

Letters to 7 Churches 05 Thyatira-Careless Heart

by James Booker

The Church of Thyatira is warned about the dangers of a careless heart and the influence of a dominating woman, and is encouraged to follow Jesus Christ and recognize His preeminence.

Duration: 43:59

Scripture: John 4:25-26, John 9:35-38, Ephesians 1:15-19, Titus 3:8, Revelation 2:18-23

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Spiritual Purification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the description of Jesus as the discerning prince in Revelation 1:14-15. He highlights three aspects of Jesus' character: his preeminence, as the Son of God; his perception, with eyes like flames of fire; and his purifying work, symbolized by his feet like undefined brass. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus' discernment in our lives and allowing his penetrating gaze to convict and purify us. He encourages believers to maintain a close relationship with Jesus through daily contact, allowing his Word and the Holy Spirit to search and transform their hearts.

Transcript

Shall we turn, please, to Revelation, Chapter 2, as we consider the Church of Thyatira this morning. The Church of Thyatira, Revelation, Chapter 2, and verse 18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

I know thy works, and thy charity, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known

the depths of Satan as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

And he that overcometh and keepeth my work unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken into shivers, even as I received in my Father. And I will give him a morning star, and he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Just a brief word of prayer, please. Our Father, again we thank Thee for Thy word, and being conscious of the need of Thy direction and of Thy blessing, we look to Thee now for a consciousness of Thy presence with us.

Thou hast ministered to the needs of our heart. Thou hast challenged us with a deeper appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We just commit ourselves to Thee for Thy strength and blessing in our Savior's name.

Amen. Now just quickly and briefly reviewing what we have been looking at thus far in the seven churches of Asia, we have noticed various heart conditions, or at least been suggesting various heart conditions in each of the churches. In order to keep it in my mind, I have thought of it under the letter C, just to help me out a little bit, so my memory will retain it.

But in connection with the church of Ephesus, we have noticed the cooling heart, the heart that was cooling off. You remember in the church of Smyrna yesterday morning, we were considering the crushed heart, crushed under the load of persecution and trial and sorrow. Last night we were looking at the church of Pergamos and that heart that was compromising, a compromising heart.

Today I would like to consider with you for a few moments the church of Thyatira, the careless heart, the careless heart. My main reason for suggesting that is the way in which the word of God is written here in verse 20. It says, Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest, or thou allowest, or thou dost permit.

And they're rather careless in permitting certain things to come into their midst that ought not to have come in. Instead of stepping in and dealing with something that was damaging to the local church and damaging to the individual saints in that local church, they allowed, carelessly allowed certain things to come in, the careless heart. Isn't it interesting and isn't it sad and so real in life that it's carelessness on our part that allows certain things to come in, things that begin sort of on a casual basis and we carelessly allow it, and before long that thing just kind of takes over our life and slowly, almost unperceptively, it takes us away and leads us away from the true center and the true object of our Christian life, Christ and his things.

There's a verse over in Isaiah. I'd just like to turn to it for a moment, please. Isaiah chapter 47.

This is a prophecy concerning Babylon, but just as an application to ourselves today and in the light of the church of Thyatira, the Lord was deeply concerned about the attitude of Babylon, and one of the things he noticed about them, and he condemned very strongly, was this carelessness that they were faced with. And in verse 8 he says, Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me, I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children, and then on he goes. Here we have the great city of Babylon and the nation of Babylon, and the Lord said, you've been given over to your pleasures, you've become very careless.

You feel that you can control the situation, you feel you'll never be widowed, you'll never be defeated, you'll always retain your power, but he said, I have something else to tell you. Your carelessness is leading you down into defeat. And so we have to be very careful, I believe, beloved, of a careless heart.

Careless about the way we talk, the way we talk to our loved ones in our home. So often the things that carry on in our home are the things that eventually come out in among us as God's people in the local church or in other areas where we live. How do we as a husband and wife talk to one another? Are we careless about that? How about with our children, with our families? Carelessness can easily slip in in a careless attitude.

Carelessness about our prayer time, carelessness about the way we read the Word of God and the object we have behind reading the Word of God, careless in our service for the Lord. Carelessness is a very easy thing to slip in to the Christian life. As an overall title for this particular church at Thyatira, I'd like to put it this way.

The church that was suffering from a dominating woman. That's not a very flattering title, but I think it fits the case. The church that was suffering from a dominating woman.

You see, in this particular church we have a woman very prominent. It's rather interesting, it's the only woman that is mentioned in the whole of the seven churches. And she was dominating things and creating a great deal of problems.

I remember a number of years ago while we were working in Newfoundland and seeking to establish a new work in a little place called Western Bay, I was going around the community trying to find a home or a building of some sort that we could have some gospel meetings and invite the people because there was no gospel effort in the town. And eventually I heard about a small building that was available, and I went to the gentleman and chatted with him about rental of this building, and the purpose was to preach the gospel to the people. And he said something like this.

He said, well, let me think about it for a day or two and you come back and we'll decide whether you can use the building or not. And when I came back two or three days later, he had apparently been checking up on our background a little bit and the work of the brethren in Newfoundland. And he said, I don't know whether we can allow you to use this building or not.

He said, I understand you're connected with those known as brethren. I said, that's right. Well, he said, I understand you're very hard on the women.

And I suppose that's the feeling that many people get that the brethren are rather hard on the women. However, I said, in what way are we hard on the women? And he said, well, I understand you don't allow them to preach. Well, I said, it's not that we don't allow them to preach.

It's the word of God that says they're not to preach, and we seek to follow what the word of God has to say. And so we got into a discussion along this particular line. But in this age when the women's lib is very strong, it has tremendous influence, not only among the people who were not saved, but among the saints of God, and even among the assemblies of God's people.

And only just last week or so, I was talking to some dear woman, and she was all head up over women's lib. She was a Christian, and you know, but she was saying that, you know, I'm beginning to feel more and more that Paul was just a woman hater. Well, in spite of all these things, there's much in the scriptures

about the Lord's appreciation of women.

Over in Psalm chapter 45, the word of God speaks there prophetically about the honorable women, or the maidens of honor. And it thrills my heart as I go through the scriptures and notice constantly how the women have brought Him, and how the Lord goes out of His way, it seems to me, to allow by the Holy Spirit, through the inspiration of the word of God, the feelings He has toward the devotion shown by women down through the ages. Even concerning Eve, you remember in chapter 3, in verse 20, she was to be marked out as the mother of all living.

The mother of all living. And you remember in the book of Exodus, concerning the tabernacle, you recall how there's almost a chapter devoted to the women who, with a willing heart, with a real burden, went out of their way to contribute to the work of the tabernacle, and the Lord saw fit that that was to be recorded there, because He was just delighted with their devotion and their self-sacrifice. It's never missed.

He has the divine order, He has a place for men, He has a place for women, there is equality in terms of, there's no idea of superiority involved in any case, but He has an order. And when we follow that order that He sets out for us, how delighted He is, and He rewards accordingly. And time forbids, going down through the case of the Old Testament, we think of folk like Rebekah, and we think of others, Ruth and Esther, and on and on we can go, and then we come into the New Testament.

And have you noticed, I'm sure most of you have, but have you noticed in the New Testament how the Lord just took delight at the spirit of love and devotion that women showed toward Him, and had it recorded here for our learning? His delight to be at the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany. And you remember when it comes near the time of the cross, it was the women that stood out so prominently, and the Word of God records that. When all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled, you recall, we're told in Luke's gospel, that the women followed Him on to the cross.

The women followed Him. And you remember when they had all forsaken Him again as He hung on the cross of Calvary, apart from John the Apostle, it was the women that stood by the cross, and the Lord had that deep concern for them. You remember it was the women that were first there on the resurrection morning, concerned about their Savior.

You remember it was the women the Lord first revealed Himself to Mary, who cried, they've taken away my Lord, I don't know where they have laid Him. And again and again and again the Lord brings out the spirit of devotion in which He delighted among the women. We think of Dorcas, and we think of Priscilla, and we think of so many others in the Scripture.

And so there are many devoted women, and the Lord is delighted with that devotion. The main point is it not that we seek to honor Him and be in that position the Lord wants us to be in, and to be faithful unto Him, and as faithful as He's looking for. On the other hand, just like it is with men, there are some women the Lord condemns, and some women, some men the Lord condemns.

And in this particular case there was a woman, and apparently she was a woman that had a kind of a domineering makeup about her. And this is not an unusual thing. I find that in many cases even among those of us brethren in many places I've been, or some places I've been at least, the woman has been the one who has controlled the whole thing.

They've been sort of the neck to turn the head, and maybe the elders have been in the prominent and the front, but the women have been behind giving all the directions and all the instructions. So domination can be dominating in many ways. One can be dominating behind the scenes as well as dominating out in the front line.

Possibly this woman was dominating behind the scenes, although even was getting out into the front line at the same time. Notice, will you, the background concerning this particular church. It's rather interesting, by the way, that this church, there are two women that come to our mind when we think of this church, and one honored and glorified the Lord, and the other was just the opposite.

There was Lydia, you remember, the seller of purple, Acts chapter 16, and she was from Thyatira. And while the word of God doesn't tell us how this particular church was formed, the word of God is silent as to the formation of this local church, many assume that Lydia, having had her heart opened to the message of the gospel when Paul preached to the women down by the river, that she was the one that went back to her home city, spread the word, because you remember even at Philippi she opened up her home so willingly that the gospel might be preached. No doubt going back, she opened up her home again and spread the word of God, and it wasn't long before a local church was formed there at Thyatira.

But now, some years later, and no doubt Lydia is off the scene, on to be with her Lord, another woman springs up by the name of Jezebel, at least that's the name given to her here in this portion. And as Lydia was so faithful to the Lord, this woman was just the opposite, so unfaithful. Another interesting thing about this particular church is this, that it was the least important city of the seven churches, and yet it has the longest letter of the seven churches.

Another interesting thing about it is this, and I think it's very important to keep in mind, it helps us to understand some of the lessons that are stressed in this particular church. And the lesson was that apparently this city was a great commercial city. It wasn't a capital city, wasn't a government city, but there was much commerce going on in that city.

They were well known for their brass works, for their leather works, for their dye works, for their pottery. Quite industrial. And as a result, even later--and this has come up through history and even has been confirmed through archaeology--as a result of all the industry in the city, trade guilds sprung up for these various industries, or unions, if you will, as we think of them today.

And these trade unions were very, very strong. Strong, if not stronger than what they are today. And the fact that these unions were dominated by heathenism and dominated by the worship of false gods, these group of Christians who came out and out for the Lord were faced with the difficulty and with the problem of going through all the heathen worship and all the sacrificing unto these false gods in order to keep their jobs.

If they didn't attend these particular feasts and go through all the immorality that was involved and worshiped, the idols were given and sacrificed to these idols and eat the meat, sacrificed to the idols, they were thrown out of their job and they couldn't get a job in the city. And this is one of the great problems, and this is what brought up apparently this Jezebel and her teaching to offset this particular problem. Let us just take a little outline of the book, shall we, or the portion.

I want to notice in verse 18, our Lord as the discerning prince or potentate, the discerning prince. I think we'll see that as we look at that in a moment. In verse 19, I want to have a look at the diligent people as

they work for the Lord.

Verse 20 to 23, I want to notice the dangerous prophetess Jezebel. Verse 24 to 29, the delightful promises that he gives to the church. Let's look for a moment at the discerning prince, our Lord himself.

I say discerning because you see his eyes are brought before us here and that brings out discernment. And there are three things that about this discerning prince of ours. That he's the preeminent one.

He's the son of God. And he's the perceptive one. He has eyes like flames of fire.

And he's the purifying one because his feet are like undefined brass. As we'll notice when we get to that point, it suggests his purifying work. Treading out, stamping out that which is dishonoring to him.

But notice his preeminence. Now remember, beloved, the background again. I think it's important, at least it's important to me at any rate.

Here is the danger of a careless heart. Here is the danger of being led astray by a woman who was seeking to bring in a teaching that would drag them down and away from the Lord. And the Lord comes before them and he said, now listen, I'm the son of God.

Now that might not sound unique at the beginning, but the interesting thing is that this is the first and only time he uses that expression in the whole of Revelation. In the book of Revelation, he's presented as the son of man again and again and again. In chapter one, on two or three occasions, he's the son of man.

He's the man in the glory. But when he speaks to this particular church, he gives forth the name, I am the son of God. I am the son of God.

He wants them to realize that he is the preeminent one and they must bow to him. You remember over in Matthew chapter 16, Whom say ye that I am? And Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed the Son to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

He acknowledged that he was the son of God. This was blasphemy in the eyes of all others and upon the church, or at least the foundation of the church, is none other than the Rock, the Son of God. What a foundation.

What a foundation. Turn with me, please, to John's Gospel, chapter nine. John's Gospel, chapter nine.

Do you remember this is the story of the man who was born blind and how the Lord healed him? And the people were challenging this man not to give credit to Christ as the Son of God. And in verse thirty-five it says, Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, now isn't that delightful? Isn't that delightful? This man was cast out because of his stand for the Lord. And when the Lord heard about it, and of course the Lord knew immediately, I'm sure, his eyes were constantly upon his own, he went out seeking him.

He went out to comfort him. He went out to bless him. And when he found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him. Do you believe in the Son of God? Who is he, Lord? I am he. You are looking at him.

And he fell and bowed and worshiped before him as the preeminent one. While we're in the gospel of John, just go back, please, to chapter five. John's gospel, chapter five, verse twenty-two.

For the Father judgeth no man, but he hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Twenty-three. For all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him. Verse twenty-five. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and hour is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.

For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. You'll notice the emphasis upon the Son of God. And this, of course, all the way through the gospel of John, which is revealing him as such.

You remember, he ends up the gospel by reminding us that these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name. So he presents himself, therefore, as the Son who is the Creator. The Son creates all things.

He presents him as the Son who is the only source of life. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Now what is the point? Well, let's keep in mind, beloved, that the Lord presents himself to the need of the people at that time.

What is the thing that's going to challenge my careless attitude about the things of the Lord? What is the thing that's going to challenge me daily to avoid being careless in my Christian life? I suggest one of the things is to realize that I'm identified with the Son of God, that I might daily come before him and, like that blind man, fall before him and worship him and say, Thou art the Son of God, and Thou art my Lord. These things say of the Son of God. And he was also perceptive, because we're told here, who have eyes like a flame of fire.

This is the description we have of him over in Revelation chapter 1, where in that description we're told there he has eyes like a flame of fire. In other words, it's not Dove's eyes, as we have in the Song of Solomon. It's not the tender, compassionate eyes.

It's the eyes of discernment. It's the eyes that are penetrating. It's the eyes that are purifying.

It's the eyes that are looking right down in through to the very condition. And he says, I see in this local church a careless attitude, allowing things to happen that ought not to happen. Eyes like fire.

Eyes that penetrated Peter as he denied his Lord, and the Lord looked at him. And what a look it was. No doubt a look of love and compassion, but a look of discernment, saying in effect, Peter, I told you.

Peter, I warned you. And it was a look that broke Peter's heart. Eyes like fire.

And this requires, does it not, beloved, relationship with him? It requires a daily contact with our Lord and allowing those eyes through the Word and by the Spirit to just penetrate our hearts and say, search me, O God. Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way, everlasting.

That's why it's so vital. That's why it's so important for us to keep short accounts with our Lord and to be before him day by day, beloved. Otherwise the careless life begins to develop.

He has eyes like flames of fire, but also his feet. His feet are like fine brass. And you'll recall when you think of the, this is the purifying one, you'll recall that when you look at the tabernacle and you look at the temple, when you look on to the book of Revelation, brass or bronze is that symbol of judgment.

The durability in judgment. As Moses lift up the serpent of the wilderness, that serpent of brass, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. Judgment again.

It was the brave and altar that bore the judgment. Judgment. But here our Savior has feet now of brass, feet that step down and deal and judge.

He's in the midst of his church. He's discerning and judging his church. Do we not read in 1 Corinthians 11, in picture of the fine brass there, concerning the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ, for this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep.

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we're chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned of the world. And he would say to that church, he said, I'm in your midst.

And he says, I'm judging. I have the feet of fine brass. If you go on with this careless and different attitude that you have, I'm going to stamp it out.

And he was doing that very thing with that careless carnal church of Corinth. And the Savior is presenting himself to this church of Thyatira in the same manner. And he's saying, in effect, don't be careless.

We need to be careful to maintain good works, so we're told in the book of Titus. Well, let's hurry on, shall we? Notice these diligent people. And again, the Lord commends where he can commend.

And rather impressingly enough, there's much to commend in this church. He says in verse 19, I know thy works and thy love and thy service and faith and thy patience and thy works and the last to be more than the verse. Now, it's rather challenging, beloved, if you were to take this particular portion and compare it or contrast it with Ephesians, the church of Ephesus, because it's rather an interesting contrast there.

And it's a lesson, at least a lesson that I learned from it at any rate. And the major lesson I learned is this. There must be a balance in my life.

There must be a balance in the local church of truth and love. In the church of Ephesus, they had truth. Now, you never read about love, their love at the church of Ephesus.

He said, I know your work. I know your labor. I know your patience.

You cannot bear them that are evil. You try those that say they're apostles and are not. You found them liars.

He said, you're standing for the truth. You will not allow any false teaching to come into your midst. But he said, you've left your first love.

That was it. They have the truth, but they didn't hold the truth in love. These dear saints of Thyatira, they had love, and this love is the agape love, that divine love.

And he said, I know your love. You have the love, but they didn't hold to the truth. And consequently, they were carelessly allowing false teaching to develop in the spirit of love, I suppose, saying, well, we don't want to rock the boat, you know.

We don't want to upset things. And I find sometimes, beloved, and I say this lovingly, and I've seen this with concern, because I think it has such an effect upon our local gatherings of God's people. There is such a thing as discipline.

There is such a thing as holiness and maintaining holiness for the Lord. And sometimes in the spirit of so-called love, we say, well, let's just forget about it. Let's not deal with the matter, you know.

If we deal with this particular problem, there's going to be so much reaction and so many problems, added problems, if we just beg to close our eyes to the situation. And sometimes discipline, which needs to be done, is not done under the guise of love. But love and truth must go together.

You go to the cross of Calvary and there is love in all its fullness, but there is truth in all its depth. And so we need this combined love and truth in our dealings individually, in our dealings collectively as God's people. However, he commends them for that love.

He said, I know your works, and that word works means your deeds, and I know your love, and I know your service. The word service here is that word from whence we get our word deacon. They were active in serving the Lord.

And your faith, time forbid, just looking at each one of these and sort of dwelling on them. It's nice to know at least they were active for the Lord, is it not? I don't know how true this report is, but I read somewhere where someone had sent an annual report in of their work of the church. And they summed it up in this little magazine by saying, we are at peace.

However, we baptized none in the last year, nor received no letter by none, restored to fellowship none, given nothing to missions, pray for us that we might hold our faithfulness to the end. Well, there wasn't much faithfulness in that, but beloved, we need to be active for the Lord, but we need to be active in love and in truth. Those two things are necessarily going together.

But then notice, will you, he says in verse 20, notwithstanding, notwithstanding this commendation, notwithstanding the fact that, and notice he had said at the end of verse 19, the last to be more than the first. He said, you are increasing in these things. You're growing in your love and in your work.

They're growing in it. Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. The dangerous prophetess.

May I just suggest in the few moments left, three things here about this dear woman, this prophetess, her name, her claim, and her fame. Or should I put it, her shame, rather than her fame. There's no fame to this dear woman, unfortunately, but we do have her name, the woman Jezebel.

Now, it's only fair to say, and I'm sure if you've studied this portion, you'll know that this is true. There's a little uncertainty surrounding this dear woman as to who she was. Much speculation.

Some have surmised that she was one of the elders' wives. Some have surmised that she was just a figure of the system that was going on in the local church, and the carelessness that was going on. But it seems to me, and this is my own conviction, perhaps the most logical way of looking at this is that here was a woman in the church who was very much in prominence, and she took on the characteristics of this dear woman in the Old Testament, Jezebel.

And this possibly wasn't her real name, but she carried on in the very manner of Jezebel, and so she was a Jezebel as such. You see, the word Jezebel, that name means chaste, which is what a contrast. The Jezebel of the Old Testament was everything but chaste.

This dear woman, who apparently took on the position of being a believer, was acting contrary to what she believed, or claimed to believe. Notice her claim. She calls herself a prophetess.

That's what she claims, a messenger of God. Doesn't that sound familiar? Every now and again you hear someone saying, I'm a prophet of God, and they promote their doctrine, their teaching. They spread it from shore to shore.

It brings us back to verse 18 again. The Lord says, Listen, I am the Son of God. My eyes are like fire.

My feet are like brass. You're to get your instructions from me, her claim, a false claim. And her shame? Well, notice what it says.

She teaches and seduces my servants, my servants, the Lord says, my servants, to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Now may I just briefly remind you of what I've said, and just add a word or two to it, that in this particular city there were these guilds, these unions. You had to belong to them, and if you belonged to them, you had to attend their meetings, you had to attend their banquets, you had to go through all they went through, those banquets.

Those banquets were simply feasts where idol worship was prominent, where they got drunk and they reveled through the night in all sorts of immorality. They had to bring their incense and offer it to the sacrifices, and the animals that were offered, they ate of the sacrifices afterward. Now it was either that, it was either that or go another job.

Apparently this one Jezebel had worked out, claiming to have a message from God as a prophetess, a direct message from God, claimed that she had the answer. Having been born again, or having been brought into the family of God, we were now free like Romans chapter five. Continue in sin, the grace might abound.

You're a believer, why worry about things you do? You've got to hold on to your job, you've got to look after your family, you've got to do these things, you've got to make a living. The Lord will understand these things, go along with it. And she was leading these servants, the Lord's servants, into a false path, which led to fornication and idolatry.

Now tonight, Lord willing, I want to zero in on that particular point, because to me it's really challenged my heart. I want to think in terms of what idolatry is for the Christian today. This was the thing that she was leading them into, a form of idolatry.

And beloved, I believe that we as Christians are involved, and can easily be involved, and I put it that way, in forms of idolatry today. And we need to be concerned and not be careless about the areas of idolatry that we see around us today. I want to think primarily of that tonight.

I trust it might just challenge our hearts. Shall we pray? Gracious Father, we thank thee this morning for our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Eyes, our Father, like flames of fire.

Oh, might we be willing, as thy people, to daily come before thy throne, and have our hearts searched to confess that that is bringing dishonor to thee, to be cleansed through thy word, and to be useful in thy service. We pray, our Father, that this day we might keep before us thee, thy things, and our Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Give us a faithful heart like unto thee, and not a careless heart, for we pray in our Savior's name.

Amen.

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