

A New Covenant

Hebrews 8 Verse by Verse

Introduction

A Better
High Priest
8:1-7

A Better
Covenant
8:8-13

Conclusions



Introduction

- When **two people sign a contract**, they enter into a form of **covenant**, each agreeing to fulfill certain conditions that benefit the other.
- When **nations sign treaties**, they also enter a covenant. Violations of treaties can lead to serious consequences.
- When **a man and a woman get married**, this is also a covenant. They vow before God and others to be faithful to one another for life.
- **God** deals with humanity in terms of **covenants**, and we will encounter that idea today.

Previously in
Hebrews

What's in
Hebrews 8?

Our
Key Verse

Previously in Hebrews

Hebrews 7:25-28

25 ... He [Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

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What's in Hebrews 8?

Two Things We Learn

- We can divide **Hebrews 8** into two parts.
- The first deals with **Christ's priesthood**, continuing a thought that our rabbi-author began earlier.
- In the second part, he digs up the longest quotation of the Old Testament to appear in the New.
- Taking us back to the words of **Jeremiah** the prophet, he shows us the **new covenant** that God is making with the people of Israel and Judah.

Two Things We Learn

1. We have confidence in a heavenly High Priest who is seated in a heavenly sanctuary.
 2. We rely on a heavenly Mediator who has introduced a New Covenant between God and His people.
- Both of these points require us to trust Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross.

What's in Hebrews 8?

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Key Verse: Hebrews 8:6

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

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- Christ is now seated now at the right hand of the Father in heaven.
- He occupies a position of majesty **in the true tent** or "tabernacle."
- The **tabernacle** and the **temple** which later replaced it, had no place for the priests to sit down.
- Their work was never done until Christ fulfilled their ministry by offering up Himself.

The Earthly
Tent

The Earthly
Priesthood

The
Priesthood
of Christ

The Earthly Tent

- The Old Testament **tabernacle** was a large rectangular tent with a big fence around it, forming a sort of courtyard.
- Inside the courtyard and inside the tent the priests carried out their work of offering sacrifices, burning incense, lighting oil lamps and so on.
- This tent was later replaced by a larger stone temple built in the days of King Solomon - and rebuilt later.
- Both of them followed essentially the same floorplan.

The
Tabernacle

The Temple

The Tabernacle

**Facsimile of the Tabernacle
in Timna Park, Israel**



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The Temple in New Testament Times



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The Earthly Priesthood

- The tabernacle, and the temple were both built according to **specific plans given by God**.
- That specific pattern was a **copy and a shadow of heavenly things** – it was not the ultimate reality.
- The work of the Levitical priests was intended to teach the people about the work of **the Messiah – Christ** – who was to come.

Lessons
from
Leviticus

The Idea of
Authority

Lessons from Leviticus

1 God Wants Us to Come into His Presence.

- There would never have been a tabernacle, no priesthood, no place of sacrifice, nor a book of Leviticus, if God did not want his people to approach him.

2 God Tells Us How That is Supposed to Take Place.

- Consider Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, who offered strange fire before the Lord.
- Consider Dathan and Abiram in the Book of Numbers, who rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron.

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The Idea of Authority

- Too often in our day, we approach God as if we were the ones in charge - as if he worked for us.
- We want a God that will meet our perceived needs.
- Consider the call of **Moses** and the burning bush.
- Consider Christ's appearance to **Paul** on the Damascus Road.
- **God revealed himself** to them and then God gave them instructions.
- **8:5** "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." (See also **Exodus 25:40**)

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The Priesthood of Christ

- Christ was not of the priestly family so He did not – and could not – serve as a priest in the Temple in Jerusalem.
- He can, however, serve in the true sanctuary or true tabernacle in heaven.
- Christ has a **more excellent ministry**, as He fully accomplished God's will and fully met humanity's need.
- He is **Mediator of a better covenant**, as this one gives us better terms on which we can relate to God.
- It is **established on better promises**, as God has obligated Himself without any requirement on our part but to accept His generous terms.

Our
Key Verse

From
Raymond
Brown

Key Verse: Hebrews 8:6

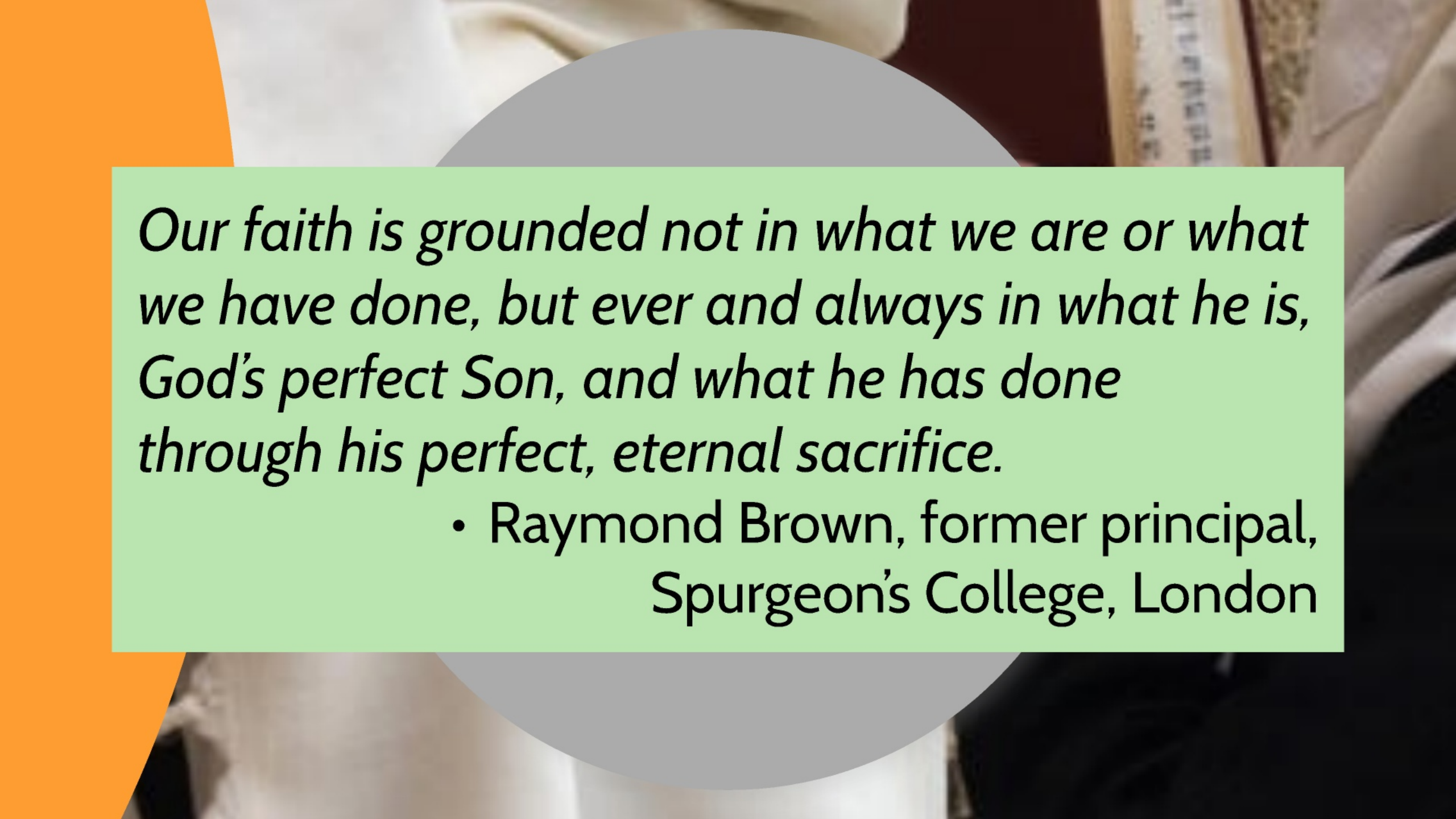
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Our faith is grounded not in what we are or what we have done, but ever and always in what he is, God's perfect Son, and what he has done through his perfect, eternal sacrifice.

- Raymond Brown, former principal, Spurgeon's College, London

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A Better Covenant 8:8-13

- **Covenant** = binding agreement, contract, or sacred pact between two parties agreeing to do or not do specific things.
- A **legal contract** is one type of covenant.
- A **peace treaty** between nations is another.
- A **marriage** is a covenant between man and wife.
- God deals with people on the basis of covenants – like the covenant between Him and Israel given in the days of Moses.

Israel's
Problem

Jeremiah's
Prophecy

Better
Promises

Israel's Problem

- 8:8 The rabbi says God, “**finds fault with them.**” The problem was not so much with the Covenant as with the nation.
- The people of Israel, like us, were fallen people who could not hold up their end of the bargain.
- The Old Covenant was not intended to be permanent.



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Jeremiah's Prophecy

On
Jeremiah
31:31-36

- **Jeremiah times:**

- The people had forsaken God.
- Religion had fallen into pure formalism.
- Idolatry, immorality and unethical behavior all ran rampant.

- **Jeremiah's ministry:**

- Mainly prophecies of judgment.
- He is often called "**the weeping prophet.**"
- He witnessed the invasion by Babylon.
- Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

Jeremiah 31:31-36

- **8:8-12** Alongside all those prophecies of judgment, Jeremiah also prophesied of a better future day – which the rabbi reminds us of here.
- Turn to **Jeremiah 31:31-36**.
- **8:10** God has not set aside Israel as some have suggested. Note **Jeremiah 31:35-36**.
- He has set aside the Old Covenant through which He related to Israel in the past.

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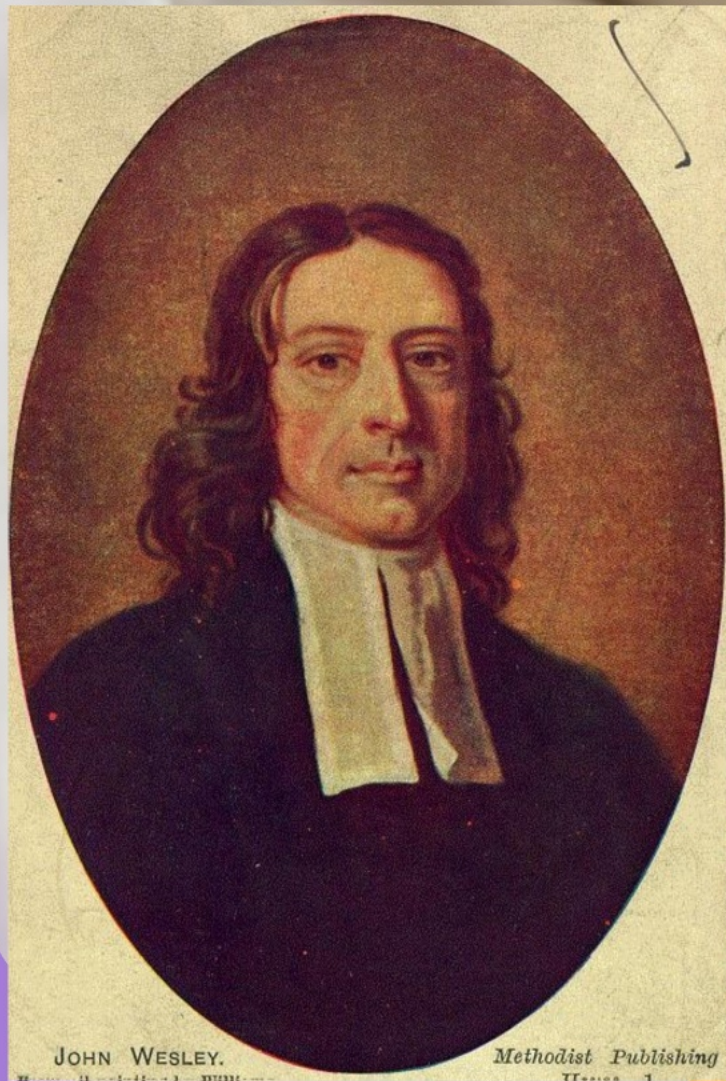
Better
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Better Promises

From John
Wesley

- Things God Promised to Israel as part of the New Covenant:
 - Inward change (8:10)
 - Intimate relationship (8:10)
 - Wholesale conversion (8:11)
 - Complete purification (8:12)
- This is also the covenant under which God accepts non-Jews into His family.

Contrasting
Covenants



John Wesley (1703 - 1791),
Founder of the Methodist
Movement

*For I will justify them, which is the
root of all true knowledge of God.*

This, therefore, is God's method.

*First, a sinner is pardoned: then he
knows God, as gracious and
merciful: then God's laws are
written on his heart: he is God's, and
God is his.*

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On the Old
Covenant

- The **New Covenant** Is:
 - Unrestricted In Its Power
 - Eternal In Its Duration
 - Complete In Its Effects
- God makes **specific promises** to His people and then binds Himself to carry them out.
- He is **transforming our hearts** so that we can hold onto our end of the agreement.

On the Old Covenant

- **8:13** The rabbi says the **Old Covenant** is:
 - Becoming obsolete
 - Growing old
 - Ready to vanish away.
- He is writing **before 70 A.D.** when the rebuilt temple that stood at the time of Christ was destroyed by the Romans.
- All that remains is for Israel to accept the terms of the New Covenant that Christ has established.
- We anticipate this will happen at the end of the church age.
- All are already welcome to accept the terms.

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- Under the New Covenant, God promised to do certain things for Israel nationally and will do so at some future date.
- What the Old Testament didn't clearly reveal was the founding of the church.
- God is now accepting anyone on earth who will accept this New Covenant's terms.

New
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Two Things
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Key Verse

A Final
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New Covenant Promises

This is what God promises as part of the New Covenant:

- Inward change (8:10)
- Intimate relationship (8:10)
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- Complete purification (8:12)

We must remember not to place confidence in ourselves whenever we relate to God.

False
Belief #1

False
Belief #2

False Belief #1

- **Possible False Belief:** I'm not worthy to enter God's presence.
- **A Biblical Response:** That's correct in the sense that we can only enter God's presence on the merits of Jesus Christ.
- If we trust in Him, we are declared worthy by God.

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False Belief #2

- **Possible False Belief:** I'm never going to change. I'm simply incapable.
- **A Biblical Response:** That is true in the sense that we cannot change without God's help.
- But the New Covenant promises include a promise of inward change.
- Christ has a present ministry of transforming hearts.

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A Final Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

- We thank you for giving us a better high priest who is the Mediator of a New Covenant.
- We thank you for Jesus Christ and his shed blood, by which we can enter your presence to receive forgiveness of our sins.
- Help us to trust in Christ's ministry, not relying upon ourselves, but rather claiming the promises that you have given to us.
- In Christ,
- Amen.

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