of the scriptures to one of my favorite benedictions that is in all the scriptures and that is to 1st Thessalonians chapter 5. When I was looking at the bulletin, Hunter's gonna be preaching to us from 1st Thessalonians chapter 5 as well. I don't think he's gonna get quite this far but 1st Thessalonians chapter 5 beginning at verse 23 and we're going to read 23 and 24. 1 Thessalonians 5 verses 23 and 24.

Because of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden, death and misery have marked the lives of the whole human race physically, mentally, emotionally and especially spiritually ever since. Physically, for example, you see the effects of the fall and the death and decay of all around us.

And we were especially reminded of that about five or six years ago when a pandemic raged across this world. Mentally, you see the effects of the fall and the various diseases that afflict the mind. causing it to hear and see things that are not there. In other cases, causing it to dive into the pits of depression that you fear that that person who falls into it will never come back from it. Emotionally, you see the effects of the fall and the feelings of others against others, that rage against other people, that covet what others have to the point that stress, anxiety, and sin overwhelm a person.

Spiritually, though, we see the effects of the fall in the way that others, the majority of the people in this world, have turned their backs on our God and have followed after the gods of this world in agnosticism, atheism, materialism, polytheism, and all the other ways that we could possibly think of. And if we were to look around and to gauge things only by sight, we would be quite depressed, would we not?

And yet, yet, because God has had mercy upon the souls of his elect, he is completely mending all human imperfection and sinfulness in the lives of those who trust in and love the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. And I want you to see this morning, brothers and sisters, when you are tempted to be discouraged by all you see around you, I want you to be encouraged by the fact that our God is, in fact, sanctifying his people completely. And he is restoring that original glory and likeness to God with which Adam and Eve were first created. with the righteousness of Jesus now instead of a perfect human righteousness. And as the passage will go on to say, God is faithful and he will accomplish this great feat in his children of faith. However, ultimate perfection, which will include a glorified body as well as a glorified soul, will only see its completion at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

And so we must be ready for that. So in looking at this great recreation and us who believe of which the text speaks and with which I want to encourage you this morning, I want you to see three encouraging truths from the word. Who will do this for us? Who will do this for us? Secondly, what will he do for us exactly? What will he do for us exactly? And finally and thirdly, why will he do this for us? Why will he do this for us and how can we know that it will certainly occur. Before we do that and before I read the word to us, let's pray and ask our God for his help.

Lord, I am a mere sinful man who can do nothing apart from your spirit. And we in this audience are mere sinful men and women and boys and girls who have no power to grasp your truth or even to apply it, Lord God, unless your spirit comes and moves in our hearts and in our lives. Father, pour out your Spirit, or all that we do and say is in vain, O God.

Lord, would you be pleased to have mercy upon us this day? Would you be pleased to have mercy upon the one who speaks these words? Would you be pleased for the sake of Jesus to cleanse us and to make us ready to receive the Word of God, that we might receive it by faith? And receiving it by faith, Lord God, that we may act upon it and live to the glory and praise and encouragement of our great God now and forevermore, Lord. Lord, I pray that you would encourage the hearts of your people this day, that they would see that you will surely do these things for them if they know and love you. Lord, would you now come and speak the word to our souls, for it is able to give life. Would you fill us with it, O God, and rouse our dead hearts to hear the word of life, that we may live the abundant life that you have called us to live in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For I ask it all now in Jesus' precious and holy name. Amen. Hear now the word of the Lord from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, starting at verse 23. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely or completely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame or be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calls you who also will surely do it. Amen. And amen. May he bless the reading and now the preaching of his word to our souls. First of all, I want you to see who is it that will accomplish and complete this new creation within us as believers. Look at the text with me once more. Look at verse 23.

Paul says that it is the God of peace himself who will do this for us. You see, the Lord the great Lord of all the earth who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light and delivered us from the dominion of sin into the freedom of the sons of God. He it is who will make this happen. Brothers and sisters, the Lord God Almighty has rescued you and me from death and sin and placed us into eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ. But I want you to see, as the text says, only he can do this. Only he can accomplish this. Such perfection and preservation as the text is going to speak about can only come from the God of all grace. And notice how he is characterized here. He is characterized as the very God of peace, the God of peace himself. You see, this is the God who is the author of peace and the lover of Concord.

He is the one who has made peace between us who loved our sins and between a God who could not stand to look upon sin. He has made peace by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we are now reconciled to Him. We who once shook our fist in His face are now at peace with our God. As Paul says in Romans 5-1 and some of my favorite words in all of Scripture, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have what? We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You and I, who once were God's enemies, have now been drawn near And we are at peace with Him because He has made us right in His sight, in the blood and righteousness of His Son. And because of this peace that exists between us and God now, we now, as the passage goes on to say, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. We as believers now have access to God in prayer and communion with Him. by faith.

And as the verse goes on to say, not only do we have access to our God and communion with him, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. For you see, the God of peace who has begun this work of faith and peace within us will one day usher us into the very presence and glory of God himself.

We shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him. for we will reflect his glory completely. And using this same language, the writer to the Hebrews describes such a God to us in this way. In Hebrews 13, verses 20 and 21, ironically another benediction. But do you remember what he said there?

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, may he equip you with everything good, that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Brothers and sisters, the God of peace, who has brought Jesus Christ up from the dead, is now at work in your heart and your life.

If you are a believer in this room, equipping you with everything good, that you may do His will, that you may live in a way that is pleasing in His sight. And brothers and sisters, if that is the one who promises to accomplish what He has begun within us, For if Jesus has given His only Son, if He has given Him up for us all, how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things? And if that is the God who promises to accomplish what He has begun within us, who can doubt that it will certainly happen in His own good way and time? And I ask you this morning, do you believe that?

The very God of peace who raised Jesus from the dead, by the blood of the eternal covenant will certainly give life to your spiritually dead self. He will certainly affect holiness within your sinful frame and he will unequivocally work in you that which is pleasing to him. Praise God that he promises to do that and that he is the God of peace who will accomplish that in the lives of his children. But that brings me to the second point. What exactly is it that this God of peace, as the scriptures tell us right here, will do for us? For us whom he has saved by the blood of Jesus, what does he promise that he will do for us?

And this, brothers and sisters, is the truly amazing news from the one who can and will accomplish everything he has promised Notice again the text in verse 23 what it says that Paul prays that he will do for us and that he is confident that he will do for us. He will sanctify you completely so that your whole spirit and soul and body will be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see the things that Paul prays for, the two things that he prays for and that he is certain that God will accomplish in his people are their sanctification and their preservation in the faith. He will sanctify you completely and he will preserve your soul and body and spirit blameless until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's look at both of those in turn. First it says he will sanctify us wholly or completely. so that the whole person may be set apart as holy, as I like to say, holy, holy unto him, not just in an objective sense. And brothers and sisters, I want you to see that in the order of salvation, just as God has justified believers and declared them righteous in an objective sense, in one objective sense, he has also sanctified believers and set them apart so that they are holy unto Him, so that when He looks at us, He sees us as holy in His sight.

Now that is not our day-to-day experience, is it not? So what this promise includes is not just sanctifying us in an objective sense, but in an increasing measure within our hearts, what we call progressive sanctification. As we more and more become like the Lord Jesus Christ, For even the most spiritually mature in this life are sanctified but in part while they are in this world. And so we must be made more and more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

I love what John Calvin says. He says, By this term sanctification is included nothing less than the entire renovation of a man. Let me say that again. By this term sanctification, Calvin says, is included nothing less than the entire renovation of a man. It is as if you were a house that has been gutted from the inside out and God is now filling it, refilling it with new and beautiful things unto his glory.

And yes, God is the one who is doing this, but from this we must also infer that we as God's people must, during our whole lives, we must be making progress ourselves in the pursuit of holiness. We, as Philippians 2 says, we must be working out our own salvation with fear and trembling as the Lord himself works in us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure.

We must cooperate with the Spirit to see progressive sanctification in our lives. So I ask you this morning, are you striving with all of your heart by the power of the Spirit working within you? Because we cannot do it without him. Are you striving daily to put to death the sin that so easily clings? And are you striving to live unto the Lord Jesus Christ, unto the author and finisher of your salvation, to run the race with perseverance until we see His face in glory? We must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling as the Lord works in us, both to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Therefore, we must be praying ever and pressing ever towards complete sanctification and holiness as we get closer and closer to the goal of our souls.

And that is the glorification of our entire beings in His sight. Do you realize, Christian, if you were in here this day and you truly belong to Him, God promises that He is making you more and more conformed to the image of His Son as you draw closer to glory. He is making you more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, more patient, more kind, more good, more faithful, more gentle, more self-controlled in this life as we get closer to the life to come. Do you see those things in your life and increasing in your life? And as 2 Peter tells us, as we see these things increasing in our hearts and lives, we make our calling and election sure. God assures our hearts that we belong to Him and that we are becoming more like His Son and that we are certainly headed for glory. And hallelujah for that. But secondly, not only will He sanctify us completely, I want you to see the second thing because many of us, I believe, become very concerned when we see all that is out in the world, the world, the flesh and the devil. How do we know that we will persevere until the end? You may say to yourself, I've seen other people who've started off very strong in the faith and have ended very badly. How do I know that I will persevere until the end?

Well, look what the word tells us here. It says, not only will he sanctify you completely, It says He will preserve our whole person, body, soul, and spirit until we safely arrive at our true home. Look at the verse. He will sanctify you entirely and your whole spirit and soul and body may it be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is that not an amazing thing? He promises to do this.

Rather than becoming confused by the plethora of terms that are used here to define a person, spirit and soul and body, and thinking that this possibly means that there's a difference between our spirits and our souls. We need to understand that Paul is using all three terms, body, soul, and spirit, to emphasize the wholeness of the sanctification and perfection that is being wrought in us who believe. In other words, all of who we are will be kept blameless and eventually perfected at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is very similar.

This language is very similar to that fourfold representation of heart, soul, mind, and strength that Jesus uses and employs to describe the totality with which we are to love the Lord our God. Do you remember as he said in Mark 12 30, you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind. In other words, you are to love him with everything that you are. And even here it says, and it promises us in the Word that if you belong to God by faith, He is working in every part of who you are, not only to sanctify you, but to preserve you faithful unto Himself until you see His face in glory.

And speaking of this totality of our whole being that is being remade and is being preserved, Calvin says this, For then is the man pure and entire when he thinks nothing in his mind, desires nothing in his heart, and does nothing with his body except what is approved by God. Let me say that one more time. Calvin says this totality means that then is the man pure and entire when he thinks nothing in his mind, desires nothing in his heart, and does nothing with his body except what is approved by God. Don't you long to be in such a state as that? Don't you long to see yourself becoming more and more conformed to that image?

And we, as the scriptures tell us, are being recreated in true knowledge, holiness, and righteousness, as the Shorter Catechism question and answer 10 says. And as the hymn writer exalts, we are being changed from glory into glory. till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before him, lost in wonder, love, and praise. Brothers and sisters, where the good work of grace and sanctification has begun in a soul, it shall be carried on. It shall be protected and preserved. And all of those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, the word says, shall be preserved until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want you to be encouraged by this because think of what Jesus said. He promised in the Gospel of John, do you remember in chapter six, that he would lose none of those for whom he had died and whom the father had entrusted to his care. If you're a believer in here this day, the son died for you and the father entrusted you to the son's care. And Jesus says this in John 6 39. And this is the will of him who sent me that I shall lose none of those that he has given me, but I shall raise them up at the last day.

Isn't that an amazing promise? And yet remember, As we said at the beginning here, if God himself, if the God of peace himself did not carry on this good work in the soul, it would miscarry and fail utterly. especially if the tasks were left to us to complete. And that's what I'm trying to say to you this morning. It is not left to us on our own to complete it.

We have the Spirit of God now who helps us in our weakness to do this. We have the amazing power of the Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead to put our sins to death and to live for Him. And therefore, we should pray to God often to perfect His work in us. and to preserve us blameless, free from willful sin and impurity. as we pursue holiness in the power of the Spirit.

Till at last, as Jude says, we are presented faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. Remember those words? Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, that's what He promises to do for you. To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty, dominion and authority, before all time, now and forever. Amen.

And that is what he will do for you, believer. He will sanctify you completely and he will preserve your body, soul and spirit until the end. And so we have seen, first of all, the one who will do this, the God of peace. Secondly, We've seen what he will do for us. He will sanctify us completely, and he will preserve us until the end. But thirdly and finally, I want you to see, and this is the amazing thing, why will the God of peace do this for us? And how can we know that it will happen?

Consult verse 24 for the answer to this question. I love these words. Faithful is he who calls you, and he will surely do it. It's almost as if there's a double affirmation here. Faithful is he who calls you and he will surely do it. According to Paul, the kindness and the love of God had appeared to them in calling them to the knowledge of the truth, just as he has done for us who believe. And now it is the faithfulness of God that would be their security and enable them to persevere until the end. Do you realize that God in his kindness and love drew you to himself and made you his very own? But he didn't stop there. His very faithfulness will carry you home to glory and therefore. The apostle assures them God would do what he desired in their lives. He would effect what he had promised.

He would accomplish all the good pleasure of his goodness towards them, not because of anything in them, and that's what we need to realize, but because of the love with which he has loved them and us, because of his hesed, or his covenantally faithful love to his people through Jesus Christ.

And so we do not need to fear, brothers and sisters, because our fidelity to God depends not upon our strivings and the success of our workings, although we need to always be striving for these things. Our fidelity to God depends upon His faithfulness to us. We persevere in this new creation because He keeps us faithful to Himself. And so how can we be assured of his accomplishing all this? As the scripture says here, because he is faithful. And what do we mean by that?

He is faithful to his own promise to save the believer. If you come to him in faith, He says, no one who comes to me by faith will I ever turn away. He is faithful to his own promise to save the believer who will come to him. He is faithful to his son, whose reward it is that his people shall be presented to him faultless.

And we've talked about this before, but it's an amazing thing to think we are the very reward to the son for his faithful work upon the earth and upon the cross. And he delights in us who delight in him. And he is faithful to the work that he has commenced in us by our effectual calling.

Those whom he has called. Look at the verse. Faithful is he who calls you. He has called you unto himself if you are a believer in this room. And he is faithful to finish the work of those whom he has called unto himself. Listen to what John Calvin says. When the Lord has once called and adopted us as his sons and daughters, we may expect that his grace will continue to be exercised towards us. For he does not promise to be a father to us merely for one day, but he adopts us with this understanding that he is to cherish us ever afterwards.

Hence, our calling ought to be held by us as an evidence of everlasting grace, for he will not leave the work of his hands incomplete, as Psalm 138.8 says. He will not leave the work of his hands incomplete.

Brothers and sisters, we are part, if you're a believer in here, and you know these words, but I'm just gonna turn back here so that I read them exactly correctly. From Romans 8, you know the golden chain of salvation. And listen to what it says, because those whom God foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son, so that Jesus would be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also what? He also called. If you're a Christian here, you've been called by the Holy Spirit. And those whom he called, he also what? He justified. He declared you righteous in his sight. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Paul speaks of it as if it is a done deal, a done fact. And you will one day see him in glory.

So brothers and sisters recognize that it is not our own faithfulness. It is not our own keeping of the law, but it is the Lord's faithfulness on which all Christians must and have to rely and on which we may always count forevermore. And so I want you to be encouraged this day, brothers and sisters, despite our sins and our sorrows in this world, despite the number of times that we fail him, he is sanctifying you completely and he will preserve you body, soul and spirit until the end. Faithful is he who calls you and he will certainly do it. Amen and amen. Let's pray. Father God Almighty, it is a blessed thing to be able to read the promises of Scripture, and I pray that we would be faithful, as Jamie has always said to us, that we would be faithful to pray back the promises that you have made to us to you. You have promised to save us. Jesus' very name means Savior. He will save us from our sins. You have promised to save us from the power and the dominion of sin and from its ultimate effects.

Lord, do that in your people this day because of your everlasting lovingkindness, your hesed, your faithfulness from before the foundation of the world, calling us unto yourself. And those whom you have called, Lord God, you will surely cause to persevere until the end.

Lord, would you give us great faith to believe that? Would you give us great faithfulness to you to be faithful to you until the end? And Lord God, would we strive by the power of the spirit working within us to live always for the glory and honor of our God, knowing that he will keep us until the end and we will see his face one day and we will rejoice in him and we shall be like him. for we shall see him as he is and reflect him fully. Lord God, we are amazed at your promises.

We pray them back to you. Do these things for us, Lord God. And would you be glorified and honored, and may your kingdom go forth as we live out as salt and light in this world, convinced that we belong to you, and that you will carry us home one day, and that you will be with us until the end. I pray these things in Jesus' precious name.