

8.18.2024 Sermon

Great Cloud of Witnesses | Hebrews 11:33-40

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

faith, people, pain, god, life, church, read, verses, hear, praying, living, talking, pastor, book, victory, heroes, hurt, feel, happen, grief

SPEAKERS

Rev. Dr. Tracy Saletta

So, we have been preaching.... First, it feels good to be back. You know, when you're gone for like two weeks, it feels like 17 years. It's so weird, but it's good to be back. We had a wonderful time. We were actually camping close by because, you know, we camped close by so that my little granddaughter could come in and out and spend time with us. Then, in the middle of our camping, Hurricane Debbie came through. I looked at Tony and said, "I don't want to die in a camper." So, you know, I think we need to go home. I wanted to go to my brick house and be safer there. When you're camping, you're surrounded by trees, and so Tony, being braver than me, was like, "Well, I don't know." Earlier in the day, he was sitting by the pool and heard a tree go down across the street. He was like, "We're going home." So, we packed up and came back. I don't know how much of a hero of the faith we were at that time, but we are reaching the end of our series on what is known as the heroes of the faith, or the hall of faith.

But I was thinking about this, and I thought they should call it the great cloud of witnesses because that's really what it is. When you go into Hebrews 12, it says we're surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, and I'm like, "Why have they never called it that?" Furthermore, I don't think these guys are heroes. Like, I have some observations. I remember once, many years ago, I was having a meeting for women's ministry and my 13-year-old daughter was upstairs. We were talking about what we're going to do for the retreat, and all of a sudden, you heard this little voice upstairs ask, "I have an opinion." That was my teenage daughter. It's kind of like me. I got an opinion about these heroes of the faith.

So, before we get there, these last seven verses that we have, they're going to be preached by three different voices, mine, Matt Kistler's, and Terry Witmyer, over these next four weeks. Because next week is the baptism. The reason that I did this is that I think these passages are actually more important than the first 33 because we have spent a lot of time focusing on them

as a Church, not just Cornerstone, but globally. I just thought these last verses are key to me and bring the balance of what faith is.

Then, Kevin is going to close us out, talking about the great cloud of witnesses. When I was parsing out who was going to preach and how it was going to go, I thought Hebrews 11 doesn't end on verse 40. It actually ends in 12. Since we're surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, it ends there to go on and talk about, since we're surrounded by them, this is what we do. So, Kevin's going to close us out there, and then we're going to head into a new series. It is going to be on praise and worship, and we're going to have each one of our preachers preach on praise and worship. If I can convince her, our very own director of worship in the arts is also going to preach a sermon on praise and worship. I've now just put more pressure on her. I love you, Joni.

So, I had a thought. Oh, and you know, as many of you know, maybe you don't because if you don't come to congregational meetings, sometimes you don't know this information, which gives me a plug for the congregational meeting on Tuesday. See how I did that? Next year, Pastor James really has a heart and a vision. For the gym and the imagery of maturing, and each one of us kind of going into the gym and working on strengthening our muscles. From praise and worship, I've been thinking about, and the elders are talking about it, going into some foundations of faith, like prayer, like praise and worship. Because when you go into the gym, you don't start with the heaviest weight, right? You start with the smallest weights, and you work your way up. And so, we, as a community, because this is a newer community, and we also theologically have changed a lot, from being more of a bounded set Church to being a centered set Church, and our theology has changed. And so, we're kind of hoping to work through some of our subjects and some of the foundations of faith, and to kind of go over it again as a community. So, we'll see. So that's kind of where we're heading.

So, let's go back to this great cloud of witnesses and to my observations. Now, you may not have these observations, but these are mine. First, these were very normal, regular people, and I think it's been unfair that we have looked at them as these stellar humans because I found myself often asking, "What are they doing and why? Why are they making that decision?" Don't we do that? Don't we look at one another's lives and go, "Why are they doing that?" Come on, admit it. How many times have you done that? You look at other people's lives, and you're like, "Why are they doing that?" Right? We do that. We know we do.

Well, I kind of did that with them. Usually, it's like, you read about these people of faith, and then, because they're in the Bible, you try to fold your thought process around them to make them more than they are. But really, if you just look at it and understand that the Bible is about humanity and humankind, it really becomes more about buffoonery. And it really becomes more about looking at these people and going, "Wow, they're just like buffoons." The other

thing is, who was in charge of deciding who was in and who was out? Like, when the author of Hebrews was writing, like, these are the great cloud of witnesses, you know, the people that were, you know, people of faith. I'm so curious about why Jephthah, like Jephthah, really, like Jephthah, put his daughter's life on the line. I'm going to make a vow against my daughter that if this doesn't happen, I'm going to kill her. What is that? Right? So, I look at that's not somebody I would put in as a person of faith.

But it's interesting to me who they put in and their thinking. Having faith does not mean you're really smart. Gideon. Gideon. Like, Gideon. How many times have you read Gideon? You're like, "Dude, what are you doing again?" You know, even David, sometimes I, you know, hopefully lightning is not going to strike me. But you know, David, you're like, "Dude, that was not a smart thing to do, that was not smart." And as I said, I've always put these heroes on a pedestal, and now I just don't see them that way. I just see them as people that are living their lives, and by the way, have moments of faith. So, we see them in a moment where their faith was powerful. Now, when you talk about Abraham, Moses, even David, you see it spread out more, but in most of the stories, it's a moment.

So, what we do is we see one moment and then we expand it like they had a whole life of faith. We don't know that; we're just seeing a moment in their life. A moment doesn't mean anything more than a moment. In that moment, they entered into a profound moment of faith. And having faith does not mean you're better, more spiritual, smarter, more gifted. You can be a buffoon and have the faith to conquer kingdoms. Thank God, because you know what that means. None of us are axed out. That means we are all included. That means we can mess up, and we can still have faith. Thank the Lord Jesus for that. Amen. Amen.

So, when I think about faith at the end of this series, I really realized in a deeper way that faith is about living our normal, regular lives. Faith is about living in the space of the now and the not yet. As long as we are on this earth, we are living in the now, and we are living in the not yet. We have not yet fully inherited the kingdom of God, and so we will forever be living in the tension of that. We are living in a world that doesn't always work out. We are living in a space of that liminal in between, in between space. It is about living in the space of things hoped for, and it is about living in the space of the evidence of things not seen.

Okay, here is what I want you to hear in this moment when we are in activated faith. That means we do not have tangible evidence in the seen realm of what we're hoping for. Do you hear that it is when we don't see it that we are living in faith period? It is when we don't understand. It is when we don't see it. It is when all hell is breaking loose. It is when we don't get it. It is when we are angry, it is when we are depressed, it is when people have turned against us. It is when we are lonely, it is when we can't figure things out. It is when we are confused. It is when we don't get the job. It is when our hopes don't come to pass.

That's when we are in faith. Faith does not look like we float like this. It does not look like that. Most of the time, it looks like a battle. And most of the time, when we are in activated faith, we sometimes look like buffoons.

So, when we are walking by faith, we do not have any kind of proof in what we see; we do not. So, let's read our text, and I'm going to read the whole thing. And I usually don't like to do this, but I'm going to do it, and it is Hebrews 11, and I'm reading from the Passion translation. Sometimes I get questions about the different translations that I use. I just like using different translations because I like voices, and I like hearing from them. I'm going to say it a different way. I like the dialogue of the different voices because the different voices make me think differently. So, for these texts, I like the voice and the dialogue of the Passion translation. It lit something within me. So, I'm going to grab the Passion translation. So, Hebrews 11, starting at 33, through faith's power.

They conquered kingdoms and established true justice. Their faith fastened onto their promises and pulled them into reality. It was faith that shut the mouths of lions, put out the power of raging fires, and caused many to escape certain death by the sword. Although weak, their faith imparted power to make them strong. Faith sparked courage within them, and they became mighty warriors in battle, pulling armies from another realm into battle array. Faith-filled women saw their dead children raised in resurrection power.

Now we switch so all the verses before. For this have been all about winning victory, power, going for it, and great things. Then it switches. Yet it was faith that enabled others to endure great atrocities. See, I've always framed that faith has been about victory, but that is not what these verses that we're about to go into are saying.

They were stretched out on the wheel of tort and tortured, and they didn't deny their faith in order to be freed because they longed for a more honorable and glorious resurrection. Others were mocked and experienced the most severe beatings with whips. They were in chains and imprisoned. Some of these faith champions were brutally killed by stoning, being sawn into, or slaughtered by the sword.

These lived in faith as they went about wearing goat skins and sheepskins for clothing. They lost everything they possessed. They endured great afflictions and were cruelly mistreated. They wandered the earth, living in desperate wilderness, in caves on barren mountains, and in holes in the earth. Truly, the world was not even worthy of them, not realizing who they were. These were the true heroes, commended for their faith, yet they lived in hope without receiving the fullness of what was promised to them.

But now God has invited us to live in something better than what they had—faithfulness. This is so that they could be brought to finish perfection alongside us. What a different definition of faith. I spent a lot of years thinking that faith was about victory. I spent a lot of years thinking that if I just pray enough, fast enough, do enough, I'm going to get the answer that I want, the victory that I want.

And if I get anything less than that, somehow the failure is on my back, that God is so transactional, and that if I don't get it, it's my fault because I haven't done enough, haven't prayed enough. So, because I have the pleasure of having two more people that are going to preach after me, I just grab my favorite verses and the ones that stuck out to me. So, I am only going to grab three or four verses because, you know, because I set the schedule up, you're welcome, Sandra. You know I wanted these verses because I got a story.

So, verse 35, yet it was faith that enabled others to endure great atrocities. As I said, we so often put faith in the category of victory and winning, and beating all the odds and getting what we want. And I read these words; it enabled others to endure great atrocity. And then, in the NIV, they named the great atrocities: torture, jeers, flogging, chains, imprisonment. This does not sound like a good time to me. It does not sound like a good time for faith. It doesn't sound like faith to me. It's like, where is the victory? Torture, jeers, flogging, chains, imprisonment.

And what this says to me is that in the midst of difficulty, it is not about what we think is winning or what we consider is victory. It's about something else, and when we read about these people of faith, P.S., by the way, their faith doesn't rise up when they're sitting on the back porch drinking iced tea. Do you hear that? Their faith rises up when they are in war, when they are being marginalized, when they are being beaten, taken hostage, about to get robbed, when they're wandering in the desert wondering where God is, when they're in slavery, when they're sitting at the bedside of a loved one, when they can't get pregnant, when people are coming against them, when they're thrown into the pit, when they think they're gonna die—that's when faith rises up.

We think faith is when we're driving in our car, holding onto our Starbucks, praying for a parking place at Christmas time, or when we're on our comfy couch, praying for comfy things, believing for things to go our way. That's when we think we're in faith. Faith is when we are in the midst of pain and things that aren't happy. When things are happy, we don't need faith. We don't even think about it. It's when things are difficult that we have to grab on to faith.

And when you read the stories of the heroes of the faith, read the before, because it's the before that ignites them into doing what they do, but we just focus on these moments of faith. No, there's the before of the difficult that they have to deal with. It seems to me that faith is faith when we've been betrayed, fired, hurt, diagnosed, rejected, feeling like a failure,

depressed, or whatever else life throws our way, and somehow in the midst of it, we still believe God. That's faith. That's faith.

Verse 38, truly, the world was not even worthy of them, not realizing who they were. I put this in here as a little boop outside of my sermon, because I have to say this: when you have people coming against you, when you have people saying things about you and giving their opinion about how you're doing, which is life, and we all do it. We all look at each other. We all got an opinion. We all do it, unless you're Mother Teresa, and I don't know any Mother Teresa, understand they don't know what they're doing, and they don't know you. They just don't realize who you are. It is not about you; it's about them.

I think of this verse, and I use it all the time in my life, when Jesus is on that cross dying for the very people that are standing below him saying, "Take yourself down," the very people that just beat him, the very people that put that crown on his head, the very people that are mocking him and tearing his garment and saying all kinds of things, and he's going, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." I am convinced in the depths of my soul that the reason that people do things is they don't really know what they're doing. And to me, honestly, that's how I live, is looking at people and going, they don't really know. People don't tell you who you are. People tell you who they are. So, when you see somebody doing something, saying something, talking against you, being a jerk. It is about them. It is not about you. Let it go. Let it go. Let them be toxic on their own. Don't grab their toxicity. Don't let it be yours. Let it go, whether it was a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, an aunt, an uncle. I don't care. A boss, a sister, it doesn't matter. Let them be them. Let it go. Let it go. Cut the tie. Pray, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do," even if it's your spouse.

Now, forgiveness doesn't mean you remain in a toxic relationship. Forgiveness means I am cutting, and if I have to, I am separating. So, when you hear me say forgiveness, it is never to remain in toxicity.

Verses 39 to 40, they were the true heroes, commended for their faith, yet they lived by hope without receiving the fullness of what was promised to them. But now God has invited us to live in something better than what they had—faithfulness. I believe faithfulness is Jesus, and I'll get to that in a minute.

So, I am reading two books right now. I'm actually reading seven, but two are what I'm talking about. If you looked at my bedside table and my table, I got like a stack constantly. I have, like, ADHD with books I don't know, and then when I have to go back to the book that I want to quote, I have to go through like 37 books because I can't remember. But anyway, so I'm reading one raised to stay by Natalie Runyon, thank you, Beck. She said, "You got to read this book, you got to read this book, you got to read this book." And I'm so glad I did, because it is

about being in the church, whether as a leader or a congregant, and the author writes about all the betrayal, abandonment, rejection, pain, and garbage that happens to any one of us.

Let me ask this question: how many have been in a church and have been hurt? Look around the room, what does that tell you? None of us are unique. It has happened to us all. Why? Because people are in the church. Yeah, church period, because where people are, people do people things in the name of God, which is what makes it worse. It really does.

So, she talks about all of the garbage that can happen to any one of us. And if you're in ministry, or if you're in a church, it's going to happen like when people come in and they go, "I love this place. I'm never going to leave. It's like the best place ever." I'm like, okay, you'll be here two weeks. Because I'm like, you're gonna get hurt. Like, I'm so glad you love us. You will be hurt. We will do something that will upset you. I will do something that will upset you, and I won't even know it. I won't even know it half the time. I don't even know what I do. So, I left pastor Tracy. She's a jerk. I don't even know what I did.

The second book I'm reading is, Oh, before I say this, this, the byline of the book is persevering in ministry when you have a million reasons to walk away. It's a really good book. It's so encouraging and PS, by the way, I'm not talking about leaving a place. I'm talking about running away from God, because what happens is somehow we equate church with God, which makes sense. But my point is, is that it happens so often that the pastor, a leader, somebody hurts us, and then we go, "God, why did you make that happen? Or why did you allow that to happen.

Well, honey, you're on Earth and you're surrounded by people, and if you're breathing and are surrounded by people, you are going to be hurt. So, remove not being hurt off the table. Just remove it. You're going to be hurt. Life is not about getting through life without pain and being hurt. It's just not. So just know if you're here, you are going to get offended one day, you're going to be upset, and you might be hurt. Allow it. It's space. But we'll get to that in a minute.

The second book I'm reading is It's Okay That You're Not Okay by Megan Devine. This book is about grief, and about these verses, rather, are all about grief and loss. Do you know why I'm reading it? Because my number one client that I coach, I coach on grief. Do you know why I coached so many people on grief? Because somehow I became an expert on grief nine years ago, when I had to lead a community through the loss of our pastor, and I had to walk with my best friend through the loss of her husband, and then 16 days later, my husband had a cardiac arrest in front of me and my son and I had to perform CPR on him until the EMS got there and brought him back to life, and in one week's time, there was both a tragedy and a miracle.

What do you do with that? What do you do with that? Because with a cardiac arrest, it says it happens in seconds, and you have literally eight minutes before the oxygen leaves the head. And somehow, within that eight minutes, we were able to keep him alive, and EMS come and you have a tragedy and a miracle. And where does faith fit there?

And in the midst of this, I had a woman in the church who was having a mental health issue, and she was refusing to leave because she wanted him to be our pastor, to be resurrected. She was having delusions because his death kicked her into it and she was writing the congregation and telling people that Pastor Bob died because I didn't have faith in it. And in the meantime, I'm leading a congregation of 250 people, and my best friend and her children and all of us have been dropped into an abyss that we were not prepared for. And I'm with my husband as he's recovering, and I had to get behind the pulpit that Sunday because the church needed a stabilizing person behind the pulpit. I could not not be here.

250 people did not receive the promise. 250 people sitting in a room not knowing how to navigate the pain, living in the space of believing God for His healing and to be honest with you, we didn't make room for the possibility of his death, but it was that faith that walked us and walked Joanie and his children and his family through the journey of his sickness to his passing with no fear. There was so much faith in that room.

So, no fear I have ever seen anybody walk by faith until the very end like I have that man ever, and I have been at a lot of bedsides, and 10 minutes before he passed away he was doing this, somebody read a verse over him, and he just went. He heard and lifted his arm. I've never seen anybody with faith like that, but I watched Joni, and I watched his children sit at his side with faith, and then to have somebody look and to go, that wasn't faith, yes, it was. And to have people look at that moment and go, because you didn't get the answer, it wasn't faith. It was great faith. It was some of the most powerful moments I have ever seen or experienced in my life.

And I spent the next years going, what, what is faith? What does it mean? And it was, it was our expectation of what the answer was that fed into our pain. It was our expectation that fed into the pain when we didn't get what we wanted so badly and what we were believing for. And where do you put that when you don't leave room for something other than what you heard God say.

And PS, by the way, I have to say this because Joni says this all the time. And by the way, I always say to Joni, this is what I'm going to preach. Are you good? And she always says, Yes, I'm always good with you preaching. She never heard God say to her that Bob would be healed, right? She never heard that, and I didn't either. So, I just want that known, but we

carried one image of faith, and it was healing. One image, and there's a danger in that when you go, I heard God say, and you don't let go.

Do you know how many people come into my office brokenhearted because God told me, and then what God told them doesn't come to pass. And then God forbid that I should say, how do you know you heard from God? And they get offended. And I'm like, it's just a question. How do you know? Because no matter how many times we think that we're hearing from God, we must hold it loosely, because we do not see clearly we are human, and we see in part, it is arrogant to ever think you hear from God perfectly, and we also hear in community, but we hold it like this. And we say, I believe I hear from God. This is what I think God is saying, but we hold it loosely.

I just jumped ahead of myself. Faith is more dimensional than just hooking on to the answer. And when we hit these moments where things don't turn out the way that we want them to turn out, then what happens is we move to why the bad something bad happen, and why does something good happen to somebody else? And what we're really saying is, what's the formula to the good so I can avoid the bad. And so those next two to three years after Pastor Bob passed away, it was filled with this church emptying out with betrayals, with pain, with change, with agony, with tears, with depression, and that was just me, and I felt like God hated me, and to be a lead pastor at that time did not feel like a gift.

And I would stand at this altar on a Sunday afternoon, after one more family told me that they were leaving and the church was empty, and I would stay here after church, and I would yell and I would scream and I would cry, and I would swear at God, and I would be so depressed, and I felt like a victim, and I fell into that mindset so easily, and I would wonder, Why me? Why am I here? And then I just knew that if I would just have enough faith, and if I could just flex my faith wings, people would come back.

I'd watch the seats empty out. I'm watching the finances tank, I'm listening to people saying what I deem were horrendous things, and I would try not to harden my heart. And day after day, in pain and in sadness, I would do the only thing that I knew how to do, and I would sit with God, because there wasn't a human on Earth that could meet the pain in my heart. And as a pastor, I couldn't share it with anybody, because if I shared it, or I started to, I would watch fear come into a person's eyes, and I was surrounded by people that were carrying their own pain and agony, and so I had to walk it.

But, and this is a big but, God met me every inch of the way, and it had nothing to do with anything that I did because I had nothing to give, and I learned the most vital lesson of my life, and that was to lean into the pain. And that was to accept the pain and lean into it. Don't run

the pain will not kill you. It will not kill you. And I learned that faith is sometimes not getting the promise and still trusting Megan Devine.

Megan Devine says this in her book, I love this: “pain has to be welcomed and understood and given actual, true space at the table. Otherwise, we cannot do the work that we do.” I am a better pastor because I leaned into the pain. I am a better pastor because I get it and because I didn't run from the pain, whether that's the personal work of showing up and staying alive, or the wider global work of making the world safe, equitable and beautiful for all beings, we have to be able to say what's true without fear of being seen as weak, damaged, or somehow failing.

The cultural storyline in the church we have in the past, not this one, seeing weakness is a failure, and we have condemned those that come into this space, weak, broken and hurting. Instead of going, it's a part of life. Let's love you back to health. We need to make it just as normal to talk about our pain as it is to talk about our joy, hard, painful, terrible things happen. This is the nature of being alive here in this world.

Okay, hear this. Not everything works out, and everything doesn't happen for a reason. Period, I hate and I use the word truthfully when people say that, well, everything happens for a reason. No, it doesn't. No. Some things have no reason, and some things are just bad. The real path here, the real way forward, is not denying that irredeemable pain exists. I'm going to pause there.

Let me tell you about irredeemable when somebody passes away and please never say to somebody, God wanted an angel, God had a reason. Well, at least they're in heaven. Well, they're in a better place. Now, don't say that stuff. I really want to swear right now, like, don't say that stuff. Don't say that because when somebody passes away, does God bring you a new normal? Yes, I. Does God bring you love? Yes, does God bring you breath in the midst of it? Yes, does that person come alive again? No, is it the life that you wanted without that person? No. Do you have to live life on this earth without that person? Yes. Does it stink? Yes? Is that irredeemable? Yes. And even if you find another person, that person is still not replaced, you still have to say goodbye to somebody that you love, and sometimes in grief, even when, like, you lose a job or you lose something that's lesser than, you still have to grieve the loss of that.

But what we do is try to like, paint this picture and go, Well, this happened, and now it's better, because now I have this No, just grieve the loss and feel the pain, and don't try to paint a better picture. Just look at it and say, this stinks. Lean into the pain, feel it, and just go, God, I know you're still with me, and walk through it and just keep going, would I rather have Pastor Bob here? Yes, 1000 times.

So that's the part when I read irredeemable pain, that's where I go. Some things just don't change, and they can't be changed. When you want to get pregnant and you can't, don't give some trite answer about God having better stuff, you gotta grieve the loss of that, and it stinks and it feels like garbage to experience that instead, as she goes on to say here, by becoming a culture strong enough to bear witness to pain. When pain is what it is, give space for other people's pain. Hold space for other people's pain by sticking together inside what hurts by opening ourselves to one another's pain, we must, as a global church, drop the rhetoric that faith equals victory and what we think faith looks like and that it means a pain-free perfect life. It means we live within the beauty and the ugly.

And I'm running out of time. Let me see where I want to go. I'm going to go here. What I believe is that faithfulness is in Christ. It's not that God is going to give us something better. It's not that okay. This happened, and then now I can get this. It's not even in the circumstances of our life. It is in Christ and even Second Corinthians, 1:20 I have claimed this for my life, you know, for no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes, in Christ, and I've often gone, okay, claim those. You know, whatever promises they are, I'm going to claim them. And as I've been thinking about this, I actually think that they are yes in Christ, meaning, Christ is that promise. They are yes in Christ, meaning, enter into Christ. It demands of us to enter into a relationship with Christ. The invitation has always been that find me. It's not in this world, guys, it's not in what we win and lose in this world. It's in Christ, you can have everything and be miserable. You can have nothing and be miserable. You can have everything and be happy. You can have nothing and be happy. It is not in what we got around us. It is in Christ. It is in developing that relationship, what saved me nine years ago, was sitting in my chair day after day for hours on end and allowing God to love me. That's what saved me. Wasn't people, was that it was God.

So, I want to close here my favorite guy, Richard Rohr, you all know I love him, and this is what he says, suffering people can love and trust a suffering God, only a suffering God can save a suffering people. Oh, that's so beautiful. The one who suffered for us. God knows Jesus is more than anything else, the God of all who suffers more than any god that can be encompassed in a single religion. Jesus is in competition with no world religion, but only in non-stop competition with death, suffering and the tragic sense of life itself. That is the only battle that he wants to win, and he wins it by including it all inside of his body, groaning in one great act of giving birth, waiting until our bodies are fully set free, the suffering creatures of this world have a Divine Being who does not judge or condemn them in any way or in any way stand aloof from their plight, but instead a being who hangs with them and flows through them and even toward them in their despair. What's our promise? Our promise is Jesus. That's our promise. What do we hang on to? Jesus. Not the answer, not what we think is going to make us happy, not the victory. Do we stop praying? No, we keep praying. We keep trusting God, but we hold it like this, would I? Would I do I pray for healing? Still, do I pray for things and

people, still, you betcha. Absolutely, because I believe in the kindness and the goodness and the beauty and the grace of God, and I believe that God is on our side, and I believe that God's breath and life is always there. So, do we. We keep praying, but we hold it like this, and whether things work out or whether they don't, we continue to have faith, and we continue to trust. Amen.