

To bring and bear the sword

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, Watermark. The scripture reading today comes from Matthew chapter 10, verses 34 to 39. If you're using the church Bible, you can turn to page 765.

! Starting from verse 34, we read, Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. This is the word of God. Okay, thanks, Cyrus.

[1 : 0 6] Is this working? You can hear? Okay, great. Doesn't sound like it. Okay, one last time. Good morning. I hope you can hear. If not, we're going to go back to the hand.

Okay, that was it. It's like when I say to my kids, I'm only speaking one more time, right? Okay, let's stick with this. What just happened there?

Okay, so welcome to December. Can you believe it's December already? What happened to 2025? Disappeared in a heartbeat. But here we are, December, and December is the season of Advent.

Advent. Niels explained Advent means coming. In the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, but we also look forward to His second coming.

We anticipate Christ's return. And so we celebrate in the month of December, Advent, Christ's coming and His return. But in order to do that, we want to understand it.

[2 : 0 9] We want to internalize it. We don't just want to remember Christ's coming. We want to make the most of it. We want to understand why did Christ come. It's one thing to know that He came, but why did Christ come?

That's what we're going to be looking at this December. And so for today and the next couple of weeks, we're going to be looking at passages of Scripture that explain why Jesus came. And we start off today with a fairly unusual passage because if you've got your Bible, you can look at it with me.

Verse 34, Jesus says, Do not think that I've come to bring peace on the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. That doesn't sound very Advent-like, right? I mean, isn't Christmas all about peace and joy and light and love and all these wonderful things.

And this morning we lit the candle of peace. When we think of Christmas, we often think of a time of peace. Jesus is described in Isaiah chapter 9 as the Prince of Peace.

I think we read it this morning. For us a child is born. To us a son is given. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And of the increase of His government and peace, there will be no end.

[3 : 18] Remember when Jesus was born, the angels appeared to the shepherds out in the fields and they say this, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.

Isn't peace all about Christmas? Isn't Christmas all about peace? So how is it that Jesus can say, This is why I came. Don't think I came to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. What's up with that?

Well, friends, you will never understand Christianity in general, or Christmas in particular, unless we understand what Jesus has to say here. And so in this passage, we're going to discover three things about Christmas and about Christianity.

Jesus tells us, in order to understand Christmas, we have to understand who He is, why He came, and how to find lasting peace. Who He is, why He came, and how to find lasting peace.

So let's dive in. Firstly, who He is, who Jesus is. Now, over the last couple of months, we've been going through John's Gospel. And John's Gospel is full of all these remarkable claims that Christ makes about Himself.

[4 : 20] He says things like, I am the bread of life. I am living water. I am the light of the world. Jesus makes all these remarkable claims about Himself. And in Matthew's Gospel, to understand what Jesus is saying here, if we go back and look at the context, we see that Jesus is making another remarkable claim about Himself.

In Matthew chapter 9, at the end of chapter 9, it says that, Jesus looks out on the crowds of people, and He describes the crowds that He sees as people that are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

You can picture a flock of sheep, there's no shepherd in sight, and the wolves are circling around them, right? Or, I'm from Africa, I don't know too much about sheep, and shepherding, and farming, and that stuff, but I know a little bit about wild animals, and safaris, and those things.

And I'm sure you've all seen on YouTube a video of maybe some antelope or something, and the lions and the hyenas are circling, right? And they've got them in their sights.

Maybe they haven't attacked them yet, but it's just a moment of, just an amount of time before those lions are going to have, you know, antelope steak for dinner that night, right? They're circling them around them, and all the animals are, they're harassed, they're kind of, they're worried, they're scared, they're vulnerable, they know that they could be attacked at any time.

[5 : 36] And Jesus looks out on the people, and the towns and the villages that he goes to, and his heart is stirred, and he's full of compassion, because everywhere he goes, he sees people, people that he made, people that are made in God's image, people that he loves, that he came to rescue.

He says they are like these, these antelope that are surrounded, they are like sheep without a shepherd, there's no one to protect them, no one to guide them, no one to rescue them, from the impending dangers, that are all around them.

They are harassed and vulnerable, with no defender, no rescuer, who will come to them. And so Jesus, what does he do? Well, beginning of Matthew 10, he sends out his disciples, with some good news.

And listen to what he says here. Chapter 10 verse 1 says, he called to him as 12 disciples, he gave them authority, over the unclean spirits, to cast them out, to heal every disease, every affliction, saying, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, saying to them, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of heaven has come, the king has come.

So, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out the demons. So Jesus looks out on these people, and he says, they're harassed, they're helpless, they're vulnerable, they have no one to lead them, no one to guide them, they're unprotected.

[6 : 52] And then he sends out his messages, with good news. He says, your king has come, the kingdom of heaven has come, the king has come. And what has he come to do? He's come to put right, all that is wrong, and broken with the world.

Jesus is the rescuer, the defender, the protector, the one that all these people need, the one that we need, to put right, that which is broken, and wrong with the world. Christ has come.

Go with this good news, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Therefore, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You see friends, the Bible has a very clear explanation, for why the world, is the way that it is.

Why is there so much grief in our world? Why is there so much pain? Why is there so much agony? Why all the tears? Why all the anxiety? Why is life such a hard struggle?

And the Bible has a very clear explanation for it. It's not because of the cosmic battle, between yin and yang. It's not because of the karmic forces, that are now paying us back.

[7 : 56] It's not because we have dishonored our ancestors, and now there's trouble in our life. The Bible says, the reason for the agony, and the strife, and the struggle, and the hardship, and the tears in our world, is that in a sense, we humanity, have engaged in an open rebellion, against our maker, against the king of all creation.

We, who are made in his image, to glorify and mirror him, we've staged this insurrection, against him. And now, in a sense, the world is a rebel state. And we are seeking independence, from our king and our lord.

To go back to Jesus analogy, we are like a flock of sheep, that have trampled on the shepherds, and we don't want your authority, we will go our own way. And now we've left, and we wonder why we feel vulnerable, and afraid, and terrified.

We've left the sheepfold, we've gone our own way, and we found ourselves, lost and exposed, and surrounded, and we wonder why. And life in this rebel state, is not going so well, is it?

We've cut ourselves off, from the source of life, and we experience death. We cut ourselves off, from light, and we experience darkness. We have rejected his authority, and now it's every man, for himself.

[9 : 13] And this is the story, of the world. But this is also the story, of our lives. But the one who made us, to know him, and love him, and glorify him, does not reject us.

This God does not, destroy the earth, and say, I'm going to go start off, a new one, down the road. This king does not, abandon his own, rather he comes to us. And he comes to rescue us, and to restore us.

Or in the words of the Bible, he comes to redeem us. To redeem this broken world, by coming to us. And in his coming, Jesus does two things. He, firstly, he overthrows, the heart of the rebellion.

The control sense of the rebellion, he overthrows it. But then the second thing he does, is he invites former rebels, that's me and you, to rebel against the rebellion, and to join the rebellion, thanks of the redeemed.

Okay? So Jesus comes, into this world, that's rejected his authority, and he says, I will crush the rebellion, I will destroy it, and I will invite people, to join my kingdom, and I invite former rebels, to leave the insurrection, to leave the rebellion, to rebel against the rebellion, and join my kingdom, of the redeemed.

[10 : 28] And the entire narrative, of scripture, all the way from Genesis, right to the end of the Bible, the whole point of the Bible, is that despite our sin, God has not given up on the world.

God has not given up, on his image bearers. God is going to send, a redeemer, one who will put everything, right to the world, not simply through nice teaching, or moral instruction, or discipleship groups, but by overcoming the rebellion, and by inviting all people everywhere, to abandon this insurrectionist project, and join the kingdom, of the redeemed.

And so that's why, when Jesus sends out his disciples, look what he says to them. He says, he gave them authority. Why does Jesus give his disciples authority? Because he's the king. He has all authority.

Jesus says, I have all authority, now I give you the authority, to do what? He gave them authority, over unclean spirits, to cast them out, to heal every disease, and every affliction.

That's the symptoms, of this broken world, the rebellious world. Saying, go to the lost sheep, of the people of Israel. Saying, the kingdom of heaven has come. The king has come. So, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out those evil demons.

[11 : 40] Who is Jesus? Jesus is the rescuer, the redeemer, the one who's come, to put all things right. And he has come, to heal this lost, and broken world, by overthrowing the rebellion, and inviting former rebels, to join the kingdom, of the redeemed.

This is who he is. And understanding, who Jesus is, now helps us make sense, of why he came. So why did Jesus come? Well, look at what he says. Look at verse 34.

Now I think we can, make better sense of, what Jesus says here. He says, do you not think, I've come to bring peace, on the earth? No, I've come to not bring peace, but a sword. Friends, Jesus has not come, to negotiate, with the rebellion.

Jesus has not come, to talk things over, or to find a middle ground. He's come to destroy it. I'm sure you've all seen, you know, Hollywood movies, where there's a terrorist attack, right?

And there's like, terrorists that are, holding hostages, in a bank, right? They, something like that. And they, they send a message to, you know, the authorities, we want a hundred million dollars, whatever.

[12 : 45] And what do they all say? We don't negotiate, with terrorists, right? We don't negotiate, with hostage takers. Friends, Jesus has not come, to negotiate, with the rebellion. Jesus has not come, to sit across the table, and say, let's try, and work things out.

He's come, to overthrow it. And what does that mean? It means, bring your sword. It means, bring his authority. Do not think, I've come to bring peace, on the earth. I know, I've not come, to bring peace. I've come, to bring a sword.

Jesus is the righteous, Messiah King. He's come to drive, out of his kingdom, all that aligns itself, and collaborates, with the rebellion, and to restore righteousness, and peace on the earth.

Do you remember, the very first promise, in the Bible, in the Old Testament, of the redeemer coming? Back in Genesis chapter 3. So right after Adam and Eve, sin against God, there's a promise.

In Genesis 3 verse 15, God says that, God says to Satan, that one day, a redeemer will come. Someone who is born, of a woman, a son of Adam and Eve, a human in some senses, someone who is born, of a woman, will come, and Satan, will bruise his heel.

[13 : 53] In other words, Satan will try, and injure him, and stop him, and damage him, but in doing so, the redeemer, will crush the head, of Satan, in the process.

A redeemer will come, and Satan will do his best, to try and harm him, and injure him, but in the process, the redeemer, will destroy, the work of the Satan. The redeemer, will be injured, Satan will be overthrown, which of course, is the cross of Jesus.

As Jesus hangs on the cross, he is injured, he is damaged, but in doing so, he destroys, the heart of the rebellion, by crushing, Satan, sin, and death, through his death, and resurrection.

In a sense, Jesus says, I've come to, come to bring a sword, but actually, on the cross, he will bear the sword, won't he? Remember, the sword will pierce, his own side. Jesus will bear the sword, in order to crush, the rebellion.

And Jesus says, he's come, for that purpose. And so in a sense, yes, Jesus has come, to bring peace. He's come to restore, peace to his kingdom. After all, he is the prince of peace.

[14 : 56] But how will he do it? Not by coming to earth, with nice teaching, or moral instruction. Not by telling people, how to get along, or five tips, not to fight in your family.

Even though, that's not a bad thing, if you've got kids, right? He will come, by confronting the rebellion, especially the rebellion, that lies in our hearts. Because the way, that Jesus will bring peace, in our world, is first, by restoring the peace, between us, and God.

And in that sense, in the sense, Jesus coming, splits history, into two, between AD, and BC, and AD. Jesus coming, also splits humanity, in two. Between those, who are with him, and join his ranks, and those, who continue, in the rebellion.

And so, it's not that Jesus, comes in order, to bring divisional strife, but it's that his coming, results in division, between those, who continue, in the insurrection, against their maker, and those who turn, and follow him.

One Bible scholar, R.T. France, put it like this, the peace that Jesus, the Messiah brings, is much more, than the absence, of fighting. It is a restored, relationship with God.

[16 : 06] And in the bringing, of such peace, paradoxically, conflict is inevitable, as not all, will accept him. As long as some people, refuse the lordship of God, following the prince of peace, will always be, a way of conflict.

And that's why, we get these really, challenging verses, in verse 35, and 36. Look at what Jesus says here. He says, I've come to set a man, against the father, a daughter, against mother, daughter-in-law, against mother-in-law, and a person's enemies, will be of their own household.

Challenging stuff. I remember, well, I don't remember, I remember hearing the story, I was very young, in the 1980s, in Australia, there was a strike, that happened with, airline pilots.

So, all the pilots, in Australia, in 1989, launched the strike, against their employer, which were the airline pilots, but also, the Australian government, because they wanted, wage increases, right?

And, so they refused to fly, and the Australian government, wouldn't budge, and so they actually got, the air force, to fly all the commercial airlines, around Australia, for a couple of months, in order to, you know, not negotiate.

[17 : 14] And, eventually, the Australian government said, listen, if you won't come back, to work, you will be blacklisted, from flying, for an Australian airline, forever, for the rest of your life.

And, my mom had, my mom's cousins, lived in Australia, and two brothers, were pilots, for Australian airlines. And so, they held out, on the strike, but eventually, the one brother said, I need to go back to work.

And, the other brother held out, and was blacklisted, from ever flying, from Australian airline, ever again. But, the division, between the two brothers, was so severe, that these two brothers, refused to speak to each other, for the next 20 years.

And so, for 20 years, these two brothers, would not talk to each other, because of their division, around going back to work, or not. Brother, against brother. A person's enemies, will be those of his own household.

But, that's over something, as, I guess, important, but something like a paycheck, over a labor dispute. Friends, what about something, infinitely more important, such as the authority of Jesus, to be your Lord, and your King, your Master, and your God, to live for Him, and His glory, in obedience to Him, as sovereign.

[18 : 27] Jesus says, He comes, and He makes this claim, this radical claim. And those who, are for Him, those who are against Him, there is an invisible division, that takes place. That He hasn't come, to cause the division, but it's the consequence, of the rebellion.

And so, in verse 37, we see these, Jesus claims, He says, you've got to give me, your highest authority, your fullest allegiance. Look at what He says, verse 37. Whoever loves father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.

Whoever loves son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me. Whoever does not, take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me. Challenging words. Now, you know, you may say, well, you know, that's a very Western idea, right?

Westerners, they don't care about their parents, right? But us Asians, or, okay, let's just be honest, you Asians, I know, I think I'm an Asian, but us in Asia, right, that's a very offensive thing.

In Asia, we teach our kids, to honor, you know, mother and father, kind of, from the moment that they're born. This is a very high value, right? And so, how offensive, for Jesus to say, whoever loves father, or mother, son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.

[19 : 35] Who does Jesus think He is? But that's exactly the point, isn't it? Who does Jesus think He is? Who gets to make a claim like this? Who has the right to say something like this?

Only God does. Jesus obviously thinks He has the right to say this. Jesus is God. But let's think about this a little bit more. Friends, if the Bible is God's word, as we believe it is, the Bible is going to both encourage and challenge every culture, in every season of the history of the world.

The Bible, there'll be some things that encourage and challenge Western culture, and there'll be some things that encourage and challenge Asian culture, right? And so, if you think about this here, if Jesus really is the King, who's come to end the rebellion in all of our hearts, every culture is going to be confronted by His claims.

And so, Westerners, you know, I grew up in South Africa, in a very Western context, we're not that acquainted with filial piety, right? And so, we look at Jesus' words here, and we say, what's the big deal? Sure, okay, honor Jesus more than your parents.

Okay, what's the big deal? And those of you come from an Asian context, you say, what? You know, Koreans, Chinese, you never do that. Now, how, this is ridiculous. This is so offensive.

[20 : 49] What is Jesus, who does Jesus think He is? But Westerners, who are far more individualistic, and far more devoted to self-actualization, personal fulfillment, we look at Jesus' words in verse 38, where Jesus says, whoever does not take up his cross and follow me, and we think, that's ridiculous.

That's outrageous. Who does Jesus think He is? Right? And so, both cultures, Asian and Western, are all confronted with this reality, I have come to be your king. And I'm going to be your king, that means you need to follow me.

Jesus is making a radical claim here. Jesus wants to be our Lord and Master. Friends, it doesn't matter who you are, what your culture is, or where you come from. Jesus Christ looks you and I, in the eye, and He says, I, I am the one to bring life.

I am the one who brings hope to the hopeless. I am the one who's come to redeem this broken world, and I do it by calling people to follow me. Friends, what about you? What do you make of the claims of Jesus?

Now, what are the implications of this? Well, let's just think through two implications. Two implications of this. First is this, you need to make a decision. The need to make a decision. Jesus Christ won't allow any of us to sit on the fence.

[22 : 05] Jesus doesn't allow us just to tolerate Him. Jesus says, either I'm your highest priority, I'm your Lord, or something else is. You can't accept Jesus as King in some areas of your life, but not King in other areas of your life.

You can't love Jesus supremely as Lord of all, in just half of your life, but not the other half. Jesus says, you can't sit on the fence. You have to make a decision. Are you going to accept me and the claims I make to be Lord and King of all?

Or are you going to be part of the rebellion and reject me? And Jesus says that it has huge, huge consequences. What are you going to do with Him? As the wonderful Christmas carol says, long lay the world in sin and error pining, until He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. So fall on your knees. Welcome Him as King. Christ the King has come to bring hope, so fall on your knees.

Receive Him. Don't sit on the fence. Here's the second implication. This is maybe a bit more applicable for a young church like us, full of young adults. Be careful who you marry.

[23 : 11] Okay? Very practical. Be careful who you marry. Notice what Jesus doesn't say here. When Jesus says, verse 35, I've come to set man against his father, daughter against mother, and a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

No in Scripture does Jesus say, I've come to set husband against wife. Right? He doesn't ever say that. Why? You don't get to choose your parents. You don't get to choose your siblings.

But you do get to choose your spouse. And the Bible assumes that Christians, those who have rebelled against the rebellion, those who have joined the ranks of the kingdom of the redeemed, prioritize Jesus above all else, and will make a decision to unite themselves in one flesh with someone who has the same values.

Someone who also has made Christ king and Lord and is living for his glory. Friends, Jesus Christ can renew an entire home. And we've seen it tons of times in the church.

A husband, a wife together decide to follow Jesus. It's the most wonderful thing. God turns the whole atmosphere, the culture of the home around. As husband and wife together choose to follow Jesus and parent their kids and align with him.

[24 : 20] It's the most wonderful thing. But friends, we've also seen households torn apart. As one person wants to follow Jesus and the other doesn't. And one person wants to submit and surrender to him and the other wants to ridicule Jesus.

And so friends, do you see why we are so clear in the Bible's teaching? Those who love and follow Jesus should take care to unite yourself in marriage to someone who shares your same values.

Okay. Why did Jesus come? Jesus came as the rescuing king, the great redeemer, to call us back from the rebellion into the kingdom of the redeemed, to restore lasting peace between God and man.

And those who respond to him will experience that thrill of hope and new mourning breaking in their lives. Those who refuse him will find themselves in eternal, never-ending conflict between God and man.

And so friends, Jesus draws a line in the sand. And he says, where do you stand? Where do you stand? Are you going to make peace with the world and end up an enemy of God? Well, are you going to receive Christ as king and receive his peace?

[25 : 23] Even if that means enmity with God. Everything hinges on that decision. Where do you stand? Okay. Thirdly and finally, how to find lasting peace. How to find lasting peace.

Now, how can this Christmas we find deep, genuine, lasting peace? Not just the peace that is there for a holiday season or the peace for a weekend. How do we find deep, lasting peace in the midst of the hardship and the storms and the chaos of life, in the midst of tragedy and difficulty?

How do we find a deep, lasting peace that abides through the difficulties of life? In this passage, Jesus tells us how. But the answer is actually counterintuitive.

Because Jesus says that if you want to find lasting peace, the secret is don't try and find peace. Jesus says here that in order to experience deep and lasting peace, you've got to give up trying to find peace.

Look at how he says it. What do I mean? Look what he says in verse 38. Whoever does not take up his cross and follows me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it.

[26 : 30] Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Friends, in the Bible, we are told again and again that Jesus' kingdom is upside down and counterintuitive. The Bible tells us that the way up is to go down.

The way to find life is to give away your life. The way to be great is to become nothing. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit. Jesus says that the least are the greatest and the blessed are those that mourn.

In the Bible, God's kingdom is upside down and counterintuitive. And Jesus says the same thing here. He says those who do everything in their life to make life work, to get ahead of life, to succeed, to make life a success will end up being the biggest losers.

Those who want to make life great will end up being the biggest losers. Friends, Jesus Christ, we'll come to that quote a little later, Jesus Christ says that the way to find true and lasting peace is not by going on silent retreats.

It's not by a more manageable work-life balance schedule. It's not by escaping the pressures of life, trying to control your schedule, get your kids into the right school, get the perfect spouse.

[27 : 39] We're trying to get everything under control. Those things are good and fine, but all they'll give you is a brief respite, a few weeks of quietness. And when the storms of life come again, it will rock your world.

The way to find deep and lasting peace in the midst of the storms is by coming to the Prince of Peace himself. You see, peace is not a commodity that you can download from an app or buy off the shelf or get from an ATM.

Peace is deeply personal. It's deeply relational. It's found in relationship with the Prince of Peace himself. Tony Renko said it like this. Separated from Christ, there is no grace for the Christian life.

United to Christ, there is full and free access to the full riches of Christ who is the fountain of all grace. Friends, peace is found in being united with Christ himself by surrendering to him.

And Jesus says here that the way to find lasting peace is not by stepping off the incessant treadmill of a busy life. It's actually to walk on a different path altogether, to do life differently, to walk with Jesus as king, to surrender to him.

[28 : 50] Jesus says this is a narrow path, a difficult path. It's the path that leads to life. And so what Jesus says here, verse 39, whoever finds his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Jesus is saying whoever seeks to control their life will actually find that it's out of control. Whoever seeks to idolize peace will find that peace is like grasping after the wind. You'll never get it.

Those who let go of trying to be their own God, those who surrender and let go of trying to be their own king, those who come to God and their needs will find that the God of the universe, the one who has come to us and for us at Christmas will come to us with his peace.

And we'll infuse our anxious and weary hearts with the peace that is not from this world but a peace that comes from above. So friends, don't seek peace in and of itself.

Seek Christ. He'll give you the peace that only comes from knowing him. So friends, what about you? How have you come to him? Jesus, the Prince of Peace?

[29 : 53] Have you given up control? Have you surrendered? Have you said, Jesus, come and be king of every area of my life? Friends, are you still trying to hold on to life?

Hold on to control? Manage your life? You'll never find peace. The way to find deep and lasting peace is to actually get on your knees, to open up your hands and say, okay, Jesus, have your way.

Here's Douglas O'Donnell again. He says, the biggest gainers in this world turn out to be the biggest losers. But if you are willing to come to Jesus as king and give him your life, saying, here's my life, Lord, it's all yours.

I'll go where you would have me go. I'll do what you would have me do. I'll give what you would have me give. I will suffer what you would have me suffer. Then, and this is the beautiful irony of the kingdom life, then you will find life, true life, life in this life, and true reward in the life to come.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we know that you have come to bring true peace, peace between God and man, peace in our hearts, not just to make the world slightly nicer and better and more kinder.

[31 : 05] God, for all of us, we confess that there is the natural tendency for the rebellion in our hearts. Jesus, come and bring your lasting peace, I pray. Come and help us to surrender, help us to join the ranks of the redeemed, to rebel against the rebellion and to come and surrender to you.

Christ Jesus, we need you. Lord, we confess that it's hard and so help us, God. Lord, where there's a wrestle in our hearts, where there's a storm going on in our hearts, whether to yield to you or to keep control of our own lives, give us faith, we pray, in your wonderful and gracious name.

Amen.