

Faith in the Future

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[0 : 01] Well, a very good evening to you. This evening I'd like to read from the letter to the Hebrews. And I'd like to read from chapter 10, verse 32, all the way to chapter 11, verse 22.

And this can be found on page 1007. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 32. And the writer to the Hebrews says this.

But recall the former days when after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. Sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction.

And sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison. And you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property. Since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance. So that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

[1 : 17] For yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed. But of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

The conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God.

So that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Through which he was commended as righteous.

God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death.

[2 : 22] And he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God.

For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists. And that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen.

In reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land. Living in tents with Isaac and Jacob.

Heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations. Whose designer and builder is God.

[3 : 29] By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive. Even when she was past the age. Since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man.

And him as good as dead. Were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven. And as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith.

Not having received the things promised. But having seen them and greeted them from afar. And having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear they are seeking a homeland.

If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out. They would have had opportunity to return. But as it is. They desire a better country. That is a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac. And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son.

[4 : 37] Of whom it was said. Through Isaac shall your offspring be named. He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead. From which figuratively speaking.

He did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob when dying. Blessed each of the sons of Joseph.

Bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph. At the end of his life. Made mention of the exodus of the Israelites. And gave directions concerning his bones.

Well we thank God. For his word. Well if you were to ask. Phil Copeland.

What a music. I like to play. In the church office. He'd probably tell you. That I only ever play one song. By one band. And there is a song by the band U2. One of my favorite bands.

[5 : 36] In fact according to Phil. My only band. But. One of their albums. They had quite a famous song. Called. Where the streets have no name. It's a song I believe about heaven.

And. The album in which it appeared. Has 10 tracks. And. This track. Took 40% of all the time. It took to record the album. They spent days.

And days. I think in fact. They spent weeks. Recording this one song. And they were all getting totally fed up. Of listening to it. And one day. The guitarist. Walked into the studio.

And the producer. Was standing there. He had the tape. In the machine. And he was about to press delete. And just erase the whole thing. He was about to give up. And the guitarist.

Somehow managed to stop him. And to persuade him. To keep going. To persevere with the album. And they did. And the song. Became a massive hit. And the album.

[6 : 37] Became one of the most successful. Sometimes. We need someone. To encourage us. To keep going. To the end. And the Hebrew Christians. Who received this letter.

Needed just that. They were of a Jewish background. And yet. They had heard the gospel. They had heard of the Messiah. They had believed in him. They had turned in repentance. And faith.

To trust in him. And they were waiting for him. To be revealed from heaven. To receive their inheritance. But it hadn't been easy. And in chapter 10.

We're told of some of the difficulties. They faced. Verse 32. Recall the former days. When after you were enlightened. You endured a hard struggle. With sufferings. Verse 33.

They were exposed to reproach. And affliction. They were being slandered. Verse 34. Some of them were being thrown into prison. Some of them were having their property.

[7 : 32] Confiscated. They were facing persecution. On account of their faith. And it does seem that some of them were growing weary.

Some of them were giving up. Meeting together. In verse 25. They were neglecting to do so. And some of them were saying. Well where is the Lord? He said he was coming for us.

He said he was going to prepare a place. And come back for us. Where is he? And as the years went by. Things didn't get any easier. And the temptation was simply to go back to Judaism.

To go back to the temples. And the priesthood. And the festivals. And just to fit in. With the world around them. And in chapter 10 onwards. The writer is continually pointing them to the future.

Reminding them of the promise of the Lord's coming. Chapter 10 verse 25. He says do not neglect to meet together. As is the habit of some. But in bridging one another.

[8 : 31] And all the more as you see the day. Drawing near. Keep looking for that day he says. Again in verse 37. Yet a little while.

And the coming one will come. And will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back. My soul has no pleasure in him.

So he is reminding them of the great promise. Verse 23. The confession of their faith. Reminding them to look forward to that wondrous day. When Christ will be revealed. When the coming one will come.

And will set the world to rights. So that was their situation. They were living by faith. But they were facing opposition. They were looking forward to the Lord's return.

To receiving their heavenly reward. And yet that seemed to be a long time in coming. And they needed to be strengthened in their faith. And that's where chapter 11 comes in.

[9 : 28] The writer reminds them. What faith is. Verse 1. It is the assurance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not seen. It means they can be sure of the future.

Even though they cannot see it now. They can have confidence that God will do what he has promised to do. Even if it seems difficult. And in chapter 11.

He goes on to illustrate this. With various examples from the Old Testament. He reminds them. Verse 2. By faith. The people of old received their commendation from God. And he explains to them. That their situation. Is precisely the same. As all the saints of old. They lived by faith. Trusting in God. They believed his promises. Even when long years went by. Without seeing the result. And they suffered opposition and persecution. For their faith in God. And the author begins by giving us four examples.

[10:29] We'll look at briefly. We're told of Abel. Abel in verse 4. Who was the man who realized God must be approached by sacrifice. Sacrifice. And by faith he was commended as righteous. Abel learned that we are considered righteous. By believing in God. And not by her own works. And then in verse 5. We're introduced to Enoch. Enoch we're told was taken up so that he should not see death. By faith. Enoch learned that if we have faith in God. We will be taken up. And saved from death. And then we're told of Noah. Noah had tremendous faith didn't he? He believed in the judgment of God. Nobody else believed it. What a silly thing to believe Noah. Nobody believes that now in this. So many millennium BC. But by faith Noah believed God. Being warned concerning events as yet unseen. And in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world.

[11:33] And became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Noah believed God. And he was saved from judgment. So we have three pictures of faith. It is by faith we are counted as righteous in God's sight. It is by faith we are saved from death. And by faith we are saved from the judgment to come. But I hope to look tonight at verses 8 to 22. Particularly with reference to Abraham. And it seems to me this section revolves really around promise. Several times we are referred to the promises of God in this section. And that was very important. Because in chapter 10 verse 23. The Hebrews were concerned about the promises of God. And they needed to be reminded that he who promised is faithful. So we want to study Abraham and his faith in the promises. And we will do so under three headings. Firstly verse 8 to 12. God keeps his promises.

[12:39] Very simply. Secondly verse 13 to 16. God's promises are often fulfilled far in the future. And finally verse 17 to 22. That future is secure since God is able to raise the dead. So firstly God keeps his promises. It's always lovely to meet someone who really does trust God and live by faith. Some years ago I was standing just down here. And I was speaking with one of our church missionaries. And he and his wife had just been laid off. They didn't know what God wanted them to do. They didn't know where they were going to send their children to school. They didn't know which country they were going to be working in. Or what they were going to do. And this missionary was explaining to me all the difficulties of his circumstance. And then he threw his head back and laughed. And he said, ha, it's always fun with the Lord. And I thought, well, it is always fun, isn't it? He was a man who had lived by faith for decades.

[13:48] And he knew that God could be trusted with all the details of his life. With his family. With his career. With his future. He was a man who knew that God was faithful. And in verses 8 to 12, the writer is seeking to remind the Hebrews that God is faithful. In verse 8 to verse 10, he tells us of the promise of land. And then verse 11 to verse 12, he reminds us of the promise of descendants. You see, in Genesis chapter 12, God appeared to Abraham. And he made him a promise. He said, go from your country. And from your people. And from your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you. And make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

[14:48] God promised him a place, a land. He promised him a people, descendants. And he promised that through these people, worldwide blessing to come to the whole earth. And yet he said, go. Abraham had to leave his country. He had to leave his family. He had to leave his dreams and his ambitions. He had to make a break with the past. And he went out in faith. Verse 8. Not knowing where he was going. I used to help at the International Student Welcome in Central Station. And I was always impressed with how many

students arrived in the UK.

And I would say, what are you doing for accommodation? And they would say, we don't know. We've made no plans. Well, that's a pretty brave thing to do. But Abraham had even greater faith in that.

God told him to leave everything. And he went out not even knowing where God was going to take him. He went out uncertain of the future.

[15:52] And Christ did the same, didn't he, when he called people. When he saw the fishermen standing by the sea. And he said to them, follow me.

And immediately they left their nets. And they left their father's business and followed him. He didn't tell them where he was taking them. Didn't tell them where they were going to end up.

He simply said, follow me. And they went out not knowing where they were going. And it must have been the same for these Hebrew Christians. They might have had to break with their past.

They might have experienced rejection from their family. They might have had to flee their homes because of the persecution they were experiencing. Their obedience may have led to a very uncertain future.

But, says the writer, God is faithful. He will bring you into your inheritance. He will take you to a place where you can worship. Well, that's very important to remember.

[16:55] Especially if you're a student. I remember as a student, we all wanted a road map of our future lives. We wanted to know, what are God's plans for me? Am I going to get married?

Am I going to have a job? Am I going to serve overseas as a missionary? We wanted to know everything the Lord had in store. And one day, a very wise man came to our church. And he preached on this subject.

And I spoke to him afterwards. And he said, don't worry too much. Just walk closely with the Lord. Concentrate on obedience. And these things will become clear as time goes on. We do not know the future.

We do not know the future. But we know that God is faithful. And secondly, he reminds us that God can be trusted even when his promises seem impossible.

Verse 11 to 12, we're told a little of the story of the birth of Isaac. We're told, Sarah herself received power to conceive even when she was past the age since she considered him faithful who had promised.

[17:58] Abraham was 75 when God promised him a son. It seemed very unlikely. He was 75. His wife wasn't too far behind and seemed a little old to be starting a family.

His body, we're told, was as good as dead. And yet he believed God. And the years continued to roll by and year after year after year.

And nothing seemed to be happening. He was getting older. Sarah was getting older. There didn't seem to be any children. And then when Abraham was 99, 24 years later, God spoke to him again. And he said, this time next year you'll have a son. It seemed impossible, didn't it? This promise. It had taken so long to be fulfilled. In fact, when Sarah heard that, she laughed.

She scoffed. Well, I have a son when I'm this old. And yet one year later, when Abraham was 100, his son was born. And the promise which had seemed such a long time in coming, which seemed so laughable, was fulfilled.

[19:00] Well, the Hebrews believed in a promise from God. And it had been a long time in coming. Peter writes of the same situation.

He says, in the last days, scoffers will come. People who laugh at you will come. They will come with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. And they will say, where is the promise of this coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. Where is this promise you Christians talk about? We've been waiting years for it.

And it hasn't appeared. It's just a joke, isn't it? Just a laugh believing that Christ will return. Well, Sarah laughed. But she had faith that God was able to do what he had promised, even when it seemed impossible.

God can be trusted, even when the future is unknown. And he can be trusted, even when his promises seem very difficult to believe. Secondly, the fulfillment of those promises often lies in the future.

[20 : 12] I have never been to Barcelona. I'd be very happy to go, but I've never been. I'm sure Scott Hamilton probably has and could tell you about it.

But if you go to Barcelona, there is, of course, that famous cathedral, unpronounceable cathedral, whose architect is Gaudi. And it's probably mispronounced as well.

But this cathedral was begun in 1882. And in 1883, Gaudi came on board and took on the project. And he worked on it for a very long time.

In fact, he died in 1926. And at that time, this tremendous building was only 15% complete. He'd seen a little bit of it.

He'd seen a few of the towers and a few of the halls and so on. But he hadn't seen the finished product. In fact, it's not even finished today. It continues to be built.

[21 : 07] He'd caught a glimpse, but he didn't see the finished thing. And in verse 13, we're told the same of Abraham. The patriarchs all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

They saw a little bit of the promise. They saw the promised land. They saw Isaac. They saw Jacob. They saw the family beginning to grow. But they suddenly didn't see the worldwide blessing that we can see today.

They knew that God was faithful, even if his promises would be fulfilled far in the future. And there's a hint of that, isn't there, in verse 9.

Abraham goes to live in the land of promise, but he lives in a tent. It would be peculiar, wouldn't it, if I bought a new house. I buy a lovely house in Newton, Mayer, and I invite you around for dinner.

Not all of you at once, of course. You get there, and I show you around in the conservatory, in the lounge, in the snooker room, and so on. And then I say, and this caravan in the front, this is actually where I sleep.

[22 : 20] It would be very odd, wouldn't it? I own this marvelous house, and yet I sleep and live in this little caravan. And yet that is precisely what Abraham did. God took him into the land of promise.

And yet Stephen tells us in Acts chapter 7, he never even owned so much as a foot of it. He lived in a tent. And verse 13 reminds us, this was because Abraham and his family acknowledged they were strangers and exiles.

For people who speak thus make it clear they are seeking a homeland. Verse 16, as it is, they desire a better country. That is a heavenly one. You see, when Abraham lived in a tent, it was almost a visual picture.

God has promised me this land. And yet my final destiny lies beyond Canaan. It was a step on the way, but it wasn't the final destination itself.

He was looking forward to something better. A better country, a heavenly one, and a city prepared by God himself. You see, just before he was called in Genesis 12, we're introduced to the men of Babel.

[23 : 32] And they live in a city. And they decide to build this marvelous tower. And they say, let's build a tower reaching to heaven. And let's make a name for ourselves. And God sees their pride and he judges them and scatters them throughout the earth.

Dividing people into different ethnic groups. But the city Abraham was interested in was very different. In Revelation 21, we're told of a city not built up to heaven, but coming down from heaven. And a city populated by a great multitude no one can count. From every tribe and tongue and nation and people gathered by God himself.

Not under judgment, but under blessing. And the writer to the Hebrews says that was Abraham's vision. The worldwide blessing that would come through his family.

The heavenly Jerusalem which would descend from heaven. And people of all nations gathered together in worship. Their names written in heaven. So Abraham and his family were pilgrims.

[24 : 38] They came from Ur, a great city. A center of civilization, technology and culture. And yet they went out and lived as strangers in tents. Then, as now, people who live here briefly, of course, are viewed with a certain reservation.

A certain suspicion. Abraham probably experienced the degree of that. And yet they didn't want to return. Verse 15. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

He could have gone back to a very comfortable life in Ur. He could have been accepted. He could have been one of the big men in town. And yet because he had this promise of God, he was willing to live in a tent.

And experience the degree of alienation from the people around him. Because he was looking forward to something much better. Well, the Hebrew Christians were trying to return, weren't they? Perhaps not physically to Jerusalem. But in their hearts, they were seeking to go back to Judaism. Not wishing to experience the alienation and the suspicion of being believers.

[25 : 48] And the writer is saying, you need to keep your eyes fixed on the future. You don't belong here on this earth. You're pilgrims. Your home is in heaven. And your citizenship is there.

That's why in verse 34, he says to them, when they had their property plundered, they knew that they had better and lasting possessions. They lost some things temporarily, but God had something permanent he was going to give to them.

And he reminded them that this world is not their home. The second implication is that the promise is not always fulfilled in our lives.

They all died in faith. And yet they looked forward to something. Verse 20, Isaac invoked future blessings. When? When he was dying. Verse 21, Jacob, when he was dying, spoke about the promise to come.

Verse 22, Joseph, at the end of his life, with their dying breath, they were looking forward to what God was going to do in the future. To the promise he had made, because they knew that he would be faithful to it.

[27 : 01] Well, Peter makes clear what this means in his first letter. He writes this letter to some Christians in the first century, whom he describes as strangers and exiles, pilgrims, people who are not of this world.

And he says to them, according to God's great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Abraham was taken into the land of inheritance, and he waited patiently for God to fulfill his promise. Peter says, we have an inheritance, an abiding one, and it's kept in heaven, and we are waiting for it to be revealed in the last time.

We need, therefore, to be patient while God brings about his purpose. And in the meantime, Peter says, though you have not seen him, Jesus Christ, you love him. Faith is being sure of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

We live by faith, trusting the Lord, trusting in his word, even though we do not yet see him. God can be trusted, and his promises will be fulfilled, even in the far future.

[28 : 28] But of course, that raises an objection, doesn't it? You say, well, what good is a promise being fulfilled if the person to whom it was made is dead? It's not much good to them, is it? Not much good to Abraham, if he's dead.

Well, I've never been to Russia. Kiran came back from Russia this week. We're grateful for your prayers for him. But I've never been. But if I did go, I'd quite like, perhaps in the summer rather than the winter, I'd quite like to visit Moscow.

And apparently in Moscow, you have this wonderful red square, and you have the Kremlin, and this great Orthodox cathedral. And in the middle of it, you have the tomb of Lenin, the famous communist revolutionary.

And in fact, Lenin is still there. He's still in his suit. He's still on display. Because when he died, one of his colleagues, a man, interestingly, called Leonard Crasson, set up a committee called the Immortalization Commission.

And his goal was he would preserve the body of Lenin, because they were so confident that some future Soviet scientist would work out how to raise the dead, that if they kept him in good nick, one day they could bring him back.

[29 : 42] Well, he's still there many years later. Interestingly, there's another feature in Red Square called the Resurrection Gate, in which there is no body.

Can God raise the dead? Soviet scientists clearly cannot. But in verse 17 to 22, we're told that God is able to raise the dead, and that his purposes will not be finally fulfilled this side of the grave.

By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son. Verse 19, he considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

You see, God made the promise to give Abraham an heir. 25 years later, he received Isaac, his son. But then he was given a command which seemed to contradict the promise.

And God said to Abraham, take your son, your only son, whom you love, and offer him as a sacrifice. It must have been very perplexing for Abraham to believe God and yet to have to obey.

[30 : 58] But in Genesis 22, verse 5, there's a hint that he knew God was going to do something remarkable. He said, we will worship and then we will come back to you, both of us.

We'll go and worship God and make sacrifice and we will return. Abraham had faith. And the writer to the Hebrews tells us, verse 19, internally, he was thinking that God was able to raise him from the dead.

He'd learned, hadn't he, verse 12, that from one man as good as dead, God was able to bring forth life. And now he came to understand that God could, if he wished, raise the dead and restore his son back to life.

Well, that's what Jesus taught. The Pentateuch, the Old Testament, the books of Moses, taught. You recall, he was debating with the Sadducees and they were saying, well, there's no resurrection. And he said to them, well, as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You, the Sadducees, who believe in no resurrection, you are quite wrong. In fact, all through the chapter we see hints of this, don't we?

[32 : 18] In verse 4, we're told that Abel, though he died, he still speaks. His testimony continued after death. And then in verse 5, we have Enoch.

Well, he never saw death because God took him. And then in verse 26, when writing of Moses, he considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt for he was looking forward to the reward.

when did Moses receive this reward? Verse 35, women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release so that they might rise again to a better life. Finally, of course, it's made very clear in verse 39 and 40, all these saints, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us, they should not be made perfect.

What he is saying is that the hope of all these Old Testament saints was that they should be made perfect, that they should rise to new life, that they should inherit that heavenly city, that better country, and they should see God face to face.

[33 : 39] How was this possible? Because God was faithful to his promise, and he would bring it about in the future, and if by that time they'd already died, he would restore them to life, life everlasting.

John Bunyan wrote that classic, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and in the tenth part of that book, he's a pilgrim, Christian is approaching the celestial city, the allegory of heaven, and as he does, he sees a river, and he's told that he, like everyone else, has to pass through that river.

Only two people, he's told, Enoch and Elijah, took another route, and he gets into the river, and it seems a bit much for him. And then he has a vision of Christ, and Christian says this, Oh, I see him again, and he tells me, When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.

And at that point, the river settles, and Christian enters onto the bank, where he is greeted by two shining men, come to minister to him. And then they see the city, stood upon a mighty hill, the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, the two men helping them, and because they had left their mortal garments behind in the river.

And they came to the city with much agility and speed, and the foundation upon which the city was framed was higher than the clouds. And they continue talking. And then they see that the beauty and glory of the city is inexpressible.

[35 : 23] And they say, quoting the words of Hebrews 12, this is Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

Hebrews 12, verse 24. God will fulfill his promises for his people. And even should they die before those promises, the promise of the Lord's return come about, they will be raised to new life.

If they have to pass through the river, he will be with them in the waters and bring them to Mount Zion and the company of the firstborn. The Thessalonians had that same question, didn't they? What about the people dying before the Lord's return? And Paul said, well, brothers, we don't want you to grieve as those who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with them those who have fallen asleep.

And we declare to you by a word from the Lord that we who are alive, who are left until the coming, the promised coming of the Lord, we will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

[36 : 42] And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, encourage one another with these words. The Hebrews needed encouragement. They needed to be reassured that God would fulfill his promise, that Christ would return to come for them, to take them to the home he had prepared for them.

He reminds them that God had always been faithful in the past and that though his promise has often seemed, humanly speaking, a very long time in coming, they would be fulfilled. And if we fall asleep before the end, then one day Christ will come, we will hear his voice, and the dead shall be raised to be with him forever.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Let us pray together. Father, we thank you that you are the God who makes promises.

[38 : 14] We thank you that we can trust you with everything. We thank you, Lord, that you will achieve your purpose for us. And Lord, one day Christ will return and take us to be with him forever in that heavenly city.

So we pray, Lord, you encourage us, encourage the weak, encourage those of us who are weak, Lord, who are discouraged, who are growing weary. Help us to encourage one another, to spur one another on in our Christian pilgrimage.

And help us to keep our eyes fixed upon that day as it draws near. Give us endurance that we might do your will and in time to receive what is promised, the heavenly reward.

So we thank you, Lord, for your purpose and your plans for us. And we pray that we will draw near to you this week in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[39 : 24] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.