

# The Truth in Jesus (Part 1)

by Ron Bailey

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*This sermon explores the truth in Jesus, emphasizing the importance of revelation and the believer's response to it.*

**Duration:** 42:06

**Scripture:** Isaiah 41:20, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9

**Topics:** "Truth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker defines a seminar as a Bible reading and emphasizes the purpose of God revealing things to His people. He uses Isaiah 41:20 to explain that God wants His people to see, know, consider, and understand that He is the one behind His spectacular works. The speaker also highlights the importance of engaging with the questions raised in the book of Romans, as Paul repeatedly asks 'What shall we say then?' to encourage deeper understanding. Lastly, the speaker mentions a personal testimony of a young woman who found comfort in the scripture's instruction to 'cut off the old man' in the face of opposition from her family.

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## Transcript

Good morning, we have two hours scheduled over the next four days, and what I'm hoping to do is to take a subject in this kind of order. Today I want to talk about the old men, and tomorrow I want to talk about the new men, and on Thursday I want to ask the question, what then? I remember about thirty years ago hearing a testimony from a young woman, she was from Liverpool, not the Liverpool Fellowship, but she came from a background where there had been no Christians, and when she became a Christian there was a lot of antagonism from her parents, and particularly from her father. And on one occasion they had a real head-to-head confrontation, and she went to bed very distressed, thinking that she had failed the Lord dramatically, and couldn't get to sleep, and so she turned to the Scriptures and read this verse where it said that you put off concerning the former conversation, the old men.

And she didn't understand it very much, but she knew it was something about the quarrel that she'd had with her father, and was very reassured. You know, God can do anything he wants with his word. God has that right, it's his word, he can do anything he wants to do with it.

We don't have that same right to do anything we want to do with it. We have a responsibility to rightly divide the word of truth that God enables us. I want to just say a word or two really about the connection between revelation and reason.

They're not opposed if they're taken in the right order. If you take them in the wrong order they do become opposed to one another. But if you take them in the right order they're not in conflict with one another at all.

I think it was yesterday that Guy made some reference to faith, and said that really faith was response to grace. That's absolutely true. I'd like to fine-tune it a little bit and say faith is response to revelation.

Unless God reveals something to a man or a woman part, there's no way that that person can respond in the way that God wants them to respond. You can't just invent faith, you can't just decide that you will do what you want to do, and so comply with something that someone may have told you, either from a book or from preaching. It's only if God reveals truth to your heart that it has an impact that demands a response.

And when you respond with an amen to what God has said, and you embrace what God has said, that's faith. Faith is responding to revelation. There's a verse in the book of Hebrews, it's just part of a verse really, but the writer says this.

He says, by faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God. If you just take a part of that, it will help to put understanding and reasoning in its right place. By faith we understand, not the other way around.

By faith we understand. It's based on revelation. Let me take you, if I may, to a passage of Isaiah, which was in the Lord's mind when he spoke about the reason that he was using parables.

Norman described what we were doing in these sessions as a Bible reading. I told him this morning that I'm not entirely sure what a Bible reading is, but I asked him not to enlighten me so that I could just continue with ignorance to do what I was going to do. I remember some years ago I was in Malawi and sharing with some Malawian pastors, and there was a word that had become very, very popular with them, which was seminars.

And everything was then a seminar. And I was talking to one of the pastors and I said, I haven't been to university, I don't know what a seminar is. What is a seminar? And he thought for a moment and he said, well, you don't sing choruses at a seminar.

So that's become my working definition of a seminar. And what we're going to do today is my working definition of a Bible reading. If you'll turn to Isaiah 41, this is Isaiah 41, and it's verse 20.

The Lord had said through the prophet Isaiah some of the things that he was going to do, spectacular things, which would attract their attention, unmistakable things. And then God says this is the purpose for which he was going to do those things in verse 20. He says this, that they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this and the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Maybe you noticed that there were four points in that. He said this is why God is doing these things. He's doing it so that you will see it.

That's to say God is revealing things. God reveals things so that you see them. And when God reveals truth, there's something in the heart which, maybe it uses this kind of language, it says, I see.

Not with the eyes, but I see, yes, I see it now. I see how it hangs together, I see how it fits together, I see it. God was going to do something and the consequence would be that people would say, yes, I see.

And then it says this, and they would know. You know that the word know often means recognise in the Bible. By their fruit you will know them.

So what would happen is God would do something, the consequence would be that people would see it, register that God was doing something. Then they would acknowledge that it was God who was doing it. Thirdly, they would consider what they had seen and what they had acknowledged to be the work of God.

It's that key thing of considering. We are required by the Lord to consider the things that he reveals to us. The secret things, the scripture says, belong to God.

But the things that are revealed are ours forever. And the Lord Jesus, you remember, expected the people of his day, the Jewish people to whom he was speaking, he expected them to have read the scriptures. God had trusted them, it was their greatest treasure.

Above all other things, Paul says, was trusted to them the oracles of God. That's why Jesus constantly said, have you not read? Did you not read? You don't know the power of God or the scriptures. Because they had that gift given to them, with that gift there came a responsibility that they should consider.

And with the gifts and revelations that God gives to us, there comes a responsibility that we should consider. Because understanding inevitably will follow when we consider what we have acknowledged that God has revealed. Do you follow that? If you see something that God has said to you in your heart and you acknowledge it, if you want to use the words of the Lord Jesus, if you add your seal to it that God is true, if you say, amen, this is God who is doing and saying this thing, then you must consider it.

You must begin to fix the revelation in your own grasp of things. It will result in understanding. You know, the Lord Jesus used a parable to illustrate that we are accountable for understanding or not understanding.

It is our responsibility whether we understand or we don't. That has nothing at all to do with your IQ or how many GCSEs or GNVQs you've got. It has to do with our faithfulness, our stewardship of the things that God reveals to us.

So, he reveals it, we acknowledge it comes from God, we consider it and the consequence is we have understanding. I want to share some things today that are my own understanding. I don't expect you'll agree with everything that I say.

I don't agree with myself all the time. So, please don't feel offended if you discover that you don't quite see the things in the way that I am saying them. I saw a bumper sticker the other day, well a couple of weeks ago, that really appealed to me and I'd like really to take it as my text for this morning.

It said, if you haven't changed your mind recently, how do you know you've still got one? Well, you don't change your mind just for the sake of changing it, but examine these things, put these things to the test, prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. This is a wonderful gift that God has given us, this book. It brings to us revelation.

There are many things and everything about God that we cannot know unless God is pleased to reveal them to us. A man by searching cannot discover God. You can't prove any of these things by natural wisdom.

We are closed up to revelation. If God had not revealed himself, we'd know nothing at all about him. If he had not revealed the things he wants us to know, we wouldn't know anything at all about them, but he has revealed them.

And because he's revealed them, that brings with it an obligation that we consider these things. So, we're going to look at some things which are not part of the received wisdom of Western civilisation. Now, if that sounds a bit complex, don't worry about it too much.

I think it's David Pawson who sometimes says that the church is in great need of what he calls degreasing. Do you understand that? Well, what he means is that the church has been affected very much by the way that the Greeks thought. Greek philosophy has had a tremendous impact, and particularly the independence of Greek thought.

The way that a man stands for himself and is responsible for himself, and everything that he does only affects him. And it works out in all kinds of ways. It works out in a democratic process, as you know, that the Greeks invented democracy.

It didn't work for them either, as it happens, but that's by the way. It's this concentration on me and mine and my responsibility. Now, that is one way of looking at things, and that is a biblical truth.

We do have a personal responsibility. We do, most clearly we do. Paul could say, the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So, you mustn't discount that important inner conviction, that personal involvement in what the Lord Jesus Christ has done with you. But there's another aspect as well, which really does fit very strangely to Western ears. Let me just turn you to a passage in the book of Hebrews.

This is where the writer to the Hebrews is proving the supremacy of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, and showing how that as a consequence of the New Covenant the old Sinai Covenant has been made obsolete. It's now passed its sell-by date and has no power or usefulness at all in that sense, as it was originally given. But this is what he says in Hebrews chapter 7, and I want to read just a little passage of this.

And give an opportunity to think for a moment as to whether this is the way we would think naturally. This is what he has to say. He's talking about the greatness of this man Melchizedek.

And in verse 4 he says this, Here's our word consider again. of Abraham, and blessed him that hath the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

And here men that die receive tithes, but there he receives them of whom it's witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also who receives tithes paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

That may seem very strange logic to you. You may say I don't understand how this works. How can you base an argument on this peculiar kind of reasoning that because Levi who was ultimately a descendant

of Abraham was somehow in Abraham.

How can you say therefore that it was Levi who was paying tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham? Well the reason you can do it is because this is a revelation. It's a revelation of the corporate nature of things. We are not alone.

We are not each one on an island. That was a very unusual insight for a western philosopher when John Donne said no man is an island. We're part of a continent.

That's not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee. That's to say we're all involved.

Or if you're an American and you prefer the quotations of Benjamin Franklin he said we must all hang together or we'll hang separately. That was at the time of independence. That's to say we are together, we are involved with one another and everything that I do affects everybody else.

It really does. I can't prove it to you. I can only draw your attention to the revelation that God has given to us.

That there's something about the entirety of the whole human race in which we are woe. I want to say something about what's happened. If we just turn to Ephesians now it's particularly our brother Paul who uses this picture by the Spirit of God of the old man.

This is Ephesians chapter 4. He says this. And this too is very important. When we read passages of Scripture it really is of vital importance that we look at the address on the envelope.

That's to say we say who was this written to? You see these were just general letters which were written so that anyone who might happen upon it could say oh yes it says here and here therefore this must be true. If I send an individual, if I send one individual an invitation to a birthday party and the letter goes astray and everyone else finds it or they photocopy it I don't expect everyone to come to my birthday party. It had an address on it.

And when we read these letters in the New Testament we really do need to look at the address. That's to say we need to look at the condition of the people to whom they were written so that we understand. You see if God says of a certain person this is true and this is true we then need to go back to the beginning and say who is he talking about in this particular Ephesian letter? He's talking about people who have been sealed with the Spirit.

He's talking about people who have been brought right into the center of Christ who are one with him who have received the Spirit of God people who have had this dynamic experience not just theory, not just Bible teaching but they have had this experience of being joined to Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God. That's who this letter is written to. If that is not your experience yet you need to be cautious about the way you apply some parts of this letter.

There's a very old story of a man who was preaching during the Welsh Revival and as he was preaching there was one man who was very concerned about the whole question of the elect who were the elect and who were not the elect I won't tell you what I think about it you can guess maybe later on. But that's what he was preaching about and there was one man who was very anxious about it and he said he didn't know whether he was the elect or whether he wasn't the elect so he really didn't know how he was supposed to respond. And the preacher said to him whose letters have you been reading? And he said well I've been

reading Romans and I've been reading Ephesians and the preacher said well that's what comes from reading other people's letters.

Now that doesn't mean that we should close our minds down and say the rest of the Bible is not applicable but it makes a point. It makes this point that these letters were written to specific destinations. They were written to specific people and those people had an experience and you need to look at the experience to understand the relevance of what's being said to them.

This is what Paul says here in Ephesians chapter 4 he speaks to people like this let me read from, I'll read from verse 17 of chapter 4 He says This I say therefore and testify in the Lord that you walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds and then you have a terrible description of man and woman without Christ this is what it says having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness or hardness of their heart who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness but you did not so learn Christ if you've got something like a Newberry Bible you'll know that it isn't me that's putting the emphasis into the word you it's Paul who did it if Paul had been writing in English he would have underlined the word you he did it with the Greek language he used an emphatic pronoun he said but you that isn't your experience their experience but you are different you did not learn Christ in the way that caused you to walk in the way that those Gentiles are and then he says this he says if so be that you heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus our brother last night made reference to the fact that we need to be taught by the Lord Jesus this is exactly what Paul is saying here he says you were taught by him in other words he's referring to people who have had a real experience of Jesus Christ in fact this word learned is the one that we have built into the word disciple it's people who had a relationship because that's what disciple speaks of you can't have a disciple without a master it's half of a unit these people are people who had committed themselves to Jesus Christ who were loyal to him who were following him who were learning from him because they were receiving his word in their hearts and to those people he says this you've been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus I want to talk this morning and tomorrow about the truth that is in Jesus I want to show if I can just exactly what the experience of Jesus has been and I don't apologize for using just the word Jesus without the full title of the Lord Jesus Christ Paul uses it here because it focuses our attention upon something it focuses our attention upon that earthly part of the Lord Jesus Christ's experience. Not the part before he came into the world if you like not the part that is yet to come but on this time when he became Jesus when he took upon himself human flesh when he took the name of Jesus the name that means saviour so there's truth in Jesus and I want us to try to well just unfold if we can the truth that is in him and ultimately we'll ask how do we become those who benefit from the truth that's in Jesus. But how good all these things being in Jesus if there's no way that what's true in him can be true in us.

Do you remember how John says in his letter these things are true in him and in you there are things that have to become true in you that aren't already true in him really it's not very complicated I'm not trying to make it complicated it just comes naturally that way all you have to do is get into Jesus Christ that's all you have to do and stay in him I can actually sit down and finish now but it's all said. All you have to do is get into Jesus Christ and stay in him and the truth that's in Jesus will be the truth that's in you that's all you have to do this is what he says this is what they were taught they were taught to cut off concerning the former way of life, the old men I'll just pause for a moment as I go past. If you are using a more modern version of the scripture you won't have the word old men.

If you're using something like the NIV or the new American Standard Version you'll have another term entirely which isn't a biblical term at all you'll have the old self now the Bible really doesn't talk about the self.

Psychologists may I don't know but the Bible doesn't and when you change Bible terms and cut modern terms you almost inevitably get yourself into a mess the other thing that you do is that you lose the precious links that the Bible has created you see there is a wonderful contrast between the old man and the new man but if you just concentrate on the old self and if you think about it logically and ask the question is a new self likely to be better than an old self you know that any self isn't likely to be much good at all anyway we're not talking about old selves, we're not talking in fact self concentrates on the individual that is Greek philosophy the old man concentrates on the corporate nature of something that has taken place it concentrates not on my personal man, your personal

man, I don't have one I remember at the same time as I told you that story of the young woman someone who used to explain the reason for him getting up like a bear with a sore head every morning, he was always miserable in the morning and when someone asked him the question he said well it was because the old man always woke up before the new man now that's a wonderful cop out but it has it has absolutely no relevance at all to what the Bible means by the old man and I'm going to take the next few minutes now to explain what the old man is as best as I can let's turn with an excuse to Paul's letter to the Romans this is the closest thing we have in the scripture to a systematic theology Paul's letter to the Romans it's very tightly reasoned, based on revelation step by step, truth built

upon truth and there are scores of questions in the book of Romans not because Paul doesn't know the answers because by the spirit of God he wants to engage your understanding he wants you to pause and think about them, maybe you know this little phrase that comes in chapter 4 when he says what shall we say then he asks that question six times in the book of Romans what shall we say then in other words he pauses in the flight of his argument, his reasoning, he pauses and he says now let's consider this a minute what are the implications of what we've said what are the consequences of this so far, and in chapter 4 what he wants to do is attract our attention to Abraham and he says what shall we say then that Abraham, our father according to the flesh has found, what has Abraham discovered,

what is Abraham's experience and if you go through this chapter you'll find it expresses Abraham's experience Abraham was and is the father of all believers Abraham is the first man recorded in the bible to put all his trust in God, if you began at Genesis chapter 1, began to read your way through you wouldn't come to the word faith or belief until you got to Genesis 15 and in verse 6 it says Abraham believed God and he counted it to him for righteousness and that becomes the foundational truth in the revelation of God to men and women that because Abraham put all his trust in the God who was able to bring life from the dead the God who was able to do impossible things, he glorified God, he didn't stumble in unbelief he put all his confidence in God and God counted it to him as

righteousness, and then you discover the consequences of that for Abraham, you discover the consequences concerning iniquities and lawlessnesses and sins, it's all here in chapter 4 I'm not going to read it, but when you get into chapter 5 it says this therefore that means what comes now is based on what's gone before therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand can you see the third word along in verse 2 is the word also the word also tells you that the new covenant adds something to Abraham's experience in chapter 4 you've got Abraham's experience, in chapter 5 you've got everything

that was true of Abraham's experience and also something else we're moving on in the

revelation, he speaks of this grace wherein we stand yesterday morning John was speaking about this ministry this grace in which we stand, what God did with Abraham and David and all those saints and godly men of those other covenants, that was grace, it was grace, the grace of God reaching out to them, enabling them but there's something about this grace in which we stand, there's something about the quality the kind of grace in this new covenant which sets it apart from the grace that there was in previous covenants so you've got everything that Abraham had and also access by Jesus Christ into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice and hope of the glory of God and so it goes on maybe you will recall that early on in Romans, Paul has actually told us by the Spirit that all had sinned

and fallen short of the glory of God, but now in chapter 5 we are being restored to the hope of the glory of God, what seemed hopeless and an absolute write-off God has done something vital and new and dynamic to make something possible that wasn't possible in earlier eras in this chapter we have some very vital revelation we have revelation which is the only truth which can explain to us the world in which we live, and I'm not going to go through it all verse by verse, but if you look at chapter 5 and verse 12 it says this, chapter 5 and verse 12, it says wherefore, and that still means he's building on what he said before wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed or spread to all men for that all have sinned verse 12, notice it very carefully

says by one man sin entered it doesn't say by one man sin began this is a vital revelation of eternal truth, sin is older than the human race do you follow it? sin is older than the human race by one man sin entered didn't only begin then, you entered this morning through the doors of this tent, but that wasn't the beginning of your existence you had existed a long time before, some of you a very long time before that but you entered in and that became a new part of your experience, well sin predates Adam in fact from this time almost for the next couple of chapters whenever Paul uses the word sin he puts a definite article in front of it that's to say if you want it technically it means this sin or if you want it colloquial in English it really means sin with a capital S, and you

discover that he begins to talk about sin in a different way, sin is no longer now something that you just do, it isn't your offense, sin takes on a personality of its own sin begins to do things for itself sin reigns sin spreads sin brings in death, sin enslaves, and you suddenly discover that what you've got on your hands is not just something that's gone wrong, but you've got something which is effectively a spiritual personality you've got something which entered into our race and it is the only explanation to the wittedness of our race it's the only explanation, there's no other I think it was a couple of years ago and I may have made reference to this here before but on a couple of occasions I've been to Auschwitz, I've been to Majdanek too wept with people who were weeping the

cruelty of men to other men the blatant wickedness of one man to another is almost unbelievable animals don't behave like this animals don't behave like this but there's something in the human race which cuts it apart from the animals something has entered into it, another kind of spirit, another kind of life force, something which goes on spoiling and destroying, when Paul referred to the old man in Ephesians, he spoke about it being corrupt, and he actually uses a tense which means it goes on corrupting, it's not something which can be improved, you can't remedy it, you can't begin to dilute it it keeps on refreshing itself in its blatant wickedness in most circumstances by the grace of God sin in its full manifestation is restrained you don't always see it in its full horror but there

was a time when the Lord Jesus spoke of His own death that was coming and He kept on speaking about His hour that was coming His hour that was coming and then on one occasion He spoke to men and He said your hour is coming and the power of darkness there was at one point in the history of the human race when God took all restraint off this wicked destructive spirit that is in every human being one point when He took the restraint off and it cried crucify Him that's its real nature that's its real nature I will not have this man to reign over me I will not bow the knee it's the ancient lie that was spread into the human race have God said you know that's not true you won't die God knows that in the day you eat of it you'll be like God you won't have anyone telling you how to live your life

you won't be tied to anyone's apron string you'll be like God yourself that's the ancient lie it's sin it entered into our human race it spread through the whole human race affected every single member of it you've hardly ever seen the horror of it unless you've seen it expressed on the cross that's what it is it's blatant enmity against God I will not have this one to reign over me I will do my own thing I will not bow the knee this amazing defiance you see it you see it in measure you see it in a two year old who learns to say no the stage that we used to call the abominable no man stage when we had it in our family when they discover this power to refuse somebody else's will it's the manifestation the manifestation of the sin that entered this human race this spirit of disobedience

this rebellious thing this thing that says crucify him crucify him this thing which comes from the one that Jesus described as being a murderer from the beginning theocracy the murder of God the intention to eliminate God as an effective force in the life it manifests itself in all kinds of ways it's this thing, it's this sin that entered into the human race it's spoiled, it's destroyed it's spread through to all parts when our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world he began an identification with the human race he came in by virgin birth and he came notice how carefully the scripture expresses it, he came in the likeness of sinful flesh his flesh was not sinful but he came in the likeness of sinful flesh he became a human being exactly like you and me with this single exception that sin

had no part in him sin did not reign in him sin was not the king in him that was the single exception he lived his life in obedience in dependence upon his father in that living relationship that makes the life of God possible to live out upon the earth, that's what he did he came and lived it but all the time he was living it and all the time he was beginning to point towards the future, there was a longing in his heart and it birthed that in Luke's gospel in chapter 12 where he says, I've come to cast fire upon the earth but I'm straightened, I'm constrained and then he explains it he says, I have a baptism to be baptized in baptism unites things, it unites the thing that's baptized into the thing it's baptized into, you used to baptize a piece of cloth into a purple dye and the two

became one, Paul expresses by the spirit of God what happened with Moses as the leader of the people of Israel when he says they were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea it has a uniting consequence, there's something that happened and I can only proclaim it, I can't possibly begin to explain it I don't think honestly that the human mind will ever understand this I don't think we could stand it I think we would go mad with the prospect of what I'm going to try to declare now, and the bible the way it expresses it it expresses it fully and yet never explains it Peter says this, he said he bore our sin in his body on the tree so you get the sense of something not just on the surface but going on into the inside you get Paul who expresses it like this, he says he who knew no sin

became sin for us there was on the cross a final identification of the Lord Jesus Christ with what this human race had become he took upon himself and into himself and became so united with it as to be

inseparable the old man that corporate defiance against God, that body of sin, that thing that refused to say yes to God, and you hear the pain of the cry it's all in Psalm 22 my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? do you remember the next cry?

I am a worm and no man and Lord Jesus used, well Paul says that Isaiah is bold we think of our Lord Jesus and what he did upon the cross mainly in terms of a land without spot, and that's absolutely right, that's part of the revelation when the Lord Jesus began to speak of his own death he said in the same way that Moses lifted up the serpents in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up he entered into what the human race had become and he took it down into death with him I want to try and tell you very quickly an illustration if you've read, come from this part of the world I think, the story of Tarker the Otter you know that towards the end of the book of Tarker the Otter he has an enemy, I think he's called Dreadnought or something like that, or Dreadlock he's an otter hound and this otter hound has plagued the life of Tarker the Otter and his mates and his babies for the whole of his existence, and then this otter hound chases him into the sea and there's a final battle and the watchers on the shore see this final battle and they see the otter's teeth clasp into the throat of this otter hound and they both go down under the swirling waters and then I think the writer says something like there was one bloody bubble that broke the surface and then another and then it was all still Tarker had taken down into death with him, his mortal enemy.

That's only a story Jesus took down into death with him, the mortal enemy he became sin for us, he who knew no sin our yours and mine and Paul and the whole human race our old man was crucified with him that's what I want to do in these days I want to glorify the Lord Jesus this is what he has done for us let's pray Lord in your mercy and your grace reveal these things to our hearts give us something that we see with our spiritual understanding something that we know to be the truth of God that comes with a flash of insight into our God conscious spirit and we know what God has done Lord Jesus we pray your prayer, Father glorify your Son let your Son may glorify you we thank you Lord for not holding back for embracing all that we had become for becoming one with it dealing with it dynamically finally gloriously, thank you for the cry that echoes by your Spirit down through the generations it is finished glory to your name Amen

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