

July 23/24, 2022

## Descent into Moral Chaos

*Messes. Choices. Faithful God Series*

**Judges 19:1-20:11**

Pastor Ryan Harmon

Well, after multiple warnings...multiple warnings, the time has arrived. You know, we wanted to give those warnings as a consideration, because there's some difficult stuff in this text today, and also again next week. But we also are a church that is committed to teaching the whole counsel of God, and there are times where there are difficult things. But as we are committed to the fact that God put this in here for a reason, we believe there is a lesson for us in this. So, without any more delay, we're going to dig in, dig into a text that many scholars agree is one of the most graphic, one of the most disturbing texts in all of Scripture. So, open your Bibles with me to Judges, Chapter 19. We're going to be covering the whole chapter and a bit of chapter 20, as well. So, beginning in verse 1:

**Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah. But his concubine played the harlot against him, and she went away from him to her father's house, in Bethlehem, in Judah, and was there for a period of four months.** (\*NASB, Judges 19:1-2)

So here at the outset, we meet three people. We meet a Levite and his concubine, and we learn about her father. Throughout this story, throughout the text, all three of these people are going to remain nameless for us. Many scholars agree that this has an effect of teaching us something, not just about these individuals, but also about Israel as a whole. In some way these people are representative. This is what it was like during these days in Israel. This is absolutely a true story, a historical story. But it also serves a purpose of telling us where God's people sat at this particular moment. So we learned about a Levite. Of course, last week Josh introduced us to a Levite as well. The Levites, that tribe, were intended by God and were tasked by God to oversee the religious life of Israel, to offer up sacrifices for the people, and to run the tabernacle. They would go from village to village, offering sacrifices for people. That was what they did. But we learned last week that Israel had fallen once again, as they have so often throughout Judges. They had fallen into idolatry, and so it seems that this week, like last week, this Levite seems to be a little bit aimless, maybe lacking some purpose. And maybe it's just possible that, because idolatry was on the rise, these Levites didn't have quite as much work to do as they once did. We don't know for sure but it doesn't seem like this Levite is taking up the task that God has given him. We also learned that he has a concubine. Now, for our modern ears, that's difficult to deal with—this whole idea of polygamy—and how it possibly existed in Israel is hard for us to fathom. Concubines were essentially second-order wives. So, there was the primary wife who had the most rights, the most privileges. But then there was a second class of wife, and that is what a concubine was. They had rights—this was a marriage commitment still, there was a covenant there—but it was a different setup than a husband would have had with his primary wife. We're going to come back to polygamy in a few moments, just because I think it's one of those things that we wrestle with sometimes and try to figure out, “Why did God allow that?” We're going to come back to that.

Now, in the text that I read—I'm reading the New American Standard—it says that **the concubine played the harlot**. Some of your translations might say that she was *unfaithful* if you're reading in the ESV or the NIV perhaps. She was unfaithful. It's the same word and, of course a harlot is unfaithful, right? But as I was studying and thinking about this and reading different commentaries, it certainly seems like unfaithfulness is probably more the case than actual prostitution here. It doesn't seem like she was being unfaithful to her husband in the sense that she was with other men, but she was unfaithful to the covenant of marriage. In the act of leaving him, she abandoned him, and she abandoned her marriage. It certainly seems like that's the case, and a number of scholars agree. The fact that she runs to her father's house, to me suggests she probably wasn't a harlot; she probably wasn't a prostitute. That would have brought shame upon him and his household. We don't know precisely what occurred that upset her so much that caused her to leave, but some provocation occurred, and she went to her father's house and was there for four months.

Before we continue any further, I just want to zoom out for a second again, kind of bring us to that 30,000-foot level, and just remember what's happening in the book of Judges. In verse 1 it says: **This was a time when there was no king in Israel**, and that refrain has been repeated over and over. There's no king. There's also no judge at this time. Samson is the last judge that we have learned about; he's the last judge of Israel. No king, no judge, and so often what occurs with that phrase—that there is no king—there's then this second phrase that *everyone did what was right in their own eyes*. That's what is happening in Israel. Everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes, and last week we saw that what commonly occurs when everyone starts to do what is right in their own eyes, is that idolatry comes on the scene and rises in the lives of the people of God.

Now, idolatry is essentially just replacing God, with a god of our choosing. Usually those gods look a lot like ourselves because they are intended to serve us. We want them to approve of us and our ways. Rather than us serving the one God, we create gods that kind of do our bidding. That's what idolatry is. It's making a lesser fake god for ourselves that works on our terms, and that's what was happening in Israel. And when this happens, soon, maybe not immediately, but very soon, chaos and destruction will result. So, God has been abandoned in Israel, and the results of that abandonment are going to be devastating. Continuing in verse 3:

**Then her husband arose and went after her to speak tenderly to her in order to bring her back, taking with him his servant and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him into her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him. His father-in-law, the girl's father detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank, and lodged there. (Vs. 3-4)**

We're going to stop there. I'm just going to summarize verses 5 through 9 because they're very repetitive. What happens day after day is they eat and they drink and they celebrate, and he lodges there. Three days pass; four days pass. They come to the fifth day, and that is what is happening. It's a classic case of Middle Eastern hospitality, almost over the top, almost comical in how this father-in-law continues to detain this Levite. We don't know exactly what his motives were. I think it's possible, like last week, you might remember that Micah kind of wanted to have a Levite, like it bought him some credit, it bought him some reputation. And it's possible that maybe this father-in-law thought, "If I can keep this Levite around, that's a good thing for me." I'm not sure exactly, but he tried to detain him over and over. We also learned that, as the Levite is going back to greet

his wife, he says he intends **to speak tenderly to her**, literally speak to her heart. So again, while we don't know what caused her departure, it seems possible at least that maybe tenderness wasn't a part of their relationship, and something needs to be smoothed over. So, they sit there engaging in this food and drink, food and drink hospitality, seen over and over again. Three days passed; four days passed; the fifth day comes and towards the end of the day, again, he tries to get the Levite to stay. We'll see if he's successful. Verse 10:

**But the man—the Levite—was not willing to spend the night, so he arose and departed and came to a *place* opposite Jebus, (that is, Jerusalem). And there were with him a pair of saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him. When they *were* near Jebus, the day was almost gone; and the servant said to his master, “Please come, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it.” However, his master said to him, “We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners who are not of the sons of Israel; but we will go on as far as Gibeah.” He said to his servant, “Come and let us approach one of these places; and we will spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah.” So they passed along and went their way, and the sun set on them near Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin. They turned aside there in order to enter *and* lodge in Gibeah. When they entered, they sat down in the open square of the city for no one took them into *his* house to spend the night. (Vs. 10-15)**

So, they depart late in the day from Bethlehem. It's a long journey to get all the way back to his home, so they can't make it all the way. They travel about five miles north and they get to Jebus, which is modern day Jerusalem; it hasn't yet been conquered by Israel. They had failed to drive the Canaanites out of that city, and so the Levite is nervous about spending the night there. He thinks they won't be greeted with warmth—won't be a friendly place for them to stay—and so they need to continue on. So even though night is quickly approaching, and things get dangerous at night out in the wilderness, they continue about five miles northeast of Jebus, Jerusalem, and they arrive at a city of Gibeah, of the tribe of Benjamin. This is an Israelite city, so they are anticipating that they will be greeted; they will be taken in; they will be hosted in this city. But their expectations are not met. They get into Gibeah; they are not welcomed. They don't receive what they are expecting, and they're having to kind of camp out in the open square in the center of the city. They avoided Jebus, right? because the Canaanites won't be kind to us, and surely the Israelites will; so let's go to an Israelite city. They arrived in the Israelite city, their expectations aren't met, and what we start to feel like is maybe these Israelites aren't so safe in Israel. Maybe their fellow Israelites aren't going to be friendly to their countrymen. Continuing in verse 16:

**Then behold, an old man was coming out of the field from his work and evening. Now the man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was staying in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. And he lifted up his eyes and saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, “Where are you going, and where do you come from?” He said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, *for* I am from there, and I went to Bethlehem in Judah. But I am *now* going to my house, and no man will take me into his house. Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, your maid servant, and the young man who is with your servants; there is no lack of anything.” The old man said, “Peace to you. Only let me *take care***

**of all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.” So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. (Vs. 16-21)**

So the old man comes on the scene from a day of work, and I'm sure when he arrives in the city, he's appalled because hospitality was a high value. You don't let your fellow countrymen stay in the middle of the square. And so he takes them in and serves as a model host, apparently saving them from this moment that was somewhat shameful for them, and for the city of Gibeah. He serves as a model host, as it appears that he seems somewhat fearful about the idea of them staying out in the open air in the square of the city, as if he knew something could maybe go wrong, if that would happen. And sure enough, things are about to take an incredibly awful turn. Verse 22:

**While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him.” Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly. Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man. But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought *her* out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until *full* daylight. (Vs. 22-26)**

Just a horrific scene! Let's just turn our minds back for a moment before we dig into the details, and let's just remember the larger context. *There is no king. Everyone does what is right in their own eyes.* God has been removed to the periphery, to the sidelines, forgotten, abandoned, rejected in favor of idols of the people's own choosing. And when that combination occurs, the descent into moral chaos is inevitable...it's inevitable! But we cannot forget this depravity that we see here. It doesn't spring forth from nowhere. It's the result of an unhinged people who have set aside their God, forgotten Him. An unhinged people who have minimized sin and have chosen to live life on their own terms. And when that's the context, horrific things result.

What do we see? Well, first, we see the wicked men of the city, wicked Israelites. We have to say, we have to emphasize, these are Israelites. They come and they demand access to the Levite, that they may have relations with him, which is a quaint way of saying what they were plotting to do was, as a group, sexually assault this Levite. Our model host, either due to callousness or self-preservation, comes out and said, “Hey, don't do this. That's too horrible. Don't engage in this folly.” But then he offers up his daughter and the Levite's concubine. The model host has offered up the two most vulnerable people in this situation—a spineless and sinful suggestion on his part. Then the men don't take him up on the offer, and so the Levite continues to forcibly grab his concubine and send her out to them. This is nothing more than a grievous, despicable, evil that that ultimately makes this Levite complicit in this horrendous act that occurred throughout the night. He discarded her, gave her into the hands of these wicked men, and what do they do? The wicked men act wickedly, and they assault her all night—in the language, in the Hebrew—which is

incredibly terse and cold. It says they seize her, they raped her, they abused her, and then they discarded her. It's hard to even put into words just how horrible it is. Absent from the story, but I think we also have to acknowledge their complicity in this event, are the people of Gibeah, right? The city square is a very public location. It would have been surrounded by a number of houses, and yet as this event, as this sinful horror is taking place all night long, not a single person intervened...not a single person! Absolute corruption...depravity...heinous sin—all taking place among the people of Israel, against the people of Israel. Israel raping Israelites! God's people playing the part of Sodom. If this reminds you at all of that scene from Genesis 19, that is not a mistake. That's precisely what is happening here. Consider that for just a moment. These are God's people, in His land, and they are playing the part of their pagan neighbors. Just a devastating text! The only person that really is innocent in this whole scene is the concubine, who experiences what I wish I could say are unthinkable horrors, but I know, and we have to admit, that it's not necessarily unthinkable, is it?

Statistics would show us or say to us that even in this room, there are people who have experienced things like this, maybe not on this scale, maybe not in a public setting, but they've experienced assault at the hands of sinful people. The statistics say that 1 in 5 women have experienced either attempted sexual assault or actually had to go through with the experience of sexual assault—1 in five! And 1 in 33 men! That's the number that is the most up to date—1 in 33 men have experienced the same and, while it is so easy for us to read this and think, 'Man, Israel, they are so messed up, what is wrong with them?' yet we have to be careful not to think this is just something that happened in the past. This pattern—rejection of God and doing what is right in our own eyes—it continues to this day, and the results of it then and the result of it now are devastating...it's devastating!

Now we have to ask, as we're considering this scene and considering this text, where is God in all of this? Where is He? Now we can't forget the larger context. Israel has rejected God. They have rejected God; they've abandoned Him, and when that happens, moral chaos ensues and that's what we've seen here! But I think it's okay, it's a very normal thing to still say, "Yeah, but still, couldn't God just zap all these guys? Couldn't He have just struck them with lightning?" And the answer, of course, is, "Yes." We have to say, "Yes, He could have." God could have turned every single one of them into hamsters. They're acting like animals; he could have made them into the pigs that they are acting like. God could have given this woman super strength, right? She could have gotten the strength of Samson. She could have had superpowers, lightning going from her eyes, devouring these men in fire. God could do that. Why didn't He? And the only answer I can offer on that specific question, in this specific instance, is, "I don't know." Sometimes when we look at the microlevel, we have to say, "I don't know why God didn't do it." But here's what I do know. I do know that God made provision in Israel to prevent this type of thing from ever happening. God made provision among His people to care for the most vulnerable, to care for the weak, to let righteousness reign rather than wickedness. God set up the world in such a way that that would happen...but His people abandoned Him.

Just think about the case of polygamy. Let's look back at that for just a moment. Now we know that God was not approving of polygamy. That's very obvious. God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman. But he did then make concession for His people who were frail, and I would also say who were immature. He made concession for them, and He said, "Okay,

listen. If there are concubines, here is precisely how they will be treated. They have rights; they will be protected.” He made concession for them and set up a world where even when something that He doesn't approve of occurs, He has made concession, and He said, “Here is how it will go.”

But the Levite rejected God and disobeyed God. He did not do what God told him to do in terms of caring for his concubine. He disobeyed! The men of Gibeah disobeyed God. The host disobeyed God. God is quite committed to His plan in the world, and His plan is to bring about goodness, to bring about order, to bring about flourishing through His people, and He sets the world up that way, and gives His people a charge. “Here's what you will do to bring this about.” But the scandalous nature of what's happened here, is that His people have utterly rejected Him, and they've rejected His ways, and they've rejected the very role that He gave to them.

See, God could stop every evil as it occurs in the world. He could make it so every time a gun is fired, that bullet becomes a marshmallow when it leaves the barrel of that gun, right? God could do that, but He has set the world up in a certain way, and He is committed to His plan, and what we see in Judges 19, in graphic detail, is that by rejecting God, His people became absolutely powerless to stop this descent into moral chaos. Wicked, evil, abandon God, elevate self, and sinful chaos is the inevitable outcome. Inevitable! It's important for us to remember as God's people, no one wakes up one day and says, “You know, what I want to do today is I want to just ruin my life. I want to go commit a grotesque sin,” and we jump from walking the straight and narrow, to just this horrendous evil. That's not the way sin works.

See, sin is so patient. It's a strange thing to say, but sin works progressively. Bit by bit, like a snake swallowing a goat, it'll latch back its jaw and slowly contort your body and contort your world until it has devoured you whole before you even know it. It's the reality. This is a story about Israel absolutely. But it's also a story about humans, and about idolatry and about sin. Do we take sin seriously? Do we run from it? Do we look at it accurately? It's also a story about our view of God, about idolatry. Do we worship God as He actually is? See, God made us in such a way that we become like that which we worship. Are we worshipping Him as He truly is, or have we settled for a lesser view of Him, a lesser God? Have we rejected the true worship of Him and instead of loving Him, do we love the world? These are sobering questions. But I think what we have seen here is that the wages of sin is sobering. I wish I could say we're done, but there's a bit more in this chapter, and things get a little more horrific. So, let's finish this chapter out, starting in verse 27:

**When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with their hands on the threshold. He said to her, “Get up and let us go,” but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home. When he entered his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel. All who saw *it* said, “Nothing like this has *ever* happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!” (Vs. 27-30)**

Now, I wish I had time to linger on the cold callousness of this Levite when he finds the concubine, but for the sake of time, we're going to skip right ahead to this horrible scene. As the Levite gets

back to his house, he cuts his concubine up into 12 pieces, one for each tribe. Now in his world, in the ancient near East, we have some evidence this occurred among some of the other nations, so it's not like he created this heinous thing. But it still is just graphic and horrendous to us, and it appears that he intended this to be like a rallying cry, like a sign to the people of Israel. We don't know exactly what he was trying to rally them to, whether it was to take revenge on the people of Gibeah or just to confront their sin, but the sign has its effect, and the people of Israel are horrified! And they say, "We haven't seen such a thing, not since we left Egypt." And in chapter 20, verses 1 to 11, which again I'm going to summarize, what we see is that the people are so horrified that they finally, finally cry out to God. They cry out to God, and they ask, "What shall we do," and it's determined that they absolutely have to make the men of Gibeah pay. They have to pay for this, and so in some sense, as we come to the close of verse 11, we're maybe somewhat encouraged. Finally, Israel is working together. They are united as a people, but you're also saddened because they're united against one of their own, because this evil horrendous act has happened within the people of Israel.

And so what we see as verse 11 comes to a close, is how the nation is preparing for civil war...God's people preparing for an internal battle. This whole scene, every detail gives us a clearer picture of how far Israel has fallen from what God intended for her. Israel has become a virtual Sodom. Israel has become just like her pagan neighbors. So, what will God do? Well, thankfully, we know that we have a scandalously gracious God. We have a God who forgives, and He is not done with Israel.

Next week Bryan will finish the story of Judges for us, but as we leave this text, the nation is preparing for civil war. Now the question for us is, "What do we do with this text?" Well, as we close, there are two questions that I'd really like to put before us and urge us to consider. Here are the two questions: Are we as a people, are you as a person, thinking rightly about God? Are you thinking of Him as He truly is—holy and mighty and great—or have you settled? Second question: Do we think seriously, accurately, about sin? Do we take sin seriously, because we have to admit that this moral chaos all followed from compromising on these two fronts? Do we have a right view of God? Do I have a right view of God? What is God like? Well, God is good. Do we believe that? God is love. Is that who God is to you this morning? God planned the world in such a way that things are supposed to run according to His design. He designed it; He is the Creator. We are the creatures, and so He set the world up to run a certain way.

From this text alone, let's just take marriage. You know, from a purely human point of view, we could say that the civil war that is about to occur as chapter 20 kind of comes to a close, is the result of a Levite rejecting God's design for marriage. If he had not had this fight with his concubine, in fact if he had not taken a concubine, this scene would not occur. This Levite disregarded God's design for marriage, took a concubine, and absolute chaos results. God's design was one man, one woman. The men of Gibeah, they rejected God. They rejected His design, and they make a world of gods and rules of their own choosing. Sexuality is redefined. Intimacy is redefined. What's honoring to God is redefined. See, God is good, but He has designed the world a certain way, and, as humans, we have to decide to submit to that world and that can sometimes feel limiting to us. Now if He is good—if I believe that—then that is an easy submission. You know what? It's limiting, but I believe God only does that for good, because He is good. But if I don't believe He is good, if I believe He's just a cosmic killjoy, then I am going to protest, and I'm

going to say He is infringing on my personal freedoms, and you know what, “No thank you.” I’ll redesign You a bit and make You in my own image. It’s a huge wrestle in our culture. It’s a huge wrestle for each one of us individually. Do we believe God is good? Are we worshipping Him as He truly is?

Second question: Do we take sin seriously? I think so often that it’s easy to start to think of sin as preferable but forbidden. We look at the world that’s engaging in sin, and we think, “Man, that kind of looks good, but we can’t do it. We can’t do it because He said we shouldn’t. God said, “No.” But that is the worldview of sin. Sin is not preferable. Sin is folly. Sin leads to destruction. It is death. It is stupidity. It is not attractive. We sometimes get tricked into believing it’s attractive. Sometimes we think, “If I could just do what I wanted, and my *wanter* is kind of inclined towards sin, boy, everything would be so good!” But that is a lie. Do we take sin seriously? Put a bad view of God and an embrace of sin long enough in your world, and before long, Judges 19 is what results. That’s just the sobering reality, and I think sometimes for us, as believers, it’s easy to say, “Boy, you know, let’s think about this on a national scale.” Yes, our nation has rejected God, and look what’s happening. Or on a cultural scale, our culture has rejected God. Or this generation has rejected God, and all of that might be true. But what I really want to challenge all of us to do today, is not think about that stuff. I want to think about *my* life. Have I settled for a lesser view of God? Have I replaced Him with a God of my own choosing? Have I started to allow sin to creep into my life? Have I started to justify it and start to flirt with it a little bit? And if so, let us put that away. Let us beware and let us turn back to God.

So how should we end? Well, I’d like to do something to close that we don’t do very often here at Lincoln Berean. In just a few moments we’re going to read a public prayer of confession. It’s very general; there are no specific sins named. But I’d like to read it together. But first we need to talk about what confession is for just a moment. Years ago, when Bryan was preaching through James, we were going through that series, and when he got to James 5, and the text says, “Confess your sins to one another,” he just talked about what confession is, and he said, “You know, confession is simply agreeing with God, that His ways are best. It’s just me saying to God, ‘You know what? You are in charge. I’m not, and Your ways are better than my ways, and I just want to publicly agree with You. I just want to agree with You, and by saying, You know what, Lord, I’ve gone astray. I want to agree with You and get back on course.’” That’s all confession is. It’s all of us agreeing together that God is God, and He set things up. And we are frail and sometimes we’re prone to wander, and we just want to say together, “We agree with You. We agree with You, and we want to follow You.”

Confession is not about salvation. Now, if you’ve never confessed your sin, you’ve never placed your confidence and your trust in Jesus as your Savior, this could be a moment of salvation. But confession is also about us saying, “Hey, let’s name it again.” God is in charge; we are not. and we are thankful for that, and we agree with Him that His way is best. And then once we confess, we then say, “You know what? We’re going to make a decision. We’re going to repent; we’re going to turn from that way. We’re not going to continue down that path because we’re a people who agree with God.” And then, because we live in light of the cross, we revel in the forgiveness that is to be found there. We revel in the fact that God forgives us, and so I’ve asked the team to end us on a celebratory note. See, as dark as Judges 19 is, we don’t have to live this way because we are a forgiven people; we are redeemed people. And so yes, we confess, and yes, we go astray but we

live in light of the joy of redemption and the joy of forgiveness, and so that is just what we are going to do to close. So, I'm going to ask you to join me. We're going to pray this together and then I'm going to close our time in prayer, and then we are going to sing together of God's amazing grace. So, join me as we pray this prayer of confession together.

“Heavenly Father, You have loved us with an everlasting love. But we have gone our own way and rejected Your will for our lives. We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. For the sake of Your Son who died for us forgive us, cleanse us, and change us. By your Holy Spirit enable us to live for You, and to please You in every way. For the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

*Our Father, we thank You that You are a patient and forgiving God. We thank You that You have called us to Yourself, and that because of the blood of Your Son, we are a forgiven people, a redeemed people, a people for Your own inheritance. And we ask, God, that even today You will help us. Help us to think rightly about You. Help us to think of You as You truly are: great, beyond all comparison, and, Lord, help us to have a sober, accurate view of sin, of the folly that it is, and help us to reject that as people, as we seek to chase after You and You alone. Jesus, we thank You for Your work on the cross, and we thank You that You are our Lord that leads us now in victorious living, and we offer up all these things to You, thankfully, and in Your name, Amen.*

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