

Grace with a Bow on Top

GENESIS 9:8-17 | PASTOR JAKE LIEDKIE

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I'm singing How Great Thou Art as we're working through Genesis, just a reminder as we go out in creation and we see the glory of God, that that's what it's designed to do, is to incite worship in our hearts. It was a number of years ago, early on in my not very long career in business, that me and another man had talked about joining in business together. As a young man, I was just surrounded by people who had been doing it a lot longer than I was, people who had wisdom that were far beyond my years and experience.

As we'd begin to seek wisdom, we were encouraged, well, you need to really think through the agreement. You need to write it up. You need to be careful.

You need to think through the business arrangement ahead of time. In the course of time, we met another guy. When you're starting out, you don't have a whole lot to lose.

So you're getting together with your collective resources, and I'm like, I don't really contribute brains or brawn, but I'm going to work really hard and I can sell stuff. So that was my contribution. Then this person had a knowledge base, and then one guy had the money and the idea.

So we came together, and I remember the discomfort of sitting down with brothers in Christ, who are all friends, with an attorney. The attorney began to talk about, well, we should talk about what you're going to do in the event that things don't work out as planned. I remember actually distinctly feeling somewhat offended by that, a little bit dirty.

It seemed like unnecessary because we were all friends. We're all friends in the Lord. We had the same goal, the same ambition.

We'd spelled out our general ideas of what we were going to do. But plugging my nose, worked through all of the details of the agreement, and sent it back and forth to the attorney, and eventually we signed the agreement. It's probably only about two years in

before one of the business partners had been cheating, had been taking money, had been competing against the other two partners.

Lo and behold, we had to dust out the agreement. What exactly are we to do in this situation? Yet when we sat down to make the agreement, everyone was happy. We were all in good faith.

I trust making it. Yet that attests to an experience that you're familiar with, and all different shapes and sizes at some level, and that is the issue of broken promises. A broken promises.

There's not a person in the room that's not been on the painful receiving end of broken promises. Unless we think too high of ourselves in the 90s, there was a conference that took the evangelical movement by storm promise keepers. I remember hearing a pastor say, you know, we ought to call it was promise breakers, because that's a lot closer to reality.

I mean, what married couple sitting down together in honesty could say, I have been faithful to the vows I've made. Not in their entirety, not perfectly. And so you and I live in a world where what we experience is broken promises, and sometimes even with the very best intentions.

Someone intends to keep a promise, and yet they're unable to get over the finish line. And so the testimony of scripture is to tell us that there is one ultimate promise keeper for whom you can trust. That God is always faithful.

He always keeps his promises. There's never a promise that he has broken or that he could break. He cannot lie.

He cannot deny himself. He will always be faithful. And so even this morning as we begin to move into Genesis 9, I just want you to think about the promises of God that are yours in Christ Jesus, and to take confidence, to take comfort that God always fulfills his commitments.

Last week, we saw God's plan for filling the earth in Genesis chapter 9 verses 1 through 7. And now in verses 8 through 17, they're all connected. We're going to see not only God's plan for filling the earth, but his promise for preserving the earth. And title this morning's message, Grace with a Bow on Top.

Grace with a Bow on Top. I had a boss who used to say, all right, I want you to do this project, and when you bring it back to me, I want you to bring it with a bow on top. What did he mean? Well, I want you to make it really, really nice.

I want it to be all wrapped up. I want it to be complete. And so here God makes a promise to creation, and that play on words, he puts a bow on top of it.

Genesis chapter 9, beginning in verse 8, Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, As for me, behold, I will establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you. And with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. Indeed, I establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, and there shall never again be a flood to destroy the earth.

Then God said, This is the sign of the covenant, which I am giving to be between me and you and every living creature that is with you for all successive generations. I will put my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth. And it will be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.

So, the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. And God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is on earth. If you remember last time, we saw that God is deeply concerned with His creatures.

He loves His creation. God cares for His creation. He loves the world.

He cares for the world. He provides for the world. We saw that God values life on earth.

He values this terrestrial globe, and He wanted to see the earth repopulated after the flood. And so, He gave everything necessary in His blessing that we saw in verses 1 through 7 of chapter 9 for the earth to be repopulated, okay, for the earth to be preserved. We saw that God was doing things like protecting and preserving and caring for the creation.

He was giving them the gift of procreation. And we saw that all of this was coming off of God's pledge that He made to Himself in chapter 8 verse 21, where God said to Himself, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth, and I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done. So, God has a plan that He is enacting to graciously provide for mankind.

And so, He tells man to fill the earth. This is really a recapitulation of God's instruction to Adam when He said, be fruitful, multiply, and rule over the earth and subdue it. God is giving Adam dominion.

It's kind of that dominion mandate, that idea of going forth and conquering and subduing creation. God told Adam to do it. We'd have a start over with the flood.

Now, Noah is being given that same charge. And yet, if you are Noah at this point, you're thinking, okay, you've promised that we'll have procreation so we can make more people to replace the ones that got wiped off the earth. And you're promising provision.

You're giving us animals to eat, animals to use. The animals aren't going to be primarily predators. We're going to rule over them.

They're going to fear us. We're going to be able to eat plants. We have provision.

You're going to give us protection, the death penalty, the ability to establish government. So, you're doing all of those things. And yet, if I'm Noah, at some point, I'm thinking to myself, here's my only concern.

The reason why there's only eight of us on the earth right now isn't because we had a procreation problem. It's not because we lack provision. It's not because we didn't have protection from all the murderers.

It was because God saw that the wickedness of man on the earth was great and He wiped us out. See, the greatest threat to man's existence right now is that man is unrighteous and God is righteous. It's the holiness of God that is the greatest threat to mankind being sustained on the earth.

And so, God comes to Noah and just in initial observations, look at what He says. Verse 9, behold, I will establish my covenant with you. Verse 11, I establish my covenant with you.

Verse 12, this is the sign of the covenant which I'm giving to be between me and you. Verse 13, this shall be a sign for the covenant between me and the earth. Verse 15, I will remember my covenant.

Verse 16, to remember the everlasting covenant. Verse 17, the sign of the covenant. And so, to have in our minds, I hear right now, you have Noah disembarking from the ark and God telling him, hey, we're going to repopulate the earth.

Here's the plan to do it. I'm going to provide for that. And then I'm going to also provide what you need relationally from me in spite of your unfaithfulness so that your life will be preserved on earth.

The covenant is a formal relationship, a formal relational agreement between two parties. And what we're going to see this morning is that this covenant and its fulfillment, this promise is dependent not upon man's faithfulness, but upon God's character. Do you understand how good that news is for us? We're going to see that this morning as we walk through the text.

This promise being fulfilled is not something that is ever threatened by your failures. Said it another way, we could not mess up enough to cause God to not fulfill this promise because it's a promise that He's making by Himself. And so, for our outline this morning, we're going to see that God covenants to preserve creation, and point number one is this, He specifies the beneficiaries.

He specifies the beneficiaries. I understand that outline's a little awkward, but covenant is being used there as a verb. So, God covenants, God is making a covenant to preserve creation.

And our first point this morning as we see the beneficiaries, the participants, who is going to benefit from this covenant? And He specifies it right here, verse 8, And so, the relationship begins here with Noah. Noah's forefronted, God is speaking directly to Noah. Noah's the man whom God delivered through the floodwaters of judgment.

And yet, the benefits of this covenant are going to extend far beyond Noah. This is very typical when God is making a covenant. He makes a covenant with an individual, and then there's other beneficiaries.

And so, in this case, this covenant is sweeping and broad and comprehensive. One writer says, There's no doubt that it was the design of God to provide for all His posterity. It was not, therefore, a private covenant confirmed with one family only, but one which is common to all people, in which shall flourish in all ages to the end of the world.

No one gets left out as a beneficiary of this promise. Even the animals are included, even the beasts, God says. God cares about His creation.

His concern there extends to mankind. It goes beyond that to every living creature. It's not exclusively a concern for mankind.

It's His entire created order. And so, when you think of God's redemptive plan for the earth, it's not just only spiritual, it's in real time, space, and history. And in fact, God is making a covenant here that is going to preserve mankind and the beasts, and then we're going to see even the earth itself.

And this is all part of God's redemptive story. And this is part of what we see right now. I think Paul alludes to this in Romans chapter 8, when he says in verse 21 that the creation is groaning, and it will be set free from its slavery.

This is the picture that kind of everybody is in this together. Man, beast, and the earth. And so, this promise extends to all of them.

Or said another way, God's redemptive activity is far beyond one people, one nation, but rather His redemptive program involves ultimately a new heaven and a new earth. He's going to redeem all of humanity. He's going to redeem the animal kingdom.

He's going to redeem the earth itself. And so, this covenant then provides some grace to everyone. Okay? This is a gracious covenant.

It provides some grace to everyone. And so, God moves from specifying the beneficiaries in verses 8 through 10 to the benefits in verse 11. The benefits in verse 11.

Point number two this morning, as God covenants to preserve creation, is that He not only specifies the beneficiaries, but He outlines the benefits. This is the benefits package, if you will. What are the details of this covenant? Well, imagine Noah hearing God say to him, Indeed, I establish my covenant with you and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, and there shall not ever again be a flood to destroy the earth.

Can you imagine what an immediate comfort that would have been to Noah? I'm picturing one of Noah's sons being maybe a bit of a prankster or a jokester and thinking it's, you know, funny when he gets off the boat to say, Hey, dad, there's a thunderstorm coming. And Noah just saying, too soon. Like that joke isn't funny to me yet.

I mean, you've just lost all of your extended family, all of your acquaintances. The earth is empty and dark and quiet. It's been destroyed by a flood.

And God says, Hey, I want to give you a word of comfort. I'm not ever going to do that again. Don't be scared.

Don't be worried. Next time you hear the dark thunder or you hear the thunder coming or you see the dark clouds rolling in, there might be a localized flood. It might be a rainy season.

There might be a monsoon, but I'm not going to do what I did again. I'm going to preserve the earth until I destroy it ultimately, which we know later in Scripture by fire. One theologian writes that the memory of the deluge might not inspire them with new terrors.

As often as the sky were covered with clouds, lest the earth should again be drowned, this source of anxiety is taken away. And certainly, if we consider the great propensity of the human mind to distrust, we shall not deem this testimony to have been unnecessary, even for Noah. What's he saying? He's saying that Noah needs to be reassured.

Let me see if he gets a sign in just a minute. He needs to be reassured. Noah was a man of great faith.

If I said Moses, I meant Noah. Noah was a man of great faith. Okay.

He believed God. He trusted God. And yet Noah was a man like us.

He would doubt God at times. And so God is graciously providing an assurance. Trust me.

You can trust me. You can trust my promises. You can bank on them.

And so I'm sure this was meaningful to Noah. I'm sure it was meaningful to his family. I'm sure that it was personally an encouragement as they heard this.

Yet, we also need to be honest to recognize that this covenant that God makes with Noah is kind of the least appreciated covenant in the Bible. It's the least appreciated covenant in the Bible. I think there's a few reasons for that.

If you can imagine being at a wedding ceremony. And this is one of those weddings where the couple decided that they were going to write their own vows. That they were going to improve upon traditional vows.

They're going to write their own. And so they kind of go through, you know, and it's kind of interesting the things they're saying. They're maybe a bit silly.

You know, I promise that if you have, you know, bad breath, that I won't, you know, tell you about it. Or, you know, if you're snoring, I'll be the one to sleep on the couch. Things that are really meaningful and substantive.

If you've been to a wedding like that before. But in this creative expression, they keep talking. And then one of them says, and I vow to never kill you.

I mean, on the one hand, I guess, like, that's a good thing. Like, we don't really want spouses not committing to kill one another. I mean, that's important on the one hand.

But you're kind of thinking like, do we really need to say that? So, I think part of why the Noahic covenant doesn't get a lot of appreciation is, if we're just honest, right? Okay. So, this is the covenant. This is the good news.

You're not going to kill everyone with a flood. And you're going to put a rainbow in the sky to look at. I mean, when you start to compare that to the other covenants of Scripture, the benefits don't quite seem as beneficial.

And when God comes in covenants to Abraham, we'll see that in a few chapters. God's going to promise to make a nation out of him. And to bring about the Messiah through Abraham's line.

And to accomplish salvation. And all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed through Abraham. Well, I mean, that's an exciting, beneficial covenant with obvious, obvious benefits.

The Mosaic covenant, given in Exodus. God says that He'll remember His people. And He says, I'm the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt.

This is a relationship that I have with you. You're going to be my people. I'm going to be your God.

Benefits, benefits, benefits. And the Davidic covenant, God's promise that of David's line, there's one day going to be a king who's going to rule and his throne will endure forever. And he's going to be a good king.

And he's going to establish an absolute monarchy. It's going to be glorious and wonderful. Okay, well, that's exciting.

And then the new covenant, Jesus inaugurates in the final Passover meal, the new covenant, which will supersede the previous covenant. I mean, that's the whole point of Hebrews. The old passes away and the new comes.

And so, you have all of these mighty, salvific covenants in Scripture that inspire adoration in our hearts. They're incredible to contemplate. And then you come to the Noahic covenant that promises, I'm not going to kill everyone.

And if you've ever thought that, you're in good company. In fact, theologians will write books on covenants and covenant theology from the Bible, and sometimes not even mention the Noahic covenant at all. Or if they do, just a few pages in the middle of a huge book dealing with covenants in Scripture.

I think what happens is that the theological significance of what is taking place here is missed. I want you to understand that the way God's redemptive plan unfolds in history is successively and progressively, bit by bit. And so, where we're at right now in the fulfillment of God's plan is this, God had creation, and He created it, and it was very good.

And mankind sinned, and creation was fallen, and it was cursed, and now man is born in original sin. And so, God promises a Messiah, but He's righteous. And so, as He judges the earth and the floodwaters, He destroys mankind.

And now, to bring about the plan of ultimate salvation through the Messianic ruler, God says, I'm going to put a foundational covenant over the earth. It's going to provide the circumstances necessary to accomplish redemption. You know what I'm going to do? We're

going to enter into a season of patience, where I'm going to be gracious to the whole world, I'm going to be gracious to all of humanity, all of creation.

And it will be on the basis of this covenant now that I will bring about the covenants that I'll make with Abraham, and Moses, and David, and the new covenant in Jesus Christ. One writer says, the purpose of this covenant is to reestablish under common grace, a livable world in which God's program for the salvation of an elect people can proceed. So, the subsequent covenants are going to relate to a very small group of people, Abraham and his descendants.

Moses would be the people of Israel. The new covenant will be God's people in Christ. And so, this is the essential framework needed for understanding the rest of redemptive history and all of the other biblical covenants.

That the Noahic covenant is not of marginal significance, but rather decisive importance. And so, if you're to give an appropriate weight to the Noahic covenant, you're to understand that this is a gracious covenant that God is making with everyone. This is God's common grace to preserve the earth while He accomplishes His redemptive plan, while He saves His people, while He unfolds history.

And so, this is absolutely incredible. And so, God here is promising that He will preserve mankind. There will still be death on the earth.

There will still be disaster on the earth. People will still even die in floodwaters. And yet, nothing will threaten His plan to bring the Messiah to earth and accomplish redemption for His people.

And so, God has given Noah the beneficiaries and the benefits of His covenant. And now, to our third point, He designates the bow. He designates the bow.

First, He shared who's involved, verses 8 through 10. Then He outlined the specific benefits, His preserving work that will allow Him, allow for the bringing about of redemption. And now, point number three, He designates the bow.

This will be the sign or the seal of the covenant promise. The sign or the seal of the covenant promise, a sign would attest to a covenant. It'd be the attestation.

And so here, according to verse 12, God says, this is the sign of the covenant, which I am giving to be between Me and you and every living creature that is with you for all successive generations. I will put My bow in the cloud. I will put My bow in the cloud.

Now, some people try to speculate that maybe some conditions on the earth changed where prior to this, no one had ever seen a rainbow. This is the first rainbow ever. It's possible.

It's also possible that God is taking something that was already occurring in nature. And He's saying, this now has a new designation. And when you see it, here is what it means.

And so God says that what the sign and seal of this covenant promise will be is a rainbow. It's a rainbow. Now, we love rainbows.

And do we not? It's like universal. You'll see a big, beautiful rainbow across the horizon. Sometimes it's particularly bright or a double rainbow.

You'll see people pulling over on the side of the road to get out of their car to take pictures. I mean, we are stunned by the beauty of the bow. It's amazing how the Lord brought it about and the refraction of light and water vapor.

And it's fascinating how the eye sees the arc and the exact number of degrees and then the different degrees that there's a double rainbow and how all of that works from a scientific perspective. But the rainbow is always associated with sunlight breaking into the clouds. In fact, just last week, I was in a coffee shop, very surprising, I know.

And someone said to me as they were looking out, I bet there's a rainbow out there somewhere. Why? Well, they could tell it's bright and cloudy at the same time. And that means somewhere someone is witnessing a rainbow.

This is given by God as a seal of His covenant, a sign of His promise. And it's designed to be seen. That when God brings a cloud over the earth, verse 14, that there will be a bow seen.

And the promise is that never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. So, we see all kinds of catastrophes on earth due to water. And yet we always know that they will be limited in their scope and limited in their depth.

And the Lord says that this bow, verse 16, shall be in the cloud. And I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. As you read that, you think, well, wait a minute, who is the bow for? I mean, normally the sign of the covenant, like we'll see soon with Abraham, that circumcision is the sign of the covenant.

Sign is really for you, reminds you of the covenant that you're graciously a part of. And yet here the Lord says, verse 15, I will remember my covenant. I will look upon it, verse 16, to remember the everlasting covenant.

So, who is the sign for? Is it for God or is it for us? When you think of it this way, when you understand remembering, the language of remembering or memory in Hebrew is not merely recalling an event, but rather action, action associated with it. And so, when God says that He remembers something, it means that He intervenes. Remember when He remembered Noah and the animals on the ark? What did He do? He started to cause the floodwaters to abate.

And so, the perspective here is that the covenant is an indication. God is essentially an anthropomorphic language saying, this bow will be a testament to me intervening, to me graciously withholding wrath upon the earth. One author says the sign of the covenant effectively guarantees God's faithfulness and willingness to act on His covenantal promises.

And it is a feature that points to God's ongoing commitment to the world He has created. So, how does that work? Well, obviously, when you see the sign, it encourages your heart because you're reminded that God sees that sign. And as He sees it, He's remembering His covenant and acting in accordance with it.

And so, that banner, even by design, going from horizon to horizon, is proclaiming peace on earth. I know the ultimate peace on earth would come, the angels would say when Jesus was a little baby, peace on earth and goodwill toward men with whom those God is pleased. And yet, there's a temporary peace that God has given to creation where He's saying, I'm not going to be continually pouring out wrath upon you like your sins deserve.

And yet, at the same time, seeing this covenant always has just, or the sign of the covenant has a little bit of an asterisk by it, does it not? It's not the kind of asterisk that means maybe there's a qualification, or maybe there's some fine print, or maybe it's not really going to come about. But it's just the recognition that forever, for how hopeful that bow is, there's also the recognition of all of the death that came before it, all of the destruction that came

before it, that there were dark clouds of judgment that preceded that bow. And so, when you and I look at the rainbow, you're to immediately think of God's absolute gracious commitment to His creation, His gracious commitment to His creation.

And as you look at that, you're also to be reminded that God also hates sin and He judges it. That's why we have to have the rainbow in the first place, because there was a flood. And as you think about God's gracious provision then to all of humanity, you're to recognize the unconditional nature of this covenant.

Unconditional meaning, there is nothing that man could do to break God's promised faithfulness to the earth. I want to read to you a couple of statements that are helpful in understanding the way we need to think about covenants in Scripture, and it has bearing even for this morning as we move toward partaking of the Lord's Supper and reflecting on the new covenant. The Noahic covenant is unconditional.

And although God places certain expectations on humanity, there is no sense in which humanity must keep these obligations in order for the promises and the covenant to remain intact. In other words, even if humanity fails to fulfill these expectations, a reality which the text clearly sees, chapter 8 verse 21, God will not renege on His guarantees. At the end of the day, the permanence of the covenant and its accompanying promises is based on the unconditional commitment of God to the human and non-human creation.

He goes on and writes, underlying the history of nature and the history of mankind is an unconditional divine yes, a divine yes to all life. They cannot be shattered by any catastrophe in the course of history, by the mistakes, corruption, or rebellion of man. God's promise remains rock certain as long as the earth exists.

And this is for better or for worse. See, when you see the rainbow, you are to understand God's unconditional promises. And I tell you, if you've not studied the concept of covenant in Scripture, it is a glorious study.

I was just reflecting this week, actually, I can still remember where I was about 20 years ago. It's before Susie and I had kids early on in marriage. I remember the exact, no surprise, coffee shop that I was sitting in in Portland.

I remember the book that I was reading. I remember the table that I was at as I was reading about God's covenant program in Scripture and beginning to have light bulbs go off to understand the stability in the Christian life that comes from understanding that when God

makes a promise, He always keeps it. And it is conditioned upon His character and not mine.

And so if you're in Christ, if you're part of the new covenant, God has promised to save you because of what Jesus has done. And it is not dependent or threatened or contingent upon your performance. So God is always faithful.

He always keeps His promises. We see that here in the Noahic covenant. And then by extension, we can transfer that to the salvific covenant that we have in Christ.

And if you want a testimony to how faithful God is to keep His covenant, even when the humans on the other side are not, you just have to look no further than the rainbow. You realize each day more than eight billion people wake up somewhere on the face of this earth and they're beneficiaries of this covenant of grace. And the vast majority of them take it for granted, and it's in operation whether they acknowledge it or not.

And I don't think we can talk about the rainbow, frankly, without recognizing that in the 1970s, the rainbow was appropriated. It was misappropriated, taken as a sign of God's covenant faithfulness to be a moniker for sexual perversion, for sodomy, for that which is unnatural and all kinds of sin that are against nature and disordered. And they would unify and lump themselves together under a shared identity, a collective identity of rebellion against their creator.

And they would take as their unifying symbol, God's sign of covenant faithfulness. It's a deep irony, of course, that this would be referred to as the pride flag because it is that very thing. They took what represents God's promise and in pride, took it for themselves.

It's an act of rebellion. There's an irony to that, that it's called a pride flag. That's exactly what it is.

And yet every time that that's displayed, whether it's a bumper sticker, whether it's a flag, whether it's a t-shirt or a bag, they can't help but to attest to God's gracious promise that He will be patient with His enemies and He's not going to destroy the earth in judgment until the appointed day. And so, even in their rebellion, they wave around the reminder of God's gracious covenant. It's the ultimate folly.

Because every time someone lifts that flag in pride, they're being sustained by the very God who created them and the God who preserves them by His covenant promise to them.

As one theologian described it, for the unbeliever to slap God in the face, he has to climb up on his lap to do it. And so, you and I get a bit offended, and I would say rightly so, but understand that the desecration of the sign of God's covenant faithfulness does not negate what it means.

Rather, it demonstrates it. And so, when you read Genesis chapter 9 and you look around you at the wickedness of the earth and you say, how can God stand by when things are so messed up? The answer is because He's gracious. He's gracious and He's accomplishing His plan of redemption.

In a few minutes, we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper. And Jesus, of course, says that it is a new covenant in His blood. It's a new promise.

It's the same character as the God who made this covenant promise to Noah. But the difference is there are many people who experience the benefits of the Noahic covenant to go on to perish eternally separated from God. Those who are with Christ in the new covenant are going to be His people forever.

They're going to be part of the new heavens and the new earth. In a few minutes, I'm going to invite you to come forward and to partake of the elements. But let me pray, and then we'll begin communion together.

God, you are so gracious to us. And Lord, we confess that we take that grace for granted, the grace that sustains us, the grace that is patient with sinners. And Lord, I thank you for even the language of this passage of Scripture that reminds us of your work on our behalf or in the faithfulness of your promises.

God, we know that were there any part of remaining in the faith that was ultimately dependent upon our performance, then we ought to still be afraid. But rather, this covenant is based upon your character, and we thank you for that. We praise you, Lord.

We love you. Amen.