

Exodus Chapter 20 v 1 - 3

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[0 : 00] The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings

The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings The Lord of the Rings Let's come to our Lord and King in prayer. Let us come to Him and worship Him. Let us pray.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.

and mighty and omnipotent King. Thank you that you are not like the kings or the powers or the governments or the authorities of this world, but you are one who has a desperate, a deep love and concern for every single individual, not only in your kingdom, but in the world that you created.

[2 : 56] We thank you again, our God, that we are those who come before one who loves us, who cares for us, and one who has an interest in us in every part. There's nothing, Lord, that's happened in this week that you haven't been aware of. There's no struggle that we face that you haven't been there for us. Lord, just a prayer away. There's no joy that, Lord, we've experienced that hasn't had its source in you, and, Lord, found, Lord, that you are the one who gives it for every good and perfect gift comes from you. But as we come this Sunday morning, again, our desire is to join with those angels and saints. Join with your people who've gone before us in heaven. We want to worship and adore you, praise you. But more than that, Lord, we want that you should give us a little foretaste of heaven, for in heaven they can see you perfectly without sin blinding their eyes, without any barricade or barrier between. They can hear your voice and enjoy the delight of communion and fellowship and friendship with you. Lord, we ask that you would lift that veil, that you would give to us that insight, that we might see something more of your splendor and glory, that we might hear a little bit more of your voice speaking to us, that we might enjoy the sweet fellowship of your Holy

Spirit. So be with us each one here this morning, we pray. Help us to lift to you our hearts, not just our voices. Bring to you the worship and praise you deserve. For we know, O Lord, that as we draw near to you, you draw near to us and you do us good. Do us good then and bless us in this time, for we ask it in and through the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. We're going to read together now from our Bibles, and if you'd like to find in your Bible, Deuteronomy and chapter 4. Deuteronomy and chapter 4. And if you've got one of the church pew Bibles, then that's page 183. Page 183. We are looking at the first of the Ten Commandments, which we'll find later on when we go back to Exodus and chapter 20, continuing our journey through Exodus. But we're going to pick up here a little bit of the teaching of Scripture concerning the truth of what we are going to be considering, that first commandment. So we're going to pick up from verse 32. Moses has been speaking to the people just before they're going to enter the new land, the promised land of Canaan, and he's been reminding them of the importance of obedience to God's laws and obedience to his commandments. And so we're going to read from verse 32 to verse 40 of Deuteronomy, page 183.

Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created human beings on the earth. Ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened?

Or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire as you have and lived? Has any God ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds? Like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

[6 : 39] You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God. Besides him, there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his presence and his great strength to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you, and to bring you into their land, to give it to you for an inheritance as it is today. Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you, and that you may live long in the land. The Lord your God gives you for all time. As I said earlier on, we're back in Exodus and chapter 20, looking at the very first of the commandments, the ten commandments that God gave to his people while they were at Mount Sinai in the wilderness on their journey to the promised land. God had provided for them everything they needed by way of food and water, by providing for them protection and care. He provided them here with his word, his truth, and we just read from verse 1 of chapter 20 of Exodus. God spoke all these words, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. In every area of life there are some people who just have to be number one. They just have to be the top of their particular field. They just have to reach the pinnacle. Whether they're athletes who strive for gold medals, whether they're football teams for champions, trophies, politicians to be elected to positions of power, prime minister or president, university graduates who long to have first class honours, employees that they might be the managing director one day, businesses that they might have the largest share of the market, and so on. In fact, if we're honest, each of us dreams of being in first place, or has dreamt of being in first place at some time in our lives, we all would love to have the top spot.

But of course, the reality is that only a very few actually make it to number one, to the top. But the irony is that those who strive and those who work and those who dream of being number one, the problem is that no one ever stays at the top for very long. Maybe they might be there for a week, maybe they're for a month. Rarely are they there for more than a year. Before long, somebody else comes along and takes that number one place, and they're relegated to number two and further down. They're pushed off the pedestal that they've longed for, and hoped for, and dreamt for. Well, why is there that desire?

Why is there that innate desire within us to be number one? Why are we so competitive? Why are we so disappointed when somebody else does better than us?

Well, evolutionists believe that's because of their theory of the survival of the fittest. They teach that there's an inbuilt desire, a drive to beat all others so that we can guarantee our own survival and that of our children.

But the Bible gives the real answer. And yes, it is something we have inherited from our ancestors. Yes, it is something that's built into our nature, but it's built into our sinful nature.

[10 : 56] And the manifestation of that sinful nature is selfish ambition. Here's what the Apostle Paul writes about the inner heart, the inner person.

The acts of the flesh, that's the sinful nature, are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like.

Sinful nature within us drives us after top spot. It's our rebellion, you see, against God. God is number one, but we long to take his place.

We long to be the God of our own lives. But, as we've read here in this first commandment, the reality is that there is only one number one.

God is number one in everything. And this commandment shows us that he is really the one and only God.

[12 : 11] All other lesser gods must take second place to him. When we were introducing this last week and thinking about this, the commandments themselves, I said that they are a self-revelation.

The commandments show us what God is like. They reveal to us something about who he is. And that's exactly the case here in this first commandment. Because God is showing to his people and to us that he alone is God.

That's the foundation for the whole of the Bible's teaching about God. It's the foundation upon which our faith is built. There is only one God. We read there from Deuteronomy, didn't we, in chapter 4, where the Lord says to him, says to the people through Moses, You have shown these things so

that you might know that the Lord is God.

Besides him there is no other. Later on in Deuteronomy, he says this, There is no God beside me. Isaiah says the same, Apart from me there is no God.

Again and again that truth is impacted and pressed down as the foundation upon which God's people are to live. There is only one God.

[13 : 23] Well if that's true, which we believe it is, why does God need to have this command? Why does he need to say, You shall have no other gods beside me, if there is no other gods beside him?

There is no other gods that exist but him. He is number one. Well because human beings throughout history, throughout time, have always invented and made gods for themselves. The Egyptians from whom the people of Israel had just left behind, they had a god for every occasion. They had Ra, the sun god, and Horus, the god of the sky, and Sekhmet, the goddess of war.

Those are just some of the important ones. In total they had 2,000 gods. They worshipped these gods and appeased these gods. They had to keep these gods happy because if they didn't then their crops would fail or storms would come or sickness would prevail.

They had to keep those gods happy to secure the smooth running of life. And where the people of God were going into Canaan, the promised land was again a landfill with people who had their own gods.

[14 : 32] Every little tribe had its own particular god, Baal and Molech. And some of those gods desired and called for human sacrifices, the sacrifice of their children, that they might have the harvest or have the rains when they needed them.

And so on. But all these gods are not gods at all. They're just inventions of men, crafted into idols by men.

Here's what the psalmist has to say about these gods in comparison to the true God. Psalm 115. Our God is in heaven. He does whatever pleases him.

But these idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak. Eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear.

Noses, but cannot smell. Hands, but cannot feel. Feet, but cannot walk. Nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

[15 : 40] So actually what we see God in doing, in giving this commandment, he is showing and revealing again his goodness. God in his goodness has given his commandments. God in his loving kindness has given his commandments.

Because this command warns us and keeps us from being fooled and conned and deceived into following empty, futile, pointless gods.

Gods that can do no good. Gods that do not hear prayer. Gods who do not help. Gods who fail. Those who put their trust in them. Nothing gods. The sad truth is, that though we've seen that the foundation again and again is being laid, there is one God only.

Yet throughout the history of God's people, the Israelites, as we go on through the Old Testament, again and again, they kept on turning to false gods. The gods of Baal, or Moloch, or whatever god there may happen to be that's trendy at the time.

But before we start to think that this really has nothing to do with us in the 21st century, before we start to think, well this commandment about false gods is really unimportant, if we don't have any of those problems today, then we need to think again.

[16 : 55] Paul reminded the Christians in the first century that they were those who were enslaved by false gods. He says to the Galatians, formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who were by nature, not gods.

The truth is that today, in our world, the vast majority of people of this world worship a false god. The vast majority of people are slaves to non-gods.

Not just the animists who have their witch doctors and their spirits in every tree and rock, but the Buddhists and the Hindus and the Muslims. They're all enslaved to man-made gods.

Nothing gods. False gods. Empty gods. And again, if we think here in the West and in the UK in the 21st century, we are not followers of another god, then we are also deceived.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, reminds them of a truth which is true for every age and for every generation and for us today. He says this, As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom

of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

[18:14] He's talking about Satan. Behind every false religion, the devil is at work. He's the one that puts into men's hearts and minds. But the reality is this, that even when we live to please ourselves and we are irreligious, we're reminded that we are those who follow the ways of the world and the ways of the world are guided by and directed by the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the god of this age, Jesus calls him, Satan himself.

So if you're not a Christian this morning, if you're somebody who feels that you are unreligious and you have no religious concerns and you're doing your own thing, then the reality is that you are serving and following a false god.

Not the true god, but a god. You are going the way that the devil leads you. But the reality is this, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has rescued us from the god of this age.

The god of our Lord Jesus Christ has brought us into a place of knowing and loving and in a right relationship with God. Paul writes to the Thessalonian Christians, you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true gods.

So we realize that this first commandment, you shall have no other gods before me, has become a reality for us who are in Christ. It's not just the commandment, you shall have no other gods, but the wonderful truth is that you shall have me as your God.

[19:47] That's why there's promises in these commandments as well, not just negatives. We are brought to faith in God, to relationship with God, to life in God.

You shall have God and no other before me. We have God now and none before him. He is number one in our lives and that's the vital truth.

The wonderful truth is this, that God is one with us and us with him. Before we came to Christ, before we knew him, the description of us is quite fitting in Ephesians 2.

We were people without hope and without God in this world. God had made a promise, a covenant promise to Abraham, years before Exodus, centuries before in fact.

And he said to Abraham, I will be to you your God and the God of your descendants. And here God is just doing exactly that. He's reinforcing, re-cementing this truth.

[20:47] You shall have no other gods before me because I promise that you will have me as your God. The Ten Commandments and the law that God brings didn't overturn that promise, that covenant of God's faithfulness.

But a part of his goodness, part of his faithfulness to him, as being their God, he gives them his law, as being their God, he gives them good things. I shall be your God, he's saying, and you shall be my people.

We have come to fulfill this commandment by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's the only way we could keep this commandment.

You see, because the truth is that no one has ever kept the commandment except Jesus Christ. As I said before, we fail, before we were Christians. We were going our own way, following the false God, that liar, Satan, or kept in some other false religion or other.

But when Jesus came into the world, he came to fulfill this commandment. He came to keep all the commandments. Remember when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and Satan said to him at one point, all the world I'll give you if you'll bow down and worship me.

[21:59] There's him calling Jesus to break the commandment, saying, come on, worship me instead of God. Have me as your God instead of him. What does Jesus say? Away from me, Satan, for it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

He kept that commandment. We see that all the way through his life and ministry. But more than that, he fulfilled this commandment on our behalf. Because we have failed and not kept this commandment, we are under sin.

But when we come to faith in Christ, the reality is this, that we put our trust in Jesus to do what we could never do for ourselves. He's kept the commandment on our behalf. In fact, he said, concerning the law, that's what he would come to do.

Matthew 5, do not think I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I've not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. God counts us as righteous in his sight.

He counts us as being those who've kept and fulfilled his law perfectly. Not because we have, but because Jesus has on our behalf. God attributes Jesus' obedience to us.

[23 : 10] Just as on the cross our sins are placed on Christ and he dies in our place, so his faithfulness and obedience to God's law is placed upon us and accredited to our account.

Yes, we are lawbreakers, but his law keeping has fulfilled the Lord's demands in our place. And so Paul writes to the Romans, Christ is the culmination of the law, the fulfillment of the law, so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

That's how it's possible for you and I, dear friends, to be made right with God. The only way. That's why it's by faith alone that we are saved. Not by good works, not by deeds, not by our own righteousness, not by us giving to charity or doing good things to outweigh the bad things.

We could never do that. Jesus has taken all the bad things on the cross and paid for them completely. Your sin and mine, those thoughts, those words, those deeds, whatever they are, and he's paid the price and we are clear of that debt.

But God says to us, rightly, if you want to be my friend, if you want to enjoy heaven and be with me, then not only do you have to be clear of all debt, but you need to be righteous. You need to be sinless and spotless.

[24 : 27] You need to keep my commandments perfectly because that's what I want, that's what I deserve, that's what I expect. But we've all failed on this, haven't we? And so again, Jesus has lived the life we couldn't live.

He died the death we couldn't die. He lived the life we couldn't live. So that God now says, because Jesus and you are one through faith in him and put your trust in him, then you are right in my sight. All the commandments you've kept, all the commandments you've fulfilled, because he's fulfilled them in your place. That's the double whammy of the gospel, the double blessing.

But there's something else as well, and this is what I want us to think about too this morning. Not only has the Lord Jesus Christ taken our sin, not only has he given us his righteousness, but more than that, when we come to faith in him, he empowers us to keep and to live out this commandment in our daily lives.

So it's not that we simply say, yes, Jesus took my sin, yes, I'm righteous before God, therefore I can do what I like and live how I want to live, because when we become a Christian, we know something has happened, there's a change of heart, we are born again of the Spirit, we are converted, we are new creations.

[25 : 42] So once when we broke the commandments again and again, now within our hearts there's the desire to keep the commandments, to live them out, to fulfill them, because we know that they are good for us, because we know that they are a blessing to us.

God has put us in new hearts. So how does the Christian, live out this commandment, you shall have no other gods before me? Well, first of all, because we love God before all others.

The Christian loves God. Now remember that when Jesus was asked, what's the greatest commandment, the first commandment? He said this, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

That's this commandment in one sense, expanded a little bit for us to understand. You shall have no other gods because you're to love me, says God. That's what he wants, our love.

And God's relationship with his Old Testament people, with Israel, was pictured again and again like a loving marriage. He is a caring and faithful and protective and providing husband.

[26 : 46] And she is a loving bride, an affectionate, devoted wife. But you see, whenever God's people in the Old Testament took on another God or turned away from the Lord, God counted that as adultery.

He counted that as unfaithfulness. If you want to understand the picture better, read the prophet Hosea. It's a pictogram in one sense. It's a pictorial life of what it means to God to be forsaken, to have an unfaithful church, an unfaithful people.

So God loves and he wants us to love him. And that's what happens when you become a Christian. This God that you once fought against, this God that you once hated in one sense because of the, this God that you didn't understand, this God becomes someone that you love.

We don't have to love God because it's our duty to love God. We love God because he loves us.

We can't help ourselves. Paul writes to the Corinthians in chapter 8, verse 3, whoever loves God is known by God.

In other words, when we know God, we love him. And when we love him, we know him. They're inseparable together. So you and I, dear friends, each day as we live loving God, we are keeping

this commandment.

[28 : 08] But, we know that our love is not perfect, is it? We know that we do not love him as we should. We know that our love is hot one day, cold the next.

We know that we are half-hearted at times. We know that we are selfish. But the reality is this, we never stop loving God. If you're a Christian, you can't stop loving God because that love within you is fuelled by the Holy Spirit.

And though it struggles, and though it's imperfect, and though it's failing, there's a love there that you want to grow and increase and deepen. You shall have no other gods before me.

Love me first of all in your hearts and lives. But also, this commandment speaks about faith, doesn't it? Not only that we are to love God firstly, but we are to trust God before all other things, all other people.

Faith is essential. Faith is essential for us being saved. Faith is essential for us in living out the Christian life as well. In fact, no one can know God without faith.

[29 : 12] Right? To Hebrews, in chapter 11, without faith, it's impossible to please God. Got to have faith. Got to have trust. Real, genuine trust.

It's by faith we're saved. It's by faith we're being saved. It's by faith that we shall be saved. The Christian faces every part of their life, every situation, circumstance with faith in God.

We trust Him in all things. To become a Christian means to renounce our faith in something else, to renounce our faith in ourselves that we're good enough to get to heaven, to renounce faith in our good works, to renounce faith in some other tokens or emblems or whatever it may be.

To put our faith in God alone is the beginning of salvation. You shall have no other gods before me because you shall trust me alone. And again, going back to the Old Testament and the commandment given to the Israelites, when they turned to these other gods, these gods of Baal and Molech and others, what grieved God so much was not only that they were showing that they did not love Him but they were showing that they did not trust Him.

After all that He'd done for them, after delivering them and rescuing them from Egypt, after bringing them through the Red Sea, after taking them all the way to the promised land and giving them this wonderful land to live in for themselves, they still thought He was untrustworthy.

[30 : 39] That's a terrible thing, isn't it? Let me just let that challenge before you for a moment. All that God has done for you, perhaps you never even have realised or recognised what God has done for you.

The fact that you are still alive today, the fact that you have been fed, the fact that you have a family, that you have a job, that you have employment, that you have money, all these many multitude things, that you have your health and strength, all these things are the gift of God and yet you still don't trust Him.

What more has He got to do for you to put your faith and trust in Him? What has He got to do? And then when you think about what He did in Christ, coming into this world, taking on our humanity, enduring and suffering in your place and mind, dying for your sins and rising again, what more has He got to do for you to trust Him?

Surely there's nothing more He can do. The only reason that you aren't trusting is because you deliberately don't want to trust Him. And again, this is the problem with the Israelites. God wasn't upset with them because they made a mistake.

God wasn't angry with them because, oh, well, they slipped up. It was so much more than that.

There was a determination and a desire to say, no, we will not trust this God in spite of all that He's done.

[31 : 54] That's why God was angry. Dear friends, you and I are called to faith as well. We're called to trust Him for our salvation, but we're called to trust Him daily.

And yes, there are times when we have doubts, aren't there? There are times when something happens to us, where we're immersed into a situation where our faith wavers. Lord, have you let me down here?

Where are you? But the truth is this, no matter how many times we waver, even at times when we doubt, even at times when perhaps we feel as if faith has left us, yet God will never leave us.

The faith that He's given us is a faith that He supplies. Paul speaks about it in Ephesians 2, faith that's the gift of God. You're a Christian because God has given you that faith.

And if you're somebody who's here this morning and you're saying, well, I wish I had that faith. You had people say that to you maybe. I wish I had your faith. It's very simple. Ask God for it. Ask God for it.

[32 : 58] If you really want it, if you really want to be saved, if you really want Christ to come into your heart and life, don't just say, I wish I had your faith. Wish I had your confidence. Ask God for it.

God, give me that same saving faith. Give me that trust in you. Unfortunately, if you were to challenge many people when they say, I wish I had your faith, then they won't do that.

They're only saying it to appease you. They're only saying it to be let off the hook. Oh, if only I had that faith, well, you can have it. God is a God who answers prayer. Jesus has said, ask and you will receive.

Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. Well, do those things and God will give you that faith. And even for us as Christians, when our faith wavers, when we're really struggling, when we look at a circumstance and we think, Lord, where are you in all this?

Let's make it our prayer again. Lord, give me that faith. Give me that faith to trust you in all of this. Give me that faith to lean on you, even though I can't see the way ahead, even though I can't work out what the answer will be.

[34 : 03] Give me that faith. That's keeping that commandment. You shall have no other gods before me. My love, my faith, are his. And just as we close, again, I want us to remember this truth which we stressed last week a little bit.

Not only do the commandments reveal who God is or reveal Christ, not only do they teach us about living the practical Christian life, but remember God gave them out of his goodness and he gave them for our freedom.

The commandments are given for our liberty. So often we look with that sinful attitude towards the law and we see it as something bad. It restricts, it constrains, it stops us from doing what we want. But actually when we look at the law as God has given it to us as we should, we see it as that which liberates and frees us and brings us into a place of safety and into a place of blessing. See the commandment sets us free from serving and fearing other gods, doesn't it?

As I said to you, the gods of the nations around about, the Israelites when they got there were those sort of gods who offered their children in fire as sacrifices to appease them.

[35 : 12] They were those sort of gods that insisted upon all sorts of terrible things being given. The people were in fear of their gods, in fear that if they didn't please them and do what they wanted, that these gods, the God who controlled the weather and the God who controlled the sun and the God who controlled the river and the God who controlled the harbor, all these different gods demanded various things.

They spent all their lives running around appeasing these gods, hoping to get these gods on their side. If you see, if we kept this commandment, then go hang the rest of them. If we keep this commandment, have no other gods before me, it delivers us from the fear.

It delivers us from the hope. It delivers us from the pressing and oppressive superstition. I'm sure you know people a little bit like that.

You see them footballers, won't you, and they go out to the football pitch. They're not Catholics, but they cross themselves because it's good luck. Footballers who always wear the same pair of socks for a game because if they don't, then the game will go badly.

People who do their sports or people do their hobbies or whatever it may be and they've got a particular ritual, they've got to do it this way and you've got to do it that way and they're trapped in that. But also think about this.

[36 : 29] This first commandment is what sets us free from sin. It sets us free if we kept this one commandment and had no other. It would set us free from all the other commandments.

It would set us free to be able to keep them. Think about it. If money is your God, if money is the thing that you live for, then inevitably in some way or another you will steal or deceive to get what you want.

Isn't that true? Isn't that what we see in the world around about us? If money was your God, if pleasure is your God, pleasing yourself and fulfilling your desires and your lusts, isn't it inevitable in some way or another that adultery will creep in?

And if possessions, what you own, your house, your car, whatever it may be, is your God, won't we covet what our neighbour has? Won't we want that person, that more shiny car or that bigger

house?

Won't we find ourselves always working and seeking and hoping to have something more? Because if we could only have what they've got, we'd be happy. If getting my own way is my God, won't I lie to do that?

[37 : 33] Won't I steal to do that? Of course we will. You see how this commandment sets us free from all of that. When the Lord God is your God alone, then you don't need to worry about finances.

Isn't that what Jesus spoke about when he spoke about, you know, you see the birds, the air, they're fed, the fields are clothed. God provides for these things. Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

Those who have the Lord their God as their God are free from serving career, are free from bowing down to popularity, are free from being lorded over by money.

They're satisfied with God and God alone. That's why God put this commandment first. It's the beginning. It's where we start. We can't begin to even consider the others until we can say as Thomas did before Jesus, my Lord and my God.

And then the others will come together. Let's just spend a moment, dear friends. Let's spend a moment in quietness, responding to God's word. Perhaps it's an opportunity to pray that prayer.

[38 : 47] Lord, give me that faith that I don't have. Perhaps it's an opportunity to hand over to him those things that we're enslaved by. Perhaps it's an opportunity to say, Lord, I'm struggling with this. Please give me that faith.

Let's respond to God's word in quiet prayer for a moment or two and then I'll pray. Oh Lord, our Heavenly Father, before whom all hearts and minds are open.

You hear us, you see us, you understand us. O Lord, O Lord, we ask that you would fulfil this commandment in our lives, that you would be number one, that you would be God and no others before you in my life.

That, Lord, you would then deliver me from those fears, from those bonds, as it were, that pull me this way and that to please others or please myself or to, in some way or other, keep me trapped and I pray, O Lord, that you would increase in me that love for you, that more and more I might love you as my God and more and more might trust you.

who we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond finding out.

[40 : 18] Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counsellor, who has ever given to God that God should repay them for from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen.