



Sermon – 09/04/2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 14:1 – 16, 20

James 4:1 – 2

Ephesians 6:11 -13

John 10:10

Acts 2:9

Let's open our Bibles together. We're going to be in Genesis chapter 14 this morning. Genesis 14, beginning in verse 1. And if you're a guest with us in the room this morning, maybe you're in town for the Aggie football game week or a new student checking out Central for the first time, welcome home. We saw last week in the text that every one of us, if we're seeking to live out God's calling on our life, we face two tests: a test of adversity and a test of abundance. That adversity tests us at the level of our anxiety and abundance tests us at the level of our apathy. And what we're going to notice now as we turn our attention to Genesis 14 is that in addition to those two tests there are three spiritual battles that everyone of us faces if we want to fight the good fight of the faith and live in a way that God has designed us to live. And as we ready our hearts for God's word I want you to know that during our response time today I want to invite you to make your way to the tables that are set up around the worship center to grab the elements for the Lord's supper which we will partake of later on during this time together. Let's read beginning in Genesis 14 starting in verse 1.

¹In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, ²these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). ⁴Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

Let's pray together.

Lord, thank You for the gift of Your word. The way that is truth, that You have poured out Your word to show us who You are so that we can live in a way that's pleasing to You. And I pray now, God, that as we come to this moment, as we encounter Your word by Your Spirit, that You will tear open our hearts and let us see where we are in rebellion against You. That we can get clearer picture of the rescue that You've offered us in Jesus Christ so that we might follow You more faithfully in every aspect of our life. And we ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.

We know that World War II was a battle between the Axis and the Allies. So, the Axis made up of Germany and Italy and Japan, the Allies like America, Great Britain, France, and others. It was a clash of kingdoms, that people teamed up together for the battle. And right as that battle was beginning to raise, there were four brothers from the Niland family in Western New York who enlisted in the US military. Now, there was a rule at that time in the military called the Soul Survivor Rule. That if multiple children of one family enlisted, they would be split up into different units so that if something tragic happened to one, it would reduce the likelihood that the others would also die at the same time. Thus, giving a chance for a family and to have at least one of their children brought home from the battle so that their family line would not be destroyed. And so, one of the Niland boys was sent to the Pacific Theater with the Air Force near Burma. The other three were stationed in England and in the European Theater, including Fritz, who were going to be sent in to invade Normandy at the start of D-Day. And if you think about it for a minute, imagine the parallels that that modern warfare moment in World War II have to the text that we're coming to today. So Genesis 14 is the first military conflict that's recorded in human history. And in this battle, we see this clash of kingdoms. Five kings versus four. And in the middle of that war taking place, there is a rescue mission that is launched to recover a sole survivor from an essential family line who must be preserved. Now, think about what's happening when we come to this text. Genesis 14 is this turning point in the Bible. Not only because it is that first military battle and warfare plays such an important theme in all of Scripture, but it's also a turning point in the life of Abram. Remember the last time we saw him leave the land that God had called him to. It was back in Genesis 12 where he left the Promised Land like a cowardly wimp in search of preservation and protection and provision. But now as this transformation happens, he leaves his promise land as a conquering warrior to bring about that same protection and provision. And what we're going to find as we work our way through this test. When we see in Genesis 14 both the dangerous rebellion and the daring rescue is that this picture of warfare that's laid out here is going to help us to see three dimensions of the spiritual battle that each one of us face if we want to fight the good fight of the faith in our daily lives.

And so let's check out the first one back in verse 1. We're going to see how it calls us to recognize the source of our spiritual battle. The source of our spiritual battle. And when you look at this text, it reads like the annals of a military history. Verses 1 through 3 that documents the way that this pattern kicks off in one of rebellion, retribution, and then rescue. And what Genesis 14 is showing us is that even though the structure of the Tower of Babel still no longer stands, the spirit of Babel still does. That rivalry and pride provoke these wars that lead to this strife. It's almost like you see here the ancient version of a Fortnite battle royale taking place. Five on four in this melee that's unfolding here. And we see the reason why down in verse 4. Why does this battle take place? Look at back at verse 4. It says,

⁴Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

So, the rebellion is against this king named Chedorlaomer. And that name is just hard to pronounce. So, I'm going to give him a nickname for the rest of the sermon. We're going to call him Cheddar because he's the big cheese of all the kings that are represented in his group. So, they rebel against Cheddar as it's laid out here in verse 4 and the battle that he is waging is not just to quell a rebellion but to expand his territory. Remember, the reason Lot chose the area near Sodom is because it was rich. It was fertile. It would be exactly the type of place that a conquering king would want to annex and to take hold of. But underlying this issue is a deeper reality. One that you're going to see on the screens when we look briefly at James chapter 4, verses 1 and 2. Because you maybe wondering yourself, what does this ancient battle have to do with my life today? And what James is going to show us, the brother of Jesus will make known to us that there's an underlying root issue behind every conflict whether it's military in nature or spiritual in nature. The spiritual battle around us comes down to one thing that you'll see in James 4 in verse 1. He says,

¹What causes quarrels among you and fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

In other words, the root issue in Genesis 14 is not a war of people, but a war of passions. That those passions, those desires, those longings deep in the human heart lead to that tension, drive us to that conflict, foster those fights that happen amongst us. And what's true of the military conflicts in Abram's day are just as true in the spiritual battles that you and I face all around us. So, you think about the tension points you have in your life. Maybe you think back to that last fight you had with your spouse or that heated moment you had with someone in your family or that conflict you had with your roommate because he's still not doing the dishes two weeks into school. Underlying each one of those points of tension is what James 4 is speaking about here. That unmet expectations, unsatisfied desires, unfulfilled longings drive us towards conflict. What we can't get on our own, we seek through these battles, these rivalries, these strifes, these moments take place where now we no longer see the people in our life as allies but adversaries. We spend our time mustering the armies of our arguments to tear down the stronghold of their defenses. That's the way this text connects to our lives. But when you look back there in Genesis 14, you see what seems like an out-of-place interlude picking up in verse 5. I mean, he set the stage. It's five on four. The battle's about to take place. And then, it seems as if it goes off course. And it speaks about this other victory that Cheddar and his allies have won. And it seems as if it may not matter but to the text and the flow of the story. But here's why it's significant. Look back in verse 5. Look at the some of the names of the peoples that they defeat. The Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim. Now, why would he mention those? Well, for one, if you were to look ahead in Deuteronomy 2, it speaks about each of these tribes. And they're not just ordinary people. Deuteronomy 2 describes them as giants in the land. They're just like the Anakim. They're more than just ordinary people. They are great warriors of great stature who Cheddar and his king's defeat. It shows their prowess. But more importantly, Abram is writing this to Israel while they're in the wilderness in this same region where the battle in Genesis 14 takes place. And what he's showing them as they're preparing to enter the Promised Land is just as God was faithful to bring about victory over the giants of the land in Genesis 14. You can

trust him to bring about victory as we enter the Promised Land in the future. He is filling them with confidence in God's ability to provide. Now, what I want you to understand is that even though we don't see military conflict playing out in our lives after Jesus has come and sent forth His church as a way to advance the kingdom, we see it playing out through a spiritual lens. That's why I want you to notice on the screen the way that Ephesians 6 talks about the nature of our warfare beginning in verse 11. Because the military battle raging around Abram helps us to make sense of the spiritual battle that rages around each one of us. Here's how Paul says it.

¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, get this, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

See, what the Bible wants you to understand is that if you're seeking to fight the good fight of the faith, your primary battle in your life is not a military war like the one we see playing out right now in Ukraine. It's not a political war like the one we see playing out right now in the lead up to the midterm elections. The root battle that you and I face is spiritual. That there are unseen demonic forces seeking to lead you astray, to drive you away from God. I mean, think about it. Genesis 14 speaks of this man, Chedorlaomer, who is the prince of the power of the regions. But we know that the New Testament speaks of an even greater enemy that you and I face. The prince of the power of the air. Satan himself who wars against us. And if we're going to find lasting victory in our lives, and Genesis 14 is pointing to the reality that we need to embrace a warfare worldview when it comes to living out our faith. That when we read the text of God's word and as we seek to live out our lives to the glory of God, we need to have a warfare mindset. We need to have a willingness to go to battle and to stand and fight even as a spiritual battle swirls around us.

But there's a second thing we'll see as we go on in the text picking up in verse 8. It points us to a second battle. We need to see the shape of the spiritual battle within us. The shape of the spiritual battle within us. So, let's pick back up in verse 8 and keep reading.

⁸Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹with Cheddar king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹²They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

So, now, the battle, the story returns to this clash between the five kings versus the four kings. And as you look at it at the second half of verse 8, you'll see that it says, they join the battle in the Valley of Siddim. They gather themselves there for the battle to take place. And the text doesn't give us much detail about how this battle plays out. But it does tell us about the result. You'll see it back in verse 10 when it says, the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled. Some fell into them and the rest fled to the hill country. So, Cheddar's team wins a decisive victory over Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other kings of the

region. In fact, there is death that's marked not just by the fighting but even in the fleeing. That as they run off, some of them fall and die, falling into these pits full of bitumen. The exact same material that they used in the Tower of Babel to construct that tower. They lose their lives here in this moment. And think about what's happened. Because as the text moves on to verses 11 and 12, in the aftermath of this military battle in Genesis 14, what we see for the very first time in recorded history is two dimensions of military warfare that give us a window into the spiritual battle that we face within us. And you'll notice the first one back in verse 11. It speaks about the first recorded instance of the plunder of war. So, you see the plundering that takes place there. Maybe you've heard the phrase, to the victor goes the spoils. You're familiar with that term? It comes from a senator who was celebrating the win of President Andrew Jackson back in the early 1800'. But the whole idea is if you win the battle, then you now not only possess the people, you possess all of the things that they own. And that's what we find here playing out in verse 11. It says,

[11So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their provisions and went their way.](#)

In other words, Cheddar and his team don't just take their lives, they take their livelihood. They don't just take the people, they take the possessions. So, a couple of weeks ago, right as the A&M semester was kicking off, we had the joy on a Friday night of hosting the Impact Ministry Fair. If you're not familiar with Impact, it's an amazing camp for incoming freshmen to learn how to live out their faith in college. And one of the things that we do coming into the semester is Central, out here in the foyer and over in the Family Life Center where we have our college gathering, we host 20 tables out here for churches around our community and 20 tables in here of different campus Christian organizations to try to foster a connection between these incoming freshmen and ways for them to flourish spiritually. And the reason we do that is because we're all on the same team. We want these kids to thrive as they settle in to their life at Texas A&M or Blinn. One of the reasons though my family loves to come up here is my boys know that when Impact Ministry Fair happens, there's all sorts of free giveaways happening at these tables. And so they're like early on, they're scouting out who's got the best stuff. They're working from table to table, grabbing candy. There was even one of the campus Christian organizations brought a toaster oven and was making s'mores at their booth. You better believe my boys hit that up. And I felt a little bit like Cheddar here in Genesis 14. I was dispatching them to different tables to grab me some Sour Patch Kids watermelon flavor or other good stuff like that. But each moment I looked over, you would see hundreds, if not, thousands of students here, including my boys there in the mix, and there would be materials all over these tables. And it seemed like in an instant, as the night went on, what was there in abundance had now been plundered? Those tables were barren compared to what they once were. They were being wiped out. And that's the picture of the plunder that we have here in verse 11. That he takes both their lives and their livelihoods. And in that moment, what we find is that Sodom and Gomorrah now move from a land of abundance to a place filled with adversity. And what we need to recognize is that pattern of plunder we see in the military battle here in Genesis 14 shows us the first glimpse of the same thing that can happen on a spiritual level in the life of you and me. So, look at the screens here at the first half of John 10:10 when Jesus is speaking about the danger of satan in your life. Notice the way He talks about it. He says,

10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

So, Jesus is warning us that satan comes into our lives not only to lead us astray by persuasion and deception, he then follows that up by plundering our souls through accusation. He steals our joy. He kills our hope. He destroys our witness. That plundering of the soul takes place. And I imagine in this room, there are some of you that have walked in here this morning who feel overwhelmed by the guilt of sin. Maybe you're a new student who's only a few weeks into the semester and you have no idea how it could be that you've fallen this hard, this fast. And satan's whispering in your ear that you're not good enough for God. That your joy is now gone. That the hope that you once had has been destroyed. That's the power of the plundering of our enemy. But look back at John 10:10, if y'all will throw it back on the screen. Because Jesus speaks a word of hope to each of us. He says, the thief comes to steal and kill and destroy but notice what he says about Himself.

¹⁰....I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

That what Jesus is reminding us of is even though we face a spiritual enemy who seeks to plunder the joy and the hope in our lives, that instead Jesus has come and thwart that plundering. He has led captive the one that was holding us in captivity. And through that action, he has offered us abundant life. More than we could ask or imagine. More than we could deserve. There may be some of you in this room who think that God will never accept you. There maybe some of you in this room who think your sin in your past is so bad that you've been disqualified from even serving in God's kingdom. That's the plundering of the enemy. Seeking to uproot the work of God in your life. And if we don't see that for what it is, then we cannot stand the spiritual battle within us. But when we come back to Genesis 14, we see a second dimension of the aftermath of this war down in verse 12 that we also need to recognize. It's not just the plunder of war but we see the first example of the prisoner of war. So, who is that prisoner there in verse 12? It says,

¹²They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

And recognized the stakes here. When Lot is taken captive, this isn't just a problem for Abram's family, it's a problem for Abram's calling. God has promised that He would raise up an offspring in the line of Abraham, but up until now, he doesn't have a son of his own. He might think Lot is his only hope. And so when Lot is gone everything is in jeopardy. But there's an important thing you need to notice that happens here in the text. If you'll turn back one chapter in your Bible to Genesis 13:12, I want you to see in the second half of the verse a key difference between our passage in Genesis 14 and the way that the Bible first talks about when Lot settled by Gomorrah. So, look at the second half of 13 when it says,

¹²...Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

And notice that phrase at the end of the verse, as far as Sodom. We talked about it last week. It's the act of being as close as possible without actually being in the city. But now, flip back to our chapter and look back at chapter 14 in verse 12 and notice the way he talks about where Lot lives now. Verse 12 of chapter 14 says,

¹²They also took Lot, the son of Abram's daughter, or Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom

No longer is he just near Sodom, he is in it. He has moved right into the center of sin. And why is that important? He couldn't resist the siren call of sin. It brought him further up and further in. In other words, Genesis 14 is showing us Lot had already become a slave to sin before he ever became a prisoner of war. There's a man by the name of Joey Henney that lives up in Philadelphia. And there's not very many times in our culture where someone's emotional support animal will make national news. But Joey's is a bit of a different situation. You see, this rescue pet that he has isn't a dog or a cat or some other common example of an emotional support animal. I want you to see what it actually is by looking at the screens. Check out this picture. That's right. An emotional support alligator. Which he has on a leash. And he's walking it around a park there. This is one that he rescued from Florida. It's about six years old and he just raves about how much better it's made his life. He says, he's not even worried about its danger because he's the only alligator he's met that doesn't bite. Get this. He even sleeps with the alligator. Now, why do we think that's crazy? I mean, there's all sorts of reasons, let's be honest. But the reason it feels so crazy is you are voluntarily putting yourself in proximity to a reptile that you know can destroy you. That you are willingly getting yourself close to something that you think you can control but at any moment, it could take over and completely devour you. But when you see that picture on the screen, you need to come face to face with the same way we can often do that with the sin in our lives. Like Lot, we don't just get near Sodom. We're now in it. We bring ourselves closer and closer in the proximity to our sin. We think to ourselves, we can control it. It's the one that doesn't bite. It's the one that promises it will never devour. And we have this illusion like we can keep it compartmentalized and contained without any consequence. But at any moment, that reptile of old, that serpent in the garden, Satan himself is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. And the way that works out for you and me is that apart from Jesus, the Bible teaches us that we're not physical prisoners of war in a military battle, but we are spiritual prisoners of war in a battle that is raging all around us. That we're slaves to sin. That we've turned our back on God. That we have gotten closer and closer with the enemy. And if we want to walk faithfully with Jesus, we need to be reminded of the words of the reformer Martin Luther who said, "He, who will have Jesus Christ for his master and king, will have the devil as his enemy." That's the type of spiritual battle within us, within us that each of us are called to face.

So, I wonder this morning, do you find yourself overwhelmed by sin? Do you see yourself on that screen getting closer to your sin rather than fighting against it? Do you find yourself plundered of the joy and hope? Well, if that's you this morning, the last portion of this section in Genesis 14 will speak a word of hope and joy to us this morning. Because the final thing we're going to see starting in verse 13 is the third spiritual battle that each of us encounter. Because beginning verse 13, we're going to see the story of the spiritual battle for us. The story of the spiritual battle for us. So, let's pick back up in the text.

¹³Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued

them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

So what this text shows us is that Lot's captivity is not the end of the story. Verse 13 recounts this man who runs from the battle. He escapes from those who have conquered the people and he comes to Abram and to his allies and brings this report. And you can imagine for a moment how Abram might have reacted in this instance when this man comes and tells him of the fate of Lot. You would expect him to react with contempt, with resistance. You would say, "Hey, you chose to live near Sodom. You got what you deserved. You turned your back on me, now I'm going to turn my back on you. That's not my problem to sort out." But instead, Abram doesn't respond with contempt but with compassion. He doesn't respond with passivity but pursuit. And in this moment, he doesn't respond with resentment but rescue. And what is that rescue look like? We'll see it there in verse 14. It says,

¹⁴When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

We see this transformation happen, this metamorphosis or this transfiguration in the life of Abram where he goes from what seems like a quiet farmer in an insignificant part of the land and transforms into this conquering warrior who's going to do whatever it takes. It's like Clark Kent going in, changing into Superman. It's like he comes out of there and in his best Liam Neeson voice, he warns Cheddar and his kings that he has a particular set of skills. And he sets off in the battle. He rounds up these 318 men. And remember what is going on here. As he pursues this battle, they go out and fight and win the victory in the most unlikely way. Notice how it describes it there in verse 15.

¹⁵He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

Now, think about how unlikely this victory is. I mean, Cheddar and his allies have defeated these giants in the land. They've just conquered four other kingdoms and brought them into subjection. And Abraham steps out with 318 men in this ragtag army. Abraham's 75 years old when this battle happens. We got any 75 year olds in the room that think they could go to war and bring back a captive. I think some of you could but it would be tough, wouldn't it? And in the most unlikely way, God brings about the victory. How does it happen? Well, look ahead in chapter 14 in verse 20. We see how the victory takes place when it says there,

²⁰and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"

In other words, the text is showing us that the nature of the victory doesn't display the greatness of Abraham. It displays the greatness of Abraham's God. He's the one that fights for them. He's the one that brings about deliverance. He's the one that brings us victory and rescue from our captors. He is showing his covenant faithfulness by bringing about an unlikely victory through an unexpected deliverer for an undeserving person. This maybe the first time that pattern shows up but it's not the last. Because if you were to look across the Bible, you see that same story over and over again. An unlikely victory through an unexpected deliverer for an undeserving person. You think about it in victories like Exodus or Jericho. You think about the

victories that were won through prophets like Elijah or judges like Gideon or kings like David. In each case, we find God fighting for His people in order to preserve His covenant promise. And it shows up right here with Abram as his rescue takes place. And that whole pattern is pointing ahead to the coming of Jesus Christ. Because there's no greater enemy than death. Since Eden, it was undefeated. And this unlikely deliverer comes. He brings about this unexpected victory. The people in Jesus, they would look at him as a common criminal in rebellion to the Roman Empire. He goes to the cross, the place that no one would expect as a source of victory. In fact, it's the symbol of defeat. And through that cross through that death, in His resurrection, He brings about the most unexpected of victories for the most undeserving of people. You and me. He suffers in our place. He rescues the slaves to sin. He sets the prisoners free. The reason that you and I can find hope this morning is because of the victory that we have in Jesus Christ. And I need you to see what happens after this victory is complete back in verse 16. It says,

¹⁶Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

Abram in other words, doesn't just rescue God's people, He recovers their possessions. In other words, he plunders the plunderers. And in that act, he is bringing about a restoration of God's promise and his calling in Genesis twelve. He's restoring God's people to now live in God's place to carry out God's purpose in their life. And I want you to just put yourself in the shoes of Lot while all this is taking place. Sin has brought you further up and further in to where you're now living in the center of sin in Sodom. And when this invasion happens, you are caught up as a prisoner of war. You're hauled off and in that moment, you're probably asking yourself and rethinking everything, "How could I be so dumb? What was I thinking?" But that disappointment would soon turn to despair and wondering, "Will God remember me? Will Abram come for me? Is there any hope of deliverance?" See, one of the main ways that satan works against us in the spiritual battle for our life is he follows deception with despair. He leads you to sin then he takes you slave to that sin. So that he causes you to doubt if you will ever find freedom. You can only imagine that Lot was in that exact place. And in the same way that Lot who didn't deserve the rescue was set free by the power of God. That's what He offers for us in Jesus Christ. Everyone of us because of our sin deserves to die. We deserve to face death. But by His Son, the son of Abraham, He reverses that curse. He sets us free and He calls us to be restored to His calling on our life. God's people and God's place under God's rule.

There's an amazing dimension of this story that you might miss if all you did was ever read Genesis 14 and move on. So, I just want you to see one last verse before we work to a close in the Lord's Supper. It comes from the book of Acts chapter 2 and in verse 9. If you remember, Acts 2 is Pentecost. It's when Peter for the very first time, is taking the Gospel to the nations. And in those first few verses of chapter 2, it's recounting the nations of the people represented there at Pentecost who are hearing God's word and his Gospel in his own language. And remember what's happened in Genesis 14. Our main character, Cheddar, is the king of a place called Elam and he's brought together a coalition of kings from the land of Mesopotamia. And now, when you hear Acts 2, maybe it will hit you in a new way. Look at verse 9. Look at the nations of the people who hear the Gospel for the very first time. Acts 2:9 says this,

⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Can you see this full-circle moment here? The kings from the places that's almost brought about the end of Abraham's line, the end of the promise of a Messiah are now the descendants of those same places, are gathered there together to hear Peter declare the Gospel for the first time. The Elamites, the residents of Mesopotamia. The descendants of Cheddar, and his allies are now here to learn about a King who is greater than any emperor this world has ever seen. One whose reign is not over a small piece of land in the Middle East but over an entire new creation. One who is making all things new. And the way He's doing it is through a rescue mission for a soul survivor. If Fritz Niland and his brothers set out in the early parts of World War II and it was pretty soon after they were deployed that adversity and tragedy struck their family. His parents learned in May of 1944 that his brother in Burma was killed, was shot down in an attack there. His military plane was struck down and he fell in Burma. And then not long after that his brothers were sent off into the war. Where one died on D Day. One died the day after and Fritz had parachuted into the area of Normandy. And he was separated from his unit. And while you may not know the name Fritz Niland, you may know his story. Because his story was the seed material for the 1998 blockbuster film, Saving Private Ryan. You remember that one? Where John Miller, played by Tom Hanks, and his crew were sent behind enemy lines on a rescue mission for a sole survivor, James Ryan, played by Matt Damon. And they're able to locate Private Ryan and they're able to start leading him out. But in that effort to rescue him, captain John Miller, the leader of this rescue brigade, loses his own life. And while he's standing there face to face with Private Ryan in his last gas of life on earth, he looks at Ryan in the face and he gives him an instruction for the rest of his life. He says, "Earn it. Earn this." In other words, we've sacrificed everything for your rescue. Now, you need to spend the rest of your life earning that escape. Repaying that rescue. Deserving that deliverance. And there may be some of you that feel that way this morning. That your only hope of rescue, your only hope of escape your only hope of deliverance is by earning it. By your efforts, by your works, by your goodness, that God will look at you and say, "Finally, I found one that's worthy of rescue." But that's not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us the only thing that we bring to our spiritual rescue is the sin that put us in captivity in the first place. And the only hope of our deliverance is by turning to that conquering warrior, that son of Abraham; seeing, believing, and trusting him for eternal life.

That's why it's so fitting we're celebrating the Lord's Supper this morning during the response time. Because the Lord's Supper reminds us of the victory feast that we celebrate because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And every month, we turn our attention to the elements in the response time to remind us of the shed blood and broken body of Jesus Christ that makes a way for our spiritual rescue. And in just a moment, we're going to stand during the response time and I'm going to invite you to come and make your way to the table to retrieve those elements. And this is a family meal for you. If you're walking with Jesus as a baptized believer, we invite you to this victory feast this morning. And as we ready our hearts for this moment, let's take a moment to pray together now. As we bow our heads together I just want you to think about in the quietness of your own heart. Are you at a point in your life where because of your sin or because of your circumstances, you're in need of rescue? And if that's you this morning, I would just want to take a special moment to pray particularly for you.

Father, there are men and women in this room right now who find themselves in a moment of desperation. At a spiritual crossroads. And I'm praying in this time, Lord, that they would be so transformed by the work of Your grace that they would forsake the pleasures of sin, that they would leave behind the captivity that You've, that they've been seduced into and instead turn to Jesus. Turn to the abundant life that He offers. Turn to the hope that we have in the Gospel. And for each one of us, that what we find Acts 2 be a reminder to us that just as Peter took the rescue of Jesus out on a mission to the nations around us, that we too are called to advance that mission in the same way. And that we as a church might live on mission right here in the Brazos Valley and around the world. And we ask these things as we prepare our hearts for Your supper. In Christ name. Amen