

July 18

I was reminded as we sang that song, that that's the song, that was on the shield from the city of Asheville: "I lift my eyes unto the hills." Lord, I pray that this city will truly come to know you, and will lift up their eyes unto you. The hills hold no power, but you do, and I pray that we may all be so converted, and to see, this city yielded unto you in every aspect: the mayor, and the city council, and even the county government, down to the street workers, and whoever, Lord. That everyone would be- would look to you, homeless as well as those who live in Biltmore courts. Lord that we would all seek you with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our strength, and with all of our mind. Seek your face, that our eyes would look, to you, for you are our help and our shield, you are our salvation, and to you we give glory this day. And Lord I pray that you will so instill in each one of us here, in this place, a heart and a longing to see this city become as it were "Bethel," the house of God.

I just have to confirm that, because I've been thinking all through the praise and worship, that sense of the Lord's burden for this city. You know, that being Asheville's song, of course, but the very first song that we did, I couldn't help remembering some years ago, when we were out on city/county plaza, playing that song, and listening to the hallelujahs just reverberate off of the city building and the county building and the hills, and just sensing the burden the Lord has for this city, and the burden that on and off, we have had for this city. He wants to rekindle that in us, and He just loves this city, and He wants us to have a love for this city, and the people of this city, and what this city can become in him. He's the one that made this such a beautiful place.

I think it's appropriate that we're singing that song after the words that came before that song, 'cause a lot of people, when they learn where I'm from, or where we're from, they say oh how lovely it is there, and it's pretty and so nice to live there, and say we've got something that's very nice. I was walking by myself one day by Beaver Lake, on the trail behind Beaver Lake, and I had a seat next to these really large trees, and I had a moment I'm sure, realizing that those trees were there long before I was born. And, barring something catastrophic, they would be there long after I'm dead. And I thought of the eternity of that, and the sort of depth of the experience that those trees will have, that I'll never have, and how eternal that seemed. But even those trees are not going to be there forever, even if man doesn't cut them down, they will pass away. So I understand why the new agers in this area worship the trees, 'cause they are ancient, and they have wisdom that we don't have. And they have experiences we don't have, but there's something bigger than that, there's something more lovely than that, there's a more lovely place, even in the world we live. How lovely is His dwelling place, the eternal dwelling place, where the tree of life, the tree that was there in the garden of eden, the tree that will be there, by the river of the water of life, the one that lasts forever, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. That is the tree that we're really, looking for.

And the maker of that tree is the one we worship. So I understand why people worship the mountains, but when we talk to people about that, or when we think about that, we should say, “yes, they are beautiful, and they are lovely, but there is an eternal land, this isn’t home yet, how lovely is His dwelling place, the dwelling place of the Lord.

Just a moment ago, I was thinking, how thankful I am that the bishop is coming, and then I thought, wow, ... there were days and years gone by when the bishop’s visit was a great source of, trepidation. We had no idea what he would say, we’d worry about it. And now we look forward with anticipation to the bishop’s visit. It’s a great day, and we anticipate what the bishop is going to bring. And we know that whatever it is, it’s from the Lord, and it’s something that we need to hear, and undoubtedly intended for our spiritual benefit. So, that’s a good thing, thanks be to God.