

Out With The Old And In With The New

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[0 : 00] Who can remember the last really good DIY fixer-upper job that you did? The last really big DIY fixer-upper job that you did.

Probably exciting. DIY jobs are, well, some DIY jobs are not so much fun. But a fixer-upper job, a DIY job, is sometimes quite a lot of fun. It can be frustrating, but it can be exciting.

Maybe it's not your forte. But we've all needed to fix something in our lives. Take something that's broken and old, not working so well, and renew it.

Fix it. Make it better than it was. Make it functional. Or make it beautiful. From, I don't know, fixing your first bicycle tire, to remodeling your Lego models that your brother or sister broke by mistake, to motorbikes and to cars, if you get that far.

Or maybe you took on a really big DIY job, like a house, or a backyard, or a church. At St. Mark's, we've taken on several big DIY jobs.

[1 : 08] The Latimer House area next door, and then the church hall. And it's exciting, but it's also frustrating, because it's really hard work. But our series has been about us getting back into God's big story, and His big story for us and for the world.

And this final talk is how God is fixing us, and renewing us, and doing a sort of DIY job on us. We are His new renewal project, so that we can enjoy who we were meant to be, and He gets rid of all the bad things in our life, that cause our lives problems, and He gives us all these good things in our life.

And we'll find out that walking with God on this journey, this fixing up renewal project, is both exciting, but it's also very frustrating. Because it depends on if we follow God's plan for the inside-out renovation of our lives.

Now typically when you're going to do a DIY project, you need to do three things. If you're going to succeed, guys won't like to hear this, but we do need to follow a blueprint sometimes.

Okay? If it's a really big job, and it's a really big mess, you need the blueprint. You need the original plans to keep you on track to know what you're doing. The first thing is we need to follow the blueprints.

[2 : 39] Then you're going to chuck out everything that's old, everything that doesn't work in your DIY project. You're going to get rid of stuff that's rotten. Sometimes wooden beams are rotten, or the floor is rotten.

Maybe you're fixing up your car and there's rust, and it doesn't work. The engine doesn't turn, or the doors don't open. You've got to get rid of the rust. Anything that causes a problem with your project that weakens the structure, or doesn't make it work properly, or doesn't make it look pretty, you need to deal with.

You need to have a blueprint. You need to chuck out the old stuff that doesn't work, and then you need to replace it with new stuff that does work, and that looks pretty. Things that are in good working order, that will make the house shine, and the car go, and the garden come to life, and make the whole project work properly.

So being part of God's story, being a Christian is very much like those three steps. It's a process that you follow, and we will need to follow all three of those steps if we're going to be made into the new person that God wants us to be, that's fit for His kingdom.

I don't mean by that going to heaven when you die. I mean fit for His purposes here on earth, and then fit for other, for relationships as well. So we're going to spend our time looking at those three things about getting fixed up by God.

[4 : 02] And so the first thing is following the blueprint. Following the blueprint. Now, one of the unique truths of Christianity is that when we look at how we're going to change, the Bible doesn't

start with the things that we have to do to change.

It begins with what God has already done for us, and especially for those who belong to Him. The Bible doesn't start with the things that you have to change, but what God has already done for those who belong to Him.

So have a look at verse 10 in our chapter. In my version, the NIV, the sentence starts at verse 9. It says, Don't lie to each other, since you've taken off your old self with its practices, and we'll get to that later, and you've put on the new self.

So there's a new thing that's happening to Christians, which this new self is being renewed in knowledge, in the image of its creator.

This new self is being renewed. It's this DIY project that's being, you're a DIY project that God is renewing to look more like our creator.

[5 : 21] Now the creator, we would normally think of as God, but in this context, it's almost our re-creator. It's Christ. It's the one who's given us new life, that we become more like.

We image Him. We become more like Him. So it's, we are being renewed. That's the present tense. There's ongoing action. But this whole chapter, chapter 3, lists an abundance of amazing truths that God has already done, or will do, for those He's renewing.

This blueprint is about who they are, what their identity is, and it contains the most awesome truths about what God has done to make people new already.

So we're just going to list them so we've got them in our minds. First thing, and I'm going to sort of bunch them together so that we can get a handle on it.

And so a new person, this person who is being renewed, is a Christian, it's a Christian, and someone who has been given a new resurrection lease on life. A Christian is someone who's been given a new resurrection lease on life.

[6 : 32] Have a look at verse 1. Paul says, Since then you have been raised with Christ. Raised here means, in a sense, raised from the dead, but also raised up to heaven.

Set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

And then a bit later in verse 4, it says, When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So that the Christian's life is intertwined with the life of Christ. He gets raised from the dead, and there's this... something happens where Christ, who is your life, if you're a Christian, so that your life and his life become unified.

Not that you get lost, not that he gets diminished, but that somehow our lives, if you're a Christian, the Christian life and Christ's life become one.

[7 : 40] A Christian is someone who's given a new resurrection lease on life. Not only that, a Christian is someone who's given a share in the glory of Christ.

He's been given new life, and he gets to share in the glory of Christ. So verse 1 again, he's seated at the right hand of God.

So Paul says, You have been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

And then one day, you will appear with him in glory. So a Christian is united with Christ, and where Christ is now seated, Christians are also seated.

Somehow we're there. Somehow, if you're a Christian, you are also there. And not only that, when he appears, he's coming back to earth to rule and manifest his rule for everyone to see, and it's going to be this glorious day.

[8 : 52] We sing about it often. And just the manner of how he's described coming back on the clouds of heaven with the angels and the saints rising from the dead and meeting him in the air and then bringing him back down to earth.

It's an amazing picture. And if you're a Christian, you get to participate in that amazing event. Appear with him in glory.

So a Christian is someone who's given a new resurrection lease on life. They get to share in the glory of Christ. And then, a Christian is someone who has been chosen and loved and forgiven by God.

Chosen, loved, and forgiven by God. So, that's towards the end of the passage, verse 12 and verse 13. Paul says, therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, that's not stuff that you do, that's stuff that God has done.

And he goes on to say, clothe yourselves with humility. And in verse 13, he says, bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you.

[10:05] So these three, well, there's actually ten different things that Paul says has been done for the Christian. I've bunched them in three different areas. You've been given a new lease on life.

This is not life that you can give for yourself. It's a life that only God can give. You get to share in the glory of Christ. It's hidden now, but it'll be manifested one day.

And you're chosen, loved, and forgiven by God. Just to expand on those three things for us so we get a better grip on them.

A Christian is one who's been deliberately handpicked by God to experience his forgiveness and his love. Deliberately handpicked by God to experience his forgiveness and love, which means you can't do anything to earn it.

God does the saving because we don't have the ability to save ourselves. That's why God does the saving in the New Testament.

[11:13] In the Scriptures, God does the saving. We don't save ourselves. We accept, we follow, we take his salvation, but he does it.

He does the saving. He does the forgiving. We don't have the power to save ourselves and because we don't have that power to do anything really, God gives us or gives Christians the most powerful thing he can give them in their new life.

He gives them the resurrection power of Christ. Quite literally, the most powerful force in the universe. Think of the Big Bang when the whole universe was created and the gigajoules, the gajillion gigajoules of energy that is released if the Big Bang is true.

I mean, you can look at the sun as an example of something that just burns off energy and in his hundreds and millions and billions of suns in the universe, all of those things have been created by God.

But you know when you do a DIY project, it always takes more energy to fix a thing that's broken than to make it in the first place. You know, when your car's broken and your windscreen wiper doesn't work, and like, it costs 2,000 rand.

[12:36] A windscreen wiper, and you think, now, if the windscreen wiper is 2,000 rand, how expensive is this car? But it's always more expensive to fix a car that's broken than to make it in the first place. So that the resurrection power of Christ, take all that creative power that God does, it takes more power to raise a dead person back to life.

And God gives that power to Christians to live this new life that He calls them to. You have this power at work in your life if you're a Christian.

It's not a power that you can give yourself. It's a power that streams out from God and from heaven and through Christ. But the blueprint, this image of who we are doesn't stop there.

It tops it off with this most breathtaking promise of Christians get to share in the glory that Christ Himself has. You know, Jesus in the Gospels says, talked about His people who will one day shine like the sun.

Jesus is now glorious at God's right hand. And then He says, you're going to have some of that glory one day. If we are being made in His image that verse 10, then we're going to reflect something of His glory in our lives.

[14:08] And this glory is way beyond anything in creation. It's cosmic level glory. It's the glory of heaven itself. The place where God dwells in unapproachable light.

And Jesus is seated there as our king, as our representative, representing our needs to God, to this court in heaven, seated at God's right hand on the throne, and showering us with the resources of heaven, so whatever we need for change to be renewed is available to us.

all we have to do is ask and trust that it is there for us. Now, that's the blueprint.

When you want to fix something, you've got to have the plan, you've got to have, this is what this house is meant to be. That's what we are as Christians. The Bible is saying that's who you are. So the way to change is to be more like that blueprint.

It's to spend time thinking about those realities. And that's what Paul says we've got to do in verse 1 and verse 2. He says, since you've been raised with Christ, that's the reality, you have been raised, now what I want you to do as a Christian, set your hearts, or seek, depending on your translation, seek, find, go, and look for these things, set your hearts on things above, up there, the blueprint, the reality, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

[15:48] And then he says, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. So seek which is above, set your heart there, and then set your mind there.

And as you think about those realities, of who you are, this is what God has done for us, it begins to change who we are down here below.

So my first question, have you experienced these realities in your life? Do you know about God's forgiveness and his love? Not do you know about it, I should say, do you know his love and his forgiveness?

If you do, then all the other promises are true for you as well. You have Christ's life-giving power in your life, and you get to share in his glory. If you don't, if you haven't experienced these things, what's stopping you from wanting them and getting them?

Nothing. They're there for you to have. You know, what is better than these things? We're made to enjoy all of these heavenly blessings. You'll always be incomplete without them.

[17:00] You'll be a blueprint that doesn't work. You'll be this shell of a building, of a project on earth that's not quite connected to the thing that it's meant to be. Paul says, don't look at the earthly things to see who you are.

Lift your eyes up. Look there to enjoy these glorious realities, and fill your life with joy and peace and life, and turn to Christ, who's the very source of everything that you long for.

The Psalms, Psalm 34, for example, says, taste and see that the Lord is good. Taste and see that the Lord is good, and that those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

You want to have these things in your life. They will radically change you and give you a peace that you can't have without them.

But for those who have tasted something of God's goodness, but are struggling to know who you are, and let's be honest, that's all of us. I don't feel particularly glorious.

[18:17] I couldn't even remember half my chords this morning, and I practiced them half an hour ago. We're struggling to know who we are, so what does Paul want us to do?

What's going to help us? We need to think of the blueprint. You need to spend time daydreaming about these heavenly realities. Now, I mean daydream at your work and sky off work, I'm not talking about that.

But you know when you're thinking of a DIY project, you know what's on your mind? You know what's on your mind. Your DIY project's on your mind. And you're dreaming about that lovely garden and where the flowers must go and what kind of flowers and what they're going to look like. You're dreaming about what that car is going to look like. Oh, the metallic blue with the stripe down the side and the rims. You dream about it. You know what you want.

We have posters on the walls of what we want. So literally, quite instead of spending time with your mind, thinking about things below, the earthly stuff, we'll get into that just now, spend time thinking about how you can, spend time about what you have and what you're going to get, what you're going to be.

[19:41] Compare your progress to the blueprints and the plan that God has and keep yourself on track. Keep sending your mind, placing your heart, your longings, your desires, your wants, where Christ is seated, in heaven.

And think about those glorious realities. There's many passages in Scripture that you can go to to think about those things. God has promised it, so you can count on it.

We can only start to change once we know what God has done for us and who we are in Christ, once we have that blueprint in place. But, just like any DIY project, just having a blueprint is not enough.

We are called to play an active role in our change, change to become the things that God says we are. Just like your DIY project, if you've got the blueprint, that's okay, at least you've got a blueprint, but you've actually got to do some digging in the place where you're working.

There's bad stuff there that's got to get rid of, and you've got to put the new stuff in to make it look like the blueprint. You need the blueprint, but just having the blueprint is not enough. We're called to

play an active role in our change.

[21 : 05] And so, in this section, but actually in all of Paul's writings, in all the New Testament, the way that God says we're going to change is by getting rid of the old and getting more of the new.

And so, this whole talk really is out with the old and in with the new. Out with the old and in with the new. So, the next step in our renewal process is getting rid of all the bad things that don't make this project work properly.

Things that pull back. Things that make it wonky, that make it weak, that undermine it, that don't make it look so good.

And we're going to replace them with things that are strong and foundational and make it work properly, make it look beautiful. the way the Bible talks about this process is a process of putting bad things off.

We see that in verse 5 and verse 8 and about putting good things on verse 12 to 14. So, what does he say?

[22 : 18] Verse 5 and verse 8. Paul says this, so, I've told you who you are, now I want you to do something. So, he says to the Christians, put to death therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, put away, put to death, kill something, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry, and you really want to put them away because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.

It's not something that you not just want, but I mean, you can't survive the wrath of God. Paul says you used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourselves of all such things.

Put these things away. Anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language from your lips. Put to death, put away, put the bad things off, take off, get rid of, distance yourself from.

Okay, so that's the bad things you must get rid of. What about the good things you must get hold of? He says, okay, well, then I want you to put some stuff on. Verse 12 to 14, therefore, as God's chosen people, again, reality of who you are, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves, put on, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Bear with each other, forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another, forgive as the Lord forgave you, and then verse 14, over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together.

[24 : 13] The key verse is still that verse 10, verse 9 and 10, don't lie to each other since you've taken off your old self with its practices, you've taken off your old self, this old DIY project that you started with, and have put on the new self.

So these are things that have happened, but there's an ongoing process now which is being renewed knowledge in knowledge in the image of its creator. Now, these lists of putting on and putting off are not just random lists of good and bad.

The first list is really all about ourselves. Everything is about what we want and desire for our own pleasure, and really not caring about the damage it does to others in the process.

it's me, me, me, my wants, my desires, so that's verse 5. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

the opposite list of good things is primarily other people focused. I'm not at the center, not my wants, but what others need from me.

[25 : 35] So, verse 12, be compassionate towards other people. Be kind towards other people. Be humble in your interactions with people.

have gentleness and be patient with others, and then forgive others, bear with them. So that the two lists are very opposite. One is about me and what I want, and I'm just going to take it and get it, and the other list is looking outward and serving other people's needs before my own.

The first list breaks relationships, because it's a selfish grab for self-satisfaction, and you know, no one likes people who are selfish. selfish. You think it'll be fun to get those things, and for you it's a little bit of fun, but the litany of broken relationships catches up with you, and you end up alone and hated by everyone.

No one likes people who are selfish, but the second list restores relationships, because everyone likes people who are caring and giving. So there are just some contrasting things to think about.

When you're faced with what you want, what your sinful desires want, versus what God wants you to be like. But, it's not just about being liked or disliked.

[27 : 01] There's an actual deadly struggle going on here. Paul doesn't just say, you know, put these things down in the same way that, I don't know, if this is something that's burning me, and I go, oops, I'm just going to put it there so it's safe.

what's empty, it's not, I'm just going to put it there. Paul says, kill, put to death, the members of your body.

One of the translations is put, verse 5, put to death whatever belongs to your members, your arms, your legs, other parts of your body that are going to be interested in all the bad things there. you need to kill them. And like in a war, you're going to want to give everything you've got to kill this bad thing in you.

This is violent warfare language. Putting off and putting on is not just a change of what's on the outside, it's an emphatic declaration of a statement of who you are on the inside.

[28 : 12] You've been totally changed and so now you need to live up to this new change that's in your life. The putting off and the putting on you is not just like changing of clothes that you go to work.

I'm going to put on my favorite shirt, I'm going to take off my tracksuit pants that I normally wear on the weekend. It's more emphatic than that.

It's like when you come out of prison. And in prison you've got prison clothes. You've got an orange overall on. And when you've been set free and you come out as a civilian, you're not going to wear those orange overalls anymore.

And you're not just going to take them off. You're going to make a statement about those orange overalls. You're going to take them off. Throw them away. Probably going to have a little burning. Call your friends and listen, I'm never going back to that.

If you ever catch me putting these overalls on again, you must ask yourself what's going on in my life. And so what Paul is saying is take what is old and dying and killing you and fight it to the death because it doesn't want to let you go.

[29 : 36] This is the sad thing about sin in our life. It's not an easy battle. This is a battle to the death. Of course we've got God's help on our side but it's a real battle. It's not something that happens easily.

But of course with God's power you can actually fight it because you've got the power of the risen Lord helping you and you've got the help of the saints.

You're not fighting this battle on your own. Okay. That's just to give us the context of what putting on and putting off is all about.

what? Okay. But how do we change? How do we change these things about ourselves? How do we put off the bad and put on the good things?

I mean I guess at one level you've got to first acknowledge that these things are part of your life.

You might say to yourself, oh sexual immorality kicked that habit a long time ago. Yeah, that's okay.

[30 : 39] we'll go down to greed, which Paul says is idolatry. Eating too much, drinking too much, sleeping too much.

What about how you react to other people? Ah, you don't get prone to rages anymore, anger, maybe even filthy language.

none of us, I bet you there's still filthy language coming out of our mouths every now and then. Bad words we shouldn't be saying. What about slander? Those little negative things, those little skinner things we say about our friends, about the people in our church, about other people made in the image of Christ.

so what made in the image of Christ and you're saying bad things about them, you may as well be saying it to Jesus, but you'll never say it to Jesus, but we think it's okay to say it to other people.

So we've got to recognize that these things are still impacting us and it's not easy to get rid of them. Well, but here's where the metaphor of putting on and putting off helps us.

[31 : 55] all of us get dressed daily. We all put clothes on every day. Yep. You should think so, you should hope so.

And what we do is we take our old clothes off and we put the new clothes on because the old clothes need to get washed so that you're fit for work or the day ahead or to have guests or to look good.

So none of us like to wear the same old clothes all the time. So that just like we're to just as we change our clothes every day we are to change daily these things in our lives.

We're to challenge daily the bad things in our life and to put on daily or seek daily the good things in our life. We need to change every day.

Now we don't change it's a daily change so we all change incrementally. Now yes when you change your clothes you totally change your clothes we get that. Some people keep some of the clothes on but okay that's fine.

[33 : 13] But a daily change means it's going to take time to become more and more like this image. You don't just totally change 180 degrees black and white overnight. Some changes happen.

Some really big changes do happen. But a lot of small changes happen incrementally over time. It's not going to happen by itself though.

It's something we need to work on every day. So how do we put off the bad things and put on the good things? We do it daily just like you change your clothes. That's why Paul uses this analogy of taking clothes off and putting clothes on.

Do it daily. Secondly, you're going to do it piece by piece. You're not going to do it all at once. I don't know about you, but typically we only get put one piece of clothing on at a time, unless you jump into your tracksuit or something.

And so the best way to work at this change process is the same way that you get dressed. One thing at a time in your life. take one area of your life that looks and sounds like something from the bad lists here in Colossians.

[34 : 26] There's other lists in Galatians and Ephesians. Take one thing from that bad list that you go, I'm still a little bit like that. And then be honest and say, I'm actually a lot like that.

And then take something from the good list of like, hey, I need to be more like this. Don't try and change everything all at once. Rome wasn't built in a day.

The people worked here at the church. The stuff that happens happens slowly bit by bit. Take one thing at a time and then take it before the Lord every day.

Take it up to heaven. And you'll begin to see how yucky the bad things are and how really beautiful the good things are.

I don't know if you remember, many people have this dream of going to school in the wrong clothes. Yeah? It's like your underwear. And it's normally like, you remember, you had those vests as a kid.

[35 : 36] I don't know if some of us still wear them, but there's a white vest as a kid. And then it's funny, those shorts, whatever. the last thing you want to do is be in a place where you not dress properly like that.

It's so embarrassing. So now what Paul is saying, what the Bible is saying, what God wants you to do is take the filth that is your sin and take it up to the cleanest place in the universe.

And you think, I don't know if I could do that. But that's the only place where it's going to get cleaned because that's where Jesus is. And then this miracle happens. Because Jesus in a sense sees you coming, bringing your bad stuff, and you're just going, I'm so sorry for this.

You know when you apologize, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. And then Jesus says, don't worry, just come here. And he's glowing with this righteousness and this holiness, with this beautiful coat, and he says, just give me your rags.

Give me the yuck stuff. I'll take that. Here, take my thing. Take my coat. Wear my coat, and be clean. And then he tells everyone around, listen, he's one of us now.

[36 : 59] He's okay. He's with me. And it just, it helps you change. So do it daily, do it piece by piece, and then the last bit of advice, is you need to get dressed together.

Maybe that was, we've got to get dressed together. Now that may sound a little bit strange, change. But it's a key thing, and it's often overlooked, especially in the modern church.

What I mean by that is, we've got to get help from other Christians to dress properly, as a Christian, is what I'm talking about. So don't go around and say, hey, I need to help you get changed.

So remember, Paul is talking to the church here. When we read the word you, in our context, in our Western context, we think it means me, but Paul is saying, hey, everyone, you, the church, would be like saying, look, in this side of the church, take all the bad stuff, and this side of the church, take all the good stuff, and now help each other get rid of those things.

They're expected, the church at Colossae is expected to help each other dress better for their role as renewed image bearers. Now, that doesn't mean that you must go around looking at how ugly people's clothes are, in other words, how bad their Christianity is.

[38 : 35] Don't go around like, oh, really, that is really gross, okay? We really need help with that. Don't do that. What you need to do is go to someone, another Christian, and say, hey, you know, these lists, I kind of recognize myself in this one area, and can we, could you help?

And then the thing to do as a Christian, you don't go, oh, that's really bad, how could you do that? What is the thing to do as a Christian? What does Christ do with you? What does Paul say we are to do with each other?

Verse 13, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, you. So then you say, cool, I'd be glad to help, I'd be glad to help.

I also suffer from the same problems. Hey, you want some more good things? Can I have more of this good thing? I'll be happy to help you pray for that. We really, this is a key part of change that's often neglected.

if you do this, just this one thing, you're going to make a big change in your life. Do it daily, do it piece by piece, try and tackle this whole beast by itself, take bite sized chunks and then get dressed together, help each other.

[40 : 06] If you do notice someone who's struggling, my advice is to not go to them directly, but pray, ask God to open their eyes and you'd be surprised that they may well come knocking on your door.

So friends, coming to Christ is just the start of the journey. You will see change, it will take time, it's not a quick fix, it's not easy, but if we do what the Bible tells us to do, look to the blueprint, remember who you are, loved, chosen, forgiven, raised up to heaven, remember what you're going to receive, glory that we can't imagine and glory that's going to increase and keep going, blessing, goodness, hope, an inheritance in heaven waiting to be revealed on the last day and then get stuck in killing off the things that are pulling you down to earth, go to heaven, ask for help and pull in, work towards the good things that you see.

Paul ends this section with these words in Colossians, he says this, whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, it is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Friends, this is a journey worth taking, it's a king worth serving and it's a God worth worshipping.

Let's ask, let's pray and ask him to help us do these things.

Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you so much for what you've done for us Lord, it is the greatest mercy that you took our sins on yourself, it is an even greater mercy that you invite us up to where you are and then give us your righteousness and you take all our filthy rags.

[42 : 44] Lord, you've raised us up to life, you've given us the Holy Spirit and you've given us each other Lord to help us in this journey. Lord, will you be with us, change and mold and shape us, give us your Holy Spirit.

Help us Lord to help each other, make us strong and bring us safely to the inheritance that you promise. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.