

# Torrey Conference 1984 The Trauma of Holiness

By R.C. Sproul

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Where do you go? You really saw that old series with the turtleneck? I get more letters about my hairdo than I get about my theology. I have to say that I was moved when Chuck Coulson made that comment about the Holiness of God series, and it made me reflect and ask how I got interested in that subject in the first place. And I suppose that I should make a similar comment about the man who most clearly and deeply introduced me to the Holiness of God. And that man was a scholar whom the Encyclopedia Britannica, Incidentally, has called the greatest scholar that America has ever produced. And I'm thinking of the preacher from Northampton, Jonathan Edwards. Edwards has the sermon. It's not too widely known by this title. Man Comma Gods. I just blew that. It's God comma man. No, that's wrong.

That reminds me of the story of my grandmother, about some guy that stood up in their Methodist Church once and started to sing Uncle Poco there. And he was going to sing Rock in the Cradle of the Deep. How many of you have never heard of that song? That's good, because three of the four songs we sang the Night I never heard of before in my life. Right. Where did those babies come from? They're great songs. You're singing them without music or anything. Well, this guy got up and he was going to sing Rock in the Cradle of the Deep. So he started off Rock.. Nope.. Rock, Darling. He would have said it six times before he got it rocking.

Now let's try that again. The title of Edward sermon.... Where's Bash? Where are you, John? Man Karma. Naturally, my wife knows it. Naturally, God's enemies. Man, naturally, God's enemies. And the theme of the sermon, of course, is that the Bible teaches us that by nature, that is, by our fallen nature we are at enmity with God. Now, we all recognize that, but we tend to soften it and talk about estrangement from God, and we need to be reconciled to God. And I think it's also easy for us to admit, like everybody else, that nobody's perfect and that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God and all that. But if you want to get people angry in a hurry and it's a good theme for young people's groups, ask them something like, how come it is that's in Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh isn't. How common is it that....Everything all right out there? I can still see you. He's pretty, isn't he?

How is common is that you hate God. Boy, does that make people mad. What do you mean, I hate God? I don't hate God. Well, if the Bible's true, it teaches us that our natural inclination as fallen creatures, our natural disposition in our sinful humanity, is not merely to be indifferent toward God, but to hate him. And I think in simple terms what happens to us when we are made alive in Christ and born of the Spirit of God. God gives us a heart for himself, so that now what we despised before is now pleasing to us. But notice that when we are converted, we are not instantly, totally comprehensively sanctified, are we? I know there are some folks who think they are. They think that they're saved, sanctified, satisfied San Franized. Right. But that's not true for most of us. Most of us have to grow in Grace and be conformed day after day to the image of Christ. And we still struggle with our fallenness, don't we? Well, if that's true, let's remember that one of the struggles that we have deeply embedded in our souls is this natural antipathy toward God that is not eradicated by regeneration, by conversion.

Do you ever find it difficult to pray? To pay attention in worship? To be excited about studying Scripture? There is a sense that even in Christ, God is still a little bit foreign to us. And in that sermon, Edwards asked the question, what is it about God that causes us to dislike him, to flee from him, to be estranged from him? And Edwards isolates a few things. He said, first of all, there is God's Holiness, which we've already talked about, that God is Holy and we are not. Second, it is that God is omniscient. And that means, of course, that God knows everything about it. And if you've ever read any of Jean Paul Sartre's philosophical works, this big, thick one Being and Nothingness, he has a little vignette in that volume and where he talks about how uncomfortable is the thought of a God who knows everything, he says that God appears in Christianity as a cosmic voyeur. He's looking through a celestial keyhole and observing everything that you do, and there's nowhere that we can run to escape the gaze of God. And that just made SART very, very nervous and unhappy. Makes me unhappy.

When I was a little kid, my mother used to say to me, she used to work and she'd say, no, look, when you're out doing whatever boys do, when there's nobody chaperoning them, and I can't watch you, and your father can't watch you, and your school teachers can't watch you. Don't you ever forget that God is watching you. It's like he's making a list and checking it twice. And that was the idea of God I grew up with. Well, then, of course, I went to College and I got much more sophisticated. And I went to seminary in graduate school and studied some theology. And I figured, well. God's not really up there with a list with my name on it. Putting down marks after my name. Except I read in a book here that David said.

Where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in shield, behold, thou art there. Thou knowest me altogether. You know, when I stand up, you know, when I sit down before a word is even formed on my lips, you know, it all together. And there's a certain sense in which it squeezes us that God knows everything about us. And I think Edwards is right that that penetrating, piercing knowledge of God from which we find nowhere to hide, makes us mad, sort of like an invasion of our Privacy.

Edwards actually said there are four things that make us mad about God. He said, the third one, and I can readily understand, is God's omnipotence, his power. The thing is, you can't beat him. You see how the Psalmist again tells us about how the nations are raging against God, and they take counsel together, and they say, let us cast his pawns from office and let's cut the cords asunder so that they can take counsel together to declare their freedom from God's power and authority. How do you feel when there's a conflict between what you want to do and what God says you're supposed to do? We'd like to negotiate those things, say, hey, God, how come you always have to have it your way? Let me do my way a little bit once in a while. But God is sovereign and omnipotently, sovereign. And that makes us mad. And I can understand that.

When I read that with Edwards, he said, there are four things that about God that we hate. And I said, well, let's see. I would say three of those would be Holiness, sovereign power, and omniscience. And when I saw Edward say, the first thing is Holiness. Second one is omniscience. Third one is sovereignty. I thought my respect for Edwards was growing by the month. I said, this guy really has insight, but I couldn't figure out the fourth one. And he says right there in the sermon, he says, Perhaps you're wondering what the fourth one is exactly right. The words right out of my mouth. So I turned the page and it says, the fourth one is God's immutability. I said, Immutability? Why in the world would that make me nervous about God? It never says, perhaps you're wondering why I selected Immutability. I said, yeah, why he should have these conversations with Edwards. He's been dead a long time, but still, I found it profitable. And he said, here's the big problem that really makes us mad is that not only is God Holy and sovereign and omniscient, but there is utterly no hope whatsoever that he will ever stop being Holy, that he will ever stop being omission, that he will ever stop being sovereign. We would like him to change, but there's not a chance. And that really makes us mad. Well, when we look at scripture and we see God appear to people, there is a kind of uniformity recorded in sacred scripture about people's reaction to the sovereign, Holy, omnipotent, immutable, God.

Yesterday morning, we spent time looking at the manifestation of God's Holiness that Isaiah beheld in the temple. And what I want to look at tonight is the reaction of Isaiah to that vision of God's Holiness. Let's look at it again, going back to the 6th chapter of Isaiah. If you're using the Gideon Bible, it's on page 730.

Last year in Jackson, Mississippi, they had a Gideon guy come into the Church and he gave a little speech on behalf of the Gideons. And he read these letters from people all over the world that write in and say they were converted because they didn't have anything to do. One night they were going to commit suicide and they're alone in their hotel room and their eyes fell upon the Gideon Bible. They picked it up and read it, and instead of committing suicide, they became Christians. And they would go on with these great stories. And he said, but we need money because we have a problem. He said, you can't believe how many people steal Gideon Bibles. And he gave us the statistics and how much it costs the Gideons every year to replace these Bibles that disappear from hotel rooms.

That's when I understood the theological concept of conviction, because everywhere I go, I go in these hotels and I don't have my Bible with me. And I borrowed a Gideon Bible and go to the Church, preach and forget it and leave it in the Church. So I had to write a check out till they get in. Now, did you find it? That was called filibuster while you were looking it up. Isaiah, chapter six. Yesterday we saw the vision of God and his Holiness and the song of the Angels. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of host. The whole Earth is full of his glory. I like verse four. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried. And the house was filled with smoke.

I went into a maximum-security prison in the state of Minnesota with a man who was all pro as a defensive back in the NFL for nine years. Lem Barney from the Detroit lines. And Detroit finally has something to cheer about. Not the Lions, but will the Detroit contingent stand up? Congratulations. Congratulations and may someday football, as it's played in Pittsburgh, come to Detroit, except on Thanksgiving, we won't talk about that.

Lemborny stands up and he gives his testimony in front of hardened lifers in this maximum-security prison. And when he told them about Jesus, he stopped in the middle and he says, if that doesn't turn you on, you don't have any switches. And I thought about that. That how we can hear of God and not be turned on.

A poll was taken in Chicago about three or four years ago of people who had dropped out of Church and asked them why they stopped going to Church. You know what the number one reason given was? Church was boring. Second reason was Church was irrelevant. Now, when we look at what happens in this temple with Isaiah and anybody else in all of scripture who meets God, we never find anybody meeting God and being bored. They may listen to my preaching and get bored, but you don't encounter God and walk away bored and say, it's irrelevant. Now, what I like about this passage is that when God manifests himself, it says the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that even doors had the sense to be moved in the presence of God.

What is wrong with us that we can be in the presence of God and not be moved? If you're bored tonight, let me remind you of something. There are lots of things I don't know, but there's one thing I do know, and that is God is in this room right now, and this is God's word you're hearing. And if God's word doesn't move you, you need to be alarmed, deeply alarmed, because we're dealing now with ultimate truth.

Well, so much for the doors. What happens to Isaiah? Listen to what he said, then said, I whoa is me, for I am undone. Now, I know that there are more recent translations of this text that have tried to change the wording a little bit, but fortunately, in most modern translations of this text, they keep the cry of Isaiah intact. Whoa is me, in spite of the fact that we never talk like that. When's the last time you ever heard anybody say, Whoa is me, Amos and Andy, right? Whoa is me, Andy. What is that going to do? That's the last time I heard it, when a kingfish used to say that in Amos and Andy, we're back in the old movie serials, in the pearls of Pauline, when the wicked...what?... Oil can Harry that's in Mighty Mouse honey, Mighty Mouse would rescue his girlfriend from the clutches of oil and hand...oil..oil ain't harry... Rocked in the cradle of the day. He would say, Whoa is me, alas and the last curses forsooth. You don't talk like that? Do you?

Jewish people still talk like this in Yiddish. You ever hear a Jewish person say, Voi se? That's Yiddish for woe is me? Now, why have the translators kept this word in this text? In spite of the fact that it is obviously what we call an archaicism, an outmoded, old fashioned way of expressing things, there's a reason for it. The reason for it is in the Old Testament, when God anointed a man to be a Prophet, God would put his words in their mouth. And when they would speak, they would not preface their speeches by saying, in my opinion, they would say, what? Thus saith the Lord. And then they would deliver a message whose origin came from God himself.

Now, the form of speech that they used to deliver these messages was called an Oracle. You've heard of the Oracle of Delphi? Well, Old Testament prophets used the form of the Oracle to deliver the messages of God. And there were two kinds of oracles. There was the positive Oracle and there was the negative Oracle. There was the good news, and there was the bad news, what we called oracles of blessing and oracles of doom.

Jesus, following in the prophetic tradition, used that same form. He did it in the most famous sermon ever preached. He uses the oracular form when he says. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteous. Blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are the pure in heart, and so on. He pronounces a divine benediction, an Oracle of wheel, an Oracle of prosperity upon those who manifested certain virtues. But the Oracle of doom, Jesus also used, and it was prefaced not by the term blessed but by the term woe. Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. You go over land and sea to make one convert. And after you've made him make him twice the child of hell, then you are yourself. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. You're like Whiteed seppal curves, beautifully whitewashed on the outside, painted spotless mausoleums inside, filled with dead men's bones. Amos did the same thing in the Old Testament when he pronounced the judgment on the city surrounding Israel. Woe unto you, Damascus, for three sins and fool. And so we see the form of the Oracle. But this is radical in that. What Isaiah does in this situation in his life, dear friends, is that he pronounces the Oracle of doom upon himself. Woe is me, for I am undone.

I like that translation too. The modern translation, I am ruined. What does he mean, he's undone? What Isaiah is experiencing here is a total breakdown of his self-image. Here was a man who was a Paragon of virtue, highly respected in his community, and he comes into the temple, and for the first time in his life, he sees God. And when people understand who God is, the next thing they understand is who they are. When Isaiah came to the temple, he saw God. But as soon as he saw God, he saw Isaiah, and what he saw wiped him out. Before he came in there, he had it together. He was what we would call a whole person. He was a man of integrity. And then he saw God. And he came apart. We call this the process of personal disintegration. Woe is me, for I am undone. I'm coming apart at the scene. His experience of encountering a Holy God was an experience of trauma.

Now, before we go on with this text, let me skip across the pages of Scripture to some other examples. We see it uniformly throughout the Bible. What happens to a backachic when he's

mad? He looks out and he sees injustice all around him. He climbs up in his WatchPower. He shakes his fist at God. He says, I'm not leaving here until I get an answer from you. And finally God shows up and the back except and when I saw him, my lip quivered. I have an almost five year old granddaughter and a six month old grandson, and my grandson sometimes cries. But before he cries, the expression on his face changes and it gets real sad looking and it looks like he's going to cry, but I don't know for sure until the dead giveaway sign takes place, the lower lip just starts to go just a little bit. Have you ever seen that? His lip starts to quiver back. He says, When I saw God, my lip quivered. My belly trembled and rottenness entered into my bones. Or Job. And Job, when God appears to Job, what does Job say? I abhor myself. I repent in dust, in Ashes. I will place my hand over my mouth and speak no more. That's the uniform experience of people who encounter God in His Majesty and in his Holiness.

How about when the Holy One became incarnate? Two quick illustrations. The disciples of Jesus were out on the Sea of Galilee at night. And the Sea of Galilee is one of these natural anomalies, how it is situated where wind tunnels come from off the desert in the Mediterranean and can turn this placid Lake into a storming, Tempest, instantaneously, without warning. In fact, today in the 20th century, with sophisticated modern equipment, sailors are still frightened on the sea Gower. And here they're out there on this Lake one night and one of these terrible storms comes up out of nowhere. You know the story and the Bible says that the disciples became afraid when the wind started blowing and the waves got 10ft high and it's ready to capsize the boat. What's Jesus doing? Taking a nap, sound asleep. You ever meet people like that? I've seen them. I met one on an airplane outside of Atlanta in the middle of a violent lightning storm. At one point in the middle of this lightning storm, the plane dropped 1000ft like that. And ladies and gentlemen, honestly, the stewardesses. Stewardi.. Were screaming in panic and passengers were crying. And I was being put to the supreme test of my Calvinism and making about a D minus, okay, because I'm clutched onto my seat, white knuckled, and there's lightning flashing all over the plane.

And the guy next to me was sound asleep. And I wanted to grab that guy at the throat and say, what's the matter with you? Don't you know that we're about to die? Wake up and be as scared as I am? Well, I think that's how the disciples felt when they see Jesus sound asleep in a storm. And they go back to him and they shake him awake and they say, Master, do something or we perish. And Jesus doesn't even answer them, looks at him, wakes up, surveys the situation, starts to talk to the wind. In fact, he yells at it. He says, Peace be still. You know the story like that. It sees like glass. There's not a suffering here. Now I ask you, what does the Bible say? Here's what it says. And they became very much afraid.

Please turn the tape to side two.

He says, Peace be still. You know the story like that. He sees like glass. There's not a suffering in the air. Now I ask you, what does the Bible say? Here's what it says. And they became very much afraid to think about it. They had every reason to be frightened by the power of that storm. Now, when the clear and present danger of the storm was removed, instead of their fears leaving, their fears are intensified. Why? I think the answer to it can be found in their question when they say, what manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him. What Genos? What kind of man is this? One of the most destructive phobias to mankind is called Xenophobia. Fear of foreigners, fear of strangers.

Fear of people who are different from we are. White people are afraid of black people, and black people are afraid of white people, and Occidentals are afraid of Orientals, and Orientals have fears of Occidentals simply because we're different. And we're not sure what to expect from people with whom we're not familiar, where we can't put them in the categories that we know how to deal with them. If I see a guy who's very intellectual, I put him in a category and I talk to him in one way. If I see another guy, that's Lucy Goosey, I put him in a category and I talk to him in a different way. And as we experience different people, we put them in different categories and different types. But here, for the first time in human history, a man shows up who is absolutely Suey gainorous. He is a man who is in a class by himself. He is the alien. He is the Holy one. The transcendent one, the only one who could command the sea and the wind.

How about one other sea story? Same guys, probably the same boats, same Lake. They go fishing all night, the lousy night. They come home, their nets are empty, they're moaning and groaning about it. And Jesus says, Peter, Simon, you drop your nets over that side of the boat. Now let me have some license here to read between the lines. We know a little bit about Peter's personality, right? The quintessential impetuous man is Simon. I can hear him. Remember how he carried on at the trial? Jesus, when he denied Jesus. He didn't do it casually, but he interspersed a few choice words along the way. He denied him cursing bitterly. I can hear him muttering some obscenities under his breath when Jesus tells him to put the net over there. He's been up all night fishing lousy night, and I can hear him say, Look, Jesus, you are a fantastic Rabbi, the best miracle worker the world's ever seen, fantastic teacher of ethics and preacher. But give us a little bit of credit. We are professional fishermen. We know what we're doing. I've had to net over that side of the boat all night. Nothing's happened. Then he looks at Andrew and he



said, all right, put it over there. Humor. He is the master and we're the disciples. So they throw it in that over the side. You know the story. Every fish in the Sea of Galilee jumps in the net, right? And that's just so filled up that they're starting to break and they drag them into the boat. And now the boat starts to sink. And so the other guys in the other boat come over and they start helping out and their boat starts to sink. Now what does Peter do? Peter says, this is what I've been waiting for all my life. Remember Peter's Jewish? He's a businessman. He said, Jesus, full partnership. Simon Barr, Jonah, Jesus Bar, Joseph, Inc. I'll even give you top billing. Your name can be first over the store, 50% of the business. All you have to do once a month, five minutes, come down to the Pier, tell me where to throw the net. He whips out of contract. That's what I would have done. I would have had a contract right there. That's not what he said. He said, depart from me. For I am an evil man. He said, Jesus, please leave. I can't stand it. You're too close.

I have a friend who's involved in the professional golf tour with leading Christian Bible studies to touring professionals. A few years ago, they had a tournament in Charlotte, North Carolina. At that time, they were holding the Kemper Open there, and one of the touring pros the previous year had won the award for golfer of the year. And it was at the Kemper that they were going to present this award and part of the ceremonies included in the pro am event before the actual tournament started that this golfer would play a round of golf in a foursome that included himself, Jack Nicholas, then President Gerald Ford, and Billy Graham. The man went out, played his 18 holes of go. And when he came off the 18th green, my friend went up to him and said, what was it like playing golf? Billy Graham and the President of the United States. And he snapped at the guy and viciously said, I don't need to have that man shove religion down my throat on the golf course. And he stormed away angrily and went to the practice. He took out his driver and just started Belling out drives to get rid of all of his hostility and all of his frustration. My friend went back and sat behind him and waited for him to hit a bucket of balls. And when he was all done, my friend said to him, Did Billy really come on strong. The guy hung his head and he said. No, I just had a bad run. Billy Graham didn't have to say anything about God. All he had to do was beat Billy Graham. All Billy Graham wanted to do was play golf, have a good time. And this guy couldn't stand the pressure of what Billy Graham represents. We are terrified by Holiness. It is so foreign to us.

So with those examples, let's look again at Isaiah where he says, Woe is me. For I am undone because I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. What is Isaiah saying? I am ruined because I have a

dirty mouth. There's something wrong with my mouth. You notice how much attention the Bible gives to the tongue, to the mouth with which we bless God, with which we curse God, with which we slander our brothers and our sisters. Which we violate each other with gossip, insults and curses.

If we were to take everybody in this room tonight and subject them to the deepest possible forms of psychoanalysis, we would see for the most part that the greatest pain, an unresolved conflict and paralysis that afflicts your life right now is a direct result of what someone, somewhere, sometime said to you. The most vicious instrument of destruction that we have is the mouth. And Isaiah said, My mouth is not clean. My mouth is dirty. And he recognized in the midst of his sin that he wasn't alone. He said, I dwell in the midst of a people with dirty mountains. I understand that now because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

So as I picture this, I see Isaiah on his face, wiped out, can't even lift his eyes up anymore to heaven. And the question I have for you is. What does God do to this traumatized man? Does he say, hey, Isaiah, you're taking yourself too seriously. Don't be so melodramatic. Don't get all hung up. Let's go on a guilt trip. No. God nods for the Angels. And one of the Seraph goes over to the altar. And with a pair of tongs, he takes a live coal from the altar and flies over and puts it on Isaiah's manner. Can you imagine that? Imagine a barbecue pit, a little brick in there, white hot. And somebody takes it with tongs and comes over and puts it on your arm. That smarts.

How about if he puts it in your mouth, sizzles, your tongue blisters, instantly. The angel of God comes and puts a live coal on the mouth of Isaiah and he says, Lo, this has touched thy lips. I want to ask you this. Why did God do that? It sounds on the surface like this is cruel and unusual punishment, that it's sadistic, that it's torturous. Well, let me say this. When we discover who God is. And we discover who we are and we go through the process of what God calls repentance.

Dear friends, authentic repentance is always painful. To mourn our sin is awful. The pain of guilt can be overwhelming when we acknowledge it and when we confess it. And I think von Hoffer was right when he talked about this gospel of cheap Grace that goes throughout our land that says, God loves you. Don't worry about he accepts you as you are. That's not true. If you are not repentant, God simply does not and will not accept you now or ever. He commands all men everywhere to repent and that hurts. Being put at the foot of the cross is agony, if you understand who God is and who you are.

But again, God was not interested in killing Isaiah. The coal was put into his dirty mouth to cleanse him. He cauterized the wound. He made his mouth pure. And listen now to what he says to Isaiah, Listen, Lo, this has touched your lips, your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven. You know, one of the easiest doctrines to teach in the classroom is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. One of the most difficult doctrines of all scripture to get in your bloodstream is justification by faith alone.

Some psychological tests were done a few years ago in American colleges. Included in that group of colleges were so called evangelical Christian colleges. Every College that scored in the 99th percentile for unresolved guilt conflicts was an evangelical Christian conflict. That's incredible. But Christians have not understood what it means to be forgiven. How would you feel if God walk in this room and walk over to you personally and put his hand on your head and said to you, called you by name and said to you. Listen, Your iniquity is taken away. And your sin is forgiven. How would you feel? Okay, I would be running down the streets, jumping over fire hydrants, clicking my heels and doing brake dancing to beat Michael Jackson to death. I mean, this would be incredible to really, really know and know for sure that my sin is forgiven.

Now, Isaiah here's that and he's still on the floor. And God asked another question. He says, who will go for me? Whom shall I send? And what does Isaiah say when he's on his belly? Here am I. Notice he doesn't say, Here I am. He's not identifying his location for God. God knows where he is, and Isaiah knows where he is. He doesn't say, Here I am. He says, Here am I. If you're looking for someone to go for you, God, here am I. I'll go. It's the only justification for the Minister because you understand forgiveness. God says, Go, I'm going to make the heart of this people fast. I'm going to give them the ears that hear not and eyes that see not. And you're going to preach Isaiah, and nobody's going to listen to you. They're going to hate everything you say. And you're going to be so frustrated you're not going to be able to stand. And I says, Lord, how long? And God says, until the cities are utterly decimated. And without them having that's, how long you do it over and over and over again. Because I have preserved for myself. And you're going to have the unspeakable privilege of participating in my work of redemption. Because you understand it, Isaiah. Because you've been purged. And you've been to forgiven.

Great tragedy of the human race is to fear the presence of God when that presence is there to heal us. I know of no solution to guilt. Real guilt, except real and authentic forgiveness. And the price tag for that is the same today as it was in this temple. Real and authentic repairs. I say to you

tonight, if you have never experienced the forgiveness of God, I pray that you do not put your head on your pillow this evening until you get it settled. Until when you're alone. You speak to God and tell him the truth for the first time.

You may be dangled over the pit of power by a Holy God. Will you do that? But he will never, ever, ever break a bruise. If you confess your sins to God tonight. He will forgive you. He will forgive you. And you can hear his words say to you. Your iniquity is taken away. And your sins. Our Father and our God. There is so much about you that frightens us. That we say with Peter please leave. You make us uncomfortable. We cannot bear your Holiness. And yet you have clothed thus with the righteousness of Christ. And have granted to those who believe your pardon. So that now there is no condemnation. Father, thank you for your mercy. And for your forgiveness. And help us to live as forgiven. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.