

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF  
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

That Love May Abound More and More  
Philippians 1:9

**Editorial Note: From 1956 - 1960, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in Miami, Florida. Sidney was on the teaching faculty of the Miami Bible Institute, teaching courses on the New Testament. While in Miami, Sidney further developed a relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who sponsored and supported the Miami Bible Institute. The Institute trained ministers to enter pastorates at CMA churches.**

**As always, during this period, Sidney was often invited to preach and teach in surrounding churches and to other groups. Frequently, he taught Bible classes and filled the pulpit at the Miami Gospel Tabernacle, a local CMA church. It is also believed that he and Violet were members of this congregation at that time.**

**On a particular Sunday during that era, Sidney Cox was filling the pulpit of another CMA church in nearby Hialeah. I believe the church was known as the Hialeah Gospel Tabernacle.**

**In the morning service, he presented a message, *That Love May Abound More and More*, text Philippians 1:9.**

**In the evening service, Sidney and Violet performed two duets and he presented a message, *The Altar and the City*, text: Exodus 27:1 and Revelation 21:16.**

**J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. August 10, 2010.**

It is nice to be with you this morning. You'll forgive me for saying that, but I'm just so happy at the privilege of coming. I've just come from the Miami Gospel Tabernacle Men's Bible Class, and we hurried over here and now we have the privilege of fellowship with you. You folks don't know me and I don't know you for that matter, except one or two folks here that I have the privilege of seeing most every Sunday morning. But it is nice to be with you.

One of the nice things about being a Christian is that you don't have to know folks to know them. You understand what I mean? You don't have to know folks to know them. I just know you there. And I look at you and I say, "Well it'll be nice to see them in heaven." It sure will. It's nice to see you here, too. I'm hoping the Lord will give you real blessing, something there that will abide within your heart and the simplicity and loveliness of the Word of God may be of some benefit and blessing to you. I'm quite sure it will. Don't look to me for blessing, I haven't got any. But I know somebody who has. And if you look to Him you'll find He'll be faithful this morning. He wants to bless you today more than you want to receive. Now, let's have a word of prayer and then we'll go on with our service.

By the way, I'm to be with you again tonight, is that right? 7:45, I'm going to preach tonight on the subject, "The Altar and the City." If you want to bring somebody with you who doesn't know the Lord

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and perhaps doesn't know the Lord as well as they ought to - perhaps somebody who doesn't know the way of salvation. There's a lot of confused people around, you know. If you've got anybody like that, you bring them tonight, will you? Perhaps the Lord can help us with this message to make salvation clear to somebody. I hope so.

Prayer: Our Father, let Thy blessing rest upon us as we turn to Thy Word. How we thank Thee for its beauty and for its magnificence. We thank Thee for the Holy Spirit, who brought it from various places and in different ways and by various men, for the Holy Spirit who can take a king and a peasant and use him for Thy glory and work through him and speak through him in such a way that the everlasting Word of God has been given to us. Wilt Thou O Holy Spirit interpret it to our hearts and bless us as we turn to it and look into its beauty. We pray that the message this morning shall be suitable for every heart and that in the giving out of Thy Word we may be able to do it undisturbed so that we can concentrate on Thy Word. And so we commit this service to Thee, our Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

I want you to turn with me please to Philippians, Paul's letter to the Philippians, and the first chapter and the 9<sup>th</sup> verse. And here are the words: "And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more." "And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more." I question if there is a more beautiful letter ever written than this epistle that Paul wrote to his friends in Philippi. And there are various reasons for that. We shall consider some of them in just a little while.

There are folks who say that this is not a doctrinal letter, and I expect in a certain sense that's true. For it is entirely different to a letter sort of like his letter to the Galatians, for instance, where he was dealing with the great problem of the mixture of law and grace - where those who had come in from Judaism had brought with them this thought that salvation was a mixture of law and grace. And in his letter to the Galatians he's dealing with that subject, and it's a very difficult subject to deal with indeed. But in the epistle to the Philippians he is not doing that at all. He is not propounding any particular doctrine.

This letter is a love letter. It's written to folks whom he had met years before. He had not seen them for about seven years. This is written from the time of his first Roman imprisonment and he is writing back to these friends to tell them how much he loves them, how fragrant is the memory of them, and how much he appreciates their constant thought of him - for they had been giving to him certain support and certain evidence of their love and confidence, and he wants them to know how much he loves them. Now, that's one of the things that's back of this letter. But it doesn't answer all of the questions regarding the loveliness and beauty of it.

Let me remind you of something here before we go any further. Let me remind you of some of the circumstances that were back of the founding of the Church at Philippi. I want to remind you first of all that when Paul started out on his second missionary journey, because that was the time when the Church at Philippi was founded, that Paul had no intention of going to Philippi. It was furthest from his thoughts. I don't know whether he knew that there was such a place as Philippi. But at any rate, he had no intention whatever of going to Philippi.

If you read in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> verses you will find verses like this, that Paul with those who were with him, they wanted to preach the Gospel in Asia. And then a

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strange thing happened. The Holy Spirit said, "No. I don't want you to preach the gospel in Asia." Then the next thing that Paul said was, "Well, if we can't preach the gospel in Asia, then we'd like to go up there to Bithynia." Now, that was a thickly populated province right on the northern coast of Asia Minor by the Black Sea up there, and he hadn't been there before. And here was a great opportunity, so he thought, to go up there and conduct meetings and found churches just like he'd been doing elsewhere. And then look, a strange thing happened again. The Holy Spirit put his hand across the path and said, "No. I don't want you to go to Bithynia." "Oh Lord, where do you want us to go?" "Well now, you wait and I'll tell you in good time." Now, I'm just paraphrasing what happened here. But that's what happened.

Now look, my dear, one of the most difficult things for us to understand is that God says 'no' sometimes. Have you ever had that difficulty with your prayers? Have you ever prayed and prayed and prayed and you wondered why God has said 'no'? Have you ever wanted to do something and you knew, or at least you thought you knew, you knew that this would be pleasing unto God? And yet somehow you were prevented from doing it.

Now, I started out this little message by saying that I don't know you folks and you don't know me. But I wouldn't be at all surprised if in this congregation this morning there is somebody who, back there in your younger days, you wanted to go to the mission field, or you wanted to be a preacher, or you wanted to go to Bible school, and you were quite sure that that was the right thing. And yet something happened that prevented you from going, and God said 'no.' I wouldn't be at all surprised if there's somebody right in this room this morning just like that. There are lots of folks who wanted to go to the mission field, and God said 'no.' There are lots of folks who wanted to be preachers, and God said 'no.' Now, here was a man who wanted to preach the Gospel in Asia, and God said 'no.'

Why didn't you let me go to Bible school? Why? And you stand and face God's prohibition. And I want to remind you, my dear, that there is as much love back of God's 'no' as there is back of God's 'yes' - that God doesn't say 'no' unless there is in His heart and in His eternal wisdom a reason big enough to make it necessary for Him to say 'no.' Now, He said 'no' to these men. "I don't want you to go up there." "But Lord, what do you want us to go, to do? Where do you want us to go?" "You'll find out in good time." And so they did, but it was a long time before they found out. And in the meantime, Paul took sick and wondered why, why, why can't I go? Where do you want me to go?

And after they wandered up that west coast of Asia Minor, they came to the little town of Troas and when they got there they found out why that God didn't want them to do this, because He had a bigger thing in mind for them to do. And you remember what happened at Troas, don't you? It was there that the vision of the man of Macedonia came to Paul. And here across on the other side of the water there was the vision of this man saying, "Come on over and help us." And the next day Paul and a little group with him, Timothy and Silas and Dr. Luke, and they got in that little boat and went across the water and landed on the other side and, listen, for the first time in history the flag of the Gospel was carried to the continent of Europe. That's what God had got in mind. That's what God was thinking about. And when they got over onto that other side there was no man of Macedonia there to meet them, but they went down the coast until they came to the Roman garrison town of Philippi. And there it seemed as if God had said to them, "This is the place I want you to be. I want you to stay here." - the most unlikely place in all of that area to conduct any kind of a meeting or give any kind of teaching that

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Paul had in mind. Now let me tell you why.

Whenever the Romans moved into a certain area and conquered it they always selected some one town right in the center of it and they would erase that town, the original town, all together. And then they would rebuild another town on the site of it, a replica of a Roman city. And in that Roman city their garrison would be stationed to look after Roman interests in that area. And Philippi was a Roman garrison town.

Now, you will remember that wherever Paul went, whatever town he went to to preach the Gospel, he always went first to the synagogue. Now, why didn't he go to the synagogue in Philippi? He didn't go to the synagogue in Philippi. Why didn't he go to the synagogue in Philippi? Well, the answer to that is very simple - there wasn't any synagogue to go to. What would a synagogue be doing in a Roman garrison town? There wasn't any synagogue there. And they wandered around for a while until at last down by a riverside in a grove of trees they came across a little group of women who were praying and immediately Paul felt at home. He began to understand then why, why - a little group of women down by the riverside praying.

Have you ever been in a town where you didn't know a living soul? And maybe you've wandered up and down the streets as I've done on many an occasion and looked here and looked there for something that would find response in your soul and there wasn't a thing. And then as you walked down the street, you can hear the sound maybe of singing coming out of a little old church or out of a mission hall or somewhere - a little group of people maybe standing on a street corner and immediately you felt at home. These are my people. They talk my language. They've got the look of the children of God upon their faces and you felt at home.

And the Apostle Paul and those with him went to a little group of women down by a riverside and joined themselves to them and taught them in the way of God more perfectly and led them out of the twilight of their understanding, out into the light of the Gospel. And among them was some of the most precious saints that God ever brought out of darkness into light – Lydia, the seller of purple, and others like her. There they were.

Oh, it wasn't very long before they found a little meeting place. It was not very long before a little assembly was formed there in Philippi and the blessing of the Lord rested upon it in this magnificent Roman garrison town with all the evidence of the pomp and power of Rome everywhere. But the thing that God was interested in was not these evidences of Roman power. What He was interested in was that little group of believers that used to gather around the Word of God to pray. That's what He was interested in.

You can be quite sure my dear, that whatever there is in this neighborhood, I don't know what there is in this neighborhood, but you can be quite sure that whatever there is in this neighborhood, out of all the things in this neighborhood there isn't anything around here that God's more interested in than this little group of believers right here in this chapel. That's the thing God's interested in. Other folks can't see any value in it. The man from some other state drives up here in his big car and goes by and sees this on the corner and he wouldn't give it a second thought, would he? But I want to tell you God knows about this. Yes, He does. He knew about that, too, that little meeting place there under the trees with a

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little group of women. And out of that little beginning there, that small seed, God formed one of the most precious churches that ever graced the world, the Church at Philippi.

It wasn't very long before they brought that girl in, you remember, that was Devil possessed and freedom came to her. And into the church she came. It wasn't very long before the Philippian jailer had cried out, "What must I do to be saved?"<sup>1</sup> and received the immortal answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."<sup>2</sup> In he comes and his house. What a chairman of the board of deacons he would have made, wouldn't he? And probably did. My, that church at Philippi. And it grew in wonder and beauty. Everybody talked about it.

Of course, the Devil attacked it. It wasn't very long before Paul was driven out and had to go somewhere else, but the deposit of the truth of God was left behind. It wasn't what men saw, it was what God saw. They could drive out God's messenger, but they couldn't stop the onward march of God's truth. And the Church at Philippi was formed.

And years went by and between the apostle and this little group of believers in Philippi, there was a bond there that was beautiful and strong. And every once in a while they'd send to him wherever he might be, send a little gift, send a message to him. "We're thinking about you and praying for you." Just like you folks do to the missionaries out on the mission field. "We're thinking about you and praying for you." And every time a little message like that, and every time a little gift came, it seemed to stir the heart of the Apostle Paul.

And now seven years afterwards he's in prison in Rome and they've sent him another little gift and now he writes this beautiful letter back. You can see all the way through how much he loves them. You remember some of the things he said to them? He said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."<sup>3</sup> Did you hear that? "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Not just some remembrances, but every remembrance as he sat there in that Roman prison circle there and turned the pages of his memory book. There wasn't one page in his thought of the Church at Philippi that he would like to have torn out. How many do you know that as you think of them you can say, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you?"

By the way, when folks think about you, can they say that about you? "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you," not just some remembrances, every remembrance of you. That was the Church at Philippi. He said, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy."<sup>4</sup>

And there's a very interesting word in there, that word 'making request' means that when he prayed for them...and by the way you can't love folks without praying for them. He loved them and he prayed for them. We say we love folks and we don't pray for them, we're just not telling the truth, that's all. He loved them and prayed for them. But in that word it says 'making request with joy' and in the original Greek word there, there is a content of meaning which means that when he prayed for them, he prayed for them carefully and thoughtfully. "When I pray for you, I pray for you carefully and thoughtfully.

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1 Acts 16:30

2 Acts 16:31

3 Philippians 1:3

4 Philippians 1:4

You're too important folks. You're too important for me to just go into the presence of God unprepared and mutter something about you that I haven't thought about.”

We do that sometimes, don't we? You've done it and so have I. We've gone blundering into the presence of God without knowing what to say or how to say it. We wouldn't go into the presence of the Mayor of our city or the President of our United States, if he said, “I'll give you five minutes of my time,” we'd know what we were going to say and how to say it. We sure would. And sometimes we go blundering into the presence of God without knowing what to say or how to say it, as if we're doing God a favor by giving him two minutes of our time muttering something at the end of a day and we call it prayer. My dear, it isn't prayer at all. And Paul prayed for his folks, friends in Philippi. It was careful and thoughtful.

I read of an old man one time who was on intimate terms with God. And he had a time and place for prayer every day. And when this old man used to go into the presence of God to pray, he used to bathe himself, put on clean clothes, put on his best suit and his nicest tie, and thus cleansed and adorned he would go into the presence of his great friend to pray. And we say, yes, that's a little extreme. I guess it is. It's a little unusual at any rate, isn't it? But isn't it beautiful, to think that somebody thought enough about God and his privilege of prayer to do that?

We don't have time to do that, and we couldn't do it if we had. But we could be a whole lot more thoughtful in our prayer life than we are. Paul was thoughtful in his prayer life. He loved these folks. You turn to verse seven, you will find there hidden away in that verse a little phrase there, that if you don't watch out you'll miss it. And this is what he says, you look for it. It's like a little jewel in a setting, like that diamond on your finger. It's right in the middle of that verse, verse seven. And this is what he says: “I have you in my heart.”<sup>5</sup> Did you hear it? “I have you in my heart.” Not just on my heart. You've got a lot of folks on your heart, you haven't got so many in your heart. There's a difference, oh yes, there's a difference between having somebody on your heart and having them in your heart. You don't open the Holy of Holies of your heart to very many folks. If you've got a half a dozen folks that are in there, you're very fortunate. But here was a crowd of folks and Paul had opened the Holy of Holies of his heart and invited them in. “I have you in my heart.”

Now in that verse we said Paul prayed carefully and thoughtfully. How do we know? Because down there in verses 9, 10, and 11 we have the very prayer he offered, so we can see how carefully he prayed. He doesn't just talk about praying carefully and thoughtfully. We've got the record of it right there.

Now let me remind you of one thing about this, and that is that Paul was not noted for long prayers. Did you hear that? Now some of us think that unless we can pray a long prayer we're not praying at all. You won't find many long prayers in the scripture. There are a few of them there like Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and a few of them there. But apart from those you won't find any long prayers in the scripture. Not this one, you won't. Here's a little prayer and it occupies verses 9, 10 and 11. How many words do you think there are in that prayer? There are 55 words, that's all, in that prayer.

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<sup>5</sup> Philippians 1:7

If I read it to you just like I'd be reading it on a radio program, if this was the microphone and I was reading verses 9, 10 and 11, that prayer of Paul on that radio program, how long do you think it would take me to read it? It would take me 29 seconds, that's all. And yet in 55 words and 29 seconds Paul prays for everything that that church would need from grace to glory, and everything in between. And he does it in 55 words and in 29 seconds. "I pray for you carefully and thoughtfully."

How does he start a prayer like that? What did these people need? What? Did they need a new building? Did they need more Sunday School rooms? Did they need more money? Did they need more members on the roll? Did they need more of this and more of that and more of the other? I don't know whether they did or not, but if they did, Paul didn't pray about any of those things. What did he pray about? He started in with the most important thing of all, without which everything else would have been sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. You can pray for a building twice this size and for Sunday School buildings that would be adequate for your needs for today and for tomorrow. You can pray for money in the till. You can pray for this and pray for that and pray for the other, but unless this central thing is there, my dear, the rest of it is just sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. What did he pray for? He prayed for just this – "That your love may abound yet more and more."<sup>6</sup>

Supposing God should give us the Apostle Paul down right here this morning. Supposing God should release his servant and say, "Paul, I want you to go down there and pray for those folks down there in that little gospel chapel there in Hialeah. You go down there and pray for them. Can't spare you long. I'll give you 29 seconds and 55 words. You go down there and pray for them." And supposing we saw this man walking in this door, come stand here and lift his hands to God and pray for us. And he stood right in front of us, this man with the lines of suffering upon his face, with his eyes that couldn't see very well, and he lifted those hands to God to pray for us, what would he pray for? What? You know I'm deeply convinced he'd pray for us just like he prayed for those folks in Philippi. I think he would say, "That your love may abound yet more and more."

If there is anything we need in these strange, mysterious days in which we live, surely that's it. I don't know your dear church, but I know the greatest need you have is just that. I don't know your home circumstances. I don't know anything about them. I don't know whether there is comfort, or plenty, or what there may be. But I know this, there isn't a home represented here but the great central need of it all is just that, "That your love may abound."

Do you have any problems in your church? You're a funny church if you haven't. In fact you're the only one I know anything about if you haven't got a problem here. Do you know that there isn't a problem in this church or any other church that love won't solve. We can try and solve them every other way, but love's the answer to it all. Is there a need around here? There isn't one single need that love won't solve. That's the answer to it all. "That your love may abound yet more and more."

More and more. Will you forgive me if I just take one moment here to tell you what that word 'more and more' means? - for there are no incidental words and accidental words in the scripture at all. They're all meaningful words. 'More and more.' How is the love of God to abide in our hearts 'more and more?' What's the picture of it? If I had a blackboard here I could show it to you in a hurry. But I

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<sup>6</sup> Philippians 1:9

haven't got a blackboard and so we'll just put a blackboard up of our own, shall we? How will that do? Here it is. Can you see it? There's the blackboard. Now, I'll just reach over here and take a piece of chalk. See it? Now, I'll take the piece of chalk and I'll put it right in the center of that blackboard, that little dot right in the middle. And then from that dot in the center I'll go and do this. Larger and larger, and more and more, and I'll keep on until every corner of that board is filled.

You've stood beside some quiet pool somewhere or other by the riverside and thrown a stone in and watched the rings go out, haven't you? And they'll go as long as there was anything to carry them. You know that's just the way God's love must be in our hearts, that your love may abound until it covers every corner of the being, until it gets down into your hands, until it gets down into your feet, until it gets down into your heart, until it sounds through your voice and looks out of your eyes - the love of God in your heart. That's what he prayed for his friends in Philippi, and that's what he would pray for you - not merely as a church, but you as an individual.

Has the love of God filled every corner of your life? I ask you the question this morning. What I ask you is not important, it's what God expects that's important. He expects that His love will fill every corner of your life, "That your love may abound yet more and more."

Shall we bow our heads for a word of prayer?

Our Father, we pray that Thou will take this word and use it for Thy glory. In Jesus precious name.

We're going to sing one verse of an invitation hymn. I do not know whether you're a Christian this morning. One of the things that rejoices my heart every time I go into a Christian and Missionary Alliance church is not how big it is or even how beautiful it is. You know the thing that always impresses me - I'll never forget the first time I walked into the Miami Gospel Tabernacle, there wasn't anybody around and I stood there and looked. And when I walked into your church this morning it was the very first thing I saw. Do you know what it was? It was this place of prayer here. Just that. A place where somebody can come and kneel.

And I saw a woman come and kneel at the altar there at the prayer rail there in the Miami Gospel Tabernacle last Sunday night. And I looked into her face this morning and saw the radiance of God in her face. You can have all the rest of it for me, but don't leave that out. You can do anything you like with the rest of it, but you keep this thing. And it could be that somebody's here this morning, saint or sinner, who's got something to say to God and God's got something to say to you. And the only place he can say it to you is right here. Now, I don't know. I don't know.

Could well be that in this room this morning there ought to be somebody who would come and finish this service by kneeling at this altar and saying, "Lord I want you to forgive me for keeping your love out of part of my heart. It never did get down into my heart. It never did get down into my pocketbook as it ought to have done. It never did get down into my shoes. It never did get down into my hands. I want you to forgive me." Could well be that there'd be somebody like that. I don't know. You'd be amazed at what happens if you do.

Maybe there's somebody here this morning who doesn't know what it means to be 'born again.' You've

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got a name on the outside but nothing on the inside. And while we sing this little invitation hymn we're not going to prolong it at all. We're going to sing one verse of, *Just As I Am Without One Plea*. If there is somebody and God's saying to you, you ought to come and finish it here at this altar, you come because He invites you, not because I did. It doesn't matter about my invitation; it does matter about Him.

If this is the way God wants you to finish the meeting this morning, you've got something to say to Him and He has something to say to you, and He can do it better here and so can you. That's why the altar of prayer is here, because you can talk to God better and He can talk to you better at this place. That's the reason. Is there anybody here that ought to be finishing that way? Let's stand and sing, *Just As I Am Without One Plea*. If there's anyone to come, you come while we sing. Don't wait. If there's someone to come, you feel this is the way you ought to finish the meeting this morning, I'm not going to ask you why at all. But if there's somebody here that's got something to say to God and God's got something to say to you, show you the way of salvation, bring you out of darkness into light, release the prohibitions that have been in your life, that have prevented God from doing what He wants to do with you, this is the place where those things ought to be settled. Let's sing it just once, if you please.

Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

There isn't a need in your life that God can't meet. Don't forget it. You're not a peculiar case. You may be to yourself, but you're not to God. He's seen folks like you lots of times. He knows just what to do. Will you give Him a chance? Is there anybody else who ought to come? Perhaps God's saying, "I've got something special for you at the end of that altar, at the end of that prayer rail. I've got something special for you right there. I can't give it to you while you're back yonder. I'd like to meet you right there." Is there anybody like that? It's wonderful what God can do. Yes it is.

We're just going to sing it through once more. No, let's hum it through, just the melody. Just let's hum it softly together and pray. It may be somebody else, I don't know.

(Humming of hymn)

God's talking to you, you better come. God has got something to say to you, you'd better come, give Him the chance to say it. Have you been born again? Has the love of God filled your heart? Oh, Lamb of God, I come. That's the only way you can come.

In just a moment, we're going to have a word of prayer for our brother.

Our Father, we lay our hands upon the head of this man, this Thy servant, our brother. Oh, God our Father, we do not know why he came and knelt at the altar this morning. It isn't any of our business, but Lord you can do wonderful things. There must have been a need somewhere. Oh, God our Father, in Jesus name meet the need of this man, this dear heart, and give him not only the thing he needs...(indistinct).. but the grace of God and the path of all understanding within his heart. And so we

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pray for him, committing to Thee with thanksgiving that Thou art so able to meet our every need and to do for us exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can ask for. May the love of God fill this dear life. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the comforter, be with us now and forever. Amen.

God bless you and we'll see you tonight.

(audio ends)