Remember Now Thy

CREATOR



Sermon by Ostis B. Wilson

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"Remember Now Thy Creator"

I want to address a little message this morning to our young folks. You older folks are welcome to listen if you care to. If you are here and feel that you have passed the flower of your youth and that this doesn't apply to you any more, just bear in mind that you will not be any younger than you are right now.

We have a nice group of young folks here and if we wouldn't consider our young people the exclusively greatest asset of the church, they are certainly one of the greatest assets of the church and I want to speak particularly to them this morning.

I will read a lesson from Ecclesiastes, beginning at the 11th chapter and verse 7.

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw

nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Now the writer begins by calling our attention to the light—the pleasantness of the light. I am sure that we all enjoy light. There is something about darkness that is depressing. He says "if a man live many years"—now that's a big IF. If a man live many years. Now some of us will not live many years, but suppose we would. I wonder if any of you feel a definite assurance in your heart that you are going to live many years. Well, I hope you will. But now the next statement is something I know you will not have. It won't happen to you, and I am sure of it. "If a man live many years and rejoice in them all." I know that you are not going to have it that way. There are going to be some disappointments, there are going to be some troubles, some griefs to be borne, sorrows you will meet with, tears you will shed. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." God said that and that makes it so, and I just accept it that way. Now, suppose you lived many years and not a shadow

came over you; never a trial, test, sorrow, or trouble crossed your path—you just rejoiced in all those years and were full of rejoicing and joy all the time, nothing ever dimmed your joy—now that won't happen to you. If it did happen to you, if it came to you to have that kind of a life, the writer says, "Remember the days of darkness because they will be many." "The days of darkness" here refer to the days beyond this life, and they are going to be many.

I heard Clarence Hartley bring a message in Bakersfield, California, one time on the subject of "Consider Your Latter End," the text from Deut. 32:29, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Now that was the theme, and when he got through and sat down. Brother Francisco got up and said: "Now, I just want to say that your latter end is your longest end."

Now, if we live many years here, eternity is a lot longer than that. The days of darkness referred to here is eternity, beyond this life; and that is our longest end. David made a statement like this in Ps. 39:5: "Thou hast made my days like a handbreadth." Now, David was an old man—I do not know just how old, but at least he said in some of his writings, "I was young, but now am old." I know he lived to be an old man and in his old age he said, "My days are just as a handbreadth." Well, I thought like this—"days" is a measure of time, and "handbreadth" is a measure of space. If I were setting up a mathematical equation from this, it would read like this: My days compared to eternity are as a handbreadth compared to space. Now, I was thinking of space—here we have a desk that is perhaps two feet across, but that would be only one, two, three, four, five plus handbreadths across. Take the distance from here back to the door, I don't know how far it would be, maybe forty feet, but there would be some hundred handbreadths across there. Take the distance from

here to Oklahoma City—approximately thirty miles. It doesn't take long to go down there, I know, but the handbreadths between here and Oklahoma City, just a common distance that workers commute back and forth, would run into the thousands, perhaps many thousands of handbreadths. Take the distance across this continent, from New York to Los Angeles. That is quite a little distance, about 3,000 miles or so, but the airplane has made such a small world out of this that now a person can eat breakfast in New York, get on a plane and eat lunch at regular lunch time in Los Angeles. The handbreadths across there would run into the millions. Now consider space. They tell us that it is some 93 million miles to the sun. Now I don't comprehend that. I don't know how far that is and they don't either. But that is what they tell us and then they say that on beyond the sun there are myriads of world and planets so distant that they measure the distance from those planets to this earth in light years. Light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, how long would it take a ray of light, how many years to travel from a planet down to earth? Now put a handbreadth up beside that and what do you have? It is infinitesimal, isn't it? You couldn't even locate it. There is no means of comparison here. My days compared to eternity are like a handbreadth compared to space. "Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth." Now, what I am telling you is this: Your latter end is your longest end and it is so much longer that there is no means of comparison. Therefore, whatever it takes for you to save your soul, whatever sacrifices you may have to make, whatever the cost may be, whatever you may have to deny yourself, the sufferings you may have to endure in order to save your soul, what difference does it make? This life is just a little while. Eternity is a long time.

A number of years ago I was traveling in the Rio Grande Valley of Southern Texas where there were numbers of safety signs along

the highway. One of them read, "Drive carefully big boy—death is so permanent."

Now let us think: "Remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many Rejoice O young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth." Young people do rejoice in their youth and they are proud of their youth, but there is one thing I notice about young folks—they want to be left alone. "I am just young one time. Just let me live my life, I am just young once." Now that is a good thing for us to realize if we apply it in the right way. If you think of it right, it is a good thing for you to realize that you are just young once. But the way the young person usually applies that and what he has in mind is, "I want to have a good time, I want to sow my wild oats, I want to go my own way. I don't want any restraints on me. I am just young once. Let me go my own way now. Let me have a good time." "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth." Then the writer says, "Walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes", and isn't that the way people do? In the sight of their eyes and the desires of their heart, doing anything they want to do. A common frailty of mankind, young and old, is that we can't see beyond the end of our nose. We can't see the effects of things, the potentials of things. We can't see the fruit that we have borne, we can't see the results of things. We are just looking here with the sight of our eyes and the desires of our hearts. That is what we want to do, but the writer says, "Go ahead and do that." He knew that was the way it would go. He knew that is what they would do. He says, "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

My mother lived for young folks. The young folks were her world. In all of my young days growing up out here at Shawnee, my mother taught the young people's Sunday school class. Every

Monday night she would have her Sunday school class come to her home. They would study the Sunday school lesson and have, maybe a Bible question and answer session. Then she would let them have a little social time, with refreshments, etc., and they all had a nice time at my mother's home. She never did let her young folks get out from under her wings, so to speak, or enter into marriage or any important venture of their lives without her having a good time of counsel with them and talking with them. But my mother would see young people sometimes taking steps following the wrong course, doing things that she, in her advanced years and experience, knew would bring sorrow and trouble to them all their lives, and in her very serious way would shake her head and say, 'There's going to be a hereafter to all this. There will be a hereafter to this." My text says, "Walk in the sight of thine eyes and in the desires of thine heart," but know that there is going to be a hereafter, folks. There is going to be a reckoning time, therefore remove sorrow from thine heart. How are we going to handle this? How can one remove sorrow from his heart? My answer is to remove the thing that causes the sorrow. Sin is what brings sorrow. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Remove the thing out of your life that causes the sorrow. It will save you a lot of sorrow and trouble on down through life. Remove sorrow out of your heart. Now let me tell you something—children, young folks, listen to me good. They that are coming up through that period of their lives resent restraint. They do not want anyone telling them what to do. They want to be turned loose. The sad thing about it is, so many are being turned loose—just going their way. But that's what they want. There are some who kick and fuss, resent discipline and fight against restraint. God's word says in Lam. 3:27, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Now God said that. What that means is that it is good for one to have some restraint on him-good for

him to be held in check and to be under discipline in the time of his youth. That is a good thing for him. But we find that we are living in a time now when young people want to be let go and they resent discipline; they resent being told what to do, and having any restraint on them.

We have a lesson in the word of God about a young fellow who got it into his mind that, "My daddy is holding me back. If I were just out from under the restraining hand of my father and had a little money to go on, I could really go places and do things." He thought he had great capabilities, and maybe he did have, if he had given them time to develop. But he just thought, "My daddy is holding me down. He is restraining me. If I could just get out from under his hand and get a little money, I could really go places. I could things." So he went to his father and said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. I am going away now, I am going to leave home." Young folks get that in their minds a lot of times. They want to get out on their own right when they need the guiding hand of their parents the most. They just want to get out from under their parents and get out on their own. That's the spirit of this age. This young man had that idea. His father gave him his portion of the inheritance and he went out from home, no doubt with his head high and his chest out. "I am on my own now, I can really do something now. I have a little money, I am out from under the hand of my daddy, and I can make my own decisions and exercise my own judgment and my own ingenuity. No doubt my judgment is better than Daddy's, anyway. I can really go places and do things now." But he wasn't prepared for that. He got out there and he found people doing things he didn't know humans did. He wasn't prepared to meet that, and he fell a victim to many different things, squandered all of his money in riotous living, and finally was reduced to a condition of want, and hired himself out to a man who

sent him out into a field to feed swine. Oh, such a detestable job for a man of his standing! How differently things turned out to how he thought they were going to turn out—what he had in his mind!

There is something about the spirit of youth and the vigor, vitality, and strength that youth has that just gives them an urge that makes them feel that they can meet things that they are unable to meet. They don't even know they are going to meet that thing, but they venture out. They go out and before they know it, before they actually come to themselves, they have their lives all mixed up and ruined and there is a trail of sorrows and woes that will follow them right on to their graves. Now, you see, your parents have been over the road before you. They are older than you are, and have had more experience than you have had. They know a little better than you do how to weigh things out, and they realize a little more than you do what the fruit and outcome and potential of these things are; and if you would just realize that and listen to them and accept admonition and instruction from them, they would save you from the woes and troubles that follow these things if they could.

Now, I dare say there is not anyone here that has any years on you but who can look back on your life and remember things that you wish you didn't have to remember, and see things that you wish weren't there. Your parents would save you that kind of trouble if they could. I have thought so many times that if each succeeding generation would just take up where the preceding generation left off and build on that foundation, and go on from there, oh, how far along we would be! But it doesn't work out that way. Every fellow seems to feel that he has to learn for himself. Maybe Daddy was an alcoholic, and they saw what happened to him. It seems that they would be restrained. "It won't happen to me like it did to Daddy. It got him, but it won't get me that way." But they just go on, dabble

and dabble, and pretty soon it has them just like it did Daddy. We can't profit by the experience of those before us, so we just keep covering the same ground generation after generation, over and over again, and never get any farther than where we started.

"Remove sorrow from thy heart." Your daddy and mother, children, could help you do that if you would just accept admonition and instruction, discipline and restraint from them.

The writer says, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." That is good admonition for every young person. The time of youth is a very important time. It is at once a dangerous time and a very advantageous time. You see, it is dangerous because youth is a time of dash and dare. Youth is venturesome, and there is something about youth that they just don't like to take a dare. Consequently, whatever the crowd is doing—maybe they know better and have been taught better—but they get out and the crowd taunts them and they don't like that, so they'll just venture, too.

My oldest brother was born of the same parents as I, was brought up at the same family altar, was taught the same things in the Sunday School, and heard the same preaching of the Word that I was taught. In his youth he had an experience of salvation at one time, but he was like the prodigal son, and he left home before he was ready to leave home. He wasn't ready to meet the problems out in the world. He thought he was, but he wasn't. People did things he didn't know humans did, and he got in with the crowd. He held out against drinking and smoking and different things like that for a long while, but others would taunt him, they called him "preacher", and finally he said he just got tired of being called "preacher", so he broke over and began to drink and smoke with them; and, as a result of that, my brother practically drank himself to death. Now, he didn't intend to do that—he had higher ideals than that when he left

home. He had been taught different from that, and he had a better foundation than that; but he got out there and wasn't able to meet what he met and he was swamped with it, and it ruined him. He practically drank himself to death.

Young folks many times seek for a thrill. They desire a thrill, and they venture in search of one, but those ventures overtake them, swamp them, and involve them in things that they never expected to get involved in.

In 2 Tim. 2:22, the apostle Paul admonishes like this: "Flee also youthful lusts." It seems to indicate that there are special things of this nature that appeal to youth in a special way. "Flee also youthful lusts." Now, I have noticed this: the evil habits of life that people get into, they usually get into in their youth. A person who gets a few more years on him, a little more experience, a little more developed, and a little more able to meet the situations of life, seldom take up with these evil habits of drinking and smoking, etc. They have a little better understanding. "Well," you say, "I know somebody that did. He was pretty well up there, too, before he started drinking." Yes, I know people like that too, but the percentage is small. If you ran out the percentage, it would be small. Most of the time people take up with these things before they are old enough to comprehend the fruit of these things, the potentials of them and where they will lead them, and these things get hold of them and enslave them throughout their lives.

Youth is the formative time of your life and the pattern of your life is being laid out in the formative years, and that pattern will be a pattern of your life right on through your life. Whatever is formed in your youth is the course you are going to follow, ordinarily. Now, God can change that. If people will turn to God, He can turn the tide and change the course of events; but most of the time the pattern of

life that is laid out in the period of youth is the pattern of life that is followed right on through to the grave. They carry it right along with them.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." God wants to get hold of folks before they get a wrong pattern of life laid out. It would be much to your advantage while you are young to give your heart to God and let Him pilot you through this unsettled period of your life. Many times there is a certain stage youth gets to, a certain age they arrive at, that they feel they have all the answers, they know more than Daddy, Mother, school teacher, or anybody else. I heard about one fellow trying to get something across to his young son one time. The son was right at that age when he had all the answers. He knew everything and his daddy couldn't tell him anything, neither his mother, the school teacher, or anybody else. He was just at that age where he had all the answers. Finally, the daddy gave up in exasperation and said, "Son, I wonder if it has ever occurred to you that twenty years from now you will be just as dumb as your daddy is now?" Now, that's the way it works out. Sometimes we think Daddy and Mother are old fogies, that they are way behind times, and are not keeping up with things at all. But we get out and we have a little experience and we learn a few things, etc. We look back and we say, "Daddy was a pretty wise old man after all. He sure has wised up. I tell you, he surely has wised up." It was you who wised up. You just got more in the groove with Daddy's thinking. But we think Daddy changed, that he wised up. Someday we'll look back there and say, "He was pretty wise after all." We didn't think he was when we were growing up. We thought he was just an "old fogey", way behind times, way out of date, not keeping up with the schedule at all. But we get out there and see how things are working out and when we look back. Daddy was a pretty wise fellow.

Now, youth is a time of great advantage, if we will just take advantage of it. God told the children of Israel concerning His law, "Teach these things to your children. When you lie down, when you rise up, when you walk by the way, in the morning and in the evening, teach these things to your children." Why did He do that? Because that was the time for the children to get them. He realized that the children coming up were going to meet the problems of the world after a while and they needed a good foundation. They needed some fortifications. They needed something in them to direct them in that trying time of their lives out there. Children and young people can grasp things that they can't get later on.

When I was a boy growing up, the Sunday school that I came up in at different times sponsored scripture memorizing contests, and the one who memorized the most scriptures would receive some kind of a little prize. We would just go into it like we were playing for keeps. We would really work at that, memorize whole chapters sometimes. Most of those verses that I memorized back there I have now. I have them in my mind. I can quote them without reading them and tell you where they are found, chapter and verse, but I don't get hold of them like that now. It is more difficult for me to memorize things now. I used to not forget much, but I forget lots of things now. I forget some things that I would be a lot better off if I remembered, but I have just reached that age of life when things don't register with me like they did then. You will do that, too, if you live long enough. Now is the time for you to get what you are going to need on through life, right here in the period of your youth when your mind is plastic, you will grasp things and you will remember things. Right now is the time for you to fortify yourself for the things that you are going to meet out there. We ought to be applying ourselves. We ought to be learning God's word, we ought to be opening our hearts to God's word, and getting the truth down

into our souls. We ought to be working at that earnestly and sincerely, because the time is going to come when it won't register with you like it does now. It will take a lot more effort for you to get hold of it later on than it does now.

God would like to get hold of you and your life and direct your life in the right channel. God needs workers for Him, and in the time of youth we have the energy, the strength, the vitality, the mind and the intellect to go ahead and make a good, profitable worker for the Lord; He would like to save you and make a worker out of you and use you in a good cause right on up the rest of your life. Here is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who will just accept this admonition, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

One of the major religions of the world today says, "Give us a child for the first seven years of his life and you can have him the rest of the time, he will be ours." They implant things in those children's minds, drill them, catechize them and educate them in those fundamental principles of their religion to where they have it and they have it good; and they can go right out in the world, but they are still going to be governed by that. Truth is that way, too, if you and I will get it. We have God's word, we have parents to teach us God's word, and we have preachers and teachers to instruct us in the ways of God. We could get it that way, too, so that we would just be sealed by the Truth before we ever go out in the world and begin to meet all the deceptions there are out there.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." I wonder if it has ever occurred to you that the things that are luring you, the things you are being borne away with the things that are keeping you from serving and loving God now, that the time will come when you will not enjoy those

things like you do now. You will lose your ability to enjoy them. The evil days come and the years draw nigh when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them." The writer goes ahead here and describes the person who loses his eyesight, "those that look out of the windows be darkened, the doors shall be shut in the street,"—he is shut in now—he can't go about and do like he used to do, can't enjoy the things he used to enjoy, he is coming down to old age now. The grasshoppers are a burden to him. Things that we used to not pay any attention to are a burden to us now.

I told somebody a while back, "I must be getting old. I used to get in my car and drive from Los Angeles to Oklahoma City without stopping for rest—just drive right through; but now if I drive out to San Bernardino and back, which is about eighty miles away, it seems to me like a big trip." Grasshoppers a burden, the almond tree shall flourish, hair will turn grey, strong men will bow themselves. Youth takes pride in its youth, in its vigor, and its quick, steady step; it holds its shoulders erect, its head up and its chest out, but the time will come when the step is going to be slower than it is now, the head will bow a little and the shoulders sag a little. You will begin to give to your feelings. Your vitality is ebbing away and the natural forces are abating and you will begin to give to your feelings. You will wake up at the sound of the bird, all nervous and restless and can't sleep at night, stay at home and rest, any little old noise disturbs you and wakes you. One may say, "When I was a youth I could just sleep right on, nothing would wake me, but now I am nervous and jittery and any little thing wakes me." The writer goes ahead to describe the circumstances of complete collapse: "the pitcher be broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern", everything going down, everything going to collapse. What is the matter? This man is going to his long home. He is coming down to the place where his health is breaking, his strength is diminishing,

his natural forces abating—he is coming down to cross over to his long home. There is a complete collapse of everything, everything falling apart. You say, "Oh, that is a dismal picture. I don't want to think about it." Well, all right, but let me tell you this: Every one of you is going to get old if you live long enough, and the only way to avoid getting old and the handicaps of old age and the breaking down and collapse of everything is, a man has to die when he is young, and nobody wants to do that. If you live long enough, you are going to come down to this time and lose your ability to enjoy the things that are holding you away from God today. "Before the evil days come and the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"—lost your ability to enjoy them. People get jittery and nervous and others say they are old and childish. Someone has said that some people get old and devilish—well, people don't have to get old that way. What we mean about people getting old and childish is that they are hard to please, and they complain and murmur—you can't satisfy them. They are unpleasant, old and childish. You don't have to get old that way. You see, it depends on how we live when we are young as to how we are when we get old.

I was called two different times in one year to preach funerals for two ladies. One of them was just past ninety-four years, and the other one would soon have been ninety-four—way up there in years, but those were sweet old ladies—just precious people. One of them had the testimony that she had given her heart to the Lord when she was twelve years old and had lived for God right on up through the years—eighty-two years for God! Isn't that a wonderful record? If you young folks and children have started living for God, just keep right on and maybe you will live eighty-two years for God. If you haven't, get started now so you can live what time you have left for God, in His service, doing good and helping save somebody else.

God wants to save you to serve Him, working for a good cause and maybe helping other people to find salvation. He needs you, He needs young folks. Young folks can fill places older folks can't fill. They have the energy, strength, etc., to go out there and do, where older folks aren't able to. I don't class myself as old, but I can't go like I used to go. I can't do things like I used to do them, but there are folks right in here that could outstrip anything I ever did if they would just get in the harness and get going, get busy doing what God would have them to do.

But now here it is, people get old and childish. They come down to old age and they are shut in now, they can't go out and bury their feelings and convictions like they used to do. It used to be if they got any convictions from God they would just go out and get with the gang and have a big time and cover it all up, but they can't do that now. They are shut in, just living with themselves and their memories and sometimes people find themselves pretty difficult to live with, especially if one has a misspent life back down there and remembers some things he wishes he didn't have to remember. You know, memories are pretty hard things to have to live with sometimes and they are pretty hard to dispose of and get rid of. Memories. You take a person who hasn't lived like he should have lived, and he knows he hasn't lived like he should have. His life has been misspent. There are things back there that transpired in his life that he wishes now hadn't transpired, and he remembers things he wishes he didn't have to remember; but he can't get out now and drown out his feelings, can't drown his memories. He can't get out—he is shut in, and maybe he is blind and can't enjoy looking at the things he used to enjoy looking at. The folks that helped to drown out his feeling when he was young are old now, too. Maybe they are shut in and can't come over to visit him, can't help him out any, and he is just shut in with himself and with his memories. All he has to

look forward to from the place where he sits is approaching death and impending judgment and the uncertainty of those things that lie beyond, and he is just pretty difficult to deal with—pretty unpleasant. We all get old if we live long enough, but how we get old depends on how we live now. One can bury things, bury feelings and cover up different things, but when you get a little older you will lose your ability to camouflage and what you are will start coming out on you. You will find yourself rather hard to live with when you are shut in and just living with yourself and by yourself.

One sister preacher used to say that people would talk about being surprised at what they would see in older people, and what older people do. "I never would have thought that of them." She said, "Oh, that's been there all the time, it is just coming out now. It is just now breaking out." They lost their ability to camouflage. They kind of covered up and hedged and it is just coming out now. Nobody with you, just shut in with your memories and yourself.

I read a title on a book in a bookstore once which said, "The Older You Get The More Like Yourself You Become." That's so. You just get to be yourself after a while, and yourself just comes out on you and exposes you.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of your youth. Let God direct you, let him protect you from all those things that you will fall into when you get out there in the world. Let Him guide your life, pilot your course, guide you right through the turbulent, unsettled period of your life, and live right on in service to Him. Then when you get old you can just ripen for heaven like these old sisters I spoke of.

My first wife's mother lived to be about ninety-three, close to it, and the last four years she lived (four years and some months maybe) she was a bed invalid. She was in our home all the time, just

as sweet an old lady as you would ever see. Everything was all right, no complaints, no murmuring, always when one would do anything for her, in her quaint little way she would say, "Thank you." But she had lived for God many years from the time of her youth, and just ripened up for heaven. We can get old like that, too. We have to look forward to getting old—it happens to every one of us.

One of the saints referred to some of the elderly sisters in our Senior Citizens Home in California. She said, "When I get old I want to be just like Sister ____ and Sister___."

"Well, they were very sweet old ladies." I said, "If you want to be like they are when you are old, you will have to be like them now."

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth", and that is my little message to you this morning. In Jesus' name.

—Amen.