

Called to Follow

“The Confidence of a Disciple”

Matthew 10:16-39

As we open God’s Word today, we continue in our study “Called to Follow.” Throughout this sermon series, we are looking at the gospel accounts and striving to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Many in our culture today consider themselves to be Christian because they regularly go to church, but does religious activity truly make us a follower of Christ? Others will consider themselves followers of Christ because they have a measure of Bible knowledge and live by good principles. But again, does religious content mean that someone is a devoted follower of Christ? Many in our culture consider themselves Christians because of their family heritage, general code of conduct, and overall good intentions, but is that really what it means to be a follower of Christ? Throughout this study, we have found repeatedly that Jesus looked to His disciples and invited them to follow Him. This invitation was a call to a personal relationship with Him that would lead to personal transformation and redefine their focus and purpose in life. However, we need to know that the call to the original disciples was not simply unique to them. He invites us all today to come and follow Him. He invites you today to a personal relationship that will bring salvation to your soul and radical transformation to your life. He is willing for all to come, but as we saw last week, we must be willing to count the cost.

As we looked at Matthew 8 and Luke 9 in last Sunday’s sermon, we were reminded that following Jesus does not make life easier. Many in our culture mistakenly believe that if they just follow Jesus then their life will be a bed of roses and everything will just work out, but that is not what Jesus said at all. When we come to the truth of who Jesus is and accept Him as Lord, it is then that our eyes are also opened to the reality of conflict. Specifically, last week we focused on the internal conflict that happens in discipleship. As we consider the Lord’s call, we come to realize that we can’t live for our comforts and follow Jesus at the same time. We must be willing to surrender them to Him. We also discovered that we can’t live according to our conveniences but according to His plan. So even our plans and preferences must be surrendered to Him. Shockingly to many, we also found that our close companions cannot be a greater love in our hearts and lives than the love that we have for Jesus. To truly follow Jesus, we must be willing to trust Him and surrender to Him as the Lord and ruler, first place in our life. These internal conflicts are very weighty, but they are not the only source of conflict. There is also external conflict that we face as we follow Jesus as Lord, and this is what is clearly in view in our text today. As Jesus is pouring into His disciples, He is transforming them and preparing them for the mission ahead. In doing so He begins to warn them about the spiritual conflict that is taking place. Because Satan is an adversary who hates the things of God, he does anything and everything that he can to rob God of glory and prevent His people from obeying Him. These disciples had already settled the internal conflict and had surrendered everything to follow Jesus as Lord, but the external conflict was, in many ways, just beginning, and it would grow to a fever pitch throughout their lives and ministry. As we learn of the external conflict it would be easy to focus on the negative realities, but as we look closely at the text, I want us to focus on the words of comfort, assurance, and promise that the Lord is giving to them. Every follower of Christ will indeed face hardships, but I believe in the midst of what Jesus is explaining, He also reveals truths that we can hold on to in those times of hardship. Because of Jesus, we do not have to live in despair even in the most difficult times of life, but we

can instead walk in confidence because of who He is, what He has done, what He has promised, and what He will do.

Before we read the text, I have a word of disclaimer: some of the words of these Scriptures are very difficult to hear and receive. In our human nature, we are likely to get offended by the words of Christ in this passage. I pray, however, that we will open our hearts and lives to the Lord, that we will allow the Holy Spirit to show us what these words mean, and that we will submit ourselves to them in obedience.

Show Text

I imagine that some of the words in this text have been a bit shocking to us today. It's not every day that we hear these words from Jesus and certainly not often that we hear a message on this topic, especially in the American Church. Let me illustrate that: When you think of the characteristics and traits of Jesus, what's the first word that comes to mind? Understandably, we are quick to focus on His love, grace, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, etc. When we think of Jesus we certainly do not think of division or a "sword." The thought seems so contradictory that some might accuse me of blasphemy. In the book, "The Jesus I Never Knew" author Philip Yancey reminds us that most people prefer to hear about how Jesus loved His enemies, forgave prostitutes, healed the lepers, fed the hungry, and worked countless miracles, but in more challenging moments like this text, we discover that there are some things about Jesus that we may not want to hear. He indeed did do all those things, but it is also true that He demands some things of us as followers. In our humanity, we would rather focus on the positive feel-good things than on the difficult things, but we must remember that ignoring the difficult things does not make them any less true. I do not believe that Jesus was being harsh or cruel in this moment, but like a doctor with difficult news and direct information for treatment, Jesus is being painfully honest about the conflict at hand and the certainties that they could confidently cling to amid the struggles.

As a follower of Jesus, it should not surprise us when persecution comes. Jesus said that we are the sheep of His pasture, but the world that is under the control and influence of Satan is like a pack of wolves seeking to destroy. In verses 16-23 of our text, we discover that there will be a day when those who follow Jesus will be handed over to the courts, beaten in synagogues, and brought before governors and kings, and all of this is because we carry the name of Christ. Verse 23 basically assures the disciples that they will be persecuted. Jesus clearly warned His disciples of this very thing and by the time we come to the end of the New Testament they were certainly experiencing this. To the Christians in Rome who were being persecuted Peter wrote in **1 Peter 4:12-14**, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." Every person faces trials and circumstances in life, but followers of Christ who boldly live out their faith will face the fiery trials of persecution. In America, we have been largely blessed to not experience the full weight of that persecution. Still, regardless of the extent that we experience it, I believe God is showing us that when these times come we can still stand in confidence because we know He is in control and we belong to Him. As we look at the text today, I want us to observe four realities that should bring us confidence amid trials.

I. His Purpose Is Accomplished in the Fiery Trials (vs. 24-25)

I love this simple statement in verse 25. It reminds us of what God is doing as we follow Jesus wholeheartedly: He is working to make us more like Christ. As we spend time with Jesus, study His Word, trust and obey Him, the Holy Spirit molds and shapes us to be more and more like Christ. **Romans 8:29** says, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” Remember, the call to follow Jesus is first a relational call as we are brought to a relationship with Him, but it is also a transformational call as He transforms us and makes us a new person in Him. The purpose of discipleship is not merely to memorize content, attend a class, pass the minutes on the clock, or hang out with friends. The goal of discipleship is to know Jesus and grow in relationship with Him, so that Christ is formed in us and our lives bring Him glory.

Here in our text, we are reminded of the close connection between the circumstances that God allows and the shaping that God performs as we submit to Him. Jesus says it plainly, “If they called the head of the house the devil, how much more would they malign the members of His household?” This may sound crazy to us, but the religious leaders of Jesus’ day were so blinded to the truth because of their hardened hearts that they accused Jesus of having a demon and of only being able to cast out a demon because He was the devil. If you follow your Scripture reading guide, you’ll read about that later this week in Matthew 12. With one simple statement Jesus showed how foolish their reasoning was, but in our text today He is clearly showing that if the world would reject Him and call Him the devil, then we should not be surprised when they reject us and call us names either. Jesus tells us why in **John 15:18-20a**, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” Maybe you’re thinking, “But Pastor, what are we to do? We don’t want to be persecuted.” I certainly understand that, and I assure you that I don’t want to be persecuted either, but if and when it comes to whatever ways we experience trials or persecutions, we should lean into it by looking to Jesus, living by faith, and trusting Him. No matter what this world brings against us, **Romans 8** guarantees us that there is no tribulation, no distress, no persecution, no famine, no nakedness, no peril, no sword...nothing, that will separate us from the love of Christ. It concludes in **verse 37**, “But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” So in these moments of fiery trials let’s look to Jesus and live for Him, recognizing that in the midst of them, He is developing us and shaping us to be the vessel He wants us to be. How? It’s in these moments that we discover the realities of Jesus that we can only experience in the fire. There are some truths and some lessons that we can only learn through the painful moments of life like persecution. When these lessons are learned they are not merely ideas in our minds or beliefs in our hearts, but they become deep, core convictions that shape us. ***ILL:** I was recently catching up with a pastor that I had not spoken to in a while. I began to ask him how he was doing since we last talked, and he began to describe the valley that he had been in for quite some time. He lamented how deep and painful and wearying the valley had been. When he reached a point of pause, I then asked, “Well, what has the Lord shown you about Himself in this valley?” The pastor perked up and excitement came across his face and I could hear it in his tone. He shared all the different things God had been teaching him. As he verbally processed these things, he caught himself and said, “I guess the valley hasn’t been so bad

if God has shown me all these things.” We enjoyed the rest of our conversation, but the fact remains that God often reveals the deepest truths in the deepest valleys.

God is not saying that we should desire trials and suffering, and we should obviously not break laws or act in ways that knowingly bring them on, but He is clearly showing us that we should not be surprised by them. We should take comfort in them, knowing that He is accomplishing His purposes through them. It is this reality that these same disciples practiced later in **Acts 5:41-42** when after they had been imprisoned, beaten, and then released, the Scripture says, “So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” They did not resist or dismiss the trial, they focused on the Lord, trusted in Him, rejoiced that they had been counted worthy, and continued to obey.

II. His Peace Is Affirming in the Fiery Trials (vs. 26-31)

The emphasis in these next verses is clearly that when we follow Jesus, we don’t have to be afraid. Three different times (verses 26, 28 & 31) Jesus says, “Do not fear.” If that statement stands alone, it’s a bit strange. It would be like me telling you something to not think about, but your immediate response will be to think about it. Jesus does not give them instructions about fear and then leave them empty-handed. He goes on to explain why they don’t have to be afraid but can instead have peace even amid the fiery trials that they would face. There are several reasons listed:

God has the final word. He tells them simply that there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known. The enemies of Jesus constantly used secret and deceptive means to oppose Him and the Gospel that He preached. We see repeatedly in the gospels how the Pharisees and Sadducees plotted and worked together to try to find a way to get rid of Jesus. Even today there are all kinds of back door deals and deceptive things that take place that oppose the things of the Lord. God shows us clearly that we have nothing to fear because He sees and knows all things, and one day He will reveal the secrets of men’s hearts. One day every deed will be exposed and judged. In essence, Jesus is saying, “Don’t fear because My Father is in control, and He will have the final word on all matters.”

God will lead you. I love how Jesus reminds them that even in the moments of darkness, He will be there to speak. His presence will be so evident that the words He gives will be as if they’re whispered in the ear. It is important to remember here that Jesus told the disciples in **Matthew 28:20b**, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **Hebrews 13:5b-6** says, “Being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’ ” Remember what Peter told the believers who were experiencing great persecution in Rome, “Even rejoice in your suffering because the Spirit of glory and God rests on you.” There is an incredible peace that comes in knowing that the Lord is with us in the fiery trials, and He will lead us even in what to say and do in those moments. This is so clear that we don’t even have to be afraid of what He gives us to say. Jesus says, “Don’t fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body and hell.” In other words, we don’t have to fear the judgment of man on earth when we are ready for the judgment of God that comes in eternity. When we are at peace with God through faith, then it does not matter what persecutions man brings against us. The great hymn writer **Martin Luther**

summarized it well, “Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.” The person who fears God alone needs never fear any man or group thereof, for the fear of God is the fear that cancels all others.

God sees and values us. Many of us have heard the old song “His Eye Is on the Sparrow.” We understand the imagery of that song, but I think it is difficult to grasp how insignificant a sparrow was viewed in that culture. Two sparrows could be sold for a single cent. The word that was used in Greek is the lowest-valued coin in the Roman empire. They were so insignificant that in Luke 12:6 we have an account where the dealer threw in an extra sparrow at no charge. In other words, in man’s view of creation, they illustrate something of little significance, yet God is so in tune with His creation that not a single sparrow falls to the ground apart from His knowledge. He sees and knows all things, and He certainly sees and knows you and me. He is so intimately aware of us and in tune with us that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. What a profound reality! The living almighty, all-powerful God of heaven cares for you and me. David said it best in **Psalm 139:1-6**, “O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it.” ***ILL:** Covid, the peak of Yosemite, I was overwhelmed with the greatness of God. I kept pondering the depth of David’s statement in **Psalm 8:3-4**, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?”

III. His Power Is Attested in the Fiery Trials (vs. 32-33)

It is important to recognize that Jesus’ statement, “Fear not,” has a direct connection to verse 32. He is molding and shaping and giving us peace for a reason. It begins to unfold with the word, “Therefore.” Everything that had been said previously was gearing up for this moment. His whole point is that we don’t have to be afraid when standing up for Jesus and confessing Him openly before men. The Scripture implies that we should stand firm and boldly confess Jesus before others.

To confess Christ means “to affirm and agree with.” It is not simply recognizing a truth about Jesus or even claiming to believe the truth about Jesus, but openly identifying with Jesus. Jesus made it crystal clear that He is the only way to heaven. He said in **John 14:6b**, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” He repeatedly shows us throughout the gospels that He is the Savior of the world and the only One who can rescue man from our sins. To confess Jesus before men means that we have personally believed that Jesus is who He says He is, and that we are willing to openly confess Him before others. I am grateful that this is somewhat easy to do in an environment like Crosslink. Baptism is a very powerful and practical way to make that outward confession of Christ, but do we confess Him as boldly when we are outside of the walls of this building? Do we confess Him openly in our workplace, in our dorm rooms, our classrooms, at the grocery store, or even in our own family, etc.? If we’re honest about it, there is a measure of fear that we experience when the Lord puts it upon our hearts to publicly confess Him. We don’t want there to be conflict. We don’t desire to be mocked or ridiculed, or for people to think we’re crazy. At work, we may fear that we will be persecuted,

attacked, or maybe even fired. Among friends, we don't want to be rejected, so in our human nature, we tend to take the easy road to avoid any measure of resistance or conflict. We may even claim that we hope these people come to know Jesus, but the fact is that the Lord has placed a witness in their life – YOU & ME! If we remain silent before men, not only might we miss our opportunity to confess Christ to them, but perhaps they will miss their opportunity to turn to Christ for salvation. **Romans 10:14** asks the simple question, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?” The implication of this is that every follower of Jesus is to be a preacher, confessing Christ before men and sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

Perhaps you're wondering, “Pastor, what does God's power have to do with us confessing Christ before men?” It is interesting to note that in the book of Acts, there is a direct correlation between the coming of the Holy Spirit and the boldness that the apostles demonstrated in confessing Christ before men, even at times of persecution. Jesus said in **Acts 1:8**, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Then in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and Peter stood and preached about Jesus to many of the very same people who had just crucified Him days earlier. Listen to part of his message in **Acts 2:22-24, 36**, “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know - this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power...Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.” This is a supernatural, spirit-filled power to boldly proclaim the truth of Jesus. Just as Jesus' power was attested through His works and miracles, the immediate evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit was that Peter and the others boldly confessed Christ, even to the very ones who had crucified Jesus and had the earthly influence to do the same to them. It was the same reality in **Acts 4:31** as Peter and John had been arrested, threatened, and then released. They went back to the early church and began to pray. In this moment of fiery trial, listen to what happened, “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.” Brothers and sisters, we may experience some form of discomfort and perhaps even some form of persecution, but let us take confidence in the fact that through the Holy Spirit, God gives the power that strengthens us in the fiery trials and emboldens us to confess Him before men.

IV. His Promise Is Assured in the Fiery Trials (vs. 34-39)

Here we come with the most difficult point of the message for us to receive. Jesus says plainly, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” This sounds shocking and probably a bit confusing. I'm sure that someone remembers our Christmas sermon about Jesus being the Prince of Peace. In Isaiah 9 we learned that the Savior is the Prince of Peace, and we discover that the religious leaders of His day understood that to mean that the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace on earth. However, Jesus' mission was not to come and bring peace to all the earth but to give His life on earth so that we could have peace with God and eternal life through Him. In other words, the primary focus of the peace that Jesus gives does

not mean that we will have peace with all mankind. He came to give His life for us so that we could have peace with God. **Romans 5:1** says it plainly, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jesus came not to bring world peace, but so that all the world could be at peace with God. However, that does mean that everyone experiences this peace with God. It is available for all, but not all receive it. **Micah 5:2-5** foretells the coming of the Savior who would later be born in Bethlehem. **Verse 5a** makes this summary statement, “This One will be our peace.” God’s plan for peace with Him is made available in One person, this One, Jesus Christ. Yet, many hear the Good News of Jesus, the Gospel message of salvation, but they refuse to repent of their sin, refuse to trust in Jesus, and reject their opportunity. Because they reject the One source of peace, they are left without peace with God. So, there are those at peace with God and those without peace with God.

When Jesus says that He came to bring a “sword,” He’s not talking about a literal sword. In fact, He later warned Peter that those who live by the sword would die by the sword (Matthew 26:52). Jesus is using the term “sword” as an imagery of the impact of the Gospel in the lives of men. The Good News of the Gospel when received leads us to experience peace with God, but the reality is that like a sword, the Gospel penetrates the heart of man and convicts the conscience. It exposes our fatal flaw of sin and calls us to respond to the grace of God for healing and salvation. **Hebrews 4:12-13** says, “For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Those who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus for salvation experience great peace with God, but those who harden their hearts and reject Him continue to go on in their stubborn and sinful ways. As a result, due to their sinfulness and rejection, there is a major division that occurs. One is living in light, the other is living in darkness. One is living in grace, the other is living in condemnation. One is living in freedom, the other is living in bondage. One is living at peace with God, the other is living at war. One is living in life, the other is living in death. This is why we see such a clear contrast in verses 35-37. Jesus is not encouraging family division, but He is showing that how we respond to Him will draw lines and bring measures of division.

We must not disconnect these verses from the context of what has already been said. Jesus is speaking of persecution and reminding us that His disciples will be misunderstood and persecuted as we seek to follow Him. Sadly, this means at times that even those closest to us will persecute us for Jesus’ sake. This doesn’t mean that we are to live like a jerk, where we deserve ill-treatment, but it does mean that we should not be surprised when even the ones we love the most treat us instead like an enemy. Many scholars believe that Matthew 10:16-23 largely describes what life on earth will be like during the Great Tribulation when everyone will be living for themselves and doing whatever it takes to preserve their own life. However, I believe we see evidences of this even today. **2 Timothy 3:1-4** explains, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” When any man chooses to love himself supremely above all others, there is no depth to which he will not go to prove it, including turning on his own family. While that may sound extreme to us, it isn’t a far reach. In various parts of the world today, there are many Muslims

coming to faith in Christ. However, when they do, they confess Christ publicly at great risk because they are reported to authorities, usually by their own family members. We can't control how others will respond to our faith in Christ, but it should be our desire, our prayer, and our hope that all of our family will come to Christ. But even if they don't, their response should not hinder our love for Jesus and our willingness to openly share Him with others.

Jesus' point is not to cause us to seek division and strife with family, but to prepare us for the probability that may come. Neither is His point to cause us to fear who will turn against us and how they might respond. His point is to call us to love Him supremely. Our love for Jesus should be greater than even our love for parents or children. Think of all the ways that you show love and care for your young children or aging parents. This is wonderful and precious in the sight of God, and I believe that He commends it, but in a similar way, the love, effort, and care that we give to Jesus should be even greater. The point is simply that as a disciple of Jesus, we must love Him first. And, how is our love revealed? It is revealed through who and what we live for. This is why Jesus concludes with this statement, "And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." We will talk a lot more about this statement in the coming weeks, but for now, let's just say this: You can't follow Christ without the cross. I'm not talking about a piece of jewelry, a tattoo on your arm, or a pin on a suit coat. The cross was a symbol ultimately of death. To follow Jesus, we must be willing to take up our cross daily and die to self. It means that our lives are laid down in surrender to Him. We are living not for self, but for Him. And, as we do, there is a clear promise: Abundant life is found in losing our life for Christ's sake. There are really two options: We can spare our life by living for self and ultimately lose it in the end, or we can surrender our life to Jesus, live daily for Him, and find true, eternal, abundant life in Him. This is the promise that assures us today. Paul exhorts us, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory," **Colossians 3:1-4**. What a promise that assures us even in times of fiery trials! May we keep the same focus as he who testified, "Whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," **Philippians 3:7-14**.

Friends, trials and persecutions may come, but we can walk forward in confidence when we know Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. Let's be confident in His purpose that is being accomplished, confident in His peace that affirms us, confident in His power that attests His goodness to others, and confident in His promise that assures us of life indeed!