

1Yr04 – The First Responders Luke 2 & Matthew 2

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message this morning, “The First Responders.” I love this title. If you’re a first responder, emergency personnel, emergency tech, emergency fire fighter, paramedic, military first responder -thank you. Today we are going to Luke Chapter 2 and Matthew Chapter 2.

In our last message we looked at some very first responders, they were the shepherds. We ended the message with the first responders, the shepherds, in the shepherd’s field. It was to the shepherds that heaven first opened and announced the incarnation of God as a child in Bethlehem. And those shepherds responded perfectly, didn’t they? But we can’t give them too much credit because heaven split open and they got their own personal rock opera. I’m talking about the host of heaven singing the grand “In Excelsis Deo” chorus for them.

But God doesn’t do it that often. God wants us to respond by faith, not because we have witnessed a personal rock opera from heaven. They say if God would hang us over hell for three seconds then hang us over heaven for three seconds we would know what to do. But he doesn’t do that. God wants our choice by faith. Faith is the evidence of what you can’t see, it’s the confidence of what you know is going to happen. In this message we are going to look at some of the other first responders and see what responding in faith (or not) looks like.

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father please show us the first responders today, and make us first responders. I pray for each of us Lord that we would be in that first responder category. Not the first to see Jesus or to recognize who he is but to respond first when we see him, when you reveal him to us Lord. Show us by these first responders what you are calling us to do today. We pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

In the Old Testament law, there were three ceremonies that were required for every first born Jewish male child.

Circumcision

Purification

Dedication

All Jewish males had to go through circumcision, and there was the Purification rite that was really for the mother. But also the firstborn had to go through a Dedication ceremony where they were dedicated and redeemed (or bought back) from the Lord. So Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to Jerusalem from Bethlehem. Bethlehem is only five miles

from Jerusalem. They are going to travel the five miles to Jerusalem probably twice. The first time is in Luke 2 verse 21.

Luke 2:21 (NLT)

21 Eight days later (after His birth), when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham, and Jesus was the fulfillment of that covenant. When God told Abraham in Genesis 12 and then again in Genesis 15 that ***through your seed all of the earth would be blessed*** he was speaking of Jesus Christ in the lineage of Abraham. Now Jesus is born to fulfill that covenant and he must (obviously) go through that law of circumcision which is a picture of the covenant with Abraham.

This is also when the baby is formally named. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew YESHUA which means “The Lord Saves.” And so they name him Jesus, as the angel told Joseph, ***because he will save his people from their sin.***

And so then they go back to Bethlehem. Forty days later they return to Jerusalem. They probably went through the second of the two ceremonies at the same time, or during that same visit, the Purification for Mary after childbirth and the dedication of the firstborn son to the Lord. The Lord had told the people through Moses that the firstborn was “to the Lord.” So the Lord receives all of our “firsts.” Our first fruits, our first born, our first money, it all belongs to the Lord. There was a ceremony where a child was given to the Lord and then redeemed – in a picture of salvation of what God would do for us – he was bought back from the Lord. And then the parents would commit to raise him for the Lord on the Lord’s behalf. That’s just a little background on the ceremony of dedication. We read it in Luke 2 verse 22-24.

Luke 2:22-24 (NLT)

22 Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

23 The law of the Lord says, “If a woman’s first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord.”

24 So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—“either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Joseph and Mary are just going through the Mosaic Law to make sure that Jesus follows the law, even from his birth, and he did of course. And according to the law, during these

ceremonies, they were to bring a lamb, actually, for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for the sin offering. But the law made a way for those who lived in poverty to not have to bring a lamb, because a lamb was expensive and was a source of food. And so if a family lived in abject poverty they were allowed in the law to bring two turtledoves or two pigeons instead. That's what Mary and Joseph brought because, listen carefully please, Jesus was not born into royalty, he was born into poverty. Jesus was royalty, we have seen that in the last messages, the highest of all royalty that has ever been royalty, but he was born in abject poverty in the lowest possible way a person could be born – in the manger, in a stable.

Joseph and Mary had Jesus at the temple for these final two ceremonies and we meet our first two first responders. These responders are important, and a lot of times they get skipped over in the story but they have a real key role. So let's read about them. The first one was named Simeon.

Luke 2:25-32 (NLT)

25 At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him

26 and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

27 That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required,

28 Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.

30 I have seen your salvation,

We're talking about a first responder here. Simeon is in the Temple, he is a righteous man, a devout man, and the Holy Spirit is upon him. Jesus passes by with Joseph and Mary, and Simeon probably says, "Hey, can I hold that baby?" And he takes that baby and lifts him up to the Lord and says "Lord, now I can die in peace. I have seen your salvation."

31 which you have prepared for all people.

32 He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

And so the first Jewish responder after the shepherds (who got a "gimme" if you will, because of the heaven thing,) says, "Listen, I know who this is. This is God's Savior. The Savior of Heaven. ***He is a light to reveal God to the nations*** (the gentiles) ***and he is the glory of your people Israel.***"

It's a real key thing to see that God's prophet Simeon said that right up front. He is going to reveal God to the gentiles; he's going to be the glory of God's people Israel. God had revealed to him he wouldn't die until he saw the Messiah, and so as soon as Simeon saw the Messiah, he said "Now I can die in peace." Let me just say that again. As soon as Simeon recognized the Messiah, saw him for who he is, he said "Now I can die in peace."

Can I just tell you, I've led a lot of people to the Lord while they were dying, on the verge of dying? And it's a funny thing about people. They want to be their own lord, and they want to have things their own way and do what they want until they realize they're gonna die. And then they are willing to consider what I have to say. And they are very receptive. So if you know anybody in that place, be sure to just go and talk to them and say, "Listen, you're going to die. Heaven is real and hell is real and I want to give you a chance to decide where you are going when you do die."

Can I just tell you guys something? You're gonna die. It is a one hundred percent chance you're going to die. Some of you are thinking "What about the rapture?" There is that. But death is really a one for one deal. You're gonna die. When you see the Savior, when you receive him for who he is you can say with Simeon "Lord, I can die in peace." It's one of the greatest privileges of the ministry to help someone really know where they are going and know their faith is strong and have them just be ready to go. You can have that same peace, because you can see the Messiah for who he is, just as Simeon did.

Here's the key. Simeon was ready to recognize the Savior when he saw him. Simeon was seeking the Savior. And I promise you when someone is seeking the Savior, when they want to know God's way of salvation, God reveals it to them. God *reveals it* to them. He will never leave someone "hanging." So I pray that you are searching for him, seeking him, anxiously waiting for him as Philippians 1 says. Our citizenship is in heaven from which we wait for a Savior, we are anxiously waiting, and we say "Are you coming? Are you coming? I'm expecting you. I'm expecting to see you." That's where Simeon was and he's a great example for us!

And then we have a little reminder of just *where* Joseph and Mary *were* in all this. This is kind of a cool little thing the Holy Spirit slipped in here. Luke 2:33 regarding Joseph and Mary.

Luke 2:33 (NLT)

33 Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him

They were amazed. The word amazed means "To wonder at" or "Marvel at." ***Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him.*** Even though the angel had

showed up for both of them, even though the shepherds had come, Joseph and Mary are clueless. They are amazed at what was being said, clearly implying they still didn't really get what was going on. I don't want to offend anybody. But there are people who give Mary, in essence, a "Deity" status. But she certainly wasn't deity here. She was a faithful young girl and highly favored, the Word says, but she is clueless as to what is happening here with Jesus.

And then Simeon blessed the family and speaks a prophecy to Mary. One that she doesn't want to hear and a hard one in Luke 2:34-35.

Luke 2:34-35 (NLT)

34 Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, but he will be a joy to many others. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him.

People feel about Jesus like they do about Volkswagens. You either love or hate them. Jesus is the same way, you either love him or hate him, and that's what this prophecy is saying.

Here's the prophecy to Mary, speaking about what was in store for Jesus that Mary as his mother would have to experience. Verse 35 says:

35 As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Speaking of Mary. And man, that is true, as Mary the mother of Jesus watched what Jesus went through during his passion week, as any mother would feel for their child.

Then our second first responder was in the Temple that day. Her name was Anna. She had been married for seven years and then widowed for the remainder of her life, and had dedicated her life to serving God in the Temple. And though Anna was married, this is one of the places where certain religions see this concept of women serving God in the Temple or being married to God.

Verse 36 says she was very old, she was probably in her eighties. Verse 38 of Luke 2 says this:

Luke 2:38 says - (NLT)

38 She (Anna) came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

This woman had spent her entire life serving God in the Temple and when she just walked by Jesus she just about danced a jig and broke a hip. She knew this was the Savior and it is revealed to her because she has been anxiously waiting, and then she immediately began praising God *and* telling everyone the Savior from God was finally here. It doesn't tell us what she said but she must have been saying something like "Hey, hey, hey! The Savior is here! He's right over there! Yeah, that baby is him! That's the Savior, I know it is! I know that child is the Savior that we've been waiting for from God to rescue Jerusalem."

And so Anna finishes out her life telling people that the Savior is here, "Wake up, he's in town, get ready for it!"

Great examples of first responders, from the shepherds, to Simeon to Anna at the temple, the first responders have been rock solid, godly, supernaturally good responses. People who are looking by faith, they see Jesus and they have great responses.

But, it's not always so, is it? We don't always see great first responses. So in our next section we are going to see our third and fourth first responders who are two opposite first responders. *We are going to see those who are truly seeking a Savior and we are going to see those who are truly self-seeking.* Let's go to Matthew Chapter 2.

Matthew 2:1 (NLT)

1 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem . . .

Here are our next two first responders. First, the Magi. They are those whom we traditionally call "The Wise Men" from the east. They were astrologers and possibly magicians, (that word was used a little different then, although in some instances, not.) So we meet them. And then we meet King Herod. He was the ruthless and paranoid King of Judea (the area of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.) The wise men are coming from the east. Probably from Persia, or Arabia or Babylon, not the east like China, but the near east instead. They were gentile "royalty" (of a type) who knew the Old Testament prophecies. They either knew it by their studies of the various religions or if they were from Babylon then the Jews who stayed in Babylon might have instructed them about what God's Word said about the coming of the Messiah. In any case, these gentile, royalty astrologers knew there was a sign that would indicate the Messiah was there.

Matthew 2:2 says (NLT)

2 (they came asking) "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

This is a delegation of royal visitors coming from a gentile country knowing that a star would identify the Messiah's birth. They saw the star of Bethlehem and they came seeking the Savior. Guys, you need to hear me please. If you will truly seek the Savior, God will unveil him, will reveal him to you. He will. All you have to do is desire to see him. These wise men desired to see him.

Here's an incredible side note about the star. Just a month and a half ago, at the end of June (2015) the star of Bethlehem was created again for the first time since the birth of Jesus Christ, and it was pretty incredible to see. It's really the aligning of two planets. All the websites are like, he's coming back, because there's a sign. (I'm thinking really? You needed *that* sign, because there are at least a hundred others that he's coming...) It was pretty incredible to see as those stars aligned.

Here's our point today. These first responders were true seekers. And so they came knowledgeable about the things of God, they came to see this newborn King of the Jews so that they could worship him.

So, the wise men were true seekers but there was also a true self-seeker as well. And I really want you to see this contrast because today in the church, and again I still don't want to offend anybody, but there are true seekers and there are true self-seekers. We meet the King of the self-seekers next. His name is Herod and he also wanted to seek out the Messiah. He also wanted to seek out this King of the Jews, but for a different reason.

Matthew 2:3 (NLT)

3 King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem.

Why was everyone in Jerusalem disturbed? Because King Herod was like, not any wife I know, but other wives, where basically if the wife isn't happy the "whole city" isn't happy! If the wife is disturbed the whole city is disturbed. So it was because when King Herod was disturbed everyone was disturbed. King Herod had already established a reputation of killing anyone and everyone who might possibly take over his throne. I'm not comparing any wife to that, honestly. King Herod was the "guy." He was like, "Off with his head!" He had killed a bunch of family members already to make sure they didn't take over the throne. So this news of the wise men coming to seek the King of the Jews put his paranoia in high gear.

Matthew 2:4-8 (NLT)

4 He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" (not because he was a SEEKER – but because he was a SELF-SEEKER)

**5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:
6 ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of
Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’ ”
7 Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from
them the time when the star first appeared.
8 Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when
you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”**

When King Herod said he wanted to worship Jesus he meant it in a “kill him” sort of way. He was acting like he was “in the church” but he actually had some hidden motives, a hidden agenda. Herod was not a true seeker, he was a true self-seeker.

Can I just tell you something here? And I am going to preface it with this church is the healthiest it’s ever been since the day it started. Relationally, in unity wise, it is the absolute healthiest it’s been since day one. I promise you it’s a joy, an absolute joy. But here’s the real truth, okay? There are some acting like they are seeking Jesus but hiding hidden motives. There are some in the church with their own agendas, with self-serving agendas. One of the most difficult things for a Christian to come to grips with is the fact that not everyone in church is truly seeking Jesus with pure motives. That there are those in church who are acting like they are seeking the Savior to a lesser degree, similar to Herod acting like he is seeking the Savior. It’s the sad truth. I don’t want to make anyone uncomfortable. Because Christians get taken out all the time by what they think are Christians. Anybody in the world can walk in these doors. It doesn’t mean they are seeking Jesus. Twenty-three years in pastoral, elder church leadership is what gives me this knowledge. I pray each of us are here today because we are truly seeking the Savior, seeking to know him and seeking to worship him.

So the wise men have come, truly seeking the Savior and King Herod is trying to use them for his self seeking plans. Continuing in Matthew 2:9-11.

Matthew 2:9-11 (NLT)

9 After this interview (with King Herod) the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was.

10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!

11 They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Here's what happens when someone is truly seeking and responds to Jesus correctly.
They *begin* by seeking a Savior,
God *sets their path* to find the Savior,
When they find him they begin to *worship him*,
And then they give *what they have* as an offering.

And we can easily learn from these first responders exactly what we are called to do in our own lives.

Accept that we need a Savior.
Allow God to set our path to find him.
When we do find him, bow our life down to worship him.
And give to him what we have (what was previously important to us) as an offering.

When we do God will take up an active role in our lives, just as he did for these "first responder" wise men.

Matthew 2:12 (NLT)

12 When it was time to leave, they (wise-men) returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

So God wants to guide you to a Savior and if you truly seek him God will bring you to him. And if you will receive him into your life *as your Savior* God will take charge of your life, leading you and guiding you to where he knows it is best for you to go. We can learn a lot from these wise men, but the biggest lesson is *wise men (and women) still seek him*.

But there's still that paranoid King of self seeking who is looking for Jesus for his own reasons, and so God needs to get Jesus out of town for awhile.

Matthew 2:13-15 (NLT)

13 After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

***14 That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother,
15 and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt."*** (Another prophecy fulfilled)

Here's the deal. God knows. Do you know that God is already there? Like in your future, the choices that you're making, God is already on the side of that choice. He already

knows the choice you're making and he is already at work within the choice that you are making, either to lead you to repentance or not.

God knows. God knows if we are truly seeking the Savior and God knows if we are truly self seeking. God knows and God is always two steps ahead of you because God is already in the future. It's not just that he know what we're going to do, it's that he is already there in that place we call the future. God sees our hearts. He sees our motives and he is ready to save us if we will truly seek him with an honest and open heart.

Unfortunately that was not the case for the ultra paranoid King Herod.

Matthew 2:16 (NLT)

16 Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance.

A horrendous murder of an untold number of baby boys in the city of Bethlehem, all to try to stamp out the effect of Jesus Christ being born. Horrendous indeed, but certainly not the last time the ruler of a culture has tried to stamp out the effect of the birth of Jesus Christ. Open in your eyes, in our country today, the most influential and powerful people are using all of their influence and all of their power to try to stamp out the effect of the birth of Christ on our culture.

That's exactly what King Herod was doing and that is exactly what is happening in our culture today. Don't give in. Stand up for Christ. He will rescue you. *Following Christ in the midst of an anti-Christ culture is the abundant life.* Giving in to the anti-Christ culture is the road to destruction and death. Don't quit because the going gets hard. Stand up for Christ. We now live in an anti-Christ culture; it doesn't mean we have to give in. Stand up for Christ.

Matthew 2:17-18 (NLT)

17 Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 18 "A cry was heard in Ramah— weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead." (Jer 31:15)

The spiritual battle for souls has always been very real and has always been very costly. And it will continue to be even more so in our culture. But the one thing that people don't realize (those who are trying to stamp out Jesus Christ) is that *God is eternal but their life is a vapor.* So the God haters, stamp out Jesus, convert the culture, bury Christianity, move on, humanism and everything else is better for our culture, they don't realize that

God has been around. He has seen it. And so this ruler who tried to stamp out the birth of Jesus goes the way of every other ruler of every other culture.

Matthew 2:19 (a) (NLT)

19 When Herod died,

That's the problem. It's that some rulers of cultures think that they're not going to die or that their legacy is not going to die or that they can do something grand enough, or incredible enough that they will somehow be remembered. If I had time I would tell you about what Herod did when he was about to die. I'll just tell you, because I started it. He brought in all the prominent people in the area and told his guards that as soon as he died they were to kill them all, so that the mourning would be great when he died, from the day that he died. Psychotic people wanting major impacts on culture.

Matthew 2:19-21 (NLT)

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

20 "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

21 So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother.

All of God's enemies will go the way of Herod. We are made as a vapor in this life, God is eternal. God's plans will succeed. Ours will not if they are contrary to God's plans. So God waits for the paranoid king to die, he does and then God tells Joseph it's okay to take the family back.

Matthew 2:22-23 (NLT)

22 But when he (Joseph) learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee.

23 So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: "He will be called a Nazarene."

That's how the first two or three years of Jesus' life went. That's how the first responders responded. In a way, there are still first responders. We may not be the first people to ever see or recognize Jesus for who he is, but there is a time in each of our lives, prayerfully, when we first respond to Jesus Christ.

You've heard my personal testimony. No one told me about Jesus Christ until I was nineteen years old. How did that happen? Nineteen years old, I first heard that Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth, became a man and lived a perfect life so he could take

my sin upon himself and pay the full penalty for my sin so that I could be forgiven and go to heaven. I heard that in this little church in Walnut, Ca and I said, "That's for me! I need that!" When the pastor said if you want some of that come on down, and I was first down the aisle. That was my first response. The first time I had heard. Up to that I had heard some other stuff. But Jesus paying for my sin, so that I can be forgiven and spend eternity in heaven with God? Now that's something I'll respond to. And I responded that first day.

I want to give you a chance to do that right now. I want to do something that we haven't done in a while. I'm just going to ask you if you've never responded publically to Jesus Christ, I'm just going to ask you to get up and walk down here. Not because that action in and of itself does anything, but it is a response to Jesus. It's a public response to Jesus. I'm going to ask for first responders and I thought this is such an appropriate time to do this. If you have never publically responded to Jesus Christ, I'm just going to ask that you stand up right now and come forward so that I can pray for you and then let you go back to your seats.

So if you need prayer, or you need to recommit your life to Jesus Christ, I want you to wait a minute. I do want you to come because that is important too.

So, because of the message, I would just like to ask for first responders, anyone who needs to respond to Jesus Christ for the first time, right now. There is a time when you have to publically stand up for Jesus and say that you do choose Jesus. To stand against this culture's direction. I choose him against the lust of my flesh, and the lust of the world. I choose him against and contrary to my sin. I turn from my sin, I turn from this world and I respond to Jesus Christ.

If that's you just stand up right now. I want you to say, "This is my time, this is the time when I am responding publically to Jesus Christ." If you have never responded to Jesus come now. I am just giving you a chance right now to cement it. I promise it will make a change in your life. A public response is important.

I am just going to pray.

We are standing up for you Jesus. We are standing against this culture, against our sin, Lord. Against the devil's work in our life, Lord. We're standing here for you. Lord we are standing here for you, to make a stand for you, to make a commitment to you Lord. God we turn from our sin, Lord. We pray that you would break the chains that bind us God, those things that hold us back from you, God. Help us to stand for you Lord. As the enemy comes in like a flood, Lord, use us to raise up a standard. Thank you Jesus. Thank

you Jesus. Hallelujah! Praise your mighty name! We surrender to you, Lord. Thank you Jesus. Praise your mighty name.

Anyone else? You need to take a stand for Jesus. You need to stand up in a culture that's trying to stamp Jesus Christ out. Just say, "Lord, I'll stand for you. I will respond to you."

Just pray after me. Dear Jesus, I see you. I see you for who you are. And I receive you into my life. I worship you. I bow my life to you. I make you my Lord and I commit to follow you. Please forgive me of my sin, come into my life and transform me. Make me a radical follower, a disciple. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and use me for your Kingdom's sake. It's in your name I pray, amen.

Listen, when I am preparing on Saturday night, I see your faces. That might sound a little creepy, but I see your faces. It's because God puts you on my heart, and my heart breaks for you. And so I just pray, "God speak to them."

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for making it real, Lord. God we don't ever want to play "church" Lord, we don't ever want to pretend. We don't ever want to have self-seeking motives, God. We want to truly seek you, Jesus. And Lord there are others in the room who are seeking you. I pray you would encourage them, God. Give them great peace that you're doing a great work in their lives. And God, each of us are in our own place with you. We realize that you are moving us towards the Savior. And so we pray you would just continue to do that, be with us Lord and continue to reveal the great things of the kingdom to us, In Jesus name, amen.