

# JOHN 6 PETER ROBINSON 24-08.MP3

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] All the days I will sing this song of gladness, with thy praise to the mountain of delight, for in thy helplessness, children, my pride, thy grace of mercy go down on my life.

I will trust in the cross of my Redeemer, I will sing of the blood that never clears, of sins forgiven, of consciousness, of death defeated and life without end.

Beautiful Saviour, wonderful counsellor, lovely majesty of our history, the way, the truth, the life, star of the glory, glorious in holiness, the other grace of God, I was champion, that you reign, you reign of our Lord.

The reading of the 5,000. So in John 6, and we're going to read from verse 12. John 6 reading from verse 12. So Jesus is just, was about to just feed the 5,000.

And we're going to carry on into the next event. So John 6, verse 12. When the people all had had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, gather the pieces that are left over, let nothing be wasted.

[ 2 : 12 ] So they gathered them and filled 12 baskets with the pieces of the 5 barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world.

Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum.

By now it was dark and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water, and they were terrified.

But he said to them, it is I, don't be afraid. Then they were willing to take him into the boat and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite side of the shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but they had gone away alone.

Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

[ 3 : 39 ] When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, Rabbi, when did you get here? Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, you're looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.

Then they asked him, what must we do to do the works God requires? Jesus answered, the work of God is this, to believe in the one he has sent.

And we thank God for his word. If the children would like to turn to John 6 and to that period in the life of the Lord Jesus and his disciples that's recorded for us there.

In the last few weeks or so, we've been looking from time to time at some of the miracles of Jesus and we come to this one. When I was a young boy, one of my favourite programmes on TV was called Bagpuss.

[ 4 : 45 ] And those of you who might remember, Bagpuss was a rather scruffy pink and cream cat, sort of a toy stuffed cat. But Emily loved him.

That was the phrase in the thing. He had an owner Emily. But he lived in a toy shop, a sort of a rundown sort of a toy shop, antique type of shop. And other strange sort of creatures lived with him there. There was a banjo playing frog, a wooden woodpecker who was a bookend called Professor Yaffel, a musical organ which is operated by mice and other strange things.

And every episode of this programme of Bagpuss, a toy would be left, a broken toy would be left. And there'd be a story about the toy and at the end of the story, the toy had been mended and fixed and repaired for sale.

I remember one of the stories was concerning a small figurine of a Chinaman and a turtle who were both bowing to one another. And the story was that the man, the Chinaman, lived on an island in a lake and his island was connected to the shore by a narrow footbridge.

One day something happened, a storm I can't remember, and the bridge was destroyed and so the man was trapped on the side, on the island away from the land, away from safety.

[ 6 : 00 ] However, he had always been very kind to the turtles that lived in the lake. Unlike those who lived on the shore who used to hunt the turtles and eat them. And so when the turtles saw he was stranded on the island, they formed a sort of a stepping stone bridge for him so he could walk all the way across to safety.

And all the people saw this and they were all amazed and they decided that they wouldn't kill and eat turtles anymore. And that was the story. Now, as far as I know, nobody yet has put forward an explanation as to how Jesus walked on the water of the lake, that he walked on the back of turtles. And though it's possible they might do in the future. But many other explanations have been given over the years as to how it was possible for Jesus to walk on water. People are looking for a natural explanation.

A few years ago, a professor, his name is Professor Noff, N-O-F, Florida University, proposed Jesus had walked on very thin sheets of ice. And he'd done all sorts of tests and all sorts of weather and all sorts of things like that.

And he said this, partially submerged in water, ice patches known as spring ice may not have been noticed by observers standing at the shore. Because the size of the spring's ice, a person standing or walking on it would appear to a distance observer to be walking on water.

[ 7 : 25 ] It seems to me that Professor Noff is the one who's skating on thin ice rather than walking on thin ice with that idea. But what puzzles me is how regularly the miracles of Jesus and the miracles of the Bible are scrutinized by men and women of science and learning and so on, trying to find an explanation, a reasonable and rational explanation to disprove the supernatural, the miraculous.

And what surprises me is this, why do they bother? Why don't they just write off those stories as being myths and legends and nonsense? Why don't they just ignore them and say that they are not to be taken seriously?

It seems to me that all those people, although they think that the authors of the Gospels and of these events are mistaken, they can't help but assume that there's some accuracy, there's some truth in what they're recording about the life of Jesus or somebody else.

But if they believe that what they're recording is true and needs explaining, then they need to look at all the facts as well. So if we take Professor Noff's explanation of thin ice, then we have to ask ourselves, how is it possible for the disciples to row a rowing boat through ice thick enough for a man to walk upon?

Pretty difficult, I should imagine, especially for three miles. How is it possible that Jesus wasn't just seen at a distance, as Professor Noff said, it could look like he was walking on water then, but he walks right up to the side of the boat and gets into the boat?

[ 8 : 57 ] And also, how is it possible, because Matthew tells us Peter also walked on the water a short distance, that he wouldn't know he was standing on ice? I think all of us would be pretty aware of that.

You may have seen last year that a magician called Dynamo walked on the Thames. He walked 50 metres away from the bank of the River Thames, out into the river, and was picked up by a river police boat, to the amazement of those who watched and saw on the television.

Unfortunately for him, many amateurs filmed the event. People were there, of course, with their camcorders nowadays, and they all filmed it, and you could see, first of all, that his feet went under the water, so the water covered the whole of his shoes, so he wasn't on the surface.

And when the boat picked him up and came back to drop him back onto the shoreline, as it were, it hit a submerged platform, just where he happened to have been walking a few moments ago.

So it was given away. You can see all these things on the internet, if you Google walking on water, there's people who do magic tricks with perspex, and other materials as well. But you see, there's only one rational explanation for what took place here, when Jesus is walking on the water.

[10:13] And it's the most logical explanation, it's this. He is the Son of God. It was done supernaturally. He was not an ordinary human being. He does, because he is God, what human beings cannot do.

Jesus said later on, as he was speaking to his disciples in this Gospel, he says this, well, to those who were accusing him of blasphemy, he says, why do you accuse me of blasphemy? Because I said, I am God's Son. Okay? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father.

In other words, these things point to, and are to show that he is God's Son. And with divine power, he is doing these impossibly human things.

But what is impossible with God, with man, is very easy for God. Now, as I said, we've looked in the past weeks at the miracles of Jesus, and they give to us clear, irrefutable proof that this very person is God, that he is divine.

[11:28] But also, we've seen that these miracles of Jesus were given not only to declare and to make known to us that here is someone who is unlike anybody else, but also they are given to encourage us in our faith, to strengthen us in our faith, that we might put our trust in him.

Here's John again, writing near the end of his Gospel. He said, Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

So these miracles are to encourage us to have faith in Christ, and to teach us as well how Jesus Christ still operates, something that way.

Because as we said to the children, Jesus Christ is saying yesterday, today and forever, there are principles in the life of Jesus which do not change, and in the way he deals with us today, there are principles that are the same.

And I want us just to think of three of these things from this event, the walking on the water, and the facts and the description that are given to us. And the first thing is simply this, Jesus can reach us wherever we are.

[12:41] Jesus can reach us wherever we are. Now John, like all the Gospel writers, was very careful to record in detail the things that he saw.

And so when you read through his account, you realize that he's an eyewitness. He talks about, just in the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, he tells us how many people were there, 5,000.

He tells us that they sat on the grass. He tells us about how they were numbered and put in groups of 50. He tells us about how there were 12 baskets left over.

You see, there's somebody who's there. There's descriptions which are eyewitness accounts. And so in this story of Jesus walking on the water, the events of Jesus walking on the water, again we have numbers, we have precision.

Verse 19, when they had rowed 3 or 3 1/2 miles. So he knows, because he's on the boat, of course, is John, he's one of the disciples who is there, he knows where they are on the lake.

[13:41] And the lake, which is the Lake of Galilee, perhaps you've seen it on the map or on the telly, it's around about, it's sort of a bit of an oval sort of a shape, a sort of, it's six miles wide by around about 10 miles long.

Now we know that they were rowing to Capernaum. Now Capernaum is on the north west coast of the Sea of Galilee.

And we know they were on the other side because earlier on in chapter 6 we're told Jesus and his disciples crossed the far side of the Sea of Galilee. So they're sort of going at least six miles, seven miles.

So what does that tell us? It tells us that they were slap bang in the middle of the lake. They were slap bang in the middle of the lake as far from shore, probably as they could be.

And we know, of course, because we're told it's dark, it's night time, there's a terrific wind, they're rowing. Clearly if they were, if the wind was with them, they would have their sails up, wouldn't they?

[14:41] Because that would blow them in the right direction. So they're actually rowing clearly into a headwind. Alright, so they're in a headwind, middle of the lake, it's pitch dark, and the waves are strong, and I'd imagine by this time of the night, that they're pretty tired.

So it's a bit of a difficult situation. We know that the Lake of Galilee, that it was a lake, could be pretty treacherous. In Luke in chapter 8, where Jesus calms the storm, and Jesus is already in the boat there, we're told that the waves were washing into the boat, and the disciples, many of them fishermen, and used to rowing on that lake, and fishing on that lake, were scared that they were going to drown.

So it's a pretty treacherous place to be. Humanly speaking, they're as far from safety as it's possible to be. They're as far from help as it's possible to be.

And even if anybody did know that they were in danger, it's pitch dark, and how are they going to get to them? But, they were not too far away from Jesus to reach them.

They were not too far away from Jesus to reach them. He was still able to receive, they were still able to receive his help. He was still able to come to them in the middle of the night, in the roaring sea, in tiredness, in fear.

[16:02] And that's an important thing for us to grasp hold of, that there is no one who is too far for Jesus to reach them. Not too far gone, not too far away from God, not too hardened against God, that they cannot be reached by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it also means for those of us who are Christians, that in the storms and troubles of our lives, that we are never too far away for Christ to reach us.

We are never beyond his reach. We can never be in such a dark, difficult, painful place, that he cannot come to us there and give to us aid.

And perhaps we've got people we're praying for, in our families, children, grandchildren, husbands, wives, parents. And we may think, well, it's been, they seem so far from God.

They seem no closer to God than before. They seem as if it's impossible for them to be reached.

But you see, Jesus Christ can reach them. He can reach them where they are.

[17:07] They may be in prison. They may be an alcoholic. They may be suicidal. They may be in the darkness of all sorts of sins and perversity and wickedness. They may just be lost in the sins of being a nice person, or even a religious person, and thinking that they're okay.

They may be in that place where they're in such great danger, but Jesus Christ can reach them. If he can walk across the water, if he can get them in the middle of a storm, stormy lake in the middle of the night, then he can reach that person that you're praying for, and he can reach you, whoever you are.

It may even be that even this morning, you might say, well, I'm beyond the reach of Christ. You don't know the sins of my heart. You don't know the past that I've lived. You don't know how I've acted. You don't even know what I'm like now.

No, I don't, but he does. And you may think that God could never come to you. He could never reach you. He could never help you. Let me assure you that he can. And here's the evidence.

Here's the proof. And you don't need just to look here at the life of the Lord Jesus. You can read through the Bible. Where was Daniel when God came to him and rescued him? He was in a pit full of raging lions.

[18:21] Everybody thought that he was lion's food, but he was saved. Think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were the friends of Daniel who lived in Babylon.

They were thrown into a great pit of fire. Well, there's no way they could be saved, but we're told that there was a fourth person there. And that fourth person brought them out to safety.

God himself. Think of Peter. He was imprisoned. The next day he was due to be executed. God reached him there. It doesn't matter where you look in the Bible. It doesn't matter where you go.

You'll find that God reaches people in the lowest, most difficult, most dangerous, darkest places. And no matter how dark the place is where you are, no matter how difficult it is, no matter how it seems to you that there is no way you can reach shore or safety, let me say to you, Jesus Christ can reach you.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that? Dear Christian friend. Do you believe that for your family?

[19:25] Do you believe that for yourself? The second thing that we see here is not only Jesus Christ can reach us wherever we are, but Jesus Christ can reach us in whatever way he chooses.

In whatever way he chooses. Now you know that Whitby has a great history of lifeboats and lifeboat men and rescues and all sorts of things like that. And the most natural thing, of course, is that when there's a ship out at sea or a ship that's in distress which is in a great storm, the most natural thing

is to send out a lifeboat to rescue them.

And you might say, well, in this situation the most natural thing for Jesus would have been get some other people, get a lifeboat or a boat and row out to rescue his disciples.

But Jesus didn't do that. Jesus didn't even do what he'd done before. In another situation he didn't just speak, peace be calm. But he walks to them.

Something so surprising that it takes them off guard, doesn't it? Look at what happens. They saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water, and they were terrified.

[ 20 : 32 ] It wasn't what they expected. It was completely, well, wouldn't be what you expect. None of us would expect somebody to be walking on the water to us. That's what Jesus did. In fact, as he was walking onto the water to them, we're told in Matthew's account they thought it was a ghost.

They were scared. Rather than things seeming to get better, they seemed to get worse. They seemed to be that things were even more problematic.

But Jesus walks on the water to them. He does the unexpected. He can come to them in the way he chooses to come to them. He can reach them in whatever way he chooses.

And dear friends, so it is with us. We often think that we know how Christ will solve our problems. We often think that we can tell God the way he should do things.

In it being the life of someone who is in great need of comfort or compassion or love or healing. Or whether it be somebody who is lost in their sin and in darkness. We think we know the best way to reach them.

[ 21 : 33 ] We know the best way for God to sort them out. We know the best way for him to deal with our problems when we're caught up in the storms of life. You see, God often does that which is utterly surprising to us.

He is not limited to the resources of which we are limited. He is not bound by the rules of status quo. Here is what God says to the people of the Old Testament in Isaiah.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. We like to have God neatly wrapped up.

Many of us think we do. We've got him wrapped up in a nice box. We've got him wrapped up in the way that he acts or behaves. We've got him as the God who is sort of the Father Christmas character who sits on the cloud and smiles benignly at people.

And will accept everybody into heaven when they die. Or we've got him wrapped up in another box. And he's the God who looks after good people and if you do good things. And so on. We've all got this idea.

[ 22 : 35 ] But God does not live in a box. He does not live in a framework of our ideas. He is completely and utterly himself. Unique. He does exactly what he wants to do when he wants to do it.

The disciples failed to recognize that Jesus Christ was coming to their aid. Because they didn't recognize the way that he came.

He had to say to them literally look it's me. Don't be afraid. It's me. It's not a ghost. It's not a dream you're having. It's nothing to be afraid of.

It's me. Sometimes we don't recognize how God has come to us and is speaking to us. We say God you've got to speak to this person in a sort of a poor way. A light from heaven like Damascus Road experience.

You've got to do this. Perhaps we've even done that with God ourselves. God if you want me to be a Christian. You want me to follow Jesus. Then you need to do this for me. Or do that for me. I need to see something.

[ 23 : 34 ] I need to hear something. I need you to show yourself. God isn't going to be limited by us. And he's certainly not going to be controlled by us. See God throughout the Bible does things exactly as and when he chooses.

There were his people in slavery for 400 years in Egypt. Moses thought that perhaps the way that God could set the people free was him starting a revolution and leading an army of slaves.

God sent 10 plagues to set his people free. Unexpectedly. When Jonah ran away from God and ran to sea.

What did God do to save him? He sent a great big fish to saw him up. That's rather unexpected isn't it? And surprising. God did it. When Paul was in threat in Damascus and they were going to arrest him and kill him.

He got let down the wall in a basket to safety. See God is not limited by the means he uses to meet, rescue, save, answer prayer, come to the aid of his people.

[ 24 : 40 ] He will do whatever he chooses to do whenever he chooses to do it. And we mustn't limit him. And I have to say to you perhaps you're not a Christian this morning and you're saying well I want, I would like God to do this.

Or if this happened I'd believe in Jesus. Or that happened. Let me say this to you. God has sent you here to hear the gospel of his son. Don't say God isn't concerned with you or God won't save you. He's brought you to hear the wonderful good news. If you reject and turn away from that, you've got nothing to call back to God on. You've got no way to say to God, I couldn't hear you.

You didn't speak to me. You didn't call me. He's doing it now. And dear friend, again in the situation in which you're finding yourself as a Christian, it may be a very difficult situation.

It may be a very painful experience you're going through. Don't limit God. You may feel that what's happening is getting worse. You may feel the situation seems to be getting worse rather than better.

[ 25 : 42 ] Don't limit God. Don't limit the Lord Jesus Christ. He can reach us whatever way he chooses. And then there's one final thing here, dear friends, as well for us to see, which is so important.

Jesus can reach us if we're willing. Jesus can reach us wherever we are. Jesus can reach us in whatever way he chooses. And Jesus can reach us if we're willing. It's a very interesting turn of phrase, isn't there?

When the disciples see Jesus walking on the water, they're terrified. And he says to them, it's I, don't be afraid. Then look at verse 21. Then they were willing to take him into the boat.

Clearly before that, they weren't willing to take him into the boat. Clearly before that, they weren't willing to have him rescue them and save them. They weren't willing. Before his words of identification, they wouldn't receive him.

Their fear and the extreme peril they were in prevented them from recognizing who he was and made them resistant to him. That's a very real danger.

[ 26 : 46 ] A very real danger. Many people are not willing to receive Christ or his help or his salvation unless they approve of the method he uses.

They want Jesus, but they want it on their own terms. Yes, I'll go to church and yes, I'll do those Christian things, but it's on my terms. As long as you don't tell me, Jesus, that I've got to give up this favorite sin of mine.

As long as, Jesus, you don't tell me that I need to change this way, this habit or this action. Yes, I'll receive you as long as I can just carry on in my own sweet way.

There are many people who know the gospel, who've heard the gospel. They know about the things of Jesus Christ. They've heard them again and again, but they won't let Jesus into the boat. They won't let Jesus into their lives because ultimately they don't want him.

Because they know that when he comes, he changes things, he transforms things, he makes a difference. People often ask the question, why is it that so many people aren't Christians?

[ 27 : 53 ] Why is it so many people don't know the Lord Jesus? Why is it so many people are lost in their sin and headed to hell? And it's as simple as this, because they want to be.

They're not willing. They're not willing. Jesus himself, when he was coming to Jerusalem, that week or so before his death and crucifixion, looks over the city.

And this is how he spoke to the people of the city. He says, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Isn't it terrible? Can you imagine that? They weren't willing. What about you?

Here is this Jesus Christ. Here is the Son of God. He's come into this world. He's come to live this life. He's come to suffer this death. All for you. For your salvation.

[ 28 : 55 ] So that you could know God. So that you could have life everlasting. So that you could have peace and forgiveness. So that you could be saved from hell. And he says, it is mine to give and I give it gladly to all who will receive it.

And you say, I don't want it. Can you imagine? Can you imagine? There's this ongoing thing with the Ebola virus. Terrible, isn't it? Awful. But imagine that there are these people who've got Ebola and there is some, they've discovered.

Imagine they've discovered this wonderful cure for Ebola. Just take this tablet. All you've got to do is take this tablet, have this injection and you'll be healed. Can you imagine that people said, no, I don't want it.

I'd rather have the Ebola, thank you. I'd rather die. And of course they wouldn't. And all the hunt that's going on for the cure of cancer. And the hunt that's going on for the cure for all these illnesses and diseases.

Can you imagine that when these things are found, people saying, no, I don't want them. How would they be? You'd say, you're stupid. Have you lost all sense? And here is Jesus Christ.

[ 29 : 56 ] Here is the good news of God that says, you are under a terrible condition. You are inflicted with an awful disease, which is sin. And the consequences of that are everlasting suffering and pain and anguish and grief.

And living a life of emptiness and living a life alienated from God. And God has paid for the price for you to have the cure.

And you say, I'm not interested. I don't want it. Who's being rational now? Who's being reasonable now?

And isn't it the case, dear friends, even as Christians at times we can be resistant to the Lord's help? Sometimes, a bit like the disciples, we can think, it's up to me.

I've got to strain out the oars. I've got to get myself to safety. I've got to get myself out of this fix. I've got to sort out the problem. I've got to save that person in my family. Instead of letting the Lord Jesus Christ take the helm.

[ 31 : 01 ] Instead of letting the Lord Jesus Christ have his way. Saying, Lord, I can't do it. Come into the boat to take over. I know that it's your way is best.

And look what happens. Look what happens when they did let him in the boat. Look what happens when they were willing. Then they were willing, verse 21, to take him into the boat. And immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

Immediately they had rest. Immediately they were safe. Immediately the problem was over. In an instant, the rescue was complete. What's the point of pride if it doesn't do us any good?

What's the use of resisting almighty God when he comes and speaks to us in his grace and goodness? What's the point of thinking that we are in control of our lives or that we know better?

What's the point of hardening ourselves against this God? We can never outrow him. We can never reach the shore without him. We must let him make us willing.

[ 32 : 08 ] We must let him make us willing to humble ourselves before him. To ask for his help. To allow ourselves to be surprised by what he can do.

Do we really need to be like Jacob, who God had to wrestle to the ground to submit, getting to submit to his way? Do we really need to be like Jonah, that God has to send a great storm and cause us to be cast into the depths of the sea before we will turn around and go back to him in obedience?

Or won't we be like Elijah, who just heard God's whisper when he was in his lowest place? And you knew that God was with him.

In 2005, there was a terrible hurricane that hit America and the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Katrina. It's gone down in legend, hasn't it?

New Orleans was flooded. The levees around the city broke under the strain of the water and the tides and were washed away.

[ 33 : 22 ] Many people were trapped in their own homes. Helicopters were sent out, boats were sent out to rescue and to bring those people to safety. But again and again, many people were unwilling to leave their homes, to leave their possessions, to leave their pets behind.

To go to safety as the water levels rose. And there were many who died. What we're talking about is even more serious than that.

See, God's desire, Christ coming into the world was to this one end, that you should not be lost. Peter writes this, God is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Jesus Christ can reach you in whatever way he chooses. And he can make you willing too. Are you willing to be made willing?

And will you receive him into the boat? Let's pray together. Amen. Forgive us, Lord, because we are so very stubborn.

[ 34 : 48 ] So stubborn because we think that we can manage without you. Stubborn because we think we know what's best for ourselves.

Stubborn because, oh Lord, we won't receive the free gift of your grace, mercy, love and forgiveness. We thank you for your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who can reach us wherever we are. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you're willing to reach us wherever we are. To rescue us, to save us. And Lord, we ask that where we are stubborn, that you would make us willing. That you'd take away that foolish pride. You'd take away that arrogance, that self-righteousness. Take away that confidence in our own abilities.

Open our eyes to see just what danger we are in. Worse danger than the disciples on the sea. We're in the danger of being on the very precipice, the very edge of hell itself. Danger of having to answer for our sin.

[ 36 : 00 ] Danger of having to receive the penalty of eternal damnation. But how glad we are, thankful we are that, Lord Jesus, you came to pay that price, to pay that penalty.

To be our rescuer, our saviour. Whoever we are, however far we fall and however far away we are. And for those of us, Lord, who are your people, we thank you that in the darkness or the difficulty of the trials of life and struggles that we face, that again you do not forsake us nor leave us.

But you are with us as you were with Daniel in the lion's den and Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego in the furnace. You reach us and you walk with us and you deliver us.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to lean upon you with all of our faith, with all of our trust. For we know that you are faithful. Amen.

Amen. And this is my prayer. Amen.