

# Ye are all the children of God by Faith

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[ 0 : 00 ] We can resume our public worship of God by singing the first psalm. The first psalm, we'll sing the whole psalm.

That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and whose leaf fadeth never. And all he doth shall prosper well, the wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro.

In judgment therefore shall not stand, such as ungodly are. Nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear. For why? The way of godly men unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.

This psalm, first psalm to God's praise, that man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray. That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray.

[ 1 : 37 ] In counsel of ungodly men, nor stand sin, nor stand sin, nor stand sin, sinner's way.

Nor sit death in the scornish chair, What place is delight.

Upon God's law I meditate, On his law day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows, Near planted by a river, Which in his season yields his truth, And his leaf fiddeth never.

And all ye doves shall cross the well, The wicked are not so, But blind they are unto the child, Which wind drives to the road, In judgment therefore shall not stand, Such as ungodly are.

[ 4 : 03 ] Nor in the assembly of the just, Shall wicked men appear.

For while in the way of godly men, Unto thy Lord is known, When us the way of wicked men, Just white be overdone.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord our God, O Lord our God, As we gather in your name once again, We give thanks that we can solicit your help, In order that our prayers and petitions Would conform to your expectations of us, That we come as sinners, That we come as sinners into the presence of a holy God, Not worthy of the least of your mercies, And yet it is mercy we seek.

We know that without the forgiveness that we are in need of, Then we can't expect ourselves to receive anything, But your back turned to us, And your face averted from us.

And we have found in your word occasions where that was true, True, Even in the experience of a people that bore your name.

[ 6 : 24 ] They came to the places where they sought you prior to that, And where you were pleased to reveal yourself to them.

And yet what they found was the heavens above us, Brass and the ground beneath the feet of iron.

We acknowledge that there are times when we find ourselves Prostrate before you in prayer, And yet we cannot find ourselves with the hope and expectation That the ear of God is turned towards us.

And we conclude rightfully that it is what we deserve, That you would turn away from us, And that you would not heed our prayers.

But thanks be to your great name, That you receive us not because of anything that is true of ourselves, But that you receive all who would approach the throne of grace, By reason of the one who is at your right hand, Even the great high priest of his people, The Lord Jesus Christ, Who has secured for us a way of access, And who has, through the word that bears his name, Brought evidence to bear upon our thinking, That allows us to understand that That way of access is always open, However we would choose to avail ourselves of it, Be it day or night, Or on whatever grounds, Sometimes we come,

[ 8 : 36 ] Only when the desperate, The situation that marks out our, Our need becomes apparent, Rather than utilising that privilege, As we ought, Help us even now, To lift our eyes to the heavens, And seek your face there, Even though we are inclined to, To bow our heads, And to close our eyes, So that the shamefacedness that is rightly ours, Would not debar us from being allowed entrance, But we pray Lord, That you would remember us mercifully, That you would unite us as one, Even one in your presence, Seeking the blessings, That will enrich, And that will add no sorrow, Seeking the privileges,

That are ours, From your own hand, That would allow us to declare, Forcefully and freely, That the Lord, Is God indeed, And that you are our God, And that you have, So made known, To our hearts and minds, It's the truth, Concerning your willingness, To come to us, Even when we were unwilling, To come to you, Remember our congregation here, All who form part of it, We pray for every home, And household represented, Many that are not, We pray for the doors, That are shut, That they may be opened, The windows that are barred, That they may see, The floodlights of your, Own word, Be directed towards them, And that, The bars may be torn asunder,

And the doors, That they may be opened, We pray Lord, For a day of power, A day of, Of mercy, And we ask, That you would accompany, The word, That is so freely, Declared, So that it would, Impress itself, Upon our hearts, And minds, We give thanks, For the many that, Come to, The house of God, And we pray for, Those who, Are unable to be here, Although their heart is here, We remember them to you, Who are hospitalised, Those that we know of, That are in the hospice, And that we don't, We pray Lord, For, Your own mercy, To be, Directed, To them, In a, In a, Way that they would understand, That it is God, Who is, Addressing their need,

We ask Lord, For the, Blessing of the most high, To accompany, The proclamation of truth, In all, The pulpits, Of our island, And beyond, We pray for the servants, That you have sent out, With the gospel, To have unction, From on high, That they may be given, Liberty to declare, Freely, And forthrightly, The gospel, And to, Remember those, Who, Have, Limited knowledge, Of Christ, That their knowledge, Would increase, And that their faith, Would accompany it, So that they would know, That the Lord, Jesus Christ, Is the one, And only, Saviour of sinners, Remember, Our nation, And all who, For and part of it, We hear so often, There is, A need for, Unanimity, Of purpose, So that there,

Would be, An inclusive, All embracing society, But to, The detriment, Of those who, Who declare, Such a desire, That is to the exclusion, Of the gospel, And to the, Declaration, Of the, Word of the living God, Who determines, What is truly, Of merit, And truly, Of efficacy, For the time, That we have, In this world, And for the eternity, Upon which our face is set, So pour out your spirit, Upon us, That we may discover, Afresh, Your saving interest, In the fallen children, Of men, Visit the world, In which we live, In its entirety, The nations of the earth, That are at war, The places that you have visited, In providence, That are strange, We hear so often,

[ 13 : 47 ] Of flush, Flush floods, Where, Water is, Something that is a rarity, And yet, When it comes, The heavens open, And it comes with such ferocity, That, That souls are swept, Into eternity, In the twinkling of an eye, We see so many, Of this world's, Goods wasted, And others are left, In want, Those starving, And those hungry, Well there are, Where there is a plenitude, Of provision, Made from your own hand, We pray Lord, For these places, That you would bring peace, Where there is war, That you would bring wisdom, Where there is, Discord, And ignorance, Lying at its heart, Remember, All the situations, That are so grievous, Even to our own eyes,

When we are so far, From it, We barely, Manage to understand, What it is, To open our eyes, In the morning, Not knowing, Whether we'll close them, In the night time, Because of the, The sudden, Onslaught of death, As many have, So discovered, So hear our prayers, Remember, As according to our needs, We said, The sick, As we have said, The grieving, And the sorrowful, Those we know of them, And many that we don't, Remember our general assembly, As it meets this week, May the spirit of God, Be liberally, At work, In the minds, And hearts, Of those engaged, In discourses, And deliberations, So hear our prayers, And guard us, Keep us, And protect us, For giving sin, In Jesus name, Amen, Amen, Let us sing now,

To God's praise, Verses from Psalm 119, From verse 33 to 40, Psalm 119, From verse 33, Teach me, O Lord, The perfect way, Of thy precepts divine, And to observe it to the end, I shall my heart incline, Give understanding unto me, So keep thy law, Shall I, Yea, Even with my whole heart, I shall observe it carefully, In thy law's path, Make me to go, For I delight therein, My heart unto thy testimonies, And not to greed incline, Turn thou away, My sight and eyes, From viewing vanity, And in thy good and holy way, Be pleased to quicken me, Confirm to me, Thy gracious word, Which I did gladly hear, Even to thy servant, Lord, Who is devoted to thy fear,

Turn thou away, My feared reproach, For good thy judgments be, Lo, For thy precepts, I have longed, And thy truth quicken me, These verses, Psalm 119, Verse 33 to 40, Teach me, O Lord, The perfect way, Of thy precepts divine, Teach me, O Lord, The perfect way, Of thy precepts divine, And to observe it to the end, I shall my heart incline, Give understanding unto me,

So give thy Lord shine light, Yea, Even with my whole heart, I shall observe it carefully, And thy lost heart make me to go, For thy delight, Like that in my heart, Out to thy testimony, And ought to be inclined, Turn thou away,

[ 19 : 00 ] My sight and rise, From new humanity, And in thy good and holy way, Be pleased to quicken me, Confirm to me, Thy gracious word, Which I did not be here, Into thy seven Lord, Who is devoted to thy fear,

Turn thou with my dear free throat, For good, For good, For good, Thy judgments be, No far, Thy reasons I have longed, Then thy truth whiten me.

I am going to read in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, Chapter 3, We'll read from verse 15 to the end, Galatians chapter 3, From verse 15, Brethren, I speak after the manner of men, Though it be but a man's covenant, Yet, If it be confirmed, No man's disannulleth, And hatheth the truth.

Now to Abraham, And his seed were the promises made, He saith not, Unto seeds as of many, But as of one, Unto thy seed, Which is Christ.

And this I say, That the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, The law which was 430 years after, Cannot disannull, That it should make the promise of none effect.

[ 21 : 39 ] For if the inheritance be of the law, It is no more of promise, But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law?

It was added because of transgressions, Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made, And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, But God is one. There is the law then against the promises of God. God forbid.

For if there had been a law given, Which could have given life, Verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ Might be given to them that believe.

But before faith came, We were kept under the law, Shut up unto the faith, Which should afterwards be revealed.

[ 22 : 45 ] Wherefore the law was of schoolmaster, To bring us unto Christ, That we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, We are no longer under a schoolmaster, For ye are all the children of God, By faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, Have put on Christ, There is neither Jew nor Greek, There is neither bond nor free, There is neither male nor female, For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if ye be Christ's, Then are ye Abraham's seed, And heir according to the promise. Amen, and may the Lord add his blessing To a reading of this word.

Let us sing now from Psalm 61. Psalm 61, And we're singing from verse 3 to the end.

For thou hast for my refuge been a shelter by thy power, And for defence against my foes thou hast been a strong tower.

[ 24 : 04 ] Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, And under covert of thy wings with confidence me hide. For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord my God, didst hear.

Thou hast given me the heritage of those thy name that fear. A life prolonged for many days, Thou to the King shalt give, Like many generations be the years which ye shall live.

He in God's presence, His abode forevermore shall have. O do thou truth and mercy both prepare that may him save.

And so will I perpetually sing praise unto thy name, That having made my vows, I may each day perform the same. Let us sing these verses, Psalm 61 from verse 3 to the end.

For thou hast for my refuge been a shelter by thy power, For thou hast for my refuge been a shelter by thy power, And for defense against my foes, Thou hast for my refuge been a strong tower.

[ 25 : 44 ] Within thy life, Within thy child pernacle lie, Forever will abide, Ourencial Order below the burden, Wherefore the life ndone of thy world sing ago, all thy wings with confidence behind.

For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord my God, this fear thou hast given me the heritage of those I give that fear.

A life prolonged for many years life to the kings shall give.

Like many generations be the years which he shall live.

still first I feel he this z O shall I, for to the good and merciful be there that made him save.

[ 28 : 07 ] And so will I eventually sing praise unto thy name, that I in my God's thine name each day perform the same.

I'll return to Paul's epistle to the Galatians. And we're going to look this evening at verses 23 to the end of the chapter.

Galatians chapter 3. Verse 23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And so on. And as you know from our consideration of this epistle up until now, Paul has repeatedly brought to the attention of the reader that salvation is all of grace.

[ 29 : 59 ] salvation is all of grace. Salvation is all of grace. It seems unnecessary to repeat it, but it is repeated. And that should awaken.

It is an understanding that by nature, our inclination is to seek salvation in ways other than the way that God has provided.

faith and faith alone saves. And any emphasis that Paul finds where the law is looked at or depended upon in order for that salvation to be realized is dismissed out of hand.

And by that is meant anything that we would do naturally, that we would consider to be something that is God-honoring or God-pleasing.

We know that his word tells us that we are to live before him and to be obedient to his revealed will.

[ 31 : 26 ] And that obviously encompasses the law that he has given. But we also understand that what is not directly stipulated as a legal statement on his part is still considered to be the will of God, if he has been prepared to reveal it to us and direct our attention to it as something that needs to be fulfilled to honor his name.

So if we invite ourselves to fulfill these things with the intention that this is the way of salvation for us or we'll enhance God's way of salvation in some way, then Paul says we are mistaken.

And the law, as we saw last Sunday, is spoken of here as something that helps us understand that we personally lack the righteousness that is the righteousness of God.

It reveals that, it reveals that to us, it brings that to the forefront of our minds. The law and our inability with regard to it proves our unrighteousness.

But today I want us to conclude the words of this chapter by considering what they have to say to us because they explain to us the function of the law in some respects.

[ 33 : 19 ] Not all, but in some respects. Then we see what the gospel does through Christ Jesus.

Again, it doesn't, it's an unexpansive statement. It reminds us nevertheless of the benefits that accrue to the believer by faith.

And finally, the experiences that belong to those who have faith in Christ that are a consequence of that faith and a consequence of their believing the gospel.

So these three things very briefly as we find them in these verses. In verse 23 we read, Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Now what is meant by that is, I suppose in the simplest terms possible, before we were the beneficiaries of faith, or before we were the practitioners of faith, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

[ 34 : 46 ] There's two different things contained within these words. In the original Greek, there's a use of the words that help us picture or visualize what the apostle has in mind.

The ordinary use of the Greek has at its heart a military application where we see the keeping that is spoken of.

We were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith. The picture is of a guard who is entrusted with the supervision of somebody who is either in chains or kept from experiencing the normal liberty that would be theirs.

So there is this picture that you have of somebody, and it's just metaphorically speaking of the law, as if the law is this kind of guard who is keeping a person free from exercising the liberty that they would normally exercise.

And the second part of that is, he says, they are shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.

[ 36 : 35 ] So that, again, the picture is of the person who is under the supervision of this person or this soldier or whoever that person is.

They are being ushered into a direction that they are committed to follow. They are shut into the faith, he says.

In other words, what the law is doing for them or to them, it is keeping them from the breach of the law or from greater offense and directing them to Christ.

If you can think of a peat bank, for example, when you go to the peats at the beginning of the year and you're beginning to, preparing the bank to be opened, sometimes that bank will have filled with water over the winter.

So you have to create a channel that allows the water that has gathered in the bank to escape. So the water goes in one direction out of the bank.

[ 38 : 11 ] So it's this kind of channeling of the individual in the direction of Christ that is spoken of. This is what the law does.

The law keeps the person from going further beyond what God permits. It channels this person in the direction of Christ.

And it serves that function. Now, it doesn't mean that through that that salvation is possible, but it shows that to say that the law has no purpose, that the law has no function.

We are not appreciating the role that God intends for the law. It is to preserve, to keep a person from going further out of the path that God intends for us.

Joseph Pippa, one of the commentators, writes the following. Paul defines the Mosaic covenant as something by which God corralled his people.

[ 39 : 28 ] It was as if they were under house arrest. The law was a restraint that God placed upon them because of their waywardness of heart, their propensity to fall into idolatry and covetousness.

Moreover, it pointed them to Christ, are there need of him. So that's the thing that Paul wants us to understand.

You know, he is intending the reader of this epistle to understand that there is a wasted effort on the part of the person who seeks life through fulfilling the law.

but he does not want the law to be ignored or to be treated as if the law is a waste of breath on the part of God.

God has this intention for it. It keeps the person, it helps the person understand what the nature of sin is and how it affects the life of all who are under it.

[ 40 : 46 ] Now the second image that he brings to us, there's two images in one there, but the second picture that he has in verse 24, wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Again, he is telling us, yes, you cannot seek to fulfil the law in order to save yourself, that is not what the law is for, but the law is the schoolmaster or tutor which directs you to Christ.

And again, he is using imagery, he is using a pictorial image of the soul being nurtured by God with the eventual conclusion that Christ is that person's only avenue of salvation.

And the image is drawn from the practice in the ancient world where those who had money, those who were by love, would have a slave, and that slave would be used to teach their children.

They had responsibility for educating the children, but they had also the power of discipline over these children.

[ 42 : 24 ] The word in Greek is paedagogos, and he is saying the law is our paedagogos, it is our tutor to lead us to Christ.

It works in this way, showing us that Christ is the alone way of salvation.

And the way that the law does that is the way that a tutor does it. The power of discipline is in his hands. And Paul uses both of these metaphors to convince the reader that the way the law functions is entirely beneficial.

It is beneficial if it is used in accordance with God's provision. It is beneficial if we understand the purpose that God means for it.

Otherwise, it is detrimental. It's amazing if you read biographies of past ministers of the church, how many of them having prepared to study in colleges and universities, their first task was to teach the children of the landed gentry.

[ 43 : 58 ] But what Paul is saying here is they have this function to teach and to restrain, to inform and to deter, so that the behaviour of those who are under the law would not go out of order.

But at the same time, it's not left like that. It is something that at the same time directs them to the passion of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And in that sense, the law is temporary. The role of the person who is the teacher, the chaplain, or whatever he is, it is a temporary arrangement.

And it is to prepare them for something that will be pertinent, that will eventually be the end goal for all of them.

In his own commentary, John Stott refers us back to what we've seen before, how Christ saved us from the curse of the law.

[ 45 : 18 ] He says only Christ can deliver us from the prison to which the curse of the law has taken us, because he was made a curse for us.

Only Christ can deliver us from the law's harsh discipline, because he makes us sons who obey from love for their father and are no longer naughty children needing tutors to punish them.

And the law does have that fact, that role to play. It corrects, it disciplines, it works in us, in our conscience, unto the spirit of God, and challenges the behaviour that is our corrective, but it is not effectual in our salvation.

But then he follows this on with, all this happened before faith came, but he says, after that faith has come, a change of course, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

The schoolmaster is no longer required to administer discipline. The schoolmaster is no longer responsible for instructing us.

[ 46 : 50 ] We are now under a different regime. We are now the beneficiaries of the enlightening of the Holy Spirit of God.

And that is the very first thing it does. It stops the need for the tutor. And the way is clearly emphasised. What we are now by faith, he says, is clearly different to what we were under the law.

our relationship with Christ, as he will go on to emphasise, has changed, but so too our relationship to God himself.

What we were under the law, we are now no longer under that discipline of the legal power of the law.

We are now, he says, the sons of God. Now, the relationship that exists between a son and a slave or a servant is quite distinct.

[ 47 : 59 ] That's not what's emphasised here. He'll later on come to discuss that, no doubt. But he says, this is what God has done.

He has brought this relationship about just as he intended to bring it about. He uses the law to inform and to instruct and to direct you to the one who makes this difference.

If you remember that introductory passage in this epistle to the Ephesians, where the apostle speaks there of the way that God saves the sinner in Christ Jesus.

Remember, there's a long passage there, beginning in verse 3 all the way down to verse 14. It's as if it's pouring out of the apostle. And he says the following, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

This is the thing that I want to highlight. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

[ 49 : 52 ] He has predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. So the relationship of which he speaks here, Paul, is a relationship that God means his children to have.

It is a relationship that he purposes for them, whereby they have God as their father. And not only are they able to speak by reason of the adoption of sins, of the closest possible relationship, they are also, as he alludes to throughout this epistle, they are beneficiaries of all that God purposes his children to have.

He speaks of the, we saw how the descendants of Abraham were beneficiaries of the promises of God to Abraham.

They inherit the promises, every one of them who are descended from the seed of Abraham by faith.

So the promise that belongs to them is all that he intends his heir to have, they are destined to have.

[ 51 : 23 ] All the rights and all the privileges are theirs, and there is nothing that will depart them from it. For as many of you, for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith, it speaks of the doctrine of adoption, and it says the following, Adoption is an act of the free grace of God in and for his only son, Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children.

They are received into the number of his children. All the benefits that Christ Jesus through his death as secured for them become theirs of right.

And to be justified is to receive pardon. Their sins will not be held against them. They are considered righteous in the sight of God.

And God, as the lawgiver and judge, declares the believer righteous, justified, free from the guilt of a broken law.

[ 52 : 56 ] And then, alongside that, or in tandem with that, the very object of the believer's faith, and the believer who are putting their trust in that faith, are united because of that faith.



That's why he says, for as many of you have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Now, he's not saying that the baptism, which is, of course, one of the sacraments, he is not insisting that the sacrament is the means by which they put on Christ, but that the sacrament of baptism is declaratory or indicative or symbolic of that union with Christ, and all that it entails.

God, as the lawgiver and judge, has declared the believer free from the guilt of sin, and they are able by faith to understand that they have put on Christ, and the words that are used there are translated by some that they have clothed themselves in Christ.

I think the reason why some choose to do that is that the putting on of Christ is so incredibly important in describing the relationship that faith has brought them into with Christ is one that needs to be emphasized as far as possible.

It's not a relationship that is aloof or distant. At any time, it's as close as your skin, as your clothing.

[ 55 : 02 ] And while that itself is a weak explanation of what is meant here, he's telling you that the person who is by faith in Christ, that that relationship of faith in Christ is one that has brought them into a complete and a perfect union with him that will not be dissolved, that is inseverable, it can't be broken by anything.

So Paul is saying this is where the law has directed you, this is what the law has done for you, it has brought you to an awareness of the essence of this relationship and the essential nature of this relationship.

for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. I suppose you could argue that this statement could be reversed.

As many of you have put on Christ have been baptized into Christ. And when you think about it like that, you think of the obligation that the believer has to demonstrate publicly through the symbols that God has given in the sacrament that the union exists.

By confession of your faith in Christ, you are invited to be baptized. And the church in some ways and that sometimes holds to that very closely.

[ 57 : 00 ] But this is the order of the words here. As many of you have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. And the believer, the one who has faith, the one that God has endowed with his grace, the one who depends on salvation through grace, is the one who has closed in with Christ in a way that is demonstrably evident in the way that they live their life here in this world.

He doesn't say we are justified by our baptism. Yes, he speaks of justification and he speaks of the symbolism, but other than this, your clothing is, I suppose, what tells you the closeness that you have with Christ.

The intensity of it is emphasized. The third thing that we have here is that because of this relationship that exists between the believer and Christ, there is a recognizable distinction between them and those who do not have this relationship.

There is that distinction. They are quite evidently different to those who are not in a faith relationship with Christ.

They should be. They should stand out. They should be seen for what they are by way of profession. But that's not really the point that he wants to advance here.

[ 58 : 54 ] He says, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.

what the emphasis there is on the unity of the body of Christ.

Those who are in Christ, the things that once stood out as separating them from others, no longer apply in the same way.

Suppose we have to remember that there are distinctions that remain whatever we are by nature. We are male or we are female.

That doesn't change. We are Lewismen or Harrismen or we are Spaniards or whatever. That stands.

[ 59 : 52 ] But they are not divisive distinctions. They do not separate us from others who have this one thing marking them out.

That they are in Christ. They are clothed in Christ. They are trusting in that Christ for the salvation of their soul. And it's all important that they recognize there is no bond nor free.

There is no black or white. There is no rich nor poor. and where that interferes with the relationship that Christ has by faith introduced us to.

It is to be appalled. It is to be distanced from if at all possible at every moment. You remember the Apostle James.

The Apostle James is very forthright in what he says about how the believer should behave himself with regard to other believers. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons?

[ 61 : 14 ] For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my foodstool.

Are ye not impartial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the law, as transgressors.

In other words, the emphasis that the apostle has here is of the unifying power of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And I think that if you're a Christian, you have discovered that for yourself.

you can be in company with men and women from all kinds of backgrounds with some shared experiences, maybe the shared experience of the workplace or whatever, and you can for a time converse with them and within a short time, perhaps your interests will dissipate your shared experiences will come to nothing.

But when it comes to the experience of the believer, as far as their faith is concerned, it is an inexhaustible resource of conversation and consideration.

[ 63 : 02 ] All who are in Christ have this shared interest and we should jealously guard that nothing intrudes into the way that we think of ourselves and the privileged position that we possess in Christ, if it means that we exclude ourselves from the company of others who have that interest.

Christ. We can't look down on anyone, we can't believe ourselves to be of a superior sort, especially because of what Christ has done for us.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither born nor free, male or female, you are all one in Christ Jesus. I used to remember that there was, some of you will know the name May Nicholson.

I remember when she used to come up here before, when she was well. One of her main supporters was one of, I think she was a lady of a superior upbringing, she belonged to the higher assurance of the nobility, I suppose.

And yet this was something you never discovered when they were in each other's company. What was at the heart of their conversation was often what Christ had done for them.

[ 64 : 34 ] Two different backgrounds, two completely different passions in their, you know, one was restrained and polite and the other one was more in your face, just a product of her environment.

but both genuine beneficiaries of God's saving grace in Christ. And that's what brought them together. That's what allowed them to work together.

And that's what stood out when you met with them more than anything. And that is what Paul is saying here. You know, this is where the law has taken us, this is where the word of God has directed to the person of Jesus Christ, the Saviour that our soul craves.

And having come there, we arrived at the same place that every other sinner saved by grace has come to. Not a different location, the same person, the same Saviour.

Maybe we've arrived there in different ways, at different times, through different experiences, but we've come to the same person. And if you be Christ, he says, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

[ 65 : 56 ] Is that not what he is meaning by that statement? If you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed. Taking you right back to the start, God's promise to Abraham that he would have a seed, and that Christ would be that seed, and all who are descendants of Christ by faith, heirs according to promise.

And again, this unifies rather than separates. The identification is clear, and the way you are, and the way I am, whatever it is that we are naturally speaking, spiritually speaking, we have an identity that God has given to us, beneficiaries of his grace, heirs together according to the promise.

Is that not something to delight in, that you are sitting here tonight, perhaps alongside, or with, in the company, people who are so different in many respects, but you have this shared experience of having come to faith in Christ, and channeled in the direction of Christ by God's work in you through the Spirit, and you have come to the one place where you can speak of your experience.

How did you come to faith? What did you experience in coming to faith? How did God speak to you? How did God encourage you in the direction of Christ?

Christ, and you can speak of that, and you can speak of it without embarrassment, and you shouldn't be embarrassed, you know, sometimes I feel that when it comes to the kind of emphasis that's placed on sensational testimonies, they're good, they're genuine, they're an accurate account of a person's experience in coming to faith, but it's their experience, it's not yours, it's theirs, and if this is what God meant for them, so be it.

[ 68 : 15 ] If you've come to the same Christ, if you've come to put your trust in Christ, if your faith is resting upon that Christ, you're no better, no worse than they are, and you can safely speak, well, this is how I came to know Christ, this is the means that God used, and it's just as wonderful in your eyes, if more so, than anybody else's.

Well, may God encourage us to think about these things. Let's pray. Oh, Lord, oh, God, we bless and thank you for the patience that you exercise towards us, how often you spoke to us through your word, and yet your word was as if it were sweeping over us without leaving any apparent effect, and yet in your time you brought us to yourself to put our trust in Christ, like so many others.

The world over we have come to seek Christ and to trust in Christ and to look to him to be the one who supplies all our needs.

Watch over as each one forgives sin. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. The closing is Psalm 25, the second version of the Psalm, Psalm 25, the second version of the Psalm, but verse 10, verse 10 to 14.

The whole paths of the Lord of God are truth and measure sure, to such as keep his covenant and testimonies pure. Now for thine own name's sake, O Lord, I humbly thee entreat to pardon mine iniquity for it is very great.

[ 70 : 14 ] What man fears God, him shall he teach the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease, his seed the earth as air shall use.

The secret of the Lord is with such as do fear his name and his holy covenant will manifest to them. These verses 10 to 14 below the whole paths of the Lord our God are truth and mercy sure.

to such as keep his covenant and testimony and testimony is pure.

Now for thine own name's sake, O Lord, I humbly thee entreat to pardon my iniquity, for it is that he great.

What man fears God, him shall teach the way that he choose.

[ 72 : 10 ] His soul shall dwell on peace his sea, the earth the zears shall use.

The secret of the Lord is with such as to fear his name.

And he his holy covenant will manifest them.

In the grace, the peace, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with you, all now and always. Amen.