

Psalms
“Gate Keeper”
Psalm 1

Well, I must say, as many of you know, I moved here from Chicago and before that from Philadelphia, and when I was coming here, I imagine that every worship would be like this here in the South. But isn't it wonderful that the gospel and even our hymns really do transcend culture, and that we can worship the Lord regardless of where we are in one spirit?

If you can remain standing for our Scripture, which comes from Psalm chapter one. And if you have your Bibles, you can follow along that Psalm, chapter one.

Receive now God's Word.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

And all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

This is the word of the Lord.

Well, as we announced this morning, our pastors considered what we should preach through next in this very brief transitional period. And we thought that it would be edifying to you if we went through the Book of Psalms for the remainder of the summer. Now we won't be going through all the Psalms, and we won't even necessarily go through them in order. But what we plan to do is to preach through a variety of different types of Psalms. I think most of you know that there are different types or genus of psalms, whether that be hymns or laments or psalms of penitence.

Tonight we're looking at Psalm chapter one, which is a wisdom psalm. But it also happens that Psalm chapter one, along with Psalm chapter two, form a kind of double prolog to the whole book. And so my self assigned task for tonight is to introduce the Book of Psalms to you by examining this opening passage in many ways, I think it is only appropriate that I do so in this manner. So a few introductory remarks about this book to get us started here. Most of you will know that the Psalms are often referred to as the mirror of the soul.

That description comes from John Calvin, who observed that there is not a single emotion that is not here represented as in a mirror. But for tonight at least, I'd like to highlight another purpose of this book, perhaps a lesser known and understood purpose, but I would argue a more important one. And that's this the Psalms. At every point in its history, have been composed for and used as the hymnbook of the people of God.

There are 150 psalms in this book, many of which are prayers and many of which are praise, but all of which were likely sung in the context of corporate or public worship. Lest you think that this is mere speculation. Allow me to point out a few pieces of evidence to support this for one. Several of the Psalms have explicit liturgical instructions in the header or the title.

So, for example, the superscription for Psalm 92 reads a psalm, a song for the Sabbath, or Psalms 122, 134 are all described as a song of a sense, stating the occasion and liturgical use for these specific psalms. Second, the content of many of these psalms are set in corporate worship, so the psalm itself makes reference to an element of the public worship in which it was some.

So Psalm 26 says, I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud. We can imagine the psalmist saying these words within the temple complex, even as he performed the very actions that he describes. And third, once again related to the superscription to be exact, 116 out of 150 Psalms have a Holy Spirit inspired title, and many of them ascribed the psalm to a specific person in fact.

Let me give you the names that are included in the titles. We have Moses, David, and Solomon, who you're all familiar with. But we also have people like Asaph, Heman, Ethan Jadwin, and the sons of Kora. You may have always wondered who these people were. Well, wonder no longer. The Book of Chronicles makes mention of these individuals, and what we learn is that these were all directors and musicians who led Israel in their temple worship.

They were, if you will, the original John Heinz of Israel. And so, first Chronicles chapter 15. David commanded the Levites to appoint their brothers to serve as temple musicians. And I quote the singers Heman Asaph and Ethan were to sound bronze cymbals. And the very next chapter we see that David appointed Asaph in particular as the chief musician.

And then first Chronicles 16, verse 41, we're told that along with Asaph were human, and Judson and the rest of those chosen and expressly named to give thanks to the Lord and to lead the music for sacred song. So from the titles we can discern that the Psalms were lifted up to Yahweh in the context of corporate worship by Israel's representative leaders of worship, who were all from the priestly tribe of Levi.

By the way, Moses, David, and Solomon are not exceptions to this. Moses was also from the tribe of Levi, and while David and Solomon were not all three were part of a very select few

who occupied, at least functionally. All three offices of prophet, priest, and king. In other words, they weren't just kings who led Israel in her battles in their priestly role.

They also led Israel in her worship. A final word, then, about the titles. If we take them seriously as we should, then the earliest psalm was written by Moses, Psalm chapter 90. And the latest psalm was written during the post period, Psalm 126. Thus, this book is a collection of psalms that historically spans virtually the entire Old Testament.

So to repeat myself. These are just three of many more reasons why scholars have concluded that the Psalms are to be understood as the hymnbook of the people of God, Trump or Longman therefore describes the Psalms as a literary sanctuary. It's not a literal sanctuary, as the physical tabernacle and temple were, but it's a literary sanctuary. It's a temple made not of wood and stones, but of words that lead us into God's holy presence.

Connecting this now to our actual text. What does all of that have to do with Psalm chapter one? Well, after the exile, and when Israel had returned to their land, they appointed Levitical gatekeepers who guarded the entrance to the newly restored temple. You can read all about them in First Chronicles chapter nine. Their role being somewhat self-evident. The temple was, of course, the earthly dwelling place of God, and not just anyone could waltz into God's house.

In fact, no one could, since none is righteous, no, not one. You may know that as something that the Apostle Paul says in Romans chapter three, but he's actually quoting Psalm chapter 14 there, which is not insignificant, because it shows us how the lyrics of the Psalms themselves remind the singers that they have no business worshiping in his temple.

Hence the need for sacrifice, hence the need for liturgy, and hence the need for corporate worship that was representative led by the priests. So these gatekeepers from the tribe of Levi guarded the gates to the house of God. They made sure that the holy things were used only for holy purposes, and that only holy people would enter into God's holy presence.

This role of gatekeeper was not new. It can be traced back, at least in principle, all the way back to Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. If you remember in numbers, chapter 25, during the wilderness wanderings, Israel at one point decided to bow down to bail, and the anger of the Lord broke out against them.

In the form of a deadly plague, killing 24,000 people. And this judgment was averted only when Phineas was out of zeal for God's holiness, grabbed a spear and impaled those who had desecrated God's worship without faithful gatekeepers. The Israelites understood that they might very well end up where they had just returned from, namely, exile. Psalm chapter one is the gatekeeper to the literary sanctuary that is, the Psalms.

Longman is by no means original in this conception. This is something that the church has recognized from as early as Jerome, the fourth century church father, who described the Psalms as a large house, with Psalm chapter one being, I quote the great door of the whole building. Bruce echoes the same point when he describes Psalm chapter one as the wicked gate to the Psalms that's wicked spelled not with a d, but with a T as in the narrow gate.

Some of you will have caught that allusion to Pilgrim's Progress. In order to escape the city of destruction and embark on the King's Highway to the Celestial City. Christian, or graceless as he's still called at that point, must pass through the Wicked Gate. You either go through this gate or you don't go through it at all. There is no third way.

You see, Psalm chapter one shows us what acceptable worship looks like, to be more precise. It shows us what an acceptable all worshiper looks like. And unless you look like this man in Psalm chapter one, you dare not enter into the sanctuary of the Psalms. You dare not proceed any further in this book and take up these sacred songs on your unclean lips, lest you be impaled by the gatekeeper.

Or worse yet, lest the wrath of God consume you. Having provided you with that long introduction, let's take a look at what Psalm chapter one actually says. There are many ways that we could divide up this text, but the simplest, I think, is often the best. The entire chapter provides us with a contrasting portrait of the way of the wicked versus the way of the righteous, and it invites us to identify with one or the other.

The implicit message being that if you identify with the wicked, you shall not pass. And so those will be our two points the way of the wicked and the way of the righteous. Let's begin, then, with the first of those. And with the first for Psalm chapter one, verse one. Blessed is the man. And we can actually stop right there.

It is appropriate that the first word of not just this chapter, but of the entire book of Psalms is blessed. The Hebrew word there is a share which you should know is not the most common word for blessing. That would be Baruch and the Hebrew, but a share in distinction from Baruch can also be translated as happy or fortunate.

The emphasis of this word is future oriented. The blessed person in this sense is blessed or happy or fortunate, not necessarily because he's experiencing God's blessings here and now, but because he or she can expect future blessings, but future blessings that are nonetheless based upon a present relationship with God. It's the same sense of the word blessed that we see in the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter five.

Who is the person that is blessed? Well, it's the poor. It's those who mourn the hungry and thirsty, the persecuted. And you think to yourself, how on earth are those types of people considered blessed? Because they're the ones who identify with Christ. And it's on that basis

that they have the hope of a future reward the comfort, the joy, the mercy, the satisfaction, and all the inheritance of the earth.

Not to mention the kingdom of heaven itself. It is appropriate that the Book of Psalms begins with this word, because it is the one who worships in Yahweh's temple, who dwells in his presence here and now, who enjoys a vibrant relationship, a communion with God. It is that person who is truly blessed. To put that differently. It is the psalmist and all those who pray and sing and rejoice, but also mourn and lament and cry along with the psalmist, who are blessed to put that differently.

Still. It's the one who can enter into the sanctuary of the Psalms who is truly blessed. So who then can enter? Who is this blessed man? Continue on then, in verse one, blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. You'll notice that verse one consists of three negative descriptions.

So the blessed man or the righteous man, as he's called later on, is someone who dissociates from the wicked. Thus, if this is a negative description of the righteous man, you can also consider it a positive description of the wicked man. All three of these colons are descriptive of a particular way of life. Indeed. Let me draw your attention to the second phrase there in verse one.

Nor stands in the way of sinners. And now, if you look down to verse six in your Bibles, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. A whole passage is framed by these references to these contrasting ways. The use of this word way to describe a manner of life is one of the most predominant metaphors in all of Scripture.

It's replete, for example, in the Book of Proverbs, where the father warns his son not to walk in the way of sinners, but the metaphor extends even into the New Testament. Of course, in John chapter 14, Jesus claims to be the way, the truth, and the life, and as we see in acts chapter nine, verse two, the disciples of Jesus, that is Christians were first known as followers of the way.

First walking elaborates upon this Hebrew metaphor in an especially helpful and practical way. I think he describes it as a nexus of four components. The way consists of one your character, the disposition of your heart, your context. That is, the literal places and spaces that you regularly inhabit through your conduct, your actions and behaviors, as well as for the consequences of those actions.

That in turn contributes to a certain state of affairs. So character, context, conduct, and consequences. All of that is encompassed in this idea of the way. And the psalmist writes that the blessed man, the righteous man, does not walk, stand, or sit in the way of the wicked sinners and scoffers. We should appreciate the progression of those words.

On the one hand, the psalmist description of the wicked intensifies as we proceed in the verse. Scoffers are worse than sinners, since they not only walk in sin, but they also turn and mock the innocent or the righteous. They delight in their own wickedness, and they despise the righteous. But notice that while the description of the wicked intensifies the action, verbs in verse one progressively slows down.

It goes from walking to standing to sitting. So the impression we get is that in each stage of degeneration, the wicked increasingly identifies with spends time with, has fellowship with lives with his depraved and darkened generation. There's a great illustration of someone like this in the book of Genesis, and his name is long. In Genesis 13:12, we're told that Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

Then in Genesis 14:12, we read that Lot was dwelling in Sodom. And finally in Genesis 19, one Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. Not only is he sitting, but he's sitting in the gate, implying that by that point he was an established citizen, possibly an elder of this wicked city. So from settling among to dwelling in to sitting in the gate of Lot is the paradigmatic fool who first walks, then stands, and finally sits in the seat of scoffers.

And were it not for God's love for his uncle and his uncle's intercession, and for him a Lot would have been turned into a pillar of salt, just like his wife, and just like his fellow citizens.

Here's a reality check for you tonight. Some of you are presently walking in the way of the wicked. In your character, you bear no fruit. There is no spirit about you. There's no love, joy, peace, patience, kindness about you. In context, you expose your senses to all kinds of evil in what you watch and what you listen to, and what you smell and touch in the places you love to visit.

The people that you daily rub shoulders with and your conduct. You're enslaved to sin, and that sin gives birth to further wickedness and destruction, to consequences that are becoming increasingly more difficult for you to disentangle yourself from. Brother, if you're walking down that way, Psalm one is a warning to you. It speaks loudly and it speaks clearly. It begs you, stop.

But the warning here that this gatekeeper sounds is not just to those who are presently walking in this wicked way. Here's a bit of grammar for you that I think is quite crucial in verse one. And the Hebrew all three verbs walks, stands and sits. All three of those verbs are written. What's known as the perfect tense. You wouldn't be able to tell in the English, but the perfect communicates something that occurred in the past but has ongoing relevance in the present.

And so if I were to translate this verse more, would only Psalm chapter one, verse one actually reads, blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scoffers. Do you see the difference there? The

righteous is not just someone who avoids the way of the wicked in the present, but it's someone who has never walked down this way, not now and not in the past.

So whether you're presently associated with the way of the wicked or formerly, so Psalm chapter one confronts you with the reality that your worship is an odor in God's sight. Should you proceed into these psalms and pray and sing these sacred songs, God's Word to you will be the same as those that he spoke to Israel in Isaiah chapter one.

Here are these words of judgment in verses 11 through 14. What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams. I do not delight in the blood of bulls. When you come to appear before me, who has required of you? This trampling of my courts bring no more vain offerings. Incense is an abomination to me. I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts. My soul hates.

Continuing in our text, those who walk down this wicked way bear no fruit. They are, as verse four says, like chaff, that the wind drives away. The analogy there is that of winnowing grain, as you're all familiar with during harvest time, the farmers would toss the grain into the air, and the heavier grains would fall to the ground, while the much lighter chaff, as the psalmist says, the wind drives away.

Chaff, to state the obvious, is dry and dead. It's tossed about by the wind because it has no roots, unlike the tree, it is rootless, and it is useless with the exception of one use, namely to be burned. Hence the psalmist continues in verse five, therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, or sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

You'll appreciate the repetition of that verb to stand. It communicates for us a reversal those who stand in the way of sinners. Verse one will not stand in the day of judgment. Those who sat in the seat of scoffers, scoffing at God and scoffing at his righteous, will not then be able to sit with the righteous. What's in view here is the final judgment when, as Paul says in First Corinthians chapter six, the saints will judge the world.

Well, in contrast to the way of the wicked, the way of the righteous is spelled out now positively in verse two. Follow along with me. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. The righteous man walks along the paths of God's Torah. There is some debate as to what exactly the psalmist means by this word law or Torah.

Some think that it refers narrowly to the Ten Commandments, along with the following 613 or so statutes. But I think it's better to understand this as referring more broadly to God's instructions as they are laid out in his covenant. Now, obviously, that includes the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, but it now situates them in the specific relational context of covenant, so that this law presupposes grace, and it is to be obeyed because of grace.

As one scholar puts it in the covenant, law and grace marry, so the righteous live out this covenant law. He delights in obeying the one who redeemed him. Now some of you may have been tense up until this point, but you've just relaxed a little because you're telling yourself, well, I can say that I delight in and that gracious law.

So I guess I can proceed into the sanctuary of the Psalms. But hold on, how do you know that you delight in this law? You should know that delighting, at least here, is not just a subjective affection towards an object the psalmist proceeds to explicitly spell out for us what this delighting practically entails. And on his law he meditates day and night.

So test yourself against this measure. The Hebrew word there for meditate is Hagar. Meditate, in my opinion, is too spiritual of a term to serve as an adequate translation. For this, Hagar more literally means to murmur. It refers to the sound that we make when we're murmuring something to ourselves under our breath. See, when the psalmist says, and on his law he murmurs, day and night there's a certain visual that that he's painting for you to imagine. Bear in mind that Scripture is back then, we're not generally available to the people of Israel. It had to be read out loud. In other words, the Israelites had to listen to it, and they had to memorize it in order for them to reflect upon it and apply it. And as they strove to commit God's law to memory, you can imagine them pacing back and forth, murmuring to themselves all that they'd heard, repeating again and again.

Those very words of God. Furthermore, the righteous man doesn't meditate on God's Word for 15 minutes in the morning and then sets it aside until maybe tomorrow, or maybe next week, or maybe even next month or year. Now he meditates upon it day and night, meaning all the time. Well, surely you might say that's to be taken hyperbolically.

I mean, it's not possible to literally meditate upon God's Word all the time, is it? Well, that's certainly not how one scholar takes it. And Cameron understands this continual meditation, as I quote, a reflection on the word of God. Even in the course of daily activities, regardless of the time of day or the context, the godly respond to all of life in accordance with God's Word.

But don't take Van Cameron's word for it. Listen to our Scripture elaborates upon this practice in other passages. This activity of meditation. Take Deuteronomy chapter six, starting in verse six, and these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise, or Deuteronomy 17, verse 18, this is a passage about the future King of Israel, who, just as in our passage, was not to walk in the way of the wicked, but rather he was to write for himself in a book a copy of this law. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law. And one more Joshua, chapter one, verse eight.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

So here's the measure. Here's what delighting in the Torah of God looks like. Here's what meditation Hagar entails. You listen. You read, you teach, you write, you copy. You talk about, you reflect upon, you apply. You keep, and you do continuously all the time so that there's not a moment when you're out of step with the will of God, nor a moment when you've stepped out of the way of the righteous.

That kind of man is the one who is blessed. Spurgeon, by way of application, points out that Israel scarcely had more than five books in their Bible for much of their history. All they had was the Mosaic covenant. And yet we have 66 books, and we have all the covenants interwoven and fulfilled in the New Covenant. How much greater they ought to be!

Our delight? How much more fruitful ought to be our lives? Hence, verse three now spells out the fruits of those who walk down this righteous path in this manner. He is like a tree transplanted by canals, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. I translated that verse the way I did because that's what the Hebrew says.

The imagery here is not that of a tree that just so happened to grow near a natural stream, but instead of a tree that has been deliberately uprooted and transplanted near a manmade watering system, near a canal. Putting this together with the first stanza, the righteous man isn't someone who accidentally stumbles upon the law of God and obeys it every now and then.

There's a deliberateness here. There's an intentionality to it all. He sinks his roots deep into the instructions of God. He daily drinks from this particular stream and no other, so that his evergreen leaves, and the fruits that he bears, the righteous deeds that are produced by his pure heart, are the steady results of this deliberate and disciplined manner of life.

And so the psalmist concludes with this sweeping statement in all that he does, he prospers. It is, as Jesus teaches in the sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter seven, verse 18, A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, or the state that, conversely, a healthy tree always bears good fruit. It cannot be any other way.

And now, in the very last verse of our passage, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. The Lord knows the way of the righteous. The knowledge spoken of here is a personal and intimate knowledge. So the Lord watches over this way. You could also say he cares for and loves those who walk in this way.

What? He again puts it like this. The Lord is in this way. He is in the character, context, conduct and consequence of this righteous way. This is essentially the entire wisdom of the Proverbs. Even as Doctor Doriani alluded to.

Because he's in this way, those who participate in this way with him participate in life. In contrast, the way of the wicked will perish, and it will perish precisely because the Lord does not know it. Again, as Jesus says in Matthew chapter seven, some will say to him, Lord, Lord, didn't we do all these things in your name?

And you will say to them, depart from me. I never knew you.

If I've done my job correctly and expounded this text faithfully, then I will have left you, I think, with the inescapable impression that Psalm chapter one, that this gatekeeper forbids you from entering. For who among you can say, I have never walked with sinners? Or who among you can say, I have only walked in the way of the righteous?

And thus the series in the book of Psalms must end no sooner than is begun. But if you are listening carefully, I think you can anticipate what Psalm chapter one ultimately points to allow me to end where I began, which is to stress the purpose and the nature of the Psalms. It is, as I said, the hymnbook of the people of God.

And as such, to repeat myself. All the Psalms were at one point lifted up to Yahweh in the context of public worship by Israel's representative and priestly leaders of worship. You see in Israel's temple worship what mattered supremely was not the spiritual state of the individual Israelite. What mattered supremely was the state of Israel's priesthood of Israel's kings, their spiritual leaders who mediated their worship.

That's what was determinative of what was and was not acceptable in God's sight. As we stand before the gates of the sanctuary of the Psalms, this is not lost on the psalmist. If you remember, I also said at the beginning that Psalm chapter one introduces the whole book not by itself, but along with Psalm chapter two. And what we see is that immediately after depicting the contrasting ways between the righteous and the wicked, immediately after inviting us to identify with one or the other to choose, the psalmist then proceeds to invite us to make yet another choice.

Psalm chapter two, verse ten. Now therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the sun, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. What Psalm chapter one implicitly and generally teaches.

Psalm chapter two teaches explicitly and narrowly. You see, we don't just identify with an abstract, righteous one. Now we identify with Yahweh as Messiah King. We either serve this Messiah King, or we rage and plot against him. We either kiss the Son of God or we perish in the way we either take refuge in him and are blessed, or we walk in the counsel of the wicked and are consumed by the wrath of God.

You see, just as the Levites and just as King David lifted up these psalms to the Lord on behalf of their people, when we see Jesus crying and crying out these Psalms in the Gospels, the evangelists are showing us that the words of the Psalms belong most supremely, not to those priests and kings of old, but to our Lord and Savior, because only he can say, I have never walked in the way of the wicked.

Only he can say, I have only walked according to the law, and only he is worthy to enter into the sanctuary of the Psalms. Have you ever considered this? Jesus didn't just die on the cross for you. He also presently intercedes for you. Jesus didn't just atone for your sins, he also leads you in your subsequent worship. Jesus isn't just the perfect sacrifice, he is also the perfect great High Priest.

Do you understand what I'm saying? That even now, as we worship God in our songs and prayers and proclamation of His Word, it is Christ who leads us by the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit. It is Christ who leads us in this worship. Thus we boldly draw near to the throne of grace. We dare to enter into God's presence.

We dare to sing these songs of praise, but we do so placing our trust in our representative, leader, and mediator of worship. And so understand that in the rest of our evening series, though, we sing and pray and cry these psalms imperfectly, they are a pleasing aroma in God's sight. For it is our prophet, priest, and Messiah King.

It is Jesus who leads us even as we sing. One final time from the sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter seven, verse seven, verse 13, Jesus says, enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life. Psalm chapter one is the narrow gate that leads to life. You either go through it or you don't go through it at all.

But this gate is so narrow, and this gate is so hard that none can enter. But praise be to our God and Father, that Jesus also says in John chapter ten, verse nine, I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.

Let's pray.

Gracious Heavenly Father, what a wonder it is that even now we stand before your presence. I think, along with the psalmist, who is man, that you're mindful of him? Who are we that we can sing songs of praise, that we can lift up prayers of petition to you, and that you accept it? Father, we thank you so much for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, and we thank you that in him we also have this gift of worship whereby we can commune with you, whereby we can participate in the way of righteousness, whereby we can enjoy eternal life or teach us to never take for granted just the sacred songs that we sing, the sacred word that we preach from and listen to and incline our hearts to be with us. We pray in every moment of our lives by the power of your Holy Spirit, who enables us to do that which we cannot do on our own, who enables us to walk

in the ways of the righteous, to meditate upon your law day and night. We pray all of these things in the strong name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.