

A wage or a free gift - Which

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- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning as we come together to worship God we look to him to bless our time together.
- We shall begin by singing to God's praise from Psalm 103. Psalm 103 from the beginning of the Psalm to verse 7.
- O thou my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is. Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. Bless O my soul the Lord thy God and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee.
- All thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, who thy diseases all and pains doth heal and thee relieve.
- Who doth redeem thy life, that thou to death mayst not go down. Who thee with lovingkindness doth and tender messes crown. Who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy mouth.
- [1 : 14] So that even as the eagle's age renew this thy youth. God righteous judgment executes for all oppressed ones. His ways to Moses.
- He his acts made known to Israel's sons. And so on. Let us sing these verses of Psalm 103 from the beginning. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.
- O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.
- O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.
- Lord thy God, I am not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee.
- [2 : 48] O thou thy name iniquities who doth most graciously forgive.
- O thou thy ghost, aders lest his own touch, Ou thou thy Kingdom. O thou thy body who has strawed and thine whose presence is born and Med. O thou thy throat, thou thy kingdom of REY. O thou thy kingdom of cries, Of thy kingdom of my manners.
- O thou thy kingdom of thy name, O thou thy Richardson, O thou thy kingdom of hak. The three kings of life unclouted, that did not go down.
- To thee with loving kindness, unto God unto God is shown.
- To thee with the broken soul, who this God shall destroy thy mouth, so that in the night's vehicles, its senior and desires, God righteous judge, that's the good of God, and of the heavens.
- [4 : 51] It with the mercy of the Lord, and of the heavens, and of the heavens.
- Let's join together in prayer. Let's pray. O Lord, our God, as we come before you at this time of morning worship, we give thanks that we can begin our service singing your praises, and the words of the psalmist upon our lips, encouraging us to bless the Lord, to praise your name, to magnify and bless that name that is above every name.
- We give thanks that you have not left us oblivious to your passion, that your word has been given to us, and that you have not hidden yourself from us in that word.

As we reflect upon this world in which we live, where there are many who are denied access to the word of life, just as it was in the history of these islands, where God's word was not readily available, and even the church that was charged with declaring the gospel to all unsoundry, denied many from the truth that that gospel contained by retaining it in a tongue that few of them could fully understand.

It was not readily available to them in their common vulgar tongue, until the light of your own countenance was raised up upon these communities, reforming and enlivening the people of God with the truth of God.

[7 : 40] We give thanks that you not only were responsible for sovereignly bringing your word into the sphere of influence of so many lives, but also that you gave access to others to that word by instructing and informing them, by giving to them through schooling the ability to read the word of God for themselves.

And we bless you and thank you that that is the means by which you ordained, through which the propagation of the truth took place.

And even while we have moved from that position of enlightenment to a position where many disdain the privilege that is put at their disposal, many are today more learned than yourself, the God who is the source of all learning.

They choose not to read your word. They choose to despise the truth and the God of the truth. That is something that you will hold to our account when we must answer to you at the last.

What we have done with the privileges that you have allowed us to enjoy. We bless you and thank you for those who have engaged with the truth and whose life depends upon such an engagement, that they are informed and instructed and enabled to face the challenges of each day, empowered by the ministration of your spirit to recognize through the light your word brings to bear upon the varying situations of our lives.

[9 : 59] May we see that for what it is and grant you grant that we would give you the praise. We remember the world in which we live in its fragile state of the beat of the word that runs sounding throughout the world.

And we see once again the threat made to world peace even through the encroachment that has been made by one nation against another.

It may not appear to us to have any significance and we may think that the danger is abating.

But we little understand the machinations of the geopolitical situation of this world, where there are war mongers ready to avail themselves of opportunities such as these to further their own ends, and to estimate the willingness of nations to act when such challenges come to the fore.

We give thanks that you are the wise God, that you overrule for good in all things. And while we cannot at times see good emerging out of evil, we cannot but commit ourselves to the one who is alone good, and pray that you would preserve life and remember young and old alike who are placed in jeopardy because of these wickednesses that are carried out.

[12 : 11] We pray for small children, for parents, for elderly who are driven from their homes and who are devastated by what has taken place, not only at this time in Ukraine, but in other parts of the world where these things might not be as newsworthy at the present.

And yet such hostility is an ever-present reality to them. We think of such as Afghanistan where the West has withdrawn its influence and yet because of that withdrawal there are many freedoms that were set so enticingly in front of the people that are now withdrawn.

So that people suffer because of that. We pray, Lord, for every nation that has been embroiled in the wickedness that lies in the heart of man.

Remember, any such we pray, especially of your own people, we cannot but commit and commend them to your care.

We pray for our own community here that peace may reign and that you would preserve it amongst us, even in the subtle threats that may be even within our communities.

[13 : 45] While it may not be war, there are times threats to the order and the peace of our communities in ways that may undermine confidence in one another and ultimately in the God of truth whose word insists upon peace.

We pray for your blessing upon us and upon our families, upon our children, upon our school, the Sunday school and those who teach in it, the work of the gospel throughout the island.

We pray for those places that are remembering the death of Christ today. We pray for those places that are remembering the death of Christ today when that has been something that had to be foregone for a time.

We ask that you would keep people safe even as we continue under the shadow of COVID. We remember those whose duty it is to deal with the needs of others and some need is greater than others.

We know that there are other illnesses that people have to contend with and if COVID intrudes into these circumstances, their difficulty is multiplied and increase of the needs of others and the increase of the needs of others.

[15 : 19] All from such an effect. Remember those who have to nourish and those of the medical profession, be they in hospital, in the community, within homes for the elderly.

Remember them, we pray. Remember them, we pray. We remember in your presence once again the family of the late Alec John Macaulay as they mourn his passing.

We think of them as we think of the family of God here in this congregation from whom you have once again taken one of our number.

We pray that you would speak to us lovingly and benevolently so that we would see that bridges made are filled by others ready to follow in their footsteps.

We are taken from time into eternity. The comfort of your people lies in the truth that says that better by far is the day of their death than the day of their birth.

[16 : 32] So hear our prayers and grant pardon for our many sins. Continue to watch over us, cleansing us in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

We are going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament, Paul's epistle to the Romans chapter 6. Romans chapter 6.

We will read the whole chapter. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

God forbid, how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us, as were baptized unto Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death. That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[17 : 40] For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, so we shall also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.

Death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once. But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

[18 : 56] And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you. For ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then?

Shall we sin? Because we are not under the law, but under grace. God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, whose servants ye are to whom ye obey?

Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God we thank that ye were the servants of sin, that ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh.

For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, and to iniquity, even so, now yield your members servants to righteousness and to holiness.

[20 : 07] For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. May the Lord add his blessing through a reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. Now boys and girls, before you go out to Sunday school, I'm sure you know what a king or a queen is.

You've probably seen pictures of the queen on the television. Maybe some of you have seen her in real life. She's a very important lady, and she is much loved by many in the country that we form part of.

[21 : 32] Now if somebody said to you that she was going to visit, I wonder how you would know that that visit was going to take place.

Well, you'd probably read about it first of all, that the queen was going to visit. But I'm sure before that, one sign would be that a massive tidy up would take place.

You would see roads that probably had a lot of holes in them before then, and somebody would come along and fill these holes in.

And all kinds of other preparatory work would take place, because the queen was coming. Maybe another member of the royal family, the same would be true.

There would be preparation made for the coming of the queen. Well, many years ago, if there was a queen or a king coming to a place, somebody was given a job.

[22 : 35] And their job was to run ahead of that king or queen and tell the people that they were coming. And they would announce the coming of the king or queen.

And they would say, make ready, prepare the way. And the most famous preparer of the way that we have in the Bible is a man by the name of John the Baptist.

I think you're going to hear about him today, I hope, anyway. That's the case. Well, John the Baptist was someone, and very strangely, even before John was born, the Bible, which is God's word, tells us that the one who was going to prepare the way for the king was himself announced as the one who would come.

In the prophecies of the old testament, we are told in different places that this person was going to come first of all.

The one who was going to come first of all. The one who was going to prepare the way for the king. Which is very important. I think when you think about the coming of the queen, for example, nobody knows anything about the person who's preparing the way for the queen.

[24 : 07] Nobody mentions the roadmenders or the people who are filling in the portals. Nobody mentions them. But the Bible mentioned this person, John the Baptist.

But not only mentioned them, but said that he was going to come. And when he would come, that they would then know that the king had come.

And John made such an impression because he was a remarkable person himself. And he came and he dressed in a very strange way as far as the people were concerned.

He had a very strange diet. He ate locusts and wild honey. He lived in the desert. And he preached, telling the people to repent.

Because the king was coming. And many people were afraid of John. Because of how he looked. But mainly because of what he had to say.

[25 : 14] And because of what he had to say, many people were afraid of him. And because they were afraid of him, what happened eventually was that he was put into prison. But we know that what John had to say was all important.

And that Jesus identified him as the one the Bible was speaking of him. He called him Elijah.

And not only did he identify John as the one the Bible spoke of. He added to the importance of John.

By when John died, after being put to prison. He was killed by his enemies. Jesus began to preach the same message that John preached.

Which I think was important for us to understand. Because Jesus, by doing that. Because Jesus, by doing that. Speaking of him. And identifying him. And continuing his message.

[26 : 18] He was saying this man was a man from God. Sent to prepare the way of the Lord. It's amazing the way God works. Many hundreds of years before Jesus came.

The message of his coming. Was not only brought to us. But also all the detail about it. And you remember that when God does something.

He doesn't not do what he's going to do. He doesn't change his mind. If he's going to do something.

And he says he's going to do it. He will do it. In his own way. In his own time. Even though we might have to wait for a long time for him to do it. Nothing will change his mind.

And when John came. People didn't know. That this was the prophecy. Of God being fulfilled. But it was. Well I hope you'll remember that.

[27 : 20] The importance that God places on his own word. As a word that is to be believed. So that. When we're looking ahead. To things that have yet to happen.

We'll remember. From the experience of the past. That anything and everything that God says will happen. Will actually happen as he said.

Well may he bless to us these thoughts. Going out. We're going to sing from Psalm 32. Psalm 32. And we're singing from verses 1 to the double verse.

Marked 5. Oh blessed is the man. To whom is freely pardoned. Oh blessed is the man. To whom is freely pardoned. All the transgression he hath done. Whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man. To whom the Lord imputeth not his sin. And in his spirit there is no guile. And not fraud is found therein. We're going to sing. To the double verse Mark 5.

[28 : 17] Oh blessed is the man. To whom is freely pardoned. O blessed is the man. Pardoned. O blessed is the man. Pardoned. O blessed is the man. To whom is freely pardoned. He shes that.

Shut up the boy is not fear. He hath done. Hes af i bargin he. T'o. To whom is freely filed. Hus asensed of no ■■■■■. Shesird of no ■■■■■.

What a holy one. To whom is freely pardoned. Blessed be the one who sing this great.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputed not his sin.

And in his death there is no guile nor fraud is found in.

[29 : 25] When as I did repeat my speech, a child was my tongue.

My bones then watched it low because I've already all belonged.

For upon me, O dear, and I, thy time did carry light.

So that my voice to turn it is, in summer shall you live by.

I dare not honor to thee, my sinners not acknowledged.

[30 : 39] A light voice mine iniquity, I have no courage.

I will confess unto the Lord, my trespasses and I.

And all my sins have really did. Forgiven iniquity.

I'm going to turn for a short time to Romans chapter 6.

And we're looking today at the last verse of this chapter. Romans chapter 6, verse 23. The American theologian R.C. Sproul suggests as a reason for the influence of Paul's epistle to the Romans on people's lives.

[32 : 22] That it lies in the comprehensive description that Paul offers of the way that God gives of the salvation of humankind.

The way that through this epistle, God enlightens us, God gives us information that is relevant to our need.

And it helps us understand in a better way what we would not have otherwise understood.

It is the good news of the good news of the best kind. And Paul delves into the truth of God and brings it together along with the knowledge that the Bible gives and his own experience gives of the work of Jesus Christ.

In verse 23 the first thing that confronts us is not good news but the worst news. The wages of sin is death we are told.

[33 : 56] And yet he follows that with the best news. And I'd like us just to think about these two things as Paul explains it.

He makes two clear contrasts. The first between sin and the gift or the grace of God.

And the second between what is the wages and the free gift. And these are all important.

We have to understand that there is a difference between the two. And many people misunderstand the gospel. And in so doing they misunderstand the fact that the gospel is all about a gift.

Because their desire may be for life. For a better life. For a secure life. For a continued life.

[35 : 06] But their understanding is that this is something that they must by their own endeavours secure for themselves. But the gospel is not something that allows us to think along these lines.

And insist that salvation, redemption, the fruit of Christ's life and death.

As it is shared with others. Is entirely of his giving. It's not of our purchasing or our receiving.

By our own hand. But I want us, before we look at that. I want us to think of what is at the heart of what Paul is saying here.

He's speaking about a solemn subject. And instinctively we would want to shy away from it. And that subject is the subject of death.

[36 : 09] If you... I remember very often. Perhaps as a young person. Perhaps as a young person. And in more unguarded moments.

If you were in a company. And that company would enter into the deep discussions about the meaning of life. And...

That wasn't the discussions of a Christian or a Christian company. But of... At that time.

A young person. Along with other young people. And sometimes you would discuss things like that. When freedom to do that was yours.

And... There would be a time for such a discussion. But at some point during that. Somebody would say... Oh, that's enough of that.

[37 : 14] That's the end of that. We don't want to go any further into this. It's morose. It's... It's... It's too serious. It's too heavy.

We don't want to spend our time talking about that. But I think... That young people. Even in their youth.

Will at some point think about... The solemnity of death. Maybe they won't want to share these thoughts with others. And they may be the thoughts would be fleeting thoughts.

But they're there nevertheless. And I think a person is being untrue. If they don't... Agree... With that.

Now... I think death is something that we need to think about. Seriously. Because it is a serious subject. But I think there's something in our society.

[38 : 19] That shies away from... Any... Thought of it. Any discussion about it. One thing... You know...

I'm sure... If you're watching television... Most of our TV stations... Will... Punctuate all their programs. Be they sport...

Or entertainment... Of any description... With adverts. And one advert that... Bugs me... Personally... Is an advert... Or several adverts...

That speak about... The cost of funerals. And the need that it is... To prepare for your funeral. To get ready for... The funeral.

And it's a very... And it's a very... Sound bit of advice. Because... You can't have a funeral... Without death. And yet... Death is not something... That is actually talked about.

[39 : 15] You might talk about... The funeral. You might talk about... What comes... After the funeral... As far as... The cost...

Implications... Of that funeral... Is involved. How it's going to... Impact upon... Your inheritance... Or the inheritance... Of your children. So that you...

Prepare for it. And you see... That you want to... Well you're told... You want to give people... Who are dying... The best kind of send-off.

And when you give them... As send-off... You don't want to... Waste your resources... On an expensive funeral. It wants to be... A celebration... Of life lived.

All of these things... Are involved in it. You can check this... For yourself. Listen... Attentively... To the focus...

[40 : 15] Of these adverts. But... Very little... Effort... Is put... Into...

What lies... Beyond... Death... For the person... That dies. It's not something... That's dwelt upon... It's not something... That's even considered. And...

At some point... You may have... Some lip service... Paid to religion... But it's only lip service. You know...

The famous words... Of... Karl Marx... Regarding religion... He says... It's... The opiate... Of the people... Religion is really...

Something that serves... A certain... Number of people... It is... Nothing better than... Than something that... Takes the pain...

[41 : 14] Out of life... That's all it's worth... It is... An opiate... It is... Something that... Takes pain... Out of living...

And... It's not really... Relevant... It's not really... Useful... In any other way... He doesn't deny... That it doesn't work... In that way... But... He says...

In his thinking... And many have... Imbined that kind of thought... With regard to religion... If that's what it takes... To dull your senses...

Then so much... The better... If it helps... Go for it... But... The thing is... If your religion...

Is not... The kind of religion... That addresses... The... What is at the heart... Of what causes the pain... That death... Death brings into... Your experience...

[42 : 08] Then... It is not... A good servant... It is not something... That you need to... To allow... To influence... Your thinking... Some people...

Would say... Well... I'm allowed to... Have my own religion... And I can pick and mix... What I take... From the Christian faith...

From the... Eastern religions... Who is to question... My religiosity... It's mine... I can believe... I can believe... What I want...

I can choose not to believe... What I want... And... The thing is... That many... Today... Are... Content...

With that kind of religion... That does not... Do justice... To... The reality... Of what death means...

[43 : 04] There is no God... There... Are... No gods...

That... Is what people... Really... Believe... Whatever... Even the most religious people... Who... Who have this...

Pick and mix attitude... To... To religion... And say... That they are religious... But they... The heart of what they believe is... Well... There is an...

There is no God... That corresponds... To what they believe... There are no gods... That correspond to what they believe... Because... What they believe...

Has no... Foundation... Has no... Grounds... For... Putting... Trust... In it... There is a perverse form of...

[44 : 00] Darwinism... Which... Insists that... Men... And women... They... Exists... Because...

Of... The process... Of... Evolution... That... Began... Who knows... When... And at the heart of that process... Is...

Process of... Natural selection... That involves... The survival of the fittest... The weak... Will perish... And the fit...

Will survive... But there is no... Grand design... And there is no... Ultimate end... And death is... What is in the experience of all...

We don't need to... We don't need to... We don't need to understand... What death is... We don't need to... Ask questions about... What lies beyond it... We don't need to ask questions about... Is there anything beyond it...

[44 : 59] Because... We've all come from nothing... We're going to go to nothing... And... There is... That's the end of the story... Now that's...

The kind of... Religion... That's the kind of... Non-religion... That's the kind of... Thinking... That influences... Lives... More and more...

Within... Our current... Society... Without... Within... Our... Contemporary... Society... They may not...

Say... As much... They may not... Regulate... Their thinking... They may not... Order their thinking... They may not... Formulate... A...

A... Belief system... In any... Structured way... But at the heart... Of what they believe... Is this...

[45 : 59] That there is no God... There are no gods... When death comes... That's the end... There's no point... In worrying about it... There's no point... In thinking about it...

There's no point... In planning towards it... And that is... The prevailing of pain... But that is not...

What we find... In the scripture... That is not... What the scripture teaches... That is not... What God tells us... In his word... The word of God...

Does not shy away... From the meaning... Of life... Nor does it... Shy away from... The solemn... End of life...

That death is... Throughout the scripture... We are told... That when death comes... It is the cessation of life... It is the severance of body... From soul...

[46 : 54] It is the God... Who gave life... In the first place... To which the soul... Will return... And following which... The God... Who gave life... Will judge...

How that life... Was lived in the world... The word of God... Is full of... Of the information... That you can... Can take...

Together... To formulate... Your religion... And to... Formulate... A preparation... For... The solemn...

End that waits us all... In his book... Does God believe in atheists... John Blanchard... He considers...

It is a very... Very... Witty tome... And it is a very detailed book... About... The philosophy... Of... Of... Of man... Over many generations...

[47 : 49] And one thing that he says is... That if you look at... Modern day philosophers... And what they believe... They may think... They are trendsetters...

They may think that... They are... You know... They are up there... With... With new... Notions... And new... New ideas... But he says... If you look at...

What they have to say... You will find... What they are saying... Was said by somebody else... Thousands and thousands... Of years ago... The earliest philosophers...

Said... Said... What these people are saying... And making out... To be original thought... That was said by others... Long before them...

Maybe it has been reconstructed... Maybe it has been... Changed in some way... But he... Blanchard... Amongst... These thoughts... He says the following...

[48 : 45] He's discussing the way... You know... People are dismissive of religion... As something that has anything... Positive to say... Or to do... With the way we live our lives...

In the world... And in particular... He's defending the Christian faith... But he's asking the question about... If you look at society...

And how society is structured... You cannot but... Be aware of... The many things... That are within society...

And the way it's structured... That originate... With... Christian beliefs... And... The thought processes...

Of God's word... And... However much you want to deny... Deny that... Or... To insist that... You know... Many people say...

[49 : 40] The problems in the world today... Are all down to religion... And... Wars... That have existed... Are all religious wars... People who believe in something... And others believe in something different...

And they go to war... And that's the reason for it... Well it's a very simplistic way... Of... Of... Understanding... Why people... Are in conflict... Because it goes deeper than that...

But... It's a very simplistic argument... That some people make that... Religionists... Responsible for that... But listen to... What Blanchard says...

If we assume... For the sake of argument... That there is a God... Who created man... Gave him a unique dignity... Instilled in him a sense...

Of human solidarity... Commanded him to behave... In a responsible... Generous... And compassionate way... Towards others... And told him... Of an afterlife...

[50 : 39] Which in some way... Relates to... Life lived here on earth... Would we not expect... Those who believe these things... To respond in ways... Which would contribute...

To the welfare of others... How would you answer the question... Well I think the answer... Is straightforward... If we believe all these things...

Then surely... What we believe... Would influence... The way we do things... The way we behave... And the way... We exercise... Our responsibility... Towards others...

And that's in evidence... In the world in which we live... If he says... On the other hand... Where... There is no motivation...

To live like that... If... The motivation... For blobs... Of animate... Matter... On the way to extinction...

[51 : 35] To be concerned... For the temporary... Well-being of... Similarly... Doomed blobs... I don't suppose... You want to be called a blob...

But... What he means... By a blob... Is that... If you reduce it... To... The...

The... The consequence... Of understanding... That... Something emerged... From nothing... To become nothing...

Then... You can call it a blob... Because really... How do you describe it? It's not... It doesn't have... It doesn't have... A moral frame...

It doesn't have a... A purpose... It doesn't have... A reason... For existence... Simply... Living... Progressing...

[52 : 31] To the end... Of that life... To nothingness... From the nothingness... From which it came... Now God... In his word... Gives us... An explanation...

He created the world... For his own glory... He put man into this world... That he gave... That he... Constructed...

He gave order... To what was created... And... Purpose... And... Direction... And while sin...

Entered into that environment... Then... Chaos... And disorder... Followed... But that's where the gospel...

Comes in... The fact of the matter... I suppose... It doesn't answer... This...

[53 : 26] This thing... Whoever you are... Whether you believe... That you're a blob... Going to nothing... Coming from nothing... Or you believe... That you're a man... Created in the image of God...

Destined to meet with that God... That God... Accountable to that God... Answerable to that God... Bring glory to that God... Whichever way you live your life...

God will have the glory... Whether you believe that or not... Death is... Something that is real... To all... Death is inescapable...

It is something that awaits us... We've encountered it... In the experience of others... We know... The reality of... We know the pain of it... We know the consequences of it... We know we have to...

Meet with it... Head on... At some point... And it doesn't matter... How much we trivialise it... Or dress it up... So that it means little to us...

[54 : 19] It doesn't... Death will not stop... Because of that... Its cause may be reduced to biology...

Or physiology... It may be something that we look at purely... From a mechanical point of view... This body of mine is just a...

A collection of different things... Cooperating together... It will one day cease... And that body will be no more... You may look at it like that...

But it is still... Described as death... It is still described as the cessation of life... It is still described... As something of consequence... And if we meet that...

With... The perspective of an atheist... Who believes that there is nothing beyond it... Or we meet it... With the perspective of somebody who understands...

[55 : 21] That death is something... That God... Can prepare us for... And make each of us ready for it... Then it makes all the difference... Men and women are seldom happy...

With what it means to die... Which is why so many despair of life... And what it means... How many people...

If any... Well I'm sure... I don't know... You've possibly read... If not heard... Spoken these words... What's it all about? When their life is free from religion...

Religious constraints... The idea of the soul... And yet they look at what their life is about... And they'll say... Well what is it about?

Why am I here? It's not a strange question... It's not a unique question... It's a question... It's a question that's been asked by so many... Blanchard mentions one...

[56 : 24] Famous... Philosopher... Who was on his deathbed... And he was visited by his friends... And while his friends were visiting... He was... He was all happy and...

Joyful... And... He knew he was dying... But... He understood what death was... Well with the understanding that he had... But when his friends withdrew...

He was miserable... Because all he had was what he had in his life... And all he had in his life... Was behind him...

There was no prospect... There was no future... As far as he was concerned... And he was miserable... And that's the way some people are... Well...

Paul is saying here... This is how you are to understand... What the death is about... Death is to be understood in this way...

[57 : 22] As the wages of sin... He says it here... Very briefly... But he says it throughout the scripture...

That... Death is the consequence of sin... From the beginning... The threat was there... That was given to her first parents... In the Garden of Eden...

The threat was there... Disobey God... And you will die... You will enter into an experience... That will bring death... You will...

Go away from the... The benevolent influence of God... You will choose to do something... That God has said... Will be to your detriment...

And that's the way it worked out... So what is Paul saying here... Well let me quote... Two theologians for you...

[58 : 21] One is... An American theologian... Charles Hodge... He says... Death is the result of sin... Because... Sin...

Deserves death... Death... There is the... Same obligation... In justice... That sin... Should be followed by death... As that...

The labourer... Should receive his wages... The labourer... Should receive his wages... It's obligatory... Then there is John Murray...

A British theologian... Who was... In America... A teacher of theology... He says... Remuneration...

Is the principle... By which we become... Heirs of death... It is earned... And there is the... Inevitable consequence... Of sin... Rectitude...

[59 : 21] Which is... Morally correct... Behaviour... Governs... The payment of wages... And therefore... We receive exactly... And...

Inevitably... What we owe... That's what death is... It is... A wage... Can you remember... Your first wage?

I can... I got... More than... I... Earned... Monetary...

I received... The wage... I just left school... And in the village... Of Shawbust... Where I lived... They were building a new manse... And they were filling...

The foundation of the manse... And they needed... Labourers... To fill... That found... And they selected... Willing workers...

[60 : 21] Who were unemployed... And I was one of them... So for three days... I think it was... Or four days... I was barrowing... Cement...

Or whatever it was... To the foundation... Of the manse... And then at the end... Of my... Days of labour... We were duly... Gathered...

And presented... Before the minister... Who gave us... Three or four of us... An envelope... With her wage... And I didn't know...

What I was going to get... But he also gave us a lecture... Because we weren't... Attending church... To the... That kind of... Mortally crew... That he had in front of him... So I got...

My wage... But a little bit extra... And fearful... For not... Bring attention... To my soul... I remember that...

[61 : 23] First wage... I won't forget it... But what Paul is saying... The wages... Of sin... Is death... This will be your last wage...

And you're going to get this... There's nobody going to cheat you out of it... There's nobody going to say... I'm going to hold this back from you... Because of what you've done...

This is something... This is something... That you've earned... This is something... That... Will be in all our...

Pay packets... And that is dreadful news... For the world... Especially if what some insist on...

As a truth that... Is caught in this world... May not appear... On the surface... To be the truth... That this passage teaches...

[62 : 25] But if you... If you understand... They're thinking... The wages of sin... Is death... But the gift of God... Is eternal life... And if you're comparing...

Like for life... You're not just... Thinking here about... The cessation of life... But... The entry into...

A life... Everlasting... Where death... Will reign... It corresponds... To the eternal life... Eternal death...

Rather than eternal life... And what that suggests... And what that... Brings to our attention is... That... Physical death... Is followed by eternal death...

For those... Who die... Without God... Without Christ... For those... Philosophers... Who dismiss... Any notion...

[63 : 26] Of theology... For those... Atheists... Who say... There is no God... For those... Agnostics... Who will suspend... Judgment... Until the day...

That they meet... This God... Who will deal with them... As those... That are accountable... As all are accountable... But this is the...

Marvelous thing... We are not just... Face to face... With death... The solemn reality... Of death... The awful story... Of death... For all...

This terrible news... That everyone is going to die... Every one of you... Myself... Included... Sooner... Or later... This is what it...

There will be... There will be an obituary... Written... There will be a story... Told... This is how he lived his life... Maybe you'll be remembered... For good things you've done... Maybe you'll be remembered...

[64 : 21] For bad things you've done... But the day will come... When that will happen... And if that was all...

There was to it... How dreadful... Would such a service... As this be... For all you had to go home with... Oh well... This is what the minister told us...

He's going to... We're going to die... You all know that anyway... He doesn't need to rub salt... In the wound... But what Paul is saying is this...

The gift of God... Is eternal life... Through Christ Jesus... Our Lord... And there's the contrast... The free gift...

Consists of eternal life... It's not a wage... It's not earned... It is bestowed...

[65 : 21] It is given... And we have to... Emphasize that... Because somewhere... Along the line... There is this... Perversion... Of a truth...

That insists... You have to... In some way... Gain favor with God... In order to... Inherit eternal life... But that's not what...

The gospel says... Believe... In the Lord Jesus Christ... To the saving of your soul... Because it is Christ...

That blots out sin... It is Christ... That deals with sin... It is Christ... On the cross... That carried the sins... Of his people... In his body... So that these sins...

Would not be... Any more held to their account... Notice it is... Through... Jesus Christ...

[66 : 20] Christ... Or in his gospel... Or in Christ... As some theologians would... Rather have us believe... It all has to do... With the person of the Lord Jesus Christ...

And what God has done... Through him... What do you have to do... What must I do... To be saved...

Believe... On the Lord Jesus Christ... That's what Christ... Himself says... Believe on him... Believe that he's done... All there is...

That needs to be done... Believe that he has... Canceled the death... Of every sinner... Who trusts in him... Believe that every sin... That is... Lies to our church... For we would...

For which we would... Otherwise die... That he has blotted out... These sins... They will never again... Be held to our account... What would you rather believe?

[67 : 22] Believe in something... That trivializes death... Believe in something... That makes death... A nothing... Believe in something... That will... In some way... Make you comfortable...

Living your life... In this world... Thinking that in some way... You're making the world... A better place... By your presence here... And that one day... They'll write a book about you... Or put up a plaque for you... Or put a bench out...

With your name on it... And you're saying... I've done something... This world will be a better place... Because of me... Perhaps if you go to the gardens...

In Edinburgh... Or any of these cities... And you'll find... Park benches... And they've got nice... Wee plaques on them... And they tell you... This is in memory of... So and so... Or perhaps in a hundred years time...

When the world will have... Turned on its head a wee bit... And the statues that were... Erected in memory of so many people... Will be torn down... Because the prevailing opinion of society...

[68 : 27] Has changed in some way... Like we see happening even today... If that was all their life was about... If that's all our life is about...

It matters not... Whether our statues are ripped to the ground... Or our benches are rotting... And the plaques are... Binned...

Those who are in Jesus Christ... Know that their sins... Are dealt with... By way of his cross... Is that not what Paul says...

When he writes to... His epistle to the Colossians... He speaks about it as... As something that... Let's well finish with these thoughts...

What Christ was doing on the cross... He was... Dealing with the sins... Of his people... You being dead in your sins...

[69 : 37] And the uncircumcision of your flesh... As he quickened... Together with him... Having forgiven you all trespasses... Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances...

That was against us... Which was contrary to us... And took it out of the way... Nailing it to his cross... Having spoiled principalities and powers...

He made a show of them... He made a show of them openly... Triumphant over them in it... Christ did that... And he will have the last word...

With regard to this world... And all in it... The victory is secure... And the salvation of the sinner... Is accomplished... By his hand...

Believe that... You may know with certainty... That death is in your... It's an appointment... Every one of us...

- [70 : 37] Maybe many of us have a diary... Appointment book... What's in store for us... For months ahead... Maybe... One thing we haven't written in... And that is the day of our death...
I think in Blanchard's book... He was talking to... He wanted to... About those scientists... Who wanted to find out...
How... A dying person... Was thinking... As they prepared for death... And they wanted...
The medical profession... To tell them... Direct us to these people... That you know... Are terminally ill... And are within...
Within the... Certain time frame... Where they're going to encounter death... But... He said... There was a reluctance...
- [71 : 41] On the part of the staff... To identify... Any one of them... It was as if... There was a dread thought... That this... Idea... That death was... Was imminent... And for every one of us...
There's that dread thought... But if we have... The Lord Jesus Christ... As our Lord... Then we know... Whatever fear... Which is a natural one... Can be triumphed over...
With God's help... By trusting in the Lord... Let us pray... Lord help us... To believe... The truth concerning...
What life is all about... And what Christ is in the world... To do... That he has... Come into the world... To seek and to save the lost... And the lostness...
Of this world... Will... Terminate in... The death... That is spoken of... Hear us... O Lord... And grant... Wisdom to us...
- [72 : 40] As we... Think on these things... Cleanse from sin... In Jesus name... Amen... Closing Psalm... Is Psalm 130... Psalm 130...
The whole Psalm... Lord from the depths... To thee I cried... My voice Lord... Do thou hear... Unto my supplications... Voice... Give... And attend to fear... Notice the last verse...
Of the Psalm... Plenteous redemption... Is ever found within... And from all his iniquities... The Israel... Shall redeem... Lord from the depths...
To thee I cried... Lord from the depths... To thee I cried... Lord from the depths... To thee I cried... To get to thee I cry, my voice, Lord, do thou hear.
Unto my salvation's voice, if I'm not in it.
- [73 : 56] Nor do you shall stand in the Lord, to smirk in a clergy.
I gather in thee forgiveness, that the earth of the greatest dream.
I wait for what my soul does, my hope is in this world.
More than thou, for more will watch, my soul is for the Lord.
I say, Lord, I'm not in it. I do watch the Lord, my life to see.
- [75 : 21] Let Israel open the door, for a wisdom and mercy be.
And planet Jesus redemption is ever found within.
And from all this in it is peace, he is the name of the child of the King.
May grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest, and I abide with you, all, never, and always. Amen.