

2 Corinthians 1

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Tape 8152
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In the last chapter, Paul said, “Now I will come unto you, (verse 5 of chapter 16), when I shall pass through Macedonia, for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I abide, yet, winter with you, that you might bring me on my journey whether so ever I go. For I will not see you now, by the way, but I trust to tarry for awhile with you if the Lord permits.” Notice, if the Lord permits. Paul is now laying out his plans with the condition that the Lord allows it, the Lord permits it. Paul had set other plans in his ministry and the Lord stopped those plans. So Paul always held on to this conditional, “If the Lord wills, or if the Lord permits.” There were certain things that Paul was wanting to do, the Lord didn’t permit him to do it. He writes about his first desires to go to Asia, and the Lord did allow him or permit him to do so. He’s learned to be flexible so that if the Lord changes things, he is able to flow with it.

But I will tarry in Ephesus, he said, until Pentecost. Now this Paul laying out his plans. Paul did not realize the problems that were going to arise in Ephesus as he plans to be there until the first of June, the Feast of Pentecost. He didn’t realize that there was going to be a tremendous uproar in Ephesus and his life was going to be threatened and in jeopardy. In fact, he really thought that it was all over for him. So the plans were being altered and the plans were being changed.

Now in Ephesus, there were those who were not really loyal with Paul or with Paul’s teachings. They were accusing Paul, falsely, of not teaching the truth. They did not like Paul’s message of grace. They were saying he’s not really an apostle. He is really sort of self-appointed. No one really ordained him. He is a self-appointed apostle. So they were challenging Paul’s teachings and his apostleship. And they were seeking to undermine Paul’s influence in the lives of the people of Corinth.

This is really rather tragic because Paul had established the church in Corinth. He went there and it was his baby so to speak. He went there and broke the ground. He went there and laid the foundation. He went there and setup the structure of the church there in Corinth. For it was Paul’s desire not to build on another man’s foundation. To go where the gospel wasn’t preached. But there were always those who were ready to come in after Paul to undermine the things that he taught and to turn the people away from the gospel of grace that Paul was teaching. Those that were wanting to put the people under the bondage and the yoke of the law. And so they would always say disparaging things concerning Paul. That was hard. That was difficult for Paul to contend with these false teachers and these false rumors that they were spreading concerning Paul. It happened to Paul and of course it happens all the time.

Several years ago, there was fellow who was going around the country, claiming to be an ex-witch of one of the highest orders. He said he was one of the thirteen of the Druids and so forth. He was lecturing mainly in Baptist churches across the country. He had chosen us as one of his targets. Now at that time we had begun radio ministry across the United States. Of course, the tapes of the teachings were going out. People were having Bible studies all over the United States, using the taped studies of our Sunday night studies here as we go through the Bible. And there were hundreds of these home Bible studies that were weekly getting the tapes from Calvary. People were gathering and of course, many of these home Bible studies are now Calvary Chapel churches all over the United States. But I started getting letters and I started getting tapes that people had made of this guy’s lectures, in which he was declaring that I was actually a part of the Illuminati, I was an undercover agent for them. He said that actually when he was with the Druids and these witch coven and so forth, that Rockefeller gave him seven million dollars, that he gave to me to start Maranatha music. He said this in order to corrupt the young people with Christian rock music and so to sort of destroy the Jesus movement.

The problem was is that people really didn’t know me. Across the United States, many of them were listening to my tapes. Then they heard the tape from this guy. They thought, wow, that’s terrible, you know, that Chuck has been paid off by Rockefeller and the Illuminati to corrupt Christian young people. People were going and listening to this guy and his tapes were spreading all over. Some of the Bible studies

actually ceased. People thought, my, we have been deceived. It was tragic, though the guy was just a terrible liar. Yet, there are always a certain percentage of people that believe without checking the story to see if it is true or not.

This fellow was speaking in Pasadena. So, my wife, decided on a Sunday evening that she would go up to hear him. Harold Fisher went along and my brother and some others. When he got to the place where he said, and I personally handed Pastor Smith, you know, seven million dollars. My wife couldn't take it any more. She stood up and she said, "John Todd, that is an outright lie and you know that it is a lie! You never gave Chuck Smith seven million dollars at any time. I am his wife and I know that that is a lie!" Of course, the guy got all flustered and said, well, I gave it to his assistant pastor. I've been suspicious of Romaine ever since because it didn't get to me. But I haven't seen any evidence of his spending the money yet.

But the thing is that the lies can destroy the influence that you can have in some people and with some people because they are not careful to check it out. So with Paul, the stories that they were spreading, did have a detrimental effect. They were hurtful.

Now there are fellows today that are on the Internet. They have their pages in which they are seeking to damage Calvary Chapel and the influence that Calvary Chapel is having in the hearts and lives of thousands of people. It is their purpose to damage the work that God is doing through the ministry here. There is a certain percentage that will listen. It hurts! You can't say it doesn't hurt. It does hurt! Paul was hurt by these lies that were being told concerning him. It hurt Paul.

So as he writing this second letter, he is writing out of a heart that is aching. A heart that is hurting because of the attitude that a group of people in Corinth had taken against him because of what these people were saying. So Paul lost his influence in being able to really instruct them in the Word of God because of the back-stabbing that was going on in the church in Corinth. It is tragic that it seems like throughout the history of the church, going clear back to this time, that there is a certain amount of back-stabbing that goes on within the body of Christ.

The Lord tells us to mark those which cause division. God said that He hated those who sow discord among brethren. I would surely not want to be engaged in any kind of a process that was branded by God as something He hated! But there are those who try to sort of elevate their own causes by undermining others. Such was the case with Paul. It caused Paul heartache that this was going on. So this second letter sort of is born out of heartache. As we look at different portions how that they were seeking to undermine Paul.

So it's appropriate that he opens us the epistle by saying, *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*, You see they were challenging his apostleship. The church in Jerusalem didn't ordain him. They didn't lay hands on him. They said, he self appointed himself. He said, no, I am an apostle by the will of God.

Now, when the problems erupted in Ephesus and Paul was forced to leave. He was forced to leave in a hurry, for his life. He went to Troas. He was waiting for Titus to bring back news from Corinth. He had sent the first letter. The first letter was sort of a hard letter because he had corrected many problems that were existing in the church in Corinth. It was a letter of correction and sometimes rebuke. He wondered how did they take it? Did they accept it or are they angry? He didn't know just how the first letter was received. He was waiting for Titus and hoping that Titus would come.

Paul left Troas and went over to Philippi. It is at Philippi that Titus finally caught up with Paul and shared with him concerning the letter and the reaction and the response of the people to his first letter. So Paul wrote this second letter from Philippi to the church in Corinth. But knowing that there was this undermining that was going on, he begins by the affirming of the fact that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. Now throughout this second letter he is going to be showing proof of his apostleship.

But he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. *and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:* To the church and to the saints in Achaia, the area around Corinth, the southern part of Greece.

²*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is so typical. It's a typical opening greeting from Paul. You find it in all of his epistles, this grace and peace. We've often pointed out the order: grace and peace. Never once does he write, peace and grace. There is a proper order.

The grace and then the peace, you have to first of all, know and experience the grace of God before you can know and experience the peace of God, Grace and peace to you from our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* Now this is sort of how Paul opened his letter to the church in Ephesus. The same phrase is used in verse three of chapter one, as he opened his letter to the Ephesians. It's "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And there he talks about who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

But here, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,*" Paul just had been through just some extremely harrowing experiences. As we said, he even thought that it was all over. He despaired of ever being saved of life itself. He thought that he was gone. He had gone through some terrible afflictions. And so in these afflictions, he experienced the comfort of God. And so he called Him the God of all comfort.

It is interesting how that when we read of Paul and we read of his missionary journeys, we sort of think of him as super-saint, like he can leap tall buildings in a single bound and you know, stop speeding bullets or a speeding train, or whatever. He is sort of a super-saint. But he was prone to discouragement. He was prone to fear, just like everybody else. But the interesting thing is that the Lord would stand by Paul and encourage him.

When Paul was in Jerusalem, it was probably one of the deepest and darkest hours of his life. From the beginning of his conversion, it had been his dream, his hope, his ambition to share the revelation of Jesus Christ that he received, directly from the Lord. He wanted to share it with the fellows that he had gone to school with, the other Pharisees that were sitting in the class with him at the feet of Gamaliel. He said, I know them! I know where they are at. If I could just have a chance, but the Lord said, Paul, get out of here, they're not going to listen to you. But Paul argued. Lord, I know where they are coming from.

So Paul finally had that chance. And as he stood there on the porch of the Antonio Fortress and he began to address the people. He began to share with them, I know what you are feeling. I know what's going on in your hearts. I was just like you! I was one of you! You know me! I was in school with you. And I was just like you. I thought that I would, you know, wipe out this sect. I was on my way to Damascus. The high priest can testify. I had orders from him to imprison those that called upon the name of the Lord. While I was going, suddenly, about noon there came a light brighter than the noonday sun. I heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And he began to share his testimony of the revelation of Jesus Christ to him. But as he was sharing, he shared that the Lord told him that he was going to call him to go to the gentiles.

The moment Paul said, gentiles, it was like striking a match to gasoline. The Jews all became inflamed. It was just an explosion. They began to throw dirt in the air. They began to scream. They began to tear their clothes. They began to rush towards the porch of the Antonio Fortress, saying kill him, kill him! So the guard brought him on into the fortress for his own protection. His life's dream was shattered!

Surely I can convince them Lord. Instead of convincing them, he just created a huge ruckus, a huge riot. So as he was sitting there in prison, it was a dark, dark moment! The opportunity had come. But it was total disaster! But the Lord came and stood by him at night in the prison. He said, Paul, be of good cheer. As you have witnessed for me here, you also have to bear witness in Rome. It's not the end of the road. Paul thought, this was it. This is the end of the road. God said, no. You've got to get to Rome. You've got to bear witness of Me there, too, Paul. So the Lord stood by and encouraged, the God of all comfort. In the darkest hours of his life, the Lord was there to comfort, to speak words of comfort.

On the way to Rome they were in this storm. They didn't see the sun. They were being tossed by this vicious storm. They had lost all of the sails. Things were so bad they just let the wind drive the ship. They had lost control. And the Lord stood by Paul, that night. He said Paul, be of good courage. No one is going to perish. So in the morning, Paul said, men! Harken unto me. You should be listened to me at the first. I told you not to set sail. It was too late in the year. This damage wouldn't have happened to you. But don't worry for this night, the angel of the Lord, who's I am and whom I've served, stood by me and assured me that though the ship is going to be destroyed, there won't be the loss of a single life. Again, standing by in the dark hour for encouragement, for comfort. And thus Paul calls him the God of all comfort.

For you who are going through hard places, dark nights, difficult situations, he is the God of all comfort. He will stand by you to comfort you, to straighten you, to encourage you.

Paul said, ⁴*who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.* I've suffered for Christ, abundantly. But even as I have gone through all of these afflictions, all of these sufferings for Christ's sake, He was there and He comforted me through all of it. Therefore I know all about hardship. I know all about discouragement. I know all about the feeling like you have been a total failure, that there is no hope. I know all about that. The Lord came and comforted me when I was going through these dark nights and these difficult experiences. Now because of what God has done for me, I can comfort you with the comfort wherewith I was comforted.

⁶*Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* In other words, Paul is saying a lot of the things that I experienced, God brought me to these things and allowed these things to happen. These were brought in order that He might show Himself strong and victorious in order that when I deal with you, I can understand and I can bring you help and comfort because I've been in the situation. In those situations, I've experienced His presence and His comfort and His love. And so Paul began to understand that a lot of the things that happened to him were for the benefit of the people. In order that I might have the experience to emphasize with them in the things that they were going through.

Having lost my dad and brother in a plane crash. It was my brother's private plane. They went down. And having lost them in a plane crash, I feel a tremendous empathy whenever I read of a family who loses a family member in a plane crash. I feel a tremendous empathy with them because I know what it is to go through that grief, to go through that sorrow. And I feel that I can, because of having gone through it and experiencing in that, the comfort and the strength of the Lord. Knowing how that God comforted me in that kind of a situation, I feel that I can better comfort people who are going through it, because I've been through it. Had I never been through it myself, I wouldn't be able to have the same kind of empathy for those who are going through it, but having been through it, I have this compassion. I have this understanding because I've been there.

So Paul is saying, I've been there! And when I was in those dark hours, the Lord was with me. He comforted me. Now He allowed these things to happen for your benefit, so that I would better understand and be able to comfort you when you are going through these things. So if I was afflicted, it was for your sake. If I've been consoled by God, it's for your sake, in order that I might be a more effective minister of Jesus Christ, bringing to you the strength that He has brought to me. Bringing to you the hope that He has brought to me. Bringing to you the comfort that He has brought to me when I was going through similar kinds of experiences that you are presently going through.

Paul said, ⁷*And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.* You may be going through some difficulties and sufferings, but we have great hope because we know that you are also going to experience the comfort and the consolation of the Lord.

⁸*For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia:* Paul is probably referring to the events that are found in the nineteenth chapter of Acts. When because of the tremendous success of Paul's ministry in Ephesus and in the surrounding communities, you can read it there in the nineteenth chapter of Acts.

There was a tremendous revival. People were coming to Jesus Christ. They were turning from paganism to the true and the living Lord. They were having big bonfires. People were bringing their books on magical arts. They were burning them, their occult books. Thousands and thousands of dollars worth of books or scrolls were being destroyed as people were turning to Jesus Christ. It also began to have a very detrimental effect upon the artisans who were making the little images of Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians. They began to suffer.

Demetrius, the silversmith, gathered together the men of the similar trade. He said you know that we have become wealthy by the sale of these little silver trinkets that we have made for Diana. Now Paul is telling people that gods are not made with hands. That these aren't real gods. People have quit buying them. We've got to do something.

They began to go through the streets of Ephesus shouting, creating a real scene. People began to follow them into the great arena, there in Ephesus. People were just shouting, some one thing, some another. Most of the people didn't even know why they were there, just that there was a lot of tumult and a lot of shouting. So they just gathered to see what was going on.

When Alexander, one of Paul's companions, sought to speak to the people. He beckoned with his hand. They recognized that he was a Jew. They began to cry out, great is Diana of the Ephesians. For two hours they chanted this. Paul was on the outside, wanting to go in. But his friends realized that if Paul would go in, it meant certain, instant death. That Demetrius and the crowd would have just pounced upon him and ripped him to pieces, literally. So they restrained Paul. They held him back. They forcibly restrained him from going in. And Paul left right after that, immediately after that. He didn't stay until Pentecost. He had to get out of Ephesus because there had been sort of a price put upon his head.

So he speaks about the trouble that came to us in Asia, *that we were burdened beyond measure*, That is, we were pressed beyond our capacity, beyond our ability. We were pushed to the wall.

It was *above strength*, It was beyond our strength to deal with, to cope with.

so that we despaired even of life. He really figured, this is it! It's all over! This is the end of my life. This is the end of my ministry. This is it. He despaired of ever surviving of ever getting out of this alive. He figured it was all over.

⁹*Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves*, That is, they had declared that they were going to kill him. He had the sentence of death on him.

But Paul said this happened, I despaired. It was beyond me. I couldn't deal with it. It was something that I couldn't handle. It was bigger than I. *that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead*, Oftentimes God allows us to get into those situations that are really beyond our capacity, in order that we not look to ourselves, but we will look to God for the answers. Many times it takes just the extremes.

But as the old saying goes, not Scripture, man's extremities are God's opportunities. It's when we get to the end of ourselves that God has then the opportunity to take over and to do for us what we can't do for ourselves. So Paul was brought to that place of, can't handle it, can't do it, in order that he wouldn't trust in himself, but that he would trust in God.

¹⁰*who delivered us from so great a death*, I came out of it! God delivered me! *and does deliver us*; I've been delivered by God from this sentence of death.

I am being delivered and thus *in whom we trust that He will still deliver us*, The ministry isn't over yet. God delivered me from the sentence of death. He has now delivered me and I trust that he will still deliver me.

¹¹*you also helping together in prayer for us*, We appreciate the fact that you were praying for us. It was a tremendous help. Your prayers for us were a tremendous help.

that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many. The fact that so many of you were praying for us, now as God has delivered, many of you can give thanks because your prayer have been answered.

¹²*For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you*. This is our comfort. This is our rejoicing. I'm not a complex person. Now they were accusing Paul of not being sincere. Paul had written, I plan to come to you and to go to Macedonia and to come back and maybe winter with you. Now the detractors were saying, look, he didn't come. You see Paul is two-faced. When he says yes, he really doesn't mean yes. When he says no, he really doesn't mean no. He's weak. He vacillates. He is insincere. He is not being truthful with you.

They were making these kinds of accusations because Paul wasn't able to come as he was planning

because of this whole ruckus that developed. It altered his plans. So they are now taking advantage of this necessity to alter plans in order to accuse Paul of insincerity. So Paul declares my rejoicing and my comfort is this, the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of, and more abundantly toward you.

¹³*For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand.* You know I'm straight-forward. I'm not trying to cleverly disguise my thoughts or write to you in a cryptic fashion. There is no double type of meaning. There are no hidden meanings in what I say. It seems like there are always people who are looking for some kind of a hidden thing.

I used to have one lady that was always calling me up and saying, now yesterday when you said, good morning, what did you really mean by that? I meant good morning!

They are looking for some kind of little, you know, double talk or something, where you really didn't say what you meant but I'm not smart enough for that kind of stuff. I just have to say what I mean and mean what I say. So Paul is saying that. I haven't written to you any other thing than what you read and acknowledge.

Now I trust you will understand, even to the end I trust that you will realize this. There is no hidden agenda here.

¹⁴*(as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

¹⁵*And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit--* ¹⁶*to pass by way of you to Macedonia,* Now this was my plan. I wrote to you and really this I was intending to do. This was in my mind to do. I haven't changed my mind. This is what I was really intending to do.

To pass by you into Macedonia and *to come again from Macedonia to you,* In fact, he was planning to spend the following winter with them there in Corinth.

and be helped by you on my way to Judea. From you I planned to sail to Syria and then on to Jerusalem.

¹⁷*Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly?* Was it just a frivolous thing? That is one of the accusations that Paul is frivolous. He just says things. He really doesn't mean them. He doesn't think them through, he just frivolously talks.

Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? These are the things that again, these detractors were saying about Paul to try to destroy his influence that he had in the ministry and in the teaching of these people. It's sad and tragic thing that a person would deliberately set upon themselves, to try to destroy the influence that God is bringing in people's lives by tearing down the instrument that God is using. And thus they were doing to Paul, there in Corinth.

¹⁸*But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.* ¹⁹*For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me, Silvanus, and Timothy--was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.* It wasn't a yes and no. It wasn't double talk. I wasn't saying yes and no at the same time.

And when we teach you the things about Jesus, with Jesus there is no yes and no, but it's a yes! ²⁰*For all the promises of God in Him are Yes,* In fact he makes reference in another place that the promises in Christ are yes and so be it.

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, *and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.* I wasn't using lightness. I wasn't using double-talk. I wasn't saying yes and no at the same time. These accusations are false. God knows! He calls God as his witness. God is true. It wasn't a yes and a no.

²¹*Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,* God is the one that's established my ministry. God is the one who has anointed me.

We got a call on the Bible answer man this week about the ordaining of women. I answered the caller by saying, we don't feel that we can ordain anybody to the ministry. We feel that only God can ordain a person to the ministry. We can't ordain people. We can't lay hands on you and say, we ordain you to be a minister of God.

It's as bad as that universal life church a few years back that people were sending in ordinations for their

cats and all. That's ridiculous. We can't ordain people. A slip of paper doesn't ordain you. People laying their hands on you and praying for you, doesn't ordain you. You are ordained by God. And if God has ordained you, you don't need man's ratification or ordination, you've got the credentials of God. That's all you need. So Paul the apostle is saying, you know, He who establishes us with you is Christ. He is the One who has ordained or anointed us, is God.

²²*who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.* God has put His stamp of approval. God has sealed us by giving to us the Holy Spirit. He has given us the earnest of Spirit in our hearts. Now when Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus (Eph. 1:13-14), he speaks about how that they were sealed by the Spirit of promise. The seal was the stamp of ownership. And he talks about them being sealed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, being the seal of God, the stamp of ownership, which is, he said, the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. In other words, it's the down-payment. It's the deposit. God has given a deposit. He's redeemed you. He's given the deposit, the Holy Spirit, which is proof of His intentions of completing the transaction. He's not going to let you just hanging. He's going to complete the transaction of redemption. To show His intention of the completion of the work, He has sealed you. The stamp of ownership is on you. The Holy Spirit which is the down-payment or deposit until He redeems His purchased possession. So Paul repeats the same thought and idea here, only applying it to himself. He has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

²³*Moreover I call God as witness against my soul,* I call God as my witness. In writing to the Romans (Romans 1:9), he said, God is my witness, how that day and night, I'm praying for you. He couldn't call men to witness that. But God is my witness.

So here again, I call God as witness against my soul, *that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.* It was really to spare you. I was upset when I heard the things that were going on, what some of these people were saying. I was ready to come and rip them apart. So God is my witness to just spare you, this big confrontation and all.

That to spare you I came no more to Corinth. ²⁴*Not that we have dominion over your faith,* Not that I have that kind of authority or rule over you.

All I am, *but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.* You don't stand in Paul. You stand in your faith in Jesus Christ. I'm just there to help you to enjoy your life in Christ.

So Paul opens up his letter to the Corinthians. He'll be, this is sort of the tenor that we will be dealing with for the first seven chapters as Paul is sort of defending himself against all of these false accusations that have been made and really showing the true heart of a true servant of God.

He's not considering himself as the lord over the flock or whatever, but I'm there to help to minister to you. To help you to come into the full joy, that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Father, thank You for the comfort, the comfort that we have received in the times of trials, difficulties, personal failures, sorrows. Oh Lord, You were there. You comforted. You lifted us out of the slough of despond and despair. You lifted us out of the miry clay. You set our feet upon the Rock. You established our goings. We are so grateful, Lord for the comfort, wherewith we have been comforted in our afflictions. We thank You Lord that it has helped us to better minister to others who are going through trials, who are going through difficulties in their walk. Lord, we have been there. We know what it is. Help us, Lord, to be faithful ministers, bringing Your love, Your truth and Your joy to the family of God, the body of Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.