

# Now and Not Yet (Nehemiah 13)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Nehemiah 13 On that day, the book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people, and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, because they had not met the Israelites with food and water, but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them.

Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing. When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, and he had provided him with a large room, formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temples and articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil, prescribed for the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, I had returned to the king. Some time later, I asked his permission and came back to Jerusalem.

Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room.

[ 1 : 30 ] I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense. I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields.

So I rebuked the officials and asked them, Why is the house of God neglected? Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms.

I put Shalamiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Padaiah in charge of the storerooms, and made Hanan son of Zakur, the son of Mataniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy.

They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites. Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs, and all other kinds of loads.

[ 2 : 46 ] And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah.

I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, What is this wicked thing that you are doing, desecrating the Sabbath day? Didn't your ancestors do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity on us and on the city?

Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath. When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over.

I stationed some of my own men at the gates, so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. Once or twice the merchants and all sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem.

But I warned them and said, Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you. From that time on, they no longer came on the Sabbath.

[ 3 : 57 ] Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gate in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember me for this also, my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

Moreover, in those days, I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples and did not know how to speak the language of Judah.

I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said, You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves.

Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon, king of Israel, sinned? Among the many nations, there was no king like him. He was loved by his God and God made him king over all Israel.

But even he was led into sin by a foreign woman. Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?

[ 5 : 06 ] One of the sons of Joyadah, son of Eliashib, the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat, the horonite, and I drove him away from me. Remember them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign and assigned them duties, each to his own task. I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times and for the firstfruits. Remember me with favor, my God. Thank you, Eden. Good afternoon, everyone.

Don't worry, your hair is safe with me this afternoon. Good afternoon. What a tough passage, hey? Let's ask the Lord for help as we finish this series together. Lord, we confess that we come with anxious hearts about many things.

And perhaps this chapter confronts us. So open our eyes to see wondrous things even in this part of your living word. We pray all these things, knowing that now we are saved, but we are not yet there in the eternal city.

[ 6 : 20 ] We pray all these things, looking forward to our Savior, Christ the King. In his name we pray. Amen. They called it Forest City.

It was a dream housing project that they announced about 10 years ago, big enough for 1 million people, on the edge of Johor in Malaysia, just a stone's throw from the border of Singapore and Malaysia.

And the idea was that you would buy an investment property that was funded by wealthy Chinese investors, and it would just be a wonderful place, and it would be paradise.

But then those who signed up 10 years ago to promises of big investment returns and a vibrant, futuristic city have instead found empty streets, empty apartments, the beach is deserted, and, I mean, you wouldn't swim anyways because there's a sign that says warning crocodiles.

So the ambition was Forest City, but the reality today is that it's a bit of a ghost town. Whether it's a dream job that turned sour, whether an award-winning restaurant you visited just turned out a bit meh, whether it was that hyped-up film sequel that should not have ever been made, we've all experienced that letdown moment.

[ 7 : 40 ] And I think in the same way reading Nehemiah 13, after the high of Nehemiah 11 and 12, it can feel like a little bit of a reality check. How does the book end?

No king for Israel, an enemy in God's temple, vows forsaken in many different ways. What happened to these people here in Nehemiah 13?

In fact, I mean, there's no even mention of Ezra, their teacher. At least we know where Nehemiah is, right? We heard it in verse 6. Verse 6 tells us, I mean, wouldn't it be good for us as a church to just have a book called Nehemiah that ended in chapter 12, right?

Imagine how nice that would have been. A people united in service. They've completed their big projects. They've rejoiced in worship. And that's it, right? Roll the credits. But God has given us Nehemiah 13 as well, because He preserves for us the sober reality that until the true Messiah comes, things are not yet the way it should be.

I'll say that again. Until the true Messiah comes, God's preserved, redeemed people, among them, things are not yet the way they should be.

[ 9 : 18 ] And I think you and I might be able to relate to this. Until the true Messiah comes, you and I are not yet the way we should and could be as well. Let's look at the chapter first, and then we'll try

and bring it to us today.

So Nehemiah 13 draws our attention to all kinds of problems. I'm going to summarize them briefly in four different ways, okay? So it's a long chapter, but four things I think are going on here.

Firstly, in the first three verses, we see that some people were getting too exclusive. Now here, sounds nice at first. They're reading the book of Moses. They're continuing to do that Bible reading that they were encouraged to do from chapter 8.

But again, remember, no Ezra, right? So I'm not sure where they're getting their interpretation from. Because what happens when they get to reading about what happened with the Ammonites, what happened with the Israelites, when they met, where, you know, Balaam threatened them.

And then they get to Deuteronomy 23, where Moses reflects on this and then says, because of this, Moses teaches that generation about to enter the Promised Land, don't admit Ammonites and Moabites into God's assembly.

[10:29] So that's a teaching for those people back in those days. But here are Nehemiah's people, and they go, hmm, that sounds like a good idea. Why don't we just do that here?

Now, let's just take what was happening back then and just do it right here. You see what happened? When people heard this law, straight away, they just dragged that application to them today, and they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

What's happening here is kind of like saying, oh, you know those Japanese soldiers, I read them in a history book one time. They were once very cruel to Christians during the Second World War. All right, here's what we'll do.

Let's ban Japanese people from PCBC. Yeah, why not, right? You've missed something, haven't you? You've missed something along the way. When you read the Bible this way, you really have. And look, even if this finished war made Jerusalem a holy, sacred space, we'll talk about that later, to just ban everyone of a certain people group far exceeded God's law.

[11:31] Far exceeded God's law and how much he cares about blessing the nations in any case. And when we think about the Ammonites and the Moabites, actually, we want to remember Ruth's story, right?

We went through the book of Ruth last year. Anyone remember that? Yeah? Okay, four chapters. Wonderful story. She was a Moabite woman. And yet she had a clear and present faith in Yahweh, right?

She trusted the God of Israel. And she was welcomed into the social life of God's people. Even given access, I think, to God's assembly. Even marrying into the family line that one day King David, the Lord Jesus, will come from.

Imagine if they said, no, we'll exclude you. Right? We miss our Messiah completely. All right? Any blanket rule like that, to exclude a certain ethnic group based on one misunderstood story in the Bible, that's going to invite disaster, isn't it?

That's going to invite disaster. And actually, even in Ezra chapter 6, we were reminded, any non-Israelites who were committed to God's word, they could find they were meant to be invited into God's community for worship.

[12:45] So, firstly, some people were too exclusive. But then, actually, the flip side was also happening. Some leaders were too inclusive. What's happening here in verse 4?

Look at Nehemiah verse 4 of chapter 13. Right? Here we see a story of Elisha. Right? Elisha is actually a high priest. He's named that in the end of the chapter, in verse 28.

So, he's kind of like the senior pastor of this group. Imagine that. And he allows a guy called Tobiah to set up office inside God's temple.

If you have forgotten who Tobiah was, back in chapter 5, we are told that Tobiah and a bunch of others, they were just opposing God's people as they were trying to rebuild the wall, as they were trying to get things sorted.

They were not committed. Tobiah and his friends were not committed to reforming, okay, God's city. All these reforms Ezra and Nehemiah were bringing to the people of God, Tobiah is not interested at all.

[13:46] But it seems like by the end of the story here, he's still on good terms. He's still friends with some of the people in high places. In fact, he's friends to the point that he's scored himself free room and board inside the sacred space that should only be for God's servants, the Levites.

You know? Hey, why is an atheist leading worship at church? That's the kind of thing that's going on here. Why is a Mormon teaching us about evangelism or leading our groups? These would be very obvious to buy in the temple moments, right? If it ever happened at PCBC. But what about the more subtle slips? Hey, why are we singing that kind of worship song that has no mention of what Jesus has done?

Why are we talking in our precious moments together about just, I don't know, boys and boss battles rather than dwelling on God's acts and his mercy in Christ?

Imagine using our time that way. What are the Tobiah and the temple moments that you can think of for us? It's interesting, isn't it, that after all these years, by the end of the story that God has given us, Tobiah is still around, still denying the word of the Lord and its power, still causing havoc amongst God's people and God's house.

[15:11] And yet it was the leaders, the top brass who were too permissive. They should have known better than to give him the kind of access and influence, and yet he's there.

But why did he even have room in the temple? Why was there even extra space, like a storeroom for him to kind of set up shop in? Where were the Levites? Well, here's a third problem that we face. The verse 10 onwards gives us the sobering news. In fact, the people had abandoned their earlier vows. The people had abandoned their earlier vows.

You remember all those big promises they made in chapter 10? What's happened now? I'm going to give you a picture. Imagine your boss at work agrees to pay you a salary.

Yep, they should, because you are, you know, slaving for them 40 plus hours a week. But then month after month, you know, you check your bank account and the paycheck never arrives. And you're like, hang on, what's going on here, mister?

[16:10] How would that feel? Would that not eventually force you to kind of start going on seek.co.nz or start to raise something with HR? It has the picture here with God's temple servants.

Remember in chapter 10, they promised, we're going to look after these temple servants who are busily keeping worship going. We will look after them. In fact, we'll organize a system where we'll collect all the resources and we'll kind of bring it together.

All the priests have to do is just to pick it up, click and collect, as it were. But then what happens? It says here, the rooms, they were empty.

They were used, they formerly used to store all the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, but there's space for Tobiah now. What the people had promised to do to fill up God's house with the resources for God's worship had not come true, just lay empty.

And Nehemiah confronts the Israelites about this fact, right? Verse 11, he says, Why is the house of God neglected? The original language here is even stronger.

[17:19] He's essentially saying, Why has God's house been forsaken? All that talk of firstfruits and offerings when the first people made their vows, it's all gone, all forgotten.

There's a prophet called Malachi. He has a book of his own in the Bible. He might have been addressing this very same situation when he cries out, Bring the whole tithe into this doorhouse, that there may be food in my house.

Malachi 3, verse 10. The people abandoned their earlier vows. And then fourthly, I think one thing that we... Sorry, another vow that they neglected, not just about restoring resources to God's temple, another vow they neglected was resting on the Sabbath, right?

Did you notice in verse 15 onwards, In those days I saw men in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading on donkeys together with wine, grapes, figs, and all other kinds of loads.

That's hard work to do on a day of rest. All right? The two do not compute if you're trying to rest.

This is like them just meant to be having a day off and just scrolling, checking their phones all the time, answering emails, doing work.

[18:36] And you do this when you become functionally atheist in practice, don't you? When every day of the week is just for work. This is what God's people have become.

Withholding food from the temple, trying to make extra cash on the weekends. Does that sound familiar? Here's a people who have become just rats running in the rat race, working seven days a week while neglecting their promises and their responsibilities that they'd promised themselves to. And notice in verse 15, it was particularly the men of Judah treading wine presses, bringing grain in, dishonoring the Lord's commands. How could they possibly bless the nations if all the nations can

see is that they worship the same almighty dollar as they do?

Vows of the Lord forsaken. But it wasn't just the common people though. I think we need to notice that again, it's not just the regular people, but the leaders were at fault too. The leaders were also to blame.

Verse 17, who does Nehemiah actually rebuke? He rebukes the nobles of Judah and said to them, you know, what's this wicked thing you're doing desecrating the Sabbath? The last time we heard about the nobles of Judah was in chapter 12 when they were actually leading the worship.

[ 19 : 57 ] Here are the worship leaders in a sense, leading them in worship of the God of money. And verse 23 then, and onwards, tells us of another issue.

And again, it's the men of Judah who are leading the way. They're meant to lead their families, I'm sure, as examples of holiness to the communities. And Nehemiah calls them out because they have gone and married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

Now these are all, obviously, wives outside of God's covenant people. And yes, Nehemiah goes into angry mode here. He shouts curses, he beats men, he pulls their hair or beards, and we'll talk about this in a moment, about his response.

But just notice what he points out, all right, verse 28. One of the sons of Joiada, son of Eliashiv, the high priest, was son-in-law to Sambalat, the Horonite. Think how hard it is to oppose Sambalat, who was, again, like Tobiah, another enemy of God, when you have to sit with him at family meals because you've kind of married into the same family.

All right? That compromise runs deep. It's awkward now. And again, as we talked about last time in chapter 10, the issue here is not, you know, inter-ethnic marriages, all right?

[ 21 : 14 ] Cross-cultural marriages. That's not the issue. The danger, as Nehemiah talks about in King Solomon's case, is that you've not just crossed cultures, you've crossed faiths, religions, right?

God's covenant, people will have married outside of God's religion, God's faith. That's the issue here. All right? That's the deeper issue.

And so likewise, I think it would be wrong to conclude, conclude from the story, oh, wow, you know, that's a shame they didn't know how to speak the language of Judah, right? Maybe that, you know, some people might argue that, does that mean we've got to keep a certain language going in this church?

No. The underlying concern is whether God's rescued people were fluent in their own holy books, in their own salvation story. For them, they needed Hebrew to access God's story of salvation.

Praise the Lord, it's been translated since. And this point in time, did they know their story of salvation is the question. Did they understand how to live as His people? Did they understand the warnings of the Lord when they fall away, when they hold on to things they shouldn't?

[ 22 : 25 ] Inside this living word is the spiritual story and language that all of God's people ought to be fluent in. And if this is true for them, it's true for us as well.

And so I think it is right to ask, how fluent are you in the language of salvation and salvation speak? How well do you know the good news from Genesis to Revelation? Or is it all just foreign to you?

I mean, after being in this English service for however long you've been here, five years or less, how natively, how quickly does the gospel flow from your speech and from your lives? How quickly can you spot when people talk about things or do things that are opposite to the gospel?

How much do you realize that we've been rescued now but not fully restored and there's far more to come in Christ? Look, every language is the same, right? Whether you know English or Cantonese or something else, you use it or you lose it.

And if you're not using the language of Jesus Christ in your life regularly, if you're not using the language of gospel, don't be surprised if you find yourself tolerating sin, turning a blind eye to error.

[ 23 : 47 ] Don't be surprised if you are not fluent in the gospel that you might just let false messages about God creep into your heart. Don't be surprised if you even forsake God's kingdom in pursuit of your own one day.

Hear the danger of making vows on your own strength has become clear in this chapter. And in this chapter also, the danger of forgetting how to speak God's salvation story has become clear as well, hasn't it?

So how does Nehemiah respond to all this? Firstly, we see right through chapter 13 a very limited response from Nehemiah. My title, there's a little title, it's not in the original Bible, but kind of a little heading in my Bible says Nehemiah's Final Reforms.

I think, I wonder if it would be better to call it Nehemiah's Futile Reforms. Because listen to him personally speak, right? This is all in first person. He says things like this, verse 8, I threw out Tobiah's household goods out of the room.

Verse 9, I gave orders to purify the rooms. Verse 11, I rebuked the officials. Verse 13, I put Shalameiah and so on in charge of distributing supplies. It's all Nehemiah going, I did this, I ordered, I stationed, I commanded, I beat them, I pulled out their hair and so on.

[ 25 : 06 ] But you just get the sense as it all builds up to the end of the story that what's the point? It's a bit futile, isn't it? It just seems like Nehemiah himself as he acts, he's a bit of a lone ranger, struggling to change a whole nation, not interested in being righteous.

And I don't know if you can see it through the chapter but the more faults he finds, the more he tries to actually centralize and then solve things himself.

Right? The whole workaholic culture thing, he actually ends up ordering the people to shut the city gates, right? For the Sabbath. And he sends his own men, right? I'm going to put my priest in now to the gates to prevent any kind of violation of it.

This is a lockdown approach, isn't it? It might change behaviour but would it change hearts? I don't know. And similarly, as we've talked about, he shows some scary use of force, beating up men, pulling their hair, forcing people to take oaths.

Was this holy zeal or would this go to HR's serious misconduct? Right? Let us imagine what it would look like if we as leaders took Nehemiah's approach of problems in our church.

[ 26 : 23 ] T■n■ koutou katoa. There's a spiritual virus going around. So from now on, on Sundays, we're going to just lock down this church. You can only listen to this live stream on Sundays, nothing else.

We're going to appoint these leaders to call you up and check that you've done so. Your cars, in fact, they will automatically drive you to church and then back home again. That's all you'll do on a Sunday. And then you'll talk only to the people assigned to you.

Here is a list of approved worship songs. You'll only sing these or I'm going to pull your hair out. Sounds awful, doesn't it? That's not worshipping the Lord from the heart at all.

Just as we ought to be uneasy when Jonah, for example, prays, salvation comes to the Lord and then he kind of throws fire and anger at the Ninevites. I think we need to be very uneasy when Nehemiah does this stuff and then says, remember me, oh Lord, and prays, remember me.

Remember all I've done for you. Again, this is a human response to a supernatural problem, sin from the hearts of God's people. And what's described here in terms of what Nehemiah does is not prescribed for us today.

[ 27 : 36 ] I think what we should get out of all of this as people today is a real sense of sadness, right? We should feel sad that all Nehemiah can do, humanly speaking, is to just hurry back and forth, fight fires.

Try to manufacture a holy people on the outside when the people themselves didn't really want to change. As one of the prophets, Zechariah himself, declares from the Lord elsewhere, real change comes not by might, not by power, but by his spirit.

I think as we think about how to respond to disappointments like this, sin in our midst, if you and I are honest, we cannot go this way, and yet we do.

If you and I are honest, we know that this doesn't seem right for Nehemiah, and yet this is far too often how we try and change things, right? I feel the same.

I feel the same. I'm guilty all the time of, ah, if I just put this in place, then my kids will do this and this. If I just, if I just institute these rules, maybe this will change the culture of our church.

[ 28 : 47 ] What about you? And our churches and our cell groups and our serving teams, even at school? We see how the world tries to do it, right? Oh, people are, students are getting too distracted at school, so let's just ban phones, right?

Oh, people aren't showing up, let's just enforce attendance. I get it. Sometimes we want a human response.

We think it will change behavior and that's it. And I get it, some of us may feel disappointed in our own lack of holiness, maybe just a vow, right? Just trying harder would do it.

Maybe some of you, you're frustrated at the lack of change in people you love. Let me just put this thing into place. Would that do a difference? But I think the most important thing we can take away from this last chapter, this reality check, is to let it drive us back to the Lord Himself.

Only the Lord can change people from the inside out. It has to be God's mighty acts, right? It has to be His Holy Spirit that sparks a revival, changes lives.

[ 30 : 00 ] And so, we leave this book longing for God to be the one who acts. Wanting God to be as our ultimate hope for change.

Yes, God's people, where they are now is great. They've been saved, they've been restored back from exile. They have been saved now, but they are not yet transformed fully.

And do you remember how Ezra and Nehemiah, these books, started? Ezra 1.1 says, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord, right, God opened up the way for them to get home.

And by the time we reach Nehemiah's closing prayers, we hear him say this line, remember me, remember me four times, right? Including this prayer in verse 22, I think it's beautiful, despite all that's gone on.

Remember me for this also, oh my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love. At the end of Nehemiah's story, he must still run to God for his grace, his mercy.

[ 31 : 03 ] And so do we. He must still appeal to God's mercy and favor. And so do we. If we want to see lasting change, deep change, then we preach this gospel, as it were, of grace and mercy.

We need to live by God's grace and mercy, remember it, and share it. Because the good news, church, is that the word of the Lord was not just fulfilled in Nehemiah's day, was it?

Because 400 years later from these events, the word of the Lord is fulfilled in the flesh. God himself descends to earth as the true and better priest, better than Ezra, the true and better governor, better than Nehemiah, the true and better Israel, better than God's people back then.

God gives us Jesus, his promised king, in whom even the prophet Isaiah prophesied one day, even the government will one day be on his shoulders. Every dissatisfaction we feel about Nehemiah's story should drive us to find our satisfaction in Christ, our true and better king.

So, my encouragement to you in the disappointment of this story is to remember, to pray, to persevere in and through God's promised king, our Lord Jesus. Jesus. This is how it works.

[ 32 : 31 ] Once you and I are so satisfied in Christ, only then will you be so content in him that you don't need to make vows and commitments.

You just won't want the lesser joy of dating a non-Christian. You won't want the lesser joy of working 24-7 because Jesus is better. When Jesus is better, you won't need to dabble with sin that is less satisfying than the Lord himself.

All that will seem hollow. Just like a better diet eventually changes your palate, your appetite, your taste buds, when we turn to our better Savior Christ again and again, he will eventually change our desires, what our hearts long for, as it were.

This dynamic is so crucial. It is, as one author put it, the expelling power of a new affection. Right? The expulsive power of new affection.

When Nehemiah came and went, he fixed people and problems, thug style. He uses curses and threats, he uses power and authority, and once he's gone, things just stay messy, don't they?

[ 33 : 43 ] But when Christ comes, he transforms you and I from the inside out. He can teach his followers about a deeper righteousness, not one that just comes from making commitments to the law and obeying it half-heartedly.

It comes from the law being written on people's hearts. That's what we need. A new covenant, a new promise, and he establishes this, how he gives his body.

It's torn for us. His blood is shed for us. He becomes our righteousness, far more than us being able to do on our own. His death on the cross, it opens a way for you and I to become righteous from hearts set on fire by the Holy Spirit.

No longer just being pressured by rules and commands from other people. His gospel changes from the inside out, changes individuals, and changes families and nations, not just for a day or two, but for eternity.

That is what happens when people truly discover the joy of the Lord. God. And so at the end of this book of the Bible, this series, we must turn once again not to our own efforts for change, but to rely on the favor and grace of our God.

[ 35 : 03 ] Let us learn to remember, pray, and persevere, trusting in God's promised King. Let us learn to be dissatisfied with Israel, but then long for and be satisfied in the Lord Jesus.

Only He has promised, He will finish the good work He started in us. So let us pray that we turn our eyes to Him. Lord, we confess that in this story we feel unsatisfied.

And so may that drive us to turn our eyes upon Jesus and to look in His wonderful face. And Lord, as the things of this world, as they become more and more real to us for what they truly are, false gods, fading pleasures, may that happen because we are so fixed on our Savior Jesus, our source of true delight, that no one else, nothing else, satisfies in comparison to Him.

Holy Spirit, we ask that you would be working this desire in us, that the fruits of the Spirit would come more and more clear to us, Father. And Lord, we ask all this in the precious name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.