

Partakers of Christ or Corpses in the Wilderness

Hebrews 3:14-19, “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we thank You for this passage that You have us in. We thank You that You have given us Your word, that Your word is consistent. Thank You that as we're studying Exodus and also Hebrews that we can see the continuity and we see pictures that you have, spiritual pictures there for us. We pray that You will help us to walk in belief. Help us to guard our hearts and help us to also exhort one another to love and good works. Pray that You will be with Jonathan as he preaches this morning. We pray that You will fill Him with Your Spirit and You will speak to us. Pray that You will help us to hear Your word and be doers of Your word. Amen.

Our passage today starts with the word 'For', which means everything we have today, almost like any other passage in Scripture, but particularly today, is an extension of what happened before it. So you had to be paying attention last week and the week before it because there's an extended argument and what happens today is just building on what happens in those passages beforehand. As we go through this text I'm going to be reminding us some of the things we looked at. It's alright if you had to take the kids out, if you weren't here, you'll get it, we'll cover it. We have an opportunity before us today. That's what this text is about, opportunities for us. Today, we have heard the word of God, it was just read to us. Today, we consider the glories and mercies of being counted as partakers of Christ. Today we consider the terrors that follow rebellion and today we consider the death that follows. The opportunity for us is to hear the word of God. We can either soften to it and experience the rest that God has in store for those who partake of Christ. Or the risk is that we will hear but harden our hearts and invite the anger of God. Everything is at stake today, if you will hear His voice.

Verses 14-15, “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” If you are taking notes, here are the three key words from verse 14 that we will unpack: Partakers, Confidence, Steadfast. First, take the “partakers of Christ” phrase. This is the same word used in verse 1, where our author speaks to his hearers as “partakers of a heavenly calling”. The larger context in which today's text sits is in an extended argument over the nature of salvation and the testing of that salvation, or the assurance of it.

Chapter 2 tells of the Glory of Christ and how He brings many sons to glory. Chapter 2 also told us of how Christ shared in the flesh and blood like men in order to destroy death through His death, and through His sufferings and temptations, aid those of us who are tempted. So you get to chapter 3 and it opens with the phrase “partakers of a heavenly calling”, but that gets even more precise here in verse 14 when the readers are addressed as “partakers of Christ”. Between these two partakings, to sum up 14 very dense verses, we are told of the faithfulness of Christ and warned of the risk of unfaithfulness on our part. Our author addresses his readers as participants in the work of Christ and even as partakers of Christ Himself. He’s writing to people as if they are partakers of Christ, as if they are partakers of a heavenly calling, but He knows not all of his hearers, not all of his audience on earth, not all those who call themselves followers of Christ are in fact followers of Christ. He knows that there are glories and blessings in being associated with Christ, but he also knows that there are terrible judgments on those who only pretend the partaking of Christ, those who have been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. There are some who think they are of Christ and aren’t and there are others who don’t even think they are of Christ, but they pretend they are of Christ. There are those who associate themselves with the people of God, with the visible church of God. That’s his audience and he’s warning if you are part of that and you’re just pretending, there are terrible things in store. This text is not a sermon for unreached people, this is not a sermon for people who have never heard the gospel. It’s there in the text, this sermon is for us. This is for the people who call themselves by the name of Christ, for people on earth that partake of Christ, or say they do. What does it mean to partake of Christ? What does it mean to actually really partake of Christ? Consider all the blessings Paul mentioned in the passage from 1 Timothy that Noel read. Consider the inheritance promised to those who are associated with Christ, the inheritance of all the things, of heaven, of earth, everything worth having. Consider these things that are promised to those that endure to the end. Partaking of Christ means to be with the people of Christ here and in the life to come. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:21, You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and the table of demons. Partaking of Christ, really partaking of Christ, means you have isolated yourself from the world. It means that Christ has isolated you from the world, Christ has made you a new man and He is in the process of putting the old man to death. What we have here is everything worth having. Christ’s table provides everything that we need, everything that is called good is captured in that phrase. How do you get that? How do you get all the good things? That brings us to the second word- “if”. “If we hold the beginning of our confidence.” This is probably my favorite word in the text, this word ‘confidence’. How do we know if we really partake of Christ? If we hold the beginning of our confidence to the end. The word ‘beginning’ there is ‘archaea’, the word ‘and’ there is ‘telos’, so it’s like the biggest word for ‘beginning’ that you could want and the biggest word for ‘and’. This also points us back to verse 6. So you’ve got to go back and look at verse six where it says Christ is the Son over His own house, and we are of that house if we hold fast our confidence to the end. The word ‘confidence’ is the same Greek word in both cases. This verse amplifies that past verse so verse 14 is amplified of what happened in verse 1 and 6. Not only can we be assured that we are of the house of Christ, but we can be assured that we are of Christ Himself if we hold the beginning of our confidence. The reason I think this is my favorite Greek word is that the word ‘confidence’ we have is losing something in translation, we’re missing a whole lot with this. Now, I don’t think the translators did a bad job

here, they picked a perfectly good word to translate the Greek word into English. The original word, in Greek, is 'hypostasis' which is a very broad word with many layers of meaning to it. This is like what happens in John 1, where the word 'logos' is translated "Word"--the Word became flesh, that is a good translation if you can only pick one English term, but the Greek term means word, and logic, and reason, and meaning. It has so many more meanings in English than it does in Greek. They had to pick a word so they did and that's perfectly fine. The same thing is happening here. 'Hypostasis' can imply confidence. That's typically the metaphorical meaning, and you can see our translators chose in both verses to translate it 'confidence'. That's fine, I don't have a problem with it, but there is so much more than just confidence. 'Hypostasis' is a compound word and literally means "that which supports underneath". In fact, this word can be used if you want to speak of literal foundations of houses. It's confidence on one hand, but also the thing that is supporting underneath. I think that makes verse 6 all the more interesting, it adds layers to it. Replace "confidence" with "foundation" and you get something like, "we are Christ's house if we hold fast to the foundation." Hold to the foundation. Line up with the cornerstone. Build your house on the rock. All these Biblical concepts that we know from other passages, they are all brought to this text with this one extra meaning. I think this is a case where the writer intentionally picked a word that has lots of color to it, lots of meanings, lots of different angles because they all work and they all add something to this. We only have one meaning in English, so let's talk about the others. You have 'confidence', 'foundation', but there is another common meaning to the term. 'Hypostasis' can also mean "really real" in the Greek. This was a common use of the term in Greek philosophy and Greek science, which was all just philosophy. When you look at all the stuff around you and you want to discover that which is actual, that which is real, out of all the illusions, you are looking for the 'hypostasis', that which is undergirding things and your perceptions of them. You're looking for the atoms, the unchangeable, the thing that can't be moved, the thing that everything else is based on. This is the word used in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance (hypostasis) of things hoped for..." In fact, Hebrews uses that word 'hypostasis', I think it's only used one other place in the New Testament, but it's used around five or six times in the book of Hebrews. Faith is the substance, faith is what's really real, it's what you can actually base your faith on because it's not an illusion. So what is really real? What's the actual thing? What undergirds everything else? Nothing in human experience has ever been more real, more fundamental, than Christ. This is Paul at Mars Hill speaking to a bunch of Greeks, Acts 17:28 "In Him [Christ] we live and move and have our being." John 1:3 "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." Hebrews 2:10 "for whom are all things and by whom are all things." Or the best one, Colossians 1:15-18 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." What's the thing underneath everything else? What's the one thing that's really real, the one thing in which there is no doubt, the one thing that's actual and no illusion? What does everything depend on? What's the hypostasis of everything? It's Christ. It's not a trick question. When you add these other meanings into our understanding of this word, it should become clear that the

confidence referenced when it says 'hold fast your confidence' is not something that originates from us. It's not talking about anything in you. Children, remember this verse every time you hear somebody say something stupid about "believing in yourself." And I know that some of you are probably not allowed to say the word "stupid" at home, this thing that I'm going to tell you is something that is stupid. You will hear people, books, movies, athletes, tell you to believe in yourself. All you need to do is believe in yourself. Nothing could be dumber than that. That's not what you're being told to hold fast to. Don't hold onto yourself! That's stupid. You have to hold onto something outside you, more sure, more stable than anything inside you. You cannot be your own foundation; you do not define your own reality. We are partakers with Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence, if we hold to the foundation, if we hold to that which is really real, if we hold to that One Thing upon which literally every created thing depends--what is that confidence? What's that foundation? What's that real reality? Rather who because in every sense it is Christ. We are partakers of Christ, if we hold to Christ. And that brings us to the 3rd word. We're partakers of Christ, we partake if we hold onto a confidence, but how are we supposed to hold onto that confidence? We're supposed to hold onto it steadfastly. This word tells us the manner in which we are to hold to our confidence. Again, the word was used in verse 6, but there it was translated "firm." Both of those are perfect translations of the word, I don't know why they picked one there and a different one here. As I was poking around and studying this, I said, 'Oh my goodness, I wish we were singing 'How Firm a Foundation' this week because it goes perfectly with this', and then I saw we were singing 'How Firm a Foundation' this week! Isn't that great? Literally, if you translate the words right you have 'hold to the foundation firmly'. The root of this word is "basis"--again implying something permanent, something underneath, something holding things together. You can have a really great house, and you can have a really great foundation, but if there is nothing that fastens the house to the foundation there will be trouble. For the most part, the way that we build houses today is with a masonry foundation and then we put wood framed walls and floors over it. Those sorts of houses can work just fine during good weather, but as soon as a strong wind comes through, you can find out which houses are secured to their foundations and which were just sitting on them. The way modern construction does this is with anchor bolts that fasten the wood to the masonry, usually no more than 6' apart all around the outside edge of the home. With the job that I have, I've seen major damage to homes where they looked just fine one day, even for decades and then a storm blew through and they began sliding off of their foundations because they either had not anchor bolts or not enough. The house can be sitting in the foundation just fine, but if there are no anchor bolts, nothing holding the house down, it will just topple over. So, summing up this verse in a sort of paraphrase: we are partakers of Christ if we hold to Christ the foundation like we have been anchor-bolted to Him. How do you do that? How do you get secured in place? Look to verse 15-- our author repeats the quote from Psalm 95, "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Remember Psalm 95 from last week? We're not going to break down every little bit of this, but we're going to repeat everything. In the ancient languages without punctuation, how do you emphasize things? You repeat yourself. He's repeating himself. "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." There is something going on there, though, in the first four words of this verse "while it is said". This phrase comes right before a quote from Psalm 95. It is not just some old saying that some old king wrote generations ago. Whenever you hear this, our author

implies, it still applies to you, it still binds you if you heard it. Whatever parts of the OT you think may have passed away, this is not one of them. In just a few verses, for us it will be many sermons later, we will come to that famous passage in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than a two edged sword." The word of God is living. Our author actually believes that and he looks at Psalm 95 that was written generations and generations before he gets there and says, "While it is said, you better be paying attention". If that was true then, what's different now? It still applies to us. The writer believes that is Psalm 95 says, "Today", then that text means his today, and he'll repeat it 5 times in two chapters just so you get the point. David's today is your today because the Word of God is living and powerful. Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. This is how you check to make sure the anchor bolts are in place. Today, when you are faced with temptations, when you know the right thing to do, when you hear the voice of God in whatever manner He speaks, His word, His creation, your parents, your conscience, through some authority put over you, when you hear His word, today, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Like last week's verses, do this today while it is called today. You cannot harden your heart today and hope that resistance to sin will be any easier tomorrow. Look at what happened to Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a great example of this because we see a guy who progressively hardens his heart over and over again. He hardened his heart in the face of great wonders from God over and over and the deceitfulness of sin caught up to him such that he suffered the destruction of his entire kingdom, even to the death of his own son and the destruction of his whole army. That's what happens when someone hears the voice of God and hardens their heart repeatedly until it leads to their own destruction. If at any point Pharaoh had just softened, it would have stopped. Today, when he heard God's voice, if he just listened to God it would have all been better, but instead it got harder and harder. You cannot bargain with God. How do you keep the evil heart of unbelief at bay? Today, while it is called today, do not harden your heart. Don't wait for tomorrow to do it.

But as an encouragement, if you do it today, then when tomorrow comes and tomorrow is called today, do it again. Today you have the choice before you that will affect the rest of your life. Are you going to harden yourself to the deceitfulness of sin, are you going to feed an evil heart of unbelief by sinning when you know you shouldn't? Or are you going to soften your heart towards God, and hear His word and heed it? And tomorrow, when you wake up, you will be presented the same choices that will affect the rest of your life, but the choices you make today, while it is called today, dictate how easy it is to pick one or the other tomorrow. And so on, for the rest of your life. There are two things I think we need to look at here because when you see a New Testament author handling Scripture and you want to know how to handle Scripture and you see a good example, study that example. The first examples for us, Paul tells us that these things happened to them as examples for us. In this particular case, we have a really wonderful thing going on. What we have is something that happens to Old Testament people way back in Exodus and then we had an Old Testament writer in Psalms, several generations after that who said, 'You know what? Those things happened as examples for us so we wouldn't harden our hearts.' Then you have a New Testament writer who looks at what the Old Testament writer says about the earlier Old Testament people and says those things happened as an example for us. If you want to know how to handle those things Paul said about those things being examples for us, it's all here in as much level and detail as you could want. If you want to know

what they mean, this is a great case study. Question two, I thought of this when Dan sent the Nigerian update. Colossians 3:16 tells us that to teach each other with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Hebrews 3 and 4 is the author of Hebrews teaching with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Here we have an example of a writer in the Bible who wants to make some really serious theological points about the nature of God and man and man's responsibilities towards God and he goes to a songbook to get his proof-text. These are not minor things, these are not fluffy things, everything depends on this, he wants to make points for us and give us applications and in order to do that he teaches us by psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. By the time we get through Hebrews 4, he is even looking at the grammar of this song and how it works. By Hebrews 4, he will have referenced Psalm 95 at least five or six times to make his points. Maybe it's not five times and it's just once and a long argument. Either way, teach one another with psalms, songs, and spiritual songs. Want to know how to do that? Here's an author in the Bible doing it.

Verses 16-18, "For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" What is it that Israel heard, but rebelled against in the wilderness? If you look ahead to Hebrews 4:2 it's going to tell us that what they heard was the gospel. The author of Hebrews says it's the same gospel and obviously the details are different because they didn't hear Jesus' words, but the writer of Hebrews says they heard the gospel. But it did not profit them because they had no faith. They heard the gospel but it didn't profit them because they didn't have faith. Remember last week, the rebellion was a failure to believe the promises of God. On this point in particular, it was a failure to believe the good things that God had in store for them, it was a failure to believe that He would take them to a land of milk and honey, it was a failure to believe that He would fulfill the promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. It was a failure to believe the testimony of Joseph whose bones they had with them to take and bury in Canaan. It was a failure to believe their own eyes when they saw the abundance of the land. When faced with giants, it was a failure to remember their own songs that they sang about a Lord who triumphed gloriously. For this, God was angry with them for forty years. At the moment of their rebellion He declared that all the adults, excepting Joshua and Caleb, would die in the wilderness. But He did not kill them all at that moment though, He drug it out, it was a protracted anger. He gave them 40 years of wandering, 40 years He led them until the rebellious generation would die off. He swore, in His wrath, they would not enter into His rest. To punctuate this, the author of Hebrews speaks of the corpses in the wilderness. The word used for corpses here is not a polite word, it's 'kolon'. As far as I can tell this is the only place in the New Testament to talk about bodies and flesh. If you're reading this in King James, the word is 'carcass' and they both work well because it's a brutally graphic word. He does not just speak of them "passing away" or "going to a better place" or anything nice like that. This word translated corpses speaks of dead bodies to the point of decay that they start falling apart. This isn't just dead bodies, this is pretty extreme. I know of a church in Virginia where the elders thought that the right interpretation of Philippians 4:8, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." meant that you were supposed to, for

example, train your children to look away from roadkill. You had to use euphemisms to speak of death. Kids, euphemism means when you use a polite or acceptable term for something that is distasteful or wicked. I get it. I understand why you would want to shield yourselves and your children from these things. We are going into the Halloween season where you are going to see our culture celebrate death and dead bodies. The hit decoration this year is a 12' tall skeleton from Home Depot, and they are already sold out. You have to go on Ebay if you want one of them and it will cost you \$1,000. That's what everybody wants, everybody wants to celebrate a dead body on the point of decay that it's falling apart. People are going to pay cash money to go to see fake gory things at our local haunted forest. We have to drive by it on our way to church and the parking lot is already muddy. It tells you where we are as a culture. Proverbs says that all who hate me love death, and when you see a culture in love with death, when you see a culture that says this month we're all going to decorate our yards with death and spend money on death, and it's not even ironic, when we put things in the front yard, it is safe to say that when a culture loves death like that, it's safe to conclude that the culture hates the things of God. You can't hide what you really believe, all who hate Me love death. We love death, therefore, we hate the things of God. We should have no part with these macabre celebrations, especially not when God has given us good things to consider, when we have the case of His sovereignty in the life of the Pilgrims this year. So yes, celebrate, but celebrate the pure, the noble, the right, the good, and shun celebrations of death. But back to Hebrews, our author does not celebrate death and does not force us to consider it for frivolous reasons. Yet, neither is he so squeamish as the elders of that church in Virginia I was telling you about. He does not use euphemisms. Whatever is true; meditate on those things. What is true of Israel in the wilderness? It is not just that they did not enter the rest. No, and don't turn your eyes away from this, their sin led to their bodies rotting in the wilderness. That's what Hebrews tells us. Their sin, their disobedience, their rebellion led to their corpses in the wilderness. This is the normal thing that happens to bodies and it happens to bodies because of our sin, because we need redemption and resurrection. Generally speaking, this is what happened ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. This is here because of sin, so why emphasize it? Why use a word that talks about bodies falling to pieces? Because this incident is an example for us. This is a type of eternal things. Entering the rest is a picture of heaven. Going into Canaan was supposed to be a picture of going into heaven. If you don't make it to heaven, what does that mean? We're good Protestants, there's no third option for us. If you're not talking about heaven, you're talking about hell. Not entering the rest is a picture of hell and it is terrible, so terrible that we probably have no full conception of how bad it is. We know what Scripture says about it, we know about the fire and brimstone and the worm that does not die. Scripture tells us all those things, but viscerally speaking, I don't think any of us really understand it. So what does the author of Hebrews do? We have an example of what happened when a righteous and holy God was angry at the people for 40 years and the consequence of his anger for forty years was that their bodies decayed in the wilderness. And remember, this is an example, hell is an eternity with God being angry with the wicked and whatever happens there, whatever happens to those bodies in the place where the worm does not die, it's going to be worse than when God was angry for just forty years. We can have really wonderfully graphic pictures of what heaven is like with Canaan. We can talk about the bunches of grapes that are so big that two men have to carry them. We can talk about a land flowing with milk and honey. We can talk about houses you didn't build

and vineyards you didn't plant. They are all pictures of what heaven is like, but don't forget the picture of hell where bodies rot in the wilderness. There, there are torments that are greater than a corpse falling apart. I wouldn't tell you those things if they weren't in the text, but they are here in the text. We're supposed to come up against this and we're supposed to say, 'That's disgusting, that's terrifying.' And whose bodies fell? Those who disobeyed. From the very beginning, from the incident at the waters of Marah, God told them how things worked in His economy. From Exodus 15:26, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you." God told them it was going to be this way, that it was going to be like this. If you obey Me, I am Jehovah-Rapha, God the healer. If you do not obey Me, you have seen what I can do to Egypt and I can do the same to you. And, it was so. Israel, while it was "today" for them, did not diligently heed the voice of the Lord, and their corpses fell in the wilderness.

Verse 19, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." When you come to this phrase it strikes me as a little odd, I didn't expect this conclusion to come. At least, perhaps it strikes you as odd that this verse in this place is odd. In the previous verses, we are told of Israel's rebellion, Israel's sinning, and Israel's disobedience. If we have the wrong understanding of everything, if we have the wrong understanding about God and Scripture and man, we might think that the logical conclusion of the previous verses is that the reason that the Israelites could not enter the land was because of their bad works. I wouldn't have been surprised if it had said that given the context, but that's not what it says. It doesn't say the reason they couldn't enter the land was because of their works. The summary of all their problems, the heart of their rebellion and sin and disobedience is their unbelief. That's the real problem. Outwardly, they drank of the Rock. Outwardly, they ate of the manna. Outwardly, they followed the pillar. But inwardly, they did not believe and that unbelief was their doom. The rebellion, the sin, the disobedience are just expressions of the inward state. The real problem was that they didn't believe. If they did believe they would have been like Joshua and Caleb. Again, this is a type of heaven and hell, and the only thing that matters is the belief. Everything that happens on earth is an expression of that, when it says every idle word will be taken into account, it's because there is a God who judges, but those idle words are expressions of an inward state. Like I said, this text isn't for unreached people, those who haven't heard the gospel before. This text is for those who come to church every week. This text is for those who shake hands before and after the sermon each week. This text is for those who share a meal together each Sunday. This text is for children who live in a house where Scripture is read. This text is for adults who come to Sunday services. This text is for those who call themselves Christians and it says there are people out there who hear the word and have a problem. Their problem is not just sin, disobedience, and rebellion. The problem is their unbelief. This is critical for us; this text is for the visible church. It is a warning to those who have heard the word of God. Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. That's how this sermon ends, not on a good note. Thankfully the writer of Hebrews keeps writing and you get to chapter 4 and you talk about going boldly before the throne of God, but that's not where we are today. Where we are today is talking about what it means the risk is of partaking of Christ and having unbelief. Today we are faced with rotting corpses in the wilderness.

Applications

- 1) If you don't remember anything from last week or this week, hear this. Today, if you hear the voice of God, do not harden your hearts. When tomorrow becomes today, do it again.
- 2) If you struggle with assurance of salvation, use this text as a test. The test is not whether or not you still sin; this side of eternal rest we all have the flesh to deal with. The test you can apply is Today, if you hear the voice of God, do you harden your heart or do you soften it? Do you proceed with disobedience, or do you start the process of obeying? Then, tomorrow, do it again.
- 3) Let us therefore fear. This is from Hebrews 4:1, but it is the author of Hebrews' own application of his text. Let us fear if any of us fall short of the rest.
- 4) The fear spoken of is corporate. We should not just each seek our own rest, but should exhort each other. We should exhort our children. We should do it daily, today.
- 5) Do not minimize unbelief. The consequences in both this life and the next devastating.
- 6) We should follow the example of our author here and really teach each other with songs. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent word.

Heavenly Father, You are a glorious God. You are a God who does not hide His face from His people. A God who does not cause Your people to guess what You want. You are plain in Your requirements of us and You are plain in how You have told us how You would react. We pray today that we would believe that You will actually do what You say, that You are a God who makes promises, keeps them, that You're a God who promises judgements and that You will judge justly and rightly. We pray that You would cause mercy to be poured out on us, mercy for us to believe, mercy for the unbelievers in this room today to be given grace to believe. That today You would soften our hearts that we might believe. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.