

Keeping The Lights On

Jeremiah Dennis
Philippians 2:14-18
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What happens when the lights go out? Well, the residents of New York City found out the hard way in the summer of 1977s. Around 9:30 PM, lightning struck an electrical substation in Westchester County. The ensuing damage caused a disruption of service that plunged more than 7 million people into absolute darkness. Within minutes of the light going out, chaos commenced, crime exploded. Looters, ransacked stores, stealing everything from Pampers to televisions to cars. Rioters damaged more than 1,600 buildings. They started more than 1,000 fires. The next morning, over 4,500 people had been arrested. More than 500 police officers had been injured trying to keep the peace. Over \$1 billion in damages had been incurred.

That's what happens when the lights go out. The dark heart of man takes over. That should come as no surprise to us as Christians though. After all, doesn't Jesus say in John 3:20, "Everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds be exposed." That's because sin loves the dark. Sin thrives in the dark. That's why we need the light.

Jesus says of himself in John 12:46, "I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me shall not remain in darkness." But it's not just Christ who shines His light. No, that mantle has been passed to believers. We bear that responsibility. For this reason, Jesus says to his disciples, Matthew 4:14, "You are the light of the world." And then Paul will say to the Thessalonians, in 1st Thess' 5:5, "You are sons of light." And it's because we are meant to be the light of Christ in a sin darkened world. And in that very same spirit, the apostle Paul directs his words to the Philippian church in our text today.

See, Paul knew what happens when the lights go out. He knew that it was imperative, it was critical that the Philippians worked out their salvation. That is that they pursued sanctification with full reliance upon the Holy Spirit in order that they could shine brightly for Jesus Christ in a midnight world.

Well, we have the very same mission today as believers. Paul in this passage addresses our mission and mandate, and he will give us three exhortations to boldly shine for Christ, three encouragements to inspire us as Christians to keep the lights on. Because more than ever the world in which we live desperately needs light. So we must, as I've entitled this message, keep the lights on.

Here's the outline we'll follow this morning. It's listed there in your notes. Number one, stop whining. Number two, keep shining. And number three, follow my lead. Stop whining, keep shining and follow my lead.

Well, we'll start with Paul's first exhortation in the passage in verse 14. And it is, as I just said, stop whining. And in case you think I'm being harsh, I just needed a word to rhyme with shining, because it's hard to come up with an outline that you'll remember.

But seriously, that is the exact essence of Paul's charge in verse 14. Look at it with me. "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." That's a straightforward command to stop complaining, to stop whining. And you'll notice he says, "Do all things," and that phrase "all things" comes at the beginning of the sentence in the original, which means it has extra emphasis. And so Paul is saying, everything in your life, every situation, every circumstance, every person you are to face without a word of complaint. Because make no mistake, God uses all of those to conform you to the image of Christ. Romans 8:28 and 29 promises that.

So in light of verses 12 and 13 where Paul said, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling and full reliance upon the energizing power of God," the first place he wants the Philippians to start is by cutting out all whining. Because think of this, is sanctification always easy? Is growth in Christ fighting sin always easy? Well, certainly not. And so Paul want us, as we pursue obedience of verses 12 and 13, to do so with nary a single word of complaint,. And specifically as Paul says, "That's going to look like no grumbling, no disputing."

Think about that word grumbling for a moment. It's an onomatopoeic word, which means the sound resembles the meaning. In Greek, this is what that word is [foreign language 00:06:24]. Sounds like a growling, a murmuring, a muttering, and it is. And so Paul is saying, no grumbling, no [foreign language 00:06:33], which is dissatisfaction with life. I'm emotionally upset with the way things are going. Good illustration of this in Matthew chapter 20, parable of the wage earners. The guys hired at the beginning of the day, they work the whole day through. Well, much to their surprise, at the end of the day, they are payed the same amount as the guys who were hired at the end of the day.

So how do they respond? They grumble. Same word, [foreign language 00:07:04]. They grumble because they're upset with their circumstances. And Paul says, "Christian, that's not supposed to have any place in your life." But not only are we to eliminate grumbling, we're also warned against disputing. Well, that has the idea of arguing or questioning. More of an intellectual thing here than emotional. It's sort of a suspicious critical mindset. And it usually looks like some kind of internal dialogue where once you've complained, now you're justifying it. You are justifying why you have legitimate right to complain about this or that circumstance. That's how grumbling and disputing fit together. But Paul says, have nothing to do with that in anything.

Now you may be hearing that and saying, "Well, listen, why is grumbling or muttering or disputing so bad?" I mean, I get that it's not great. I don't love to hang out with grumblers. But at the same token, why is Paul going to highlight grumbling when he could have said, "Hey, don't have anything to do with sexual immorality, or don't be idolaters. Why would you harp on complaining? I mean, is it that bad? Hold that thought and keep your place in Philippians 2. Turn with me to 1st Corinthians 10 because 1st Corinthians chapter 10, God gives you his perspective on grumbling. We're just going to peek into the mind of God here. 1st Corinthians 10, we're

going to start in verse six. And just for context, Paul is now talking about the Jews and about the way they behaved in the wilderness during their wandering. This is after the exodus.

Listen to what Paul writes, 1 Corinthians 10 beginning in verse six. "Now, these things took place as examples for us that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents."

Now listen to verse 10, "Nor grumble as some of them did and were," what? Destroyed by the destroyer. How seriously does God take our grumbling? Serious enough that he wiped out an entire generation of Jews in the wilderness and their dead carcasses littered the sand as a vivid reminder that God hates grumbling.

But let's take it a little bit further, let's explore why does he so hate grumbling. Going to go to Numbers 14:27. Turn there if you wish. God talks to Moses in Numbers chapter 14. The people are grumbling to Moses. They're complaining about how big the giants are in the promised land and if we enter, we will surely die. So listen to what God says to Moses, Numbers 14:27, "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I've heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them as I live, declares the Lord, what you have said in my hearing, I will do to you. Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness and of all your number listed in the census from 20 years old and upward who have grumbled against me."

Three times, God says, "Even though the Jews grumble to you, Moses, it was really against me." And in case you missed it, he says it three times, which tells us that every time we grumble, every time we murmur, every time we complain, we are grumbling against God. And in effect, what we are doing is we are rejecting His sovereignty. We are rejecting His wise plan and we are rejecting His will for our life. John MacArthur says it this way. "In reality, every complaint a believer makes is against the Lord and is one of the ugliest of sins. It demonstrates a lack of trust in His providential will, boundless grace and infinite wisdom and love."

So church, if you and I are to live in this dark world and shine for Christ, we must recognize every single time we complain we are waging war against the [inaudible 00:12:36] and sovereignty of almighty God. Grumbling is not a small thing in God's mind. And let me give you a few examples of how this might work itself out in real terms in your life or my life.

Husbands, every time you grumble that your wife made you late yet again to a party or to church or to some important gathering, when you grumble against her, you are really grumbling against the Almighty. Wives, when you grumble that your children never obey, when you grumble that they have seemingly endless hunger and it's super expensive to feed them when eggs cost like eight bucks a carton and the sky high bill now because of inflation and you grumble about that, you are grumbling against the most high.

But you don't get a free pass just because you're not married. Singles, we might grumble because we see yet again that our friend's on Facebook just got engaged and they're 10 years younger. And yet we are still looking for the right person and we've been praying and where is he? Where

is she? And I'm pretty discontent with my situation now and my grumbling is no small thing because I'm grumbling against the Almighty creator. When we grumble in effect we say this, "God, I don't like how you rule the world. I don't like the way you run my life. I think if I had the reins I could do better than you are doing now."

That's the heartbeat behind a grumble, even if you would never voice those words. The thing is when we grumble, we overlook the fact that that specific circumstance has been designed and given to us by God to make us more like Christ. And what we have is an opportunity to live out verse 12, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. In other words, pursue sanctification to its full consummation, which is Christ likeness.

If we are going to look more like our savior, we must begin by eliminating grumbling or disputing from our lives. And just think of this, how often did our Lord grumble in his 33 years on this earth? Did he grumble against God for giving him a band of bumbling buffoon disciples who never seemed to get it right? Did he grumble that the Pharisees always harassed me? "Well, why won't they get off my back?" Did he grumble that his mission ended on a bloody cross surrounded by jeering crowds? Well, no. If you remember what he said as he prayed in the garden, "It is not my will but yours be done."

If we want to impact the world for Christ, if we want to make a difference for Jesus in this world, then we must **stop whining**. And that hits all of us, not just some of us. We must learn to accept the reality that everything God gives us is good, even if it hurts. And it's all designed to conform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, which by the way as a believer ought to be our highest aim.

If we will do this, we will go far in keeping the lights on. That leads us to our second exhortation in the passage. Not only are we to stop whining, but we are also to **keep shining**. Look at verse 15, "This is the reason why we don't grumble or dispute, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation. Among whom you shine as lights in the world holding fast to the word of life."

Well see, these verses have to do with our witness the testimony that we give off to a world that watches closely. And the reason why it is so important that you and I as Christians eliminate grumbling from our lives is because when we grumble, it dims the light. It turns it way down and it minimizes our effectiveness for God because when we grumble, the unbelieving world looks at us and says, "They're just like me. I complain about everything too. So does he and he says he's a Christian."

See, that's how the world lives, right? Unbelievers, whine constantly. Here in Arizona, they whine that it's too hot in the summer, and then in the winter they whine that it gets too cold. And then we whine that does it rain enough, and then when it rains, we whine that it's too wet. And we find all kinds of reasons to whine. We don't like our politicians, we don't like inflation, we just whine. Or rather the world does.

But that is not how it is meant to be for God's people. Because make no mistake, we are exclusively uniquely God's people. Look at what Paul says about our identity in verse 15. What does he call us? Children of God. That's your noble identity, Christian, you are not a son of

Satan. They are. You are a son or daughter of the king of everything and that is an exquisite heritage. You have noble blood in your veins, and Paul is saying you are meant to live that way.

Imitate your father. I don't know about you, but I love my father. He's an amazing man. He's patient, he's kind, he's super successful but extremely humble. He's wealthy but cares nothing for riches. And he loves my mother and he serves my mother and he's always available if I need a call or I need counsel. And so I look at my dad and say, "I want to be like my dad when I grow up." And Paul looks at you and says, "I want you to be like your dad when you grow up, Christian."

Be who you are, and if you're wondering what that identity looks like, he tells you in verse 15. He gives you three descriptions, blameless, innocent, and without blemish. Let's break that down for a minute. Blameless has to do with the outside, right? That's how people perceive you. This is living a life that's above reproach. It does not mean sinless perfection, but what it does mean is nobody could look at your life and justly point an accusing finger at you because of your sin, because you're authentically Christian.

And then innocent by contrast looks at the inside of a person. That's a word that was used to talk about metals like gold, but it was gold that was not mixed with the cheaper alloys. Or it's used to talk about wine that wasn't diluted with water. It was just pure wine. And so what he's saying is, as Christians, we ought to be unmixed in our character with sin. But then he adds one more. He says, "Without blemish."

That's how the Old Testament talks about the kind of sacrifice that God requires. For example, Exodus 29:1, it says, "Only the unblemished animal, only the animal without blemish could be accepted as a sacrifice." And that was an animal that had no defect. It wasn't deformed. It was the best of the best.

That is who you are meant to be as a child of God. Because when you live that way, you reflect your father. And if you want an example of this, think about the prophet Daniel in the Old Testament. Daniel was a devout Jew, but he was surrounded by a pagan culture. His culture hated everything he stood for morally. And yet surrounded by that kind of hostile Christless, God hating culture, did Daniel say, "There's no use trying to hold the line of righteousness. I can let my obedience slip a little bit here, a little bit there. I mean, after all, it's really hard to be pure when everyone around me is impure."

Why don't you listen to what Daniel's enemies said about Daniel, Daniel 6:5. "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

Now, don't you want your neighbor or your son-in-law or your coworker to say that about you? That even your children would say, "We look at mom and dad and we can't find any real gross sin in their life because they're so authentically Christian. Yeah, they're not perfect, we know, but when we look at them, they are so virtuous."

That was Daniel's testimony and that is a picture of a child of God, which is your identity and it's mine we're meant to live that way, and when we do that, we stand out like white snow against black mud. We have virtue in the midst of vice. We have integrity in the midst of deceit. We have holiness in the midst of filthiness.

That's how a child of God is meant to live. And listen, when you live that way, when that defines you, you will be so different from those around you. You will be radically different than the world around you. Because look at how Paul describes the world of the Philippians, which would be true of our world, "A crooked and twisted generation." And notice he says, "in the midst of," which means you are immersed in this kind of environment. It is everywhere around you. It doesn't have to be in you, but it is around you.

This is the water in which you swim, a world which is crooked and twisted. And that word crooked, it's the word from which we get the English word, scoliosis right? You know scoliosis, curvature of the spine. But it's abnormal. You're not supposed to have that curve for scoliosis. And the idea is that this thing is morally curved, morally bent. It's deviated from the standard, which would be God's word.

So not only are the generation, the world, is it crooked, it's also twisted and that's even stronger. So this means it is so morally bent that it is now irreparably warped. It's just mangled. Looks like a pretzel. That's the world the Philippians lived in. That sounds a lot like the world you and I live in too, doesn't it? A world that's crooked and twisted.

You've read enough news, you've seen enough things on your newsfeed on your phone to realize this is a crooked and twisted generation. We're living in the days of Isaiah 5:20, where Isaiah says they call evil good and good evil. "They put darkness for light and light for darkness. Who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

In other words, it is completely morally topsy-turvy. It is a confounded, confused upturned world, morally speaking. That's our culture by the way, a culture, a world in which we have the drag queen's story hour. That's where drag queen performers wear their regalia and they go to a public library and they read children's books to kids aged three to 11. And that's promoted as good.

We live in a world where gender is fluid and we reject binary kind of notions of man and female. You could be whatever you want. We live in a world where it is impolite to assume somebody's preferred pronouns and you should probably ask before you offend them because you never know that a man actually identifies as a man and you don't want to offend. So we very much live in a crooked and twisted generation.

And oh, by the way, it's in the midst of that, that Paul says we are to shine as lights in the world. In the midst of that, not outside of that, in the middle of darkness, we shine. That word for light, not the normal word for light, like the light of a candle, the light of a torch. It's not this word. This is the word for luminaries, which is a heavenly body that gives off light.

So in the Greek translation of Genesis in the creation account, when he is talking about the sun and the moon and the stars, he uses this very word, light. And you could properly now think of this as Paul is saying, "Among whom you shine as blazing stars in a dark night." And that's who Christians are and what we are meant to do, blaze like heavenly bodies in a pitch black, inky black night.

And you may wonder, well, how do we do that? How do I shine as lights in the midst of this world? Well, he tells you, look at the first part of verse 16. "Holding fast to the word of life." Well, what's the word of life to which I'm supposed to hold fast to? It's the word that gives life, the word that produces life. You know it as the Gospel. We hold fast to the Gospel and actually there are really two ideas inherent in that holding fast.

So we're going to blaze with light. There are two things we do. Number one, we hold fast to the Gospel. And number two, we hold forth the Gospel. We hold fast and we hold forth. Let me explain that. We hold fast to the Gospel by clinging to its truths. By refusing to move beyond the Gospel, by constantly believing in and glorying in the reality that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And we delight in that truth and then we hold forth the Gospel, and we do that by boldly proclaiming exactly what Peter declared to the hostile leaders of Israel in Acts 4:12. "There is salvation and no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." That was Peter's message. That is our message.

So let me ask you a personal question. Are you holding fast to the Gospel? Are you clinging to the truth of the Gospel as a drowning man clings to a life preserver thrown to him? Are you clinging to the Gospel? And then number two, are you holding forth the Gospel? Are you proclaiming the truth of the Gospel to people in your life?

And listen, I get that's scary. There's a big coward in this room and he's right up here and he lives in my heart and every time I have an opportunity to talk about Christ, he starts complaining about his fear because evangelism is scary. But Paul says, no, we're meant to blaze his lights.

We hold fast the Gospel, we hold forth the Gospel. Holding forth looks like talking about the truth that hell is real and judgment is real and sin is damning and that God will judge sinners. And yet he made a way through Jesus Christ for sin to be atoned, to be covered, to be removed. And it's only through the life and blood of Jesus Christ that a man can have hope, that a man can be saved. And that is the message that we proclaim. That's the message that we hold forth to the world, a world in utter darkness. We hold fast to that truth and then we hold forth that truth because the world is perishing and there are so few lights in the world.

So let me ask you, are you in darkness? Do you love your sin? Do you avoid the light because the light exposes your evil? I hope that's not you because the darkness holds nothing for you but judgment. The darkness holds nothing but the wrath of God to come. And so I would urge you come to Christ and to the light. Jesus says, "I've come as light into the world."

There is no light outside of Christ, no salvation outside of Christ. You must come to Jesus. You must flee to him and you must not delay because the time is short. There is life and light in Jesus Christ and you need both.

That leads us to our third and final exhortation in the passage. First he says, "**Stop whining, no grumbling.**" And then he says, "**Keep shining, keep blazing brightly for Christ through your righteous lives.**" And then lastly he says, "**Follow my lead. Follow my lead.**" And it's like he anticipates an objection as if he knows that someone in the Philippian church is going to say, "Paul, you just said we are immersed into a dark world. Where they are sons of Satan and I'm a son of God, how am I supposed to shine bright when everyone wants to snuff out my light? How do I maintain this course? How do I live with virtue when all around me is vile sin? It looks good on paper, Paul sounds real good in a message. But in practice, in my life with the people I'm surrounded by at work, how do I do that?"

So Paul, by way of encouragement, looks at them and he says, "Follow my lead." And far from being arrogant or presumptuous in saying that, the Apostle Paul is uniquely qualified to ask the Philippians to follow his lead. And these next few verses will explain why he's qualified to say, "Follow my lead."

I want you to look down at verse 16, the middle of it, "Holding fast to the word of life so that in the day of Christ, I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I'm to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me."

These verses are saturated and dripping with the language of labor and sacrifice. Look at verse 16, he talks about not wanting to run in vain, not wanting to labor in vain. In vain just means it was worthless, meaningless, it accomplished nothing. And the idea of running is he pictures himself as an athlete, a racer, and he's sprinting forward with all of his mite. And then the idea of labor means work to the point of exhaustion. And so it's like he's a marathoner and he is running and he is running and the finish line is there and he's giving it his all and he gets close to the finish line, then he just collapses in the heap across the line. But he makes it. He made it. He gave it everything, but it doesn't matter because he ran the race and he finished and he says, "I don't want to come short."

Why is it so important, Paul? Well look at verse 16. So that in the day of Christ, which is when Christ returns and he rewards believers and we are glorified, so that in that day my life would have mattered. It would've counted. That all of my ministry would not have been for naught, for nothing. It would've mattered because it would give glory to Jesus Christ. That's what I want. And so that's why he could say to the Philippians, "Listen, follow my lead because I'm doing this presently."

And then look at verse 17. Paul shifts the metaphor. He goes from the race to the temple. "Even if I'm to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all."

So there's one verb that's translated "poured out as a drink offering." It's a technical term. It was used in pagan sacrifices. What it portrays is say a Greek or a Roman who would go to the temple, they would have their sacrificial animal, they'd kill it and offer it on the altar. It would be burning, and then they would do something else. They would take what is called a libation, a word that you never use, a libation.

It would be essentially a cup of wine. They would approach the place where the sacrifice was and they would pour the wine out on top of or around the sacrifice. And because it's very hot, that would immediately dissipate into this puff of steam. And so the image Paul has is, "That is my life. All of my ministry is a sacrifice for God. All of it is offered to him."

See, he viewed himself as a priest. Listen to what he says in Romans 15, verse 15. "But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God." Now listen to the language. "To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the Gospel of God so that the offering," or think sacrifice, "so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Everything I do is to offer my ministry and even you, Philippians, as my ministry among you, I can offer it to God as something which will please you, something which God will give honor from." He says, "That is everything I am."

So if you need encouragement to shine bright, you need encouragement to live boldly for Jesus Christ, then he says to the Philippians, "Follow my lead because I'm living this out right now."

But there's one more thing I want you to see before we close, one more thing. What kind of attitude did the apostle Paul maintain in view of all the sacrifice required? Was he a grumbler? Was he a murmurer? Did he say, "God, why is my ministry so hard? God, why do I have the promise of persecution in every single city? God, why am I probably going to die at the hands of Nero?"

Of course not. He never ever said something like that. In fact, here's what he says in Philippians 3. "Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord."

Did you catch that? "I count all things as loss for the surpassing value worth of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord." Which is to say, "Everything I sacrificed, it wasn't really a sacrifice. It was meaningless, small compared to knowing Christ. I'd do it again a thousand times over."

So far from grumbling, he realized this is the path to highest joy, which is why in verses 17 and 18 he will say, "I am glad and I rejoice with you all." And then he will urge them in verse 18, "You should be glad and you should rejoice with me." Because he knew this one spiritual principle, the greatest joy comes from the greatest sacrifices for Christ. The greatest joy comes from the greatest sacrifices for Christ. And so Paul could say, "It was all worth it. It was all worth it. And so you Philippians, follow my lead."

Listen, church, who more than the one who gave it all, Jesus Christ upon a cross, deserves your life as a sacrifice? Who more than Jesus Christ is worthy of you every day offering yourself as an

unblemished sacrifice to God? That's what we're called to do. That's how we shine for Christ. That's how we live for Christ. That's how we keep the lights on.

So let me tinker with your heart a little bit and invade your personal space. Right now, how is the Holy Spirit impressing upon you how you are supposed to respond to this? Where do you need to say yes to the kingdom of God and say no to the kingdom of self? Where do you need to count the cost to lay down your life as a daily sacrifice so that Jesus Christ may be honored, so that your brothers and sisters in Christ may be blessed? What sacrifice and where do you need to make? And it will likely cost your life. We are meant every day to lay down our lives as a sacrifice to God. When we do that, we keep the lights on.

Polycarp lived in the second century. He was the bishop of Smyrna. He was the personal disciple of the Apostle John. When he was 86 years old, he was arrested. The proconsul of the city commanded him on pains of death to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ. He said, "Have respect for your old age, swear by the fortune of Caesar reproach Christ and I will set you free."

To which Polycarp replied, "86 years have I served him and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my king and savior?"

The proconsul replied, "I have wild animals here I will throw you to them if you do not repent."

Polycarp responded, "Call them. It is unthinkable for me to repent from what is good to turn to what is evil."

Frustrated, the proconsul sputtered, "If you despise the animals, I will have you burned."

Polycarp calmly answered, "You threatened me with fire, which burns for an hour and then is extinguished, but you know nothing of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. Why are you waiting? Bring on whatever you want."

And at that, the bonfire was prepared and Polycarp was laid atop a mound of sticks and wood. Before the flame was lit, before the match was struck to light the fire that would ignite his flesh, Polycarp uttered these words. "Oh Lord God Almighty, the father of your beloved and blessed son Jesus Christ, I give you thanks that you count me worthy to be numbered among your martyrs. Sharing the cup of Christ and the resurrection to eternal life, soul and body. May I be received this day as an acceptable sacrifice."

May that spirit fill my heart and your heart because when we live that way, we will keep the lights on.

Let's pray. Jesus, you are worthy. You deserve honor. You deserve praise. You deserve our lives. I pray that you would strengthen us to know that all that you have planned for us is for our good, and that we would thus reject grumbling. I pray that we would live boldly and righteously for you amidst a perverse culture. And I pray that you would give us hearts that joyfully lay down our own lives and sacrifice so that you may be made known. Would you do this, Father, so that the lamb may receive the worship he deserves? Amen.