

James chapter 3, we are in verses 1 through 12. It is all one section. We have spent the last couple of weeks going through verses 1 and 2. This is an important section. We will begin our reading, chapter 3 verse 1.

Do not become many teachers, my brothers, knowing that we (including James) will receive greater judgment. For we all stumble, often. If anyone is not stumbling in speech, this one is a mature man, able to bridle also the whole body. Behold we put bits into the mouths of horses for them to obey us, and we turn around their whole body. Behold also the ships: being so great and being driven by such fierce (or strong) winds, is being led around by a small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman should decide. In the same way also is the tongue. It is a small member and it boasts great things. Behold how little a fire is kindling so large a forest! And the tongue is a fire, the world of unrighteousness. In this way the tongue is set in our members defiling the whole body, and setting on fire the course of nature; and being set on fire by hell. For every species both of beasts and of birds, both of reptiles and of sea creatures is being tamed and has been tamed by the human species. But the tongue no one of men is able to tame. (Notice, 'no one of men,' it is impossible for a human being to tame the tongue.) It is an unrestrainable evil, full of poison bringing death. In it we bless God and the Father, and in it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. This is not proper my brethren for these things to happen this way. Now the fountain out of the same opening does not pour out both sweet and bitter water does it? (Expecting the answer no.) My brothers, a fig tree is not able to produce olives, nor a grapevine to produce figs, do they? (Expecting the answer no.) In this same way, not any fountain produces both sweet and bitter water.

In chapter 1 James presented for us The Development of Faith. That for every believer there are designed circumstances to teach us two things: (1) to trust the Lord and (2) in trusting the Lord to experience Him. You see, He is the one who is pursuing a relationship with us. The Bible says in the natural, without His Spirit, we are not even interested. Don't care. Romans chapter 3 says the natural man cannot seek after and does not search after the things of God, neither can he understand them. And how we get on people to say, "You know, what you should be doing is..." Yes, but they can't in the natural. In the human we can't do that. We can go to church; but can we go and seek the Lord and receive from Him? We can't do that without His Spirit drawing us. Total dependence upon His Spirit opening up our minds and our hearts to be receptive to His word. That is not natural. That is not natural in the human. But God designs circumstances to pursue a relationship with us.

Now we are busy. We might get up in the morning and spend 20 minutes reading our Bibles and having devotions, then off we go. And the Lord basically is saying, "Well, it's just nice to spend 20 minutes with you, you know, but you're off doing your thing and I would like to have a relationship with you all day long." So He has to intervene in our circumstances to get our attention because He is pursuing the relationship with us. He has always pursued us. We have never pursued Him.

When He came to die for our sins the world just said, "Whatever. Do whatever You want to do I don't want anything to do with it. I am not going to believe and receive what Jesus did for me on the cross." I mean He did it all! So that everything that He gives to us beginning at salvation on is a gift. So, even when it comes to salvation, He pursued us. He died for us 2000 years ago before we were even born. The moment we were born His spirit has been pursuing us, ministering to us, testifying to us about Christ and our need for Christ. So, He is totally pursuing us, we are not pursuing Him. And so He gives us circumstances that He has designed for us to seek Him.

Usually it goes like this: I am on way throughout my day in my natural functions of the day, something happens and I stop and I say, "Lord, what did you do that for? Why did you allow that to happen?" or, "What are You doing?" His response? "There you are." You know? We stop to seek Him and acknowledge Him and even communicate with Him if something goes wrong, but then during the day if we just go on our natural way, as things happen, and we don't seek Him naturally. The Development of Faith. I can't go to church and go to Bible study and have my devotions and try in my own effort to develop my relationship with the Lord, it won't work. We all already know that. "I am going to read 10 chapters a day." As soon as we miss once we say, "Well, I blew it, so forget that." Realizing that He is pursuing a relationship with us and it is through the difficult and hard times we learn to trust Him and we experience Him in those circumstances.

In chapter 2 we saw The Activity of Faith. James says if you do not have a faith that is active, faith being the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, if you say you have faith, like James says in verse 14, if you say you have faith but there is no activity, God's spirit is not in your life. He says the question is, "Can faith save him?" And he even puts the answer in his question, "No it can't." You don't have a saving faith. You have a religious faith. You have a human faith.

We also saw in chapter 2 verse 19 that there is also a demonic faith. Do you know that Satan has faith? James 2:19 he is talking to the Jews - and remember that James is writing to the Diaspora, the Jews who have been scattered - and he says to the Jews, he quotes to them the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4 that the Jews pray every morning and every evening, "**The Lord our God is one.**" And to a Jew, if he can die with the word *one* on his lips that is the most closet to God that he can be at the point of death. The One God. If he can say, "One," before he dies. And it is quoted in their morning prayers and evening prayers. So James says, **You believe that God is one. You do well. But even the demons are believing and trembling.** Satan believes the truth about Jesus Christ. He knows more accurately than we do about what God's word is saying. That is why he can twist it. He believes and he trembles, James says, which is a little more maybe than what we do. In the presence of God Satan shakes. He knows.

So James says if you have mental faith to believe mental truths that your mind handles you are doing pretty good, but you are not saved. And if you believe the truth that your mind understands, you are still not saved. You must surrender. Remember with the mind we understand things. That is all it is. With the mind we understand things. With the mouth we confess things. But it is only with the heart that we make a decision to surrender to Christ. If I

have two things going for me and I am dependent upon these two things: I understand and I agree with and I believe the truth about what the Bible says, and I am saying it with my lips that I agree with and I understand and I believe what the Bible says about Jesus Christ, I got two things going. But James says if your heart, you don't have Christ in your heart, that is not active faith. That is human faith. That is religious faith. That is, even, satanic faith.

But if the Lord is active in your life, that is active faith. So we have The Development of Faith, we have The Activity of Faith, and chapter 3 is The Maturity of Faith. After receiving Christ where are we headed? What now?

James brings up this topic. Verses 1 through 12, is The Use of the Tongue, and then the remainder of the chapter, The Use of the Mind. Basically in summary statement, once Christ comes into our spirit He is seeking control. Even after we are saved we are still out of control. And He is working from the inside out. Not working through ceremony or religiousness, He is not even working through the Bible from the outside. God's Spirit is taking the truth of the word, but He is working from the inside. That is why the 10 chapters a day doesn't work if you are doing it, because you are trying to get this from the outside and get it in, hoping that it rubs off for something. Get ahead in life. Whatever. Hoping that these measures - whatever we do from the outside in - are going to help and it doesn't help. That is because God takes His truth that we read on the outside but He takes it on the inside and He makes changes. And He ministers from the inside.

But James says the one element in a person's life that the Lord is really looking to control is the tongue. It is the most dangerous element in our human body. The Command of the Tongue, verses 1 and 2. James says, **Do not become many teachers.** Notice the literal translation because the English translation says, "do not *be* many teachers." *Do not become.* That means they are not yet but they aspire for, or they have ambition to become teachers. "I want to teach." Wow! Do you know what that encompasses? You realize how much responsibility that is? James is saying the one great thing that your tongue can be used for is to minister God's truth and God's grace to other people, but if it is not the Lord, and if it is not the truth just the opposite happens. Your teaching, your tongue, leads people in the wrong direction. There is a lot of that going on.

He tells why, here is the consequences, **Knowing that we will receive greater judgment.** James includes himself. I like it when... One Bible teacher, he is known internationally, but when he teaches - and he will go through the whole Bible with you - as he teaches he says, "Well, because of this scripture, I want to let you know I am not a teacher. I am just sharing information with you that I studied and then you take it and you... I am not responsible for what you do with it." That is kind of a cop out. If you are teaching, you are teaching. That is what teaching is. When you are teaching, you are actually sharing and giving the information. That is all it is. It is God's Spirit that ministers to people's hearts. **Do not become many teachers knowing that we will receive greater judgment.**

We studied how that judgment upon believers is the loss of reward in heaven. We know from 1 Corinthians chapter 3 that we as believers, we're going to pass through the fire. Not the

fire of hell, but it is like this - again, you know I am a conceptual person - and it is like the car wash. You see your car going down, they hook it on, and it goes right down there, and the water comes down, and washes your car. Well, picture instead of water, picture fire. And once you die, Peter is there, he vacuums you know and then puts you on the conveyor belt, and off you go, and you pass through the fire. Whatever is left, after you pass through the fire, that is who you will be throughout eternity. And the people that say, "I was teaching and ministering the gospel for 40 and 50 years." Yeah, but if it wasn't the truth, it is all going to burn. Nothing there. It wasn't the Spirit of God and it wasn't the truth of God, it is going to burn. For a non believer, for a false teacher, Revelation 19 and 20 tells us that their doom for false teaching and false representation is the lake of fire. Not the car wash, the big lake, a difference.

Then in verse 2 it tells us why we should not become many teachers. The reason why? **For we all stumble, often.** The word we translated stumble, **πταίω**, actually means *to trip*. We all trip up all the time in our walk with the Lord and we do it often. So you got to be careful because if you are a teacher and you - like everyone else - you trip up, you stumble. And so you have got to be careful. Stumbling must be at a minimum. I think that this is the big area that we need to look at in the body of Christ. You can't just throw somebody up there because they have a calling, or because they have some kind of an awareness of some kind of a truth, and then after church is over they go down to the casino and gamble and drink and go home. What is wrong with this picture? It is an awesome responsibility. If every pastor, and if every Bible teacher understood the ramifications, the seriousness of what this text is saying, they would be scared to death to stand up in that pulpit.

For we all stumble, often. Then he says, **If anyone is not stumbling in speech, this one is a mature man.** Not humanly mature. The word designates a maturity spiritually, a completeness of person. As we read earlier, further down, it is impossible for man to tame the tongue. It has got to be God's Spirit. This is what He is after. **This man is a mature man able to bridle also the whole body.**

In chapter 1 verse 19 James says, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger." Be quick to hear. Slow to speak and slow to anger. Hearing and listening is the best thing to do. At the end of chapter 1 he says, "If any of you presume to be religious, while not bridling the tongue, your religion is vain." Just being religious you can still be out of control, so your religion means nothing. It is the tongue. God is after the tongue.

And as I shared with you last week this mature man who is able to bridle the whole body. There is a principle concept right in this text that is very, very important. Once a person reaches the area of maturity with their speech, and with their tongue, that is a designation that they also have the rest of their body under control. If a person does not have their tongue under control, it is evidence that the other areas of their life are not under control. What a person says, as I said last week, the tongue is the Table of Contents for a person's life. You know who they are and what they are based on what they say and how they say it. We sing praises to the Lord and we bless the Lord and we are kind to our Christian brothers and sisters at church, but when we get home we are abusive with one another. We are abusive at work. We are abusive at school. It all

comes from this little tongue. Very, very dangerous. But remember the tongue, the speech of man is the indicator of whether a person is under control with the rest of their life.

I shared with you also last week, my mentor, he would tell me that he would not perform weddings for Christians if the man smoked. I figured, "Well, everybody has got their thing. He doesn't perform weddings if the man smokes." Well, I have to ask, "Why?" and he said that if the man, who is the head of the household, if he smokes it shows that he has an addictive character. It won't just be smoking. Satan has already got an inroad there and as he tries to lead his family into the spiritual things of the Lord there will be other things that he will get addicted to because he has an addictive character. He says, "It is not judgment against them but I can't perform a wedding with already knowing the man has got his neck on the block." Knowing about his character just because of practices people have. The Bible says because of the tongue we know who people are, we know what they are like.

Verses 3 to 5, The Comparisons of the Tongue. We have had The Command of the Tongue, verses 1 and 2. Verses 3 and 5, The Comparisons of the Tongue. First of all in verse 3 he says, **Behold**, which literally means *pay attention, observe*. **We put**, literally *we thrust, into the mouths of horses*, we put bits into their mouths, **for them to obey us, and we lead around their whole body**.

Now that might be true as far as principle goes. When I first rode a horse, went to Griffith Park down in Los Angeles to ride a horse, I had never ridden one before. So the man asks you, "Have you ever ridden before?" If you have, he gives you a horse that fits your experience. Of course, when he came to me, and I was with a girl, so this is kind of like a date. So, when he comes to me, he says, "Have you ever ridden before?" I said, "No." So, they bring out this horse and I take it that the horse, that it doesn't make any difference who is on this horse, it doesn't make any difference what you do, the horse does the same thing all the way around. You might think that you are Roy Rogers, but he is just going along and he doesn't change, right? So, I get on my horse, she gets on her horse, and we go out to the trail. And they got this big trail that goes under the freeway and all the way back over and then back into the stables. So, nobody knows why, but soon as my horse got on to the track, and the girl is riding right next to me, he takes off! I mean full gallop! I am holding on for dear life and I am thinking to myself, "Somebody is pulling a trick." But this horse caught up with another group, they were walking their horses, I mean I don't know how many, 10 to 15 people, but it must be some kind of girl's club because they were mostly girls. And the horse just, whoosh, right up into the middle and he stops! And then he starts walking with their horses and I am right in the middle of all these girls and I am going, "Hi," trying to get him, but he won't, he follows along, and I look back, and the girl I was with she is back there looking, you know, she's just... So, uh, we went all the way around in this group and they got off and I got off and I said, "Nice to be with you. Good ride," and I got off. But I couldn't do anything with that horse, so I don't know, James must have his own horses or something.

Basically, in principle, what we do is we put a bridle, we put a bit in a horse's mouth, in order to guide him around. This is a massive animal, crush you at any minute if he decides, "I am tired of people riding me." The huge muscles, just a massive animal. Yet, this massive

animal we can lead him around by putting a bit in his mouth, a little small piece of metal in his mouth that we can lead him around.

Interesting the psalmist in Psalm 39:1 says, **I said I will guard my ways that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep a bridle for my mouth while the wicked is before me.** Psalm 39:1. Even the psalmist knew that there needed to be a bridle in his mouth. He needed to be under control. He needed to guard his ways. He needed to be sensitive to whether he is going to sin with his mouth when he stands even before the wicked. Again the comparison of the bridle and the bit to the tongue.

Secondly verse 4, **Behold also the ships: being so large and being driven about by such fierce winds, even these large ships are being turned around by such a small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman should decide to go.** The emphasis here is on these fierce winds that drive a ship. These fierce winds that will carry a ship in a big storm and the helmsman, the steersman, he is trying to keep the ship under control but these fierce winds are driving the ship. Well the rudder doesn't drive the ship, the rudder controls the ship. There is a difference. These fierce winds drive but the rudder controls. There is an old saying, "Loose lips sink big ships."

Again, the writer of Proverbs, Proverbs 6:16-19, he says, **These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are quick in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and the one who sows dissension amongst the brethren.** He hates a lying tongue. When He saved us He began the process of gaining control over what we represent in life. Not by our own human effort but by our attitudes and our philosophy in life as we approach life and the tongue. The tongue can be a health to people, a help to people, or it can destroy them.

Verse 5 says, **In this way also the tongue is a small member and boasts great things.** Reminds me of Cassius Clay who later became Muhammad Ali. "I am the greatest!" He says that he is even more popular than Jesus Christ himself. People know Muhammad Ali more than they know the name Jesus Christ. With his tongue. His tongue was expressing his attitude that he is the greatest. Interesting now that as he suffers, can hardly speak, hardly move, hardly walk, of course, people don't put him out there and say, "Well here is the greatest," anymore.

I remember a news correspondent wanted to interview him in his last years and so Muhammad Ali was sitting at the table like this, shaking. He has Parkinson's disease. He can hardly talk and so the wife was sitting at the table on this side and the reporter was sitting over here. And so the reporter was looking at him saying, "Excuse me, Mr. Ali, will you answer some questions?" And the wife said, "Yeah, go ahead, he will nod his head or he will make some kind of a signal to you as to what his answer is." So, Muhammad Ali is just sitting there like this, with his eyes closed and his head down and is shaking and the newspaper guy, the correspondent is getting real close, "Now I want you to understand me." And the wife said, "You back off a little bit because he has these twitches and these reactions, you don't want to get too close." So he says, "Okay, Mr. Ali." And then all of a sudden Muhammad Ali went like this. It was a joke.

It was a set up. So they were kidding about how many, many people think that the greatest is now not the greatest and he might have been the greatest in the boxing world for a certain time but he is not the greatest anymore.

No matter how good you do, or how successful you do, there is a prime in life where if you live long enough you are on the back side of life. All you have is the memories as to who you are, or who you were.

"Well I can remember the time in Vietnam killing people my bare hands."

"Oh! You must have been a hero."

"I was a hero."

"That was fifty years ago. What are you today?"

Whatever certificate you have on your wall, or whatever trophies you have on the top shelf, or whatever buttons and badges and awards you get, that's it. But it is not who you are now, it is what you were.

The tongue boasts great things but it is just small member. And, you know, the tongue can paint a bigger picture than what the tongue is. The tongue is just a little member and it can paint a picture for you that is just out of this world.

Behold how little a fire is kindling a large forest!

I trust that we have all gone camping at least once. At least tried it. We went several years ago up to Sequoia. They talked me into taking tents and sleeping in tents in the outdoors. All the campsites were full so we had to sleep in a little open area down by the river that flowed through there. No water, or hardly any water. We were also warned, "Watch out for bears. If you are going to be down, that is where the bears go, down on the creek." Guess who didn't sleep? Yeah. Don't tell me there are bears around. "And you expect me to sleep?! Yeah! What are they going to do? Rub my feet for me or something? I don't think so!"

But no matter whether you are staying in a motor home, or sleeping in a tent, or just going barbecuing out in the forest, that fire can warm you, that fire can be used for cooking. Fire is a very useful thing. It can actually scare away the animals to keep the fire going. Here's Bill, 2:30 in the morning, throwing wood on the fire because fire chases away the animals. If I had to I'd set myself on fire just to get them off of me. Panic. But what happens when that campfire goes out of control? It can destroy a whole forest. Little campfire. Destroy a whole forest. So that is the tongue you see.

Verse 6 is The Corruption of the Tongue. **And the tongue is a fire, the world of unrighteousness.** And the word *world* is **κόσμος**, which literally in the Greek it means *the system*. The tongue is the system of unrighteousness. **And in this way the tongue is placed in**

our members defiling and corrupting the whole body, and it is setting on fire the course of nature. Do you realize that our whole course in life is set by the tongue? You know when you are at work, you had a few words to say to your boss that got you fired, or that got you in trouble, or gets you in trouble. We are setting the course of our life based on the tongue. What we say and how we say it will guide the direction of our life in the human realm. **The tongue defiles and corrupts the whole body and is setting on fire the course of nature, and is being set on fire by hell.** Again the passive voice showing that hell is the one setting the tongue on fire.

The word for hell and there are a few words in the Bible for the word hell. This one is the word Gehenna (**γέεννα**) and it literally stands for the valley of Hinnom right outside of Jerusalem. It was actually the garbage dump and people would come out and dump their garbage over the cliff and down into this big valley that was constantly burning. Never stopping. This is the same area in the Old Testament where the false prophets would come and they would actually sacrifice children to these various idols and these various deities. Well the Jews turned it into a garbage dump. In fact if you were poor and unable to afford your own funeral, guess what, into the dump. Burns. Everything just burns. It is constantly burning.

The Lord used this word to reference hell eleven times and James one. Gehenna. The tongue. You can imagine this smoking incendiary of this valley Hinnom and it is the source from which the tongue speaks. In Proverbs 20:6, the book of Proverbs says, **Every man boasts of his own greatness but a faithful man who can find?** In other words, actions speak louder than words. What we do and what we say and the decisions we make, that is the book that people are reading.

And the Lord says, "Number 1, I want to save you so that after this life you don't go down into the lake of fire, but also so that My spirit can live inside of you and I can begin to work within you to restore you back to what I created you for." There is a restoration process going on. He is renewing the mind according to Romans 12:2. All of our experiences in life and our experiences with sin before receiving Christ, they are still there on the cortex of the brain. I have got the Spirit of God leading me now instead of Satan baiting me; but I still have those experiences and all those remembrances right here in the cortex of the brain. You know what God says to me, "Now that I live inside of you, now that I possess you, I want to start working from the inside and I want to renew your mind. I want to heal you of those remembrances and those experiences. I want to place on your mind and in your mind the truth of God." It takes years.

You see church is not supposed to be a religious exercise. The gathering together of believers is the gathering together of people who, first of all, went to the spiritual hospital and got saved and now they are in therapy. So church is a spiritual hospital where God says, "I saved you. You didn't die. You didn't die in your sins, I saved you. But you still need therapy."

Mike and I were talking about operations. And you get an operation on your knee, or really any major operation on any part that works on your body, and you can get an operation but what kind of therapy either your own or the one they provide will get you back walking again.

Well, the Lord saves us and then we just flounder. And the Lord wants to minister through our tongues the spiritual things of Christ.

I am remembering with the tongue and the fire, you remember in October 8, 1871? Of course you do. October 8, 1871 remember Mrs. O'Leary's cow, as the saying goes, kicked over the lantern and Chicago burned. 100,000 thousand people were homeless. 300 people died. 17,500 buildings burned. It cost the city 400 million dollars to put out the fire and clean it up. Of course, now Mrs. O'Leary's cow is not getting blamed for it, now the truth is coming out, they say that kids were smoking in the barn. Anyway you look at it that is the damage that can be done.

In Proverbs chapter 12 verse 18, it says, **There is the speech like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is health.** You want do be around people when they talk they just refresh you? It is health. You are healthier mentally and emotionally, maybe even physically, just by talking with that person. But there can be words that are like the piercings of a sword, pierce you right through.

Proverbs chapter 15 verse 14, **The heart of the one that has understanding seeks knowledge but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.**

We will finish with this. Paul says in Ephesians 4:29, **Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth but what is good (or profitable) edification in order that it might minister grace to the hearers.** No corrupt communication. And that means it is the same thing a piece of fruit falling on the ground and decaying. Sometimes our words, people take them in and they just sit there on their heart and on their mind and it just rots. Like indigestion of the mind after people talk with you. So he says, "Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth but let it minister grace to the hearers."

If anything, we should begin to understand that maturity as a believer isn't so much learning the Bible from cover to cover and memorizing all the verses and really getting it all down; but the Lord wants to work from the inside. He wants to use our tongue for His Spirit to minister to other people. But He says, as we will see next week, "You can't do both." You can't bless God, praise God, and tell people about the Lord and then turn right around 30 minutes later and get mad at them and wish them the worst. He says, "My brothers it is not proper to be that way." The Lord wants control of our tongue. He wants control of our life. He wants our life to live for the glory of God.

In summary, what that means is that the Lord by His Spirit will reveal His substance through our life. That is His glory. His person. That means a lot of things in me have to change. That's His first message, "You are saved but you have got to change. I want you to go to therapy and I want, by My Spirit, all you have to do is go - My Spirit through My Word will change and minister to the cortex of your brain." You will become a new person. But let me tell you this: when you become a new person there will be less of you and more of Christ. The complete and mature Christian is somebody who has reached that point where God's Spirit is in control of their

tongue. They are consistent, not perfect, consistent, and they are walking with the Lord 24 hours a day seven days a week. And we know that we only have but a short time left here on earth.

I represented many activities, and many philosophies, and many lifestyles in my lifetime but you come to a point where you say, "You know, everything I do and try to do is just passing. In fact, it is a waste of time. With my one time in life, I want my speech, I want my actions, I want my decision making to represent Jesus Christ; so that other lost people will find their way through something that I might say to them. Or even more importantly some Christian brother or sister will find encouragement and refreshment."

Tuesday night we are studying Philemon and Paul says to Philemon, "Oh! Your reputation Philemon is just great! How you have refreshed not only my soul, but you have refreshed all the brethren too." Somebody who is refreshing to be around. They minister the grace of Christ. But you know if our life is surrendered to Christ for Him to use as He chooses that is not only eternal value for us, because when we pass through that fire we have got something to show for our life other than just floor mats on the car. You know, the whole car is burned. You got the frame. You got the floor mats. It's like, "That's it! Your whole life that is all that is left." But other people, their eternity, their walk with the Lord becoming healthy. I mean that has got to satisfy you. That has got to be something to say, "Man, that's got to be the most satisfying thing that a Christians can experience." Is to minister the health and grace of Christ to other believers, and see them walk with the Lord in a very healthy way. See them refreshed and encouraged, even corrected maybe. Not a religion and it starts in the home, how we talk to one another and how we treat each other.

Let's close in prayer.