

# Hebrews 12 (Part 2) v3-11 • Keys to keep from growing weary in suffering

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This is our second part of Hebrews chapter 12. We're picking it up in verse 3, and we're going to read down through verse 11. So follow along with me as I read these verses, and then we'll pray and see what the Lord has for us. It says:

*<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?*

*"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. <sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."*

*<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

I'll have you stop right there and let's pray.

Father, thank you for giving us your word today and every day. And we pray that as we unpack these verses and look at them a little more thoroughly, that you would increase our understanding and insight. We come to you, Lord, because we know that it is only through your Spirit, Lord, it is only through the power of the illuminating work of your Spirit that we are even able to grasp what they say.

And so we pray for that understanding. And we pray, Father, for the application that comes from your word. Help us, Lord, to put it into practice and to walk it out in our lives. We ask this, Father, in Jesus' precious name, amen. Amen.

You'll recall last week we were talking about ways to stay in the race. This author as well as the other biblical authors refer to our Christian walk as a race. And you'll remember we talked about it as a marathon. Not a sprint, but a long-distance race that requires endurance. Here's what's interesting. As we get into verse 3 and following, the model kind of changes a little bit.

It goes from a race to a battle. How many of you know that the Christian life is a battle, and we are dealing with battle type situations all the time. It's important for us to be reminded of that because if we lose sight of the fact that our walk with the Lord is a battle, we're going to be surprised when attacks come. And we're going to kind of be looking around saying, what's this? What is this?

And I see this happening in Christians all the time. Something will happen as it relates to their lives. Some kind of attack, some battle situation will begin to unfold in their life, and they're kind of like, 'what is this?' As if they're surprised that they're in a battle. We should never be surprised that we're in a battle.

We should just go, 'oh, this is what happens.' This is what happens when you're on a battlefield. And our lives in Christ are lived out on a battlefield. There are several battles and several fronts. They often talk about the front of a battle, which is of course, you know that area where they're really engaging the enemy.

Well, there are actually several fronts in our spiritual battles that we fight. We fight against ourselves, our own fleshly nature. We fight against an enemy who wants to take us out. We fight against a world that opposes us and wants to stamp us out. And so there's all these different areas where there are frontal attacks going on, and it happens.

And when it happens, we need to be prepared and we just need to say, yeah, this is what happens when you're in a battle. You have battle sorts of stuff that takes place. Well, interestingly enough with these battles is that many of them are going on inside of us.

And that is why the author talks here about making sure that you don't become weary or fainthearted. See, weariness happens inside. Faintheartedness happens inside to me, in my heart, in my mind, when I'm dealing with all of the junk that is going on. And that's why we become weary. And that's why the author says, if you look with me again in verse 3, he says, "<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from

*sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."*

And we know that the recipients of this letter, the Hebrews that this author was writing to, were dealing with hard times and persecutions because of their faith in Jesus. And they were becoming weary and some of them were becoming fainthearted. It's kind of interesting, I looked up that word fainthearted and it has an interesting connotation.

The New King James Version actually translates fainthearted as discouraged in soul. It's just a way of saying depressed. Discouragement is a very serious emotional state. I don't know about you, but when I'm discouraged, nothing is good, and I mean nothing. The sky cannot be blue enough, right? The sun cannot be bright enough.

Nothing is good. It's like you put on these dark colored glasses and it just casts a dim view of the world. Are you like that or is it just me? Maybe it's just me. Okay, I guess it's just me. Oh, well, here we go. But discouragement is a terrible thing because everything is just gloomy.

And that's why the author of this letter is advancing some keys. Remember we had keys last time to staying in the race. Now we're going to be looking at some different keys. In fact, we'll put them up on the screen as our note taking. These are going to be keys to keep from growing weary during times of suffering, trial, difficulty.

And, again, that can come in many different ways, shapes and forms. They were dealing with persecution here. Trials can come in all kinds of packages. And we'll talk about some of those. But the very first key that we're going to look at here is found in the first two words of verse 3, again, where the author says, "*Consider him*" and he's talking about Jesus.

Again, verse 3 says, "*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility*" so we'll put our first bullet point up here:

### **Keys to keep from growing weary in suffering**

- Consider Jesus and how He suffered

Our first key to keep from growing weary and suffering is to consider Jesus and how He suffered. And basically how He dealt with suffering. I mean, when you look at Jesus, I'm impressed with the way He handled suffering.

I don't handle, Paul doesn't handle suffering that same way. But I look at Jesus and I see, wow, that He's an example to me. Well, here's the point. I'm a Christian and it's not just Paul anymore. Now Jesus lives in Paul. It's the same thing with you guys. As Christians, Christ lives in you through His Holy Spirit.

And now the very power that He showed, that endurance and that strength in difficulty and in time of trial, now lives in you. You get it. It lives inside of you. That power, that ability to stand in the midst of trials and difficulties without becoming weary, without becoming fainthearted, or as the New King James Version says, discouraged in soul. That's now inside of you. It's inside of me. And we need to recognize that because we have the power to endure.

So consider Jesus. Consider Jesus. Now, here's what's interesting about this. You'll notice that the language as He kind of goes on in verse 4. He begins to use language that tells us that the difficulties and the challengers are not just challenges from without, they're challenges within.

He says in verse 4, "*In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*" In your struggle against sin. The word sin in the Greek literally means personal failures. It's talking about sinful actions, things that we do that are sinful. In your sin. And sin can . . . that's part of that battle we were talking about.

One of the fronts in the battleground, or on the battleground, is me. And my sinful nature. And I'm always having to deal with it. And so are you. We're constantly having to deal with it. And let me tell you something, it can easily cause us to grow weary and fainthearted. I get notes from people all the time who are just absolutely devastated by their sin and they are weary by it to the point of being fainthearted.

And here's the point: the enemy begins to jump on that weariness when we fail. And he likes to point the finger at our failures and get us to focus on them to the point where we begin to even doubt our salvation. And I hear that a lot from Christians. In fact, here's an actual question that someone wrote to me. They said:

Q: I just can't figure out how it is possible that my sins are forgiven if I keep repeating them – even though I hate repeating the same sins. If I trusted in Jesus 100% wouldn't I stop sinning?

I smile a little bit as I read that note, but because that's not a rhetorical question. They were wanting an answer. And I wrote back and I said, "No. Unfortunately, you're not going to stop sinning as long as you're living on this planet and in that corruptible body that has a sinful nature."

That's not to say that we don't get victory from sin, but you're not going to be perfected this side of glory. And if you're going to allow your sin to overwhelm you to the point of weariness and faintheartedness, then you're going to be weary and fainthearted a lot.

I don't know where people got it, but this whole idea that somehow when I get saved, I'm going to stop sinning, is just crazy. We're even told in the book of 1 John that he who says he has no sin is deceived (1 John 1:8). He's self-deceived, truth isn't in him because this sinful nature remains.

We will fall. We will fail from time to time and sometimes miserably. But that is not a commentary on your salvation. It may be a commentary on your faith, the degree of your faith, but not your salvation. But it causes people to become very discouraged. And if it isn't sin, it's something else that's going on that maybe has nothing to do with sin or something you couldn't even help.

There are so many other things that we deal with in life that can cause discouragement. Loss of employment, the loss of a precious relationship with another person, or loss of health, or any of those things. We just become so weary. And they are afflictions and trials and difficulties, and we go through them in life, and we get weary, frankly.

The first key is that we're supposed to look to Jesus because His is the power that lives in us to stand in the midst of those things. It is His power, guys. You hear me harping on this all the time. Don't count on yourself. Count on Him. You're not strong enough to stand up under these trials, and I'm talking about every day, the kind of trials that all people deal with, whether they know the Lord or not.

None of us are strong enough. It's just that in the church, we don't necessarily decide to take care of it with pills or drugs or alcohol or thrills or, something. We go to the Lord. They're just trying to cope. The world, when they do all

those things, they're just trying to cope with the difficulties of life, the disappointments of life.

We don't cope, we overcome. In fact, the Bible says we're to be more than overcomers. But the only way we can overcome is through His power. It's because He overcame, right? Jesus is the overcomer (John 16:33). We are now in Christ, and therefore our ability to overcome is predicated upon Him working in and through our lives.

I don't have the goods to overcome and neither do you. But through Jesus, we can now overcome. And this is where we get our second key here to not becoming discouraged.

Look at verse 5 with me would you. *"<sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?"* You'll notice he goes on to quote a couple of verses out of Proverbs chapter 3. *"My son,"* I want you to notice how he's addressing the reader. Let's just say my child, *"do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary"* (here's that weariness we were talking about) *"when reproved by him. <sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and (He) chastises every son" (or child) "whom he receives."*

And so this is the second key to not getting overwhelmed and weary and suffering:

### **Keys to keep from growing weary in suffering**

- Consider Jesus and how He suffered
- View hardships as God's loving discipline (training)

We Christians have to come to a place where we begin to shift our view and understanding of the sufferings and trials we're going through, into a place where we understand that God is using these things in our lives to discipline us and to train us. Listen, the word discipline can kind of have a very negative connotation. Because typically when I use the word discipline, what do you think of? You probably think of scolding a child or something like that, don't you?

But discipline carries more of a connotation than just punishment. It's not just punishment. Discipline is where we also get our word 'disciple.' And the disciple is a follower, but it's a follower who is being trained. Instructed. So discipline from the Lord is instruction and training as much as it is reproofing.

And we need to come to a place, Christians, where we look at all of the junk that is going on in our lives as God's disciplinary instruction in our lives. He is disciplining us and He's doing it out of love. He's doing it out of love. And that's why we're told not to regard it lightly or not to just say, oh, terrible, oh, just, and forget.

No, we're to say, Lord, this is you. And not to become weary for that very reason. But unfortunately, that's what we do. We become weary. I mean, we're really good at becoming weary. And I have to be honest with you, you know when I'm going through hard times, I don't know about you, but it never feels like God's blowing me a kiss at the time.

It feels a little bit more like a spanking. But I'm reminded in passages like this, that is an act of His love. Isn't it interesting? Our heart never gravitates toward the conclusion that this is God's love for us. I mean, all by ourselves. We have to be reminded by the Word, don't we? When we're going through a hard time, all I know is I'm going through a hard time, and I want it to end.

That's all I know. And it's painful and it stinks, and I don't want to be here. And then I go into the Word, and I start seeing a different perspective from the scripture. And I see from that scripture that God is using these things to train me and to instruct me that I might grow and become a more mature person. And that's one of the reminders that James gives us. Let me show you this on the screen from James:

**James 1:2-4 (ESV)**

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

He starts off his letter practically this way. He says, *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect,* Don't hold back, let it go so *that you may be perfect.* That word means complete or whole, all right? It's not talking about morally perfect. Like I said, you're not going to be perfect this side of glory, but you will be whole in a greater way *and complete, lacking in nothing* he says. But I want you to notice here that he says that the difficulties in trials and sufferings that we go through are there to test our faith.

What does that mean? Well, it's the same thing that we used to do in school. When the teacher would tell us to take out a piece of paper and a pencil and

number it from 1 to 10 because we're going to have a quiz. Did you like that when that happened in school? Then you're weird. I hated it because I was not a good student in school. I was not a good student at all. In fact, I got into a lot of trouble, which was a little weird because my dad was the superintendent.

So those things tend to follow you home, you know. And so when the teacher would say, "It's time for a test," I would always just immediately be discouraged because I knew I was going to fail it. I didn't know the stuff. I didn't care. That was the bottom line. But that test had a very cruel way of showing how much I didn't know. And the tests that we go through in life have a very interesting way of telling us where our faith is at.

How's your faith doing? Well, it's all seen how we fill out the paper on the test. In our case, it's how we respond to the trial. How do we respond when trials pop up in our lives? When you lose your job, when you wreck your car, when somebody that you love tells you they never want to speak to you again.

When you get a scary diagnosis from the doctor, how do you respond? Do you freak out? Well, you just had a test, and it shows kind of where you're at. And that's why James says that we're to consider it a joy because there's a work that's going on that God is doing in our lives to help us to know and understand kind of where our faith is at.

And when we fail and when we freak out and when we flesh out because of something going on in our life that's bad, it's a telltale marker that the Lord has allowed into our lives so that we might understand, 'I need to grow. I need to grow in my faith. I'm not where I should be.'

But again, these verses all teach us that God is using all these things that happened in our lives to bring about maturity. And can I just define Christian maturity for you? It's Jesus. Do you know that's what God is doing in your life and in mine? With all these rotten, junky, stinky things that happen in our life, He is forming Christ in us. It's kind of a painful process, which we'll talk about here in a little bit, but that's what's going on. And that's the training that we're talking about. Which again, is that word discipline. That's the training.

Look what he says in verse 7. He says, "*It is for discipline*" (in other words, it is for the purpose of training) "*that you have to endure.*" God is training you. You thought that when you left home, when you grew up and you left home, you thought, 'Wow, this is great. I don't have parents to discipline me anymore.'



And then you come to Christ and realize He's still doing it. But it's the kind of a thing a father does. It's the kind of thing a good father does. Notice, that's what he says in the middle of verse 7. Reading on, he goes on to say, "*God is treating you as sons.*" Or if you will, as His children. And then he kind of asked the rhetorical question, 'what son isn't disciplined by his father?'

Now, I don't know what kind of a father you had. I think back on the way my dad disciplined and trained me. I was the last of four kids and he did his best. My dad's going to be 94, by the way, this month, in about two weeks. And as I think back on his parenting, I thought, some of it was good, some of it was not so good.

I mean, that's kind of what he, skip down to verse 10. That's kind of what he says here. He says that our fathers "*disciplined us for a short time*" you know. How long are you disciplined in home, until you leave home? Some kids leave when they're 17, 18. Some stick around a little bit longer. But he says they discipline us "*as it seemed best to them,*" and we know they made some mistakes, don't we?

I know I made mistakes. I've now raised my own four kids and they're all grown and out of the home. And I look back on my own parenting and sometimes with a healthy dose of regret. I'll be completely honest with you, I wish I could get a do-over on several aspects of child raising. Fortunately, all four of my kids, you know, we've entered into that stage where we're friends with all of our kids. We like to spend time together. They like to come over and visit and hang out and bring the grandkids and stuff like that. And so God's grace prevailed. But I know I made several mistakes along the way. Some of the stuff I did was good. Some of the stuff I did was not so good.

I want you to notice what he goes on to say here in verse 10 when he says, "*but he*" (he's referring to God) "*disciplines us for our good,*" (and the thing is so) "*that we may share his holiness.*" When he says here that God disciplines us for our good, he's not talking the way we talk to our kids before we discipline them and say, 'Now this is for your good.' Because sometimes it was and sometimes it wasn't. This is saying, when God trains and disciplines us, it is always for our good. What it's really talking about God, it's referring to him as a disciplinarian, as a trainer.

It is always for our good. He never makes the kind of mistakes that human fathers can make with their kids. He doesn't make those mistakes. He is a good good Father, as we like to sing. And that means there's nothing bad in the way He trains and disciplines us. And that's something that we need to remember.

In fact, remember what Paul said when he wrote to the Romans. You all know this, Romans 8:28. He says:

**Romans 8:28 (ESV)**

*...we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

*...we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, and that's God's good, by the way, not yours. That's probably an important distinction. We kind of look at it and go, 'oh, doesn't look very good to me.' No, God's bringing about good in your life. It's from His perspective. *for those who are called according to his purpose.* God's work is good. And you'll notice that verse says, we know that in all things, and that includes even the sufferings that we go through. In the challenges in the trials and the hurts and all those things that we don't like to go through.*

But we learn something in these verses in Hebrews 12 that is very important about getting to the good part. And it's in verse 11. Would you look with me there? Verse 11, he says, *"<sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later"* (so there's a time frame here. Later, he says) *"it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness"* now, he could have stopped right there, but he didn't. Well, how does he end that verse? He ends it this way: *"to those who have been trained by it."*

And those last seven words are critical. Because as much as we love to quote Romans 8:28, which we put up there, God, works all things for good, for those that love him and are called according to his purpose, and we love to quote that. But Hebrews tells us that's not automatic. That good that He brings out of all things is not automatic. It only becomes good as you open yourself and submit to the training that is part of what God is trying to communicate.

Can I just tell you guys, not everybody does that. And I'm even talking about Christians. Some Christians refuse to be trained and it's kind of sad. They're constantly trying to throw off responsibility on other things or other people as to why these things are happening. And they never embrace those things in the Lord in a way as to say, 'teach me and help me to grow and become more like Jesus through this trial, through this difficulty.'

There are Christians that don't do that. And when that happens, Christians, they begin to flirt with bitterness. Because if trials aren't going to make you better, the only other option is for them to make you bitter. And that happens to some

people. Have you ever met somebody who was old and crotchety, just bitter and spoke venom and toxic?

Have you ever met somebody like that? I have. And I expect that to happen in the world because all people can do in the world is cope. That's the best you can do in the world, just cope. I remember as a kid, everybody talked to me about coping mechanisms. Until I was tired of hearing about cope. I was so glad when I became a Christian to find out that we don't have to cope.

We can actually overcome. We can actually have victory. So I expect people in the world who are trying to cope to probably end up bitter. But as Christians, as people who have an invitation, a personal invitation to come to Him when we are weary and heavy laden. He says to us that very thing: come to me, all you who are weary (Matthew 11:28).

Isn't that what we're talking about in these passages? Those of you who are fainthearted, come to me. I'll give you rest. I'll take care of you. You can offload that pressure on me, He says. We as Christians ought to be taking advantage of that every chance we get. We don't, but we should be. And when we do, we begin that process of submitting to the training that God is wanting to bring about in our lives through the difficulties and through the hardships. So that it will ultimately bear fruit, good fruit in our lives.

I can say here, right now, standing in front of you that as much as I hated going through and have hated and probably will continue to hate all the trials that come into my life, they have born fruit. Much to my surprise, sometimes. They have born fruit. But again, for that to happen, we need to submit our suffering to the Lord and offer it to Him. And not everybody does that.

Our natural tendency is to withdraw when we're hurt. Sue and I had this cat one time, it was such a perfect picture of what happens when people are hurt. But we took this cat in to get fixed. It was a female. We didn't want to have any more kitties, so we took the cat in and the cat was obviously in some pain. We brought the cat home, and she ran behind the stove and stayed there for like 24 hours.

And I thought, that's kind of the way I feel when I'm hurting. I just want to withdraw. I'm not the kind of a person, I'm pretty private. I want to go be by myself and kind of sulk, but that's not very good. It doesn't help. And our natural tendency also is to ask why? Why is this happening? Have you ever gotten a good answer for that? Because I haven't. I don't think God is telling, to be completely honest with you.

You read through that whole book of Job. I don't know the last time you studied through the book of Job. Here's Job, bless his heart, he goes through all these trials, difficulties, I mean severe. And his three friends come along and they go, we know why this is happening to you because you're a scuzzbag of a sinner. That's it. You just got to repent.

And remember, as you read Job, what did Job say? He said, no, you're wrong. This is not happening because of sin. And he was right. Job was right, and his friends were wrong with their assumptions. So you endure this long narrative of this dialogue between Job's three friends and Job. And finally, even this other young man starts to talk ,and it's all just a bunch of fluff, and Job is getting angrier as the book goes on.

And he even comes to the point of kind of arrogantly saying, if God would show up, I'd have words with Him and we'd talk this thing out, and I would confront Him face to face about His unfairness. Well, he gets his wish. At the end of the book, God appears in the whirlwind. Do you guys remember?

And what have they been talking about the whole length of this book? Why. Why is this happening to me? And his friends are going, we know why, but they're wrong. And Job says, well, I can tell you why it's not happening to me. And then he finally gets to talk with God. And what happens? God doesn't tell. Did you ever notice that in the book of Job?

He never explains. God never explains why Job is going through those things. All He says is question after question after question to show His sovereignty, His power, and His wisdom. That's all He does. So that whole thing of, why is this happening to me, don't even go there because I don't think God's sharing that information.

The real question we need to be asking is, will I trust Him to take what is happening to me and bring good fruit from it? That's the question. Will I trust Him? I love the words of Peter, a man who knew what it was to suffer. Look at 1 Peter chapter 4:12-13 on the screen. It says:

**1 Peter 4:12-13(ESV)**

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

There is going to be a gladness that we're going to have when Christ is revealed because of our sufferings. That's what that passage says, by the way, because of the things that you are suffering now. As you commit those things to the Lord, trust Him for the fruit. Peter says, rejoice that when Christ is revealed, in other words, when He returns, that you will share in His glory.

These things that you and I are going through are producing a glory. In fact, it's a glory that Paul says elsewhere, far surpasses any difficulty that we are suffering right now. He says, that you can't even compare. Don't even try. He says, I'm convinced you can't even compare what you're going through now with the glory that is going to be revealed one day. In fact, let me put that passage up on the screen for you just so you can see it for yourself. Romans. There it is:

**Romans 8:18 (ESV)**

*...I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

That says it, doesn't it? I consider, he says, you know what, they're not even worth comparing. But that takes trust, doesn't it? Because this hardship that you're going through right now is really difficult.

And it's getting all of your attention, and it's very challenging for you to take on a perspective that says, I'm just going to trust God that this isn't even going to show up as a blip on the radar one day compared to the glory that will be revealed in my life through it.

So here's the point of all this. What the writer of Hebrews is attempting to do to his audience is to get their perspective switched over to a heavenly one. You with me? An earthly perspective is my problems, they hurt, I'm discouraged. That's my perspective.

His perspective is I'm using this in your life to form Christ in you. And if you will trust Me, I'm here to tell you that the glory that will one day be revealed through these sufferings in your life will not even be able to be compared. These sufferings that you're going through will not even be comparable to the glory. And we need God's perspective every day. And this is why we study the Word of God.

It's why we get into the Word of God, because we need to be reminded of these things because our perspective is dark and discouraging. His perspective is overwhelmingly positive, and it gives us hope. If you're going through a hard

season right now, I want to encourage you to put your hope in the Lord. To hope in the fact that God knows. He's there to give you the power to overcome, to stand strong, to fight the battle. And what you're going through right now is going to bring a glorious surpassing glory one day. Let's stand together. If you need prayer this morning, we'll have some people up front here to pray with you if maybe there's a heavy burden that you need to offload onto the Lord.

Father, we thank you so much for your Word because it is such a wonderful reminder of where we need to be. Where our perspective needs to be. Father, forgive us for the many times when our perspective is so earthbound from that standpoint of thinking about our pain and focusing on it, rather than knowing and trusting that you are in charge, and you are going to use these things in our lives to bring about a surpassing glory. Help us, Lord, to trust you and to consider Jesus the one who not only suffered, but the one who is ready, stands at the ready to help us in suffering, to endure and to be victorious. Thank you, Father. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, amen.