why my family cannot afford me to go to school and and that with that I was so I invade my my family because some of my family usually they are they are rich they are they are in the political situation like that and they are a leader of a Catholic so something like that so I really I feel really bad and I I really you know I I feel useless useless about my who I am and yeah that's but one day some missionaries went into our village and shared the word of God but many times I ignored them I even tore the the what they're giving and I ignored them but one day my sister said why don't we try let's try let's go entertain them so in short we my my sister go and we entertain them but the time that's the time

I accept Jesus my Lord and Savior but the time that I said my Lord and Savior my family rejected me they haven't said oh because they believe that Catholic is it's the best religion something like that they are the one who is saved they are the one who is true and so my family rejected me and they even said you better you better go and change your family name and I remember the last word of my grandmother she told me if you'll not go back as a Catholic you better change your family name so that's that's yeah that's how I became a Catholic wow so how what happened afterwards when you kind of as you grew as a Christian as you found out more about what what you know who God is how did how did that change you yeah yeah and actually yeah I continue

[33 : 47] I continue as a believer and in my place I I lead a worship leader in our church and yeah that's I continue I fight for the faith but due to some circumstance that happened in the church I feel like you know dry and sometimes there there it's because something happened in a church that I trust a lot the pastor is standing in front and one day the pastor is trying to rape me and there's a time I feel so down where will I go now my family rejected me and the pastor that oh my tries and the trying why God so all of my walk with

God is now before is questioning God why he allowed that to happen yet he knows that I want to serve him for the rest of my life something like that so yeah that's crazy that's tough so you went to Kuwait and it was it was hard spiritually you felt dry and you but you also knew you were living immorally and you were asking God for a second chance how did that unfold how did he end up giving you a second chance yeah I prayed and I asked forgiveness for a second chance and I told please give me another chance and so that's why I tried to apply for another job again and so I came here in Hong Kong and that's the time I when yeah that's the time

I came here in Hong Kong and my sister invited me to a church in a Pentecostal church so I continued my walk with God again there and I guess I wanted you to talk a little bit about you just coming into Hong Kong as a helper what was that experience like what were the challenges what were the struggles the first time I came here in Hong Kong my first employer I struggled a lot because she's so mean to me and she's so strict and everything I'm not allowed to use mobile and I'm not if she asked me to go in a store in 30 minutes you must be home like that so strict and everything and I'm not allowed to talk to other nannies and she treat me like she treat me just like lower than them you know you're just a nanny you're just a nanny so so you're just a nanny yeah and she treated me

I was it was really a struggle for me because I came from I compare the one I came from Kuwait and my work there is you know we eat together with my employer you know it's because in Kuwait if they eat together they put it in one plate and all of us will eat together by hand and and yet when I came here in Hong Kong that struggled me also eating by hand is dirty I'm sorry it's dirty something like that so I compare the place that I came in in Kuwait that I came from a rich family I have my own room I have everything food and they treat you a lot they treat me like a part of the family and yet they are rich family and so I become boastful and I compare my past work to them so I started answering her back if she's harsh I become harsh also sometimes but I found that it's not good and how did you find that how did God sustain you to respond to your harsh employer so I just prayed and cried out to God I said Lord forgive me for doing this because I know it's really hard to deal also because if I do something that she asked me and my employer my mom goes to work and popo will come she will tell me come on come on so I didn't know which one whom I will obey if my employer so when my employer will come home why didn't you do what

[39 : 16] I said because so I don't know I don't really know so what I did is I really prayed God but through that situation God teach me how to humble and understand them and through attending also the church and yeah also that before I'm not allowed to read the Bible so what I did because she doesn't want me to switch on the light during night time so what I did is I bought a flashlight so I just flashlight the Bible while reading so that's how God spoke to you through that to learn how to love even a harsh employer and God reminded me also of my sin my past sin that we are all sinners we all have weaknesses and so that's the time let's take

I guess talked about your struggle with just coming to Hong Kong and working here and the society here and the harshness what's your experience been in becoming part of a church here I know you've been in watermark for a couple years now so we're all family here you can be honest I don't know I don't know everything she's going to say but what was your experience coming to a church that isn't all Filipino that we don't all speak Tagalog or it's not all uniform it's quite multicultural what was your experience what was the struggles we want to hear from you I have been attending watermark for two and a half years now the first time I came here I feel shy and I feel that I feel insecure coming here because

I saw that they are all employers they will see me also as a nanny they will look me down as a nanny so those are some thoughts that came into my mind and so I feel really insecure for good reason though right because that's what you experienced outside right yeah maybe it's because of my past something like that so I that's and I'm a little bit shy type and so I but I think God I have a mouthpiece before I came here a sister Janet is my mouthpiece every time they ask she's the one who speak for me so good job Janet yeah because yeah and I feel I feel like I'm in love in this

church but what I love about the church is that the teaching the teaching

I really love the teaching of the watermark yeah but but through that the the time that there was a time that Janet went home to Philippines and I'm alone in the church so so what now Jonah you're alone so I need to I need to stand up and I pray to God that God will help me deliver me from my insecurities and so through hearing the word of God and through you know sister Rhoda sister Christine and all of you it encouraged and so and also you you carry through you that I was encouraged and that's the time

I feel love and I feel secure here I mean yeah through the word of God and I was delivered to my struggle through also my personal study my reading the Bible and my devotion so that's how I grow and overcome the shyness and I'm a little bit shy but until now I need to overcome because I used to when greeting times I just sitting down there and whoever wants to greet me then if nobody will greet me then it's fine yeah and I mean that's how a lot of us feel right and you're just kind of like afraid and yeah what is it about the word of God what is the word of God that you heard that was so or you read that really kind of gave you confidence you don't have to cite anything just in general what I heard is that God is a God who loves us equally yeah who loves us equally no matter how that's what

[44 : 29] I heard that he's not looking at our position or no matter how higher you are and yeah that yeah that's good and we just read that today right God is he's a God of just he's just he shows no partiality right we'll give you one final word here very importantly what would you want just what would you want like the church to hear in terms and to know about as just you here as a representative of domestic helpers what would you want the church to know and to hear I think as brothers and sisters in Christ yeah we came here as a sojourner I used to sojourner we sacrifice for our family our loved ones to work here otherwise to because we need financial support from our family otherwise we are not here so I think we need to we deserve to be loved and respected yeah and because as what we have heard a while ago that

God is a God of just thank you thank you thank you Jonah let's give a round of applause we love you thank you Jonah thank you for stepping out of your comfort zone and just letting us into a bit of your heart and it just sounds like you know there's so many struggles highs and lows but it's just amazing hearing you talk about God and talk about how much you love his word and how much he's changed you allows you to see who you are as a broken someone who struggled and sinned but who is loved by your creator and I think that's beautiful and as I was thinking about her testimony you know I think one thing that the Holy Spirit really convicted me about is that I think I do need to apologize and say sorry

I think even as a church many of us need to apologize to the helpers around us and I chatted with a few helpers in the past month and so or so I just asked them hey what's one thing you would want Hong Kongers to do differently not in general but just in relation to you as a helper and a few answers I got was just say please and thank you to us another one was just honor my one day off a week and really honor it don't sneak things in there and third just talk to us like normal people and get to know us and I think that just hit me because I know I failed to reach out to so often and I know in my head I've been a Christian I know I think I'm more often shaped by the views outside and if I'm brutally honest sometimes helpers I may hold you in less esteem even if it's subconsciously or I may just naturally gravitate to someone who's more similar to me or speaks like me or is educated in a similar way as me and I'll just gravitate towards them more and I'll hold them in higher esteem and we know that that's not right that's not who God is and I know that we can do better and we can change by the grace of God so I just really feel like we also need to apologize to you as a church as a people and we really need to work on this by God's grace and the interesting thing about our failure though what gave me comfort as I was thinking about this is that God isn't surprised by anything you know if you look back at the passage let's take a look at verse 16 God says circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn it's very graphic isn't it and this idea of circumcising your own heart is really just a picture that you need a radical heart change you need something to come in and just rewire your heart who you love how you love and like all of us the Israelites were also self people and they needed God's love to do that so that's why God says to them love the sojourner for you were sojourners in Egypt I brought you out of Egypt remember me the one who brought you out of captivity in church when you start reading the rest of the Bible you begin to see something very interesting is that the Bible writers start using the word sojourner not just literally but spiritually to describe the spiritual condition of all people sometimes you'll see it

translated as a stranger or foreigner or alien but the meaning is essentially the same it's that we are all sojourners separated from God's kingdom and this morning whether you're a Christian or not I think we do wrestle with being sojourners in Hong Kong right some of you guys are literally trying to become citizens of another country through immigration and investment but a lot of us are sojourners in a social sense we feel like sojourners in our companies in our families even we feel like we're outsiders we're strangers some of us feel like we're sojourners like in terms of our finances our salaries our job title our education level that we always need to go somewhere else to be happy we're not there yet and we spend our entire lives striving to become citizens of something some of us are just so gripped we feel like sojourners in the life of romance and relationships and we just need to get to that promised land and then

[50 : 57] I'll be happy then I'll be home and there's always another place to sojourn to and what we don't see is that heaven is our true home that adoption into God's family is what we truly need and so we end up being sojourners in the world in our sin and we are separated from God and there's no path to citizenship it's not just seven years the door is closed but this is the beautiful passage then you get to the new testament God says this in ephesians 2 let's really sink this into our hearts remember that you were at that time separated from Christ alienated from the common wealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus you who are once far off have been brought near by the blood of

Christ so then you are no longer strangers you are no longer aliens but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God isn't that amazing we are sojourners we were strangers but now we are sons and daughters of the God most high so this morning whether you are a fortune 500 CEO or a helper or a teacher or a lawyer or a doctor or student whatever you are the Bible is saying God is saying your greatest need is for Jesus to change you from being a sojourner to a child of God God and we believe that this is the only place to be a child of God a son and daughter of the king it's the only place that you will be fully known for everything you've done the good the bad and the ugly you'll be fully known but you'll also be fully unconditionally loved you won't find that anywhere

I believe it's the only place where God can change your heart and turn you given for every hurt you have ever caused and that you can heal from every hurt that you've ever received it's the only place you can be certain for life after death and so when you're so full of God's love that will naturally change how you live and so for some of us today I think we need to just recognize that for maybe the first time that I am a sojourner and I've been searching all my life to be home and God is saying welcome home I'm ready to forgive you I'm ready to call you son and daughter come home and for those of us who are professing to be following Jesus I think we just need to continue meditating on these verses again for the

Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords the great the mighty and the awesome God can we put that up on the screen there that's really the next one yeah for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords the great the mighty and awesome God he's not partial and takes no bribe he executes justice for the fatherless and the widow he loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing love the sojourner therefore for God has revealed who he is what he cares about and so if we call him God if we call him father we need to know what his heart is about and what we're really saying here is that the way you treat sojourners is a sign is a litmus test even of whether God's love is alive in your heart the

God of sojourners if we worship him if we seek him if we follow him we too must be a people who love sojourners and if you're just full of love right now and you don't know how to love the sojourner take a look at the bulletin there's some thoughts there better yet chat with Jonah or Janet or any of the helpers you know get to know them get to know their hopes and dreams talk to them just like you would talk to anybody see how you can love them well God says love the sojourner for you and I we were sojourners in the world you were slaves to your sin but God rescued you he brought you out of captivity and into his family so let's be a God let's be a people of sojourners because we worship a God of sojourners let's pray father we know this is hard we know that intrinsically we fear the other we fear those who are different we fear those who act and speak differently from us [56 : 20] God but we know that you love the sojourner God so this morning we we we humble ourselves we stand before the God of sojourners and say Lord would you open our eyes Lord help us to see our own condition how you brought us into your family Lord we were sojourners God so Lord help us to love the sojourners whom you love so dearly Lord let the scales of prejudice and

fear of the other let them just fall away we need you Holy Spirit to do a miraculous work in us we need your love to fill us God because we know we can't do it ourselves so we just open our hands our hearts to you this day Lord would you change us would you change us in Jesus name nothing love oh something

I need to