

The Gospel in Word And Power

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[0 : 0 0] Let's sing praise to God. May the words of Romans 1 be an encouragement that we would lift up our voices in praise and joy that I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is a power of God unto salvation to all who believe.

Let us then praise him. Singing from Psalm 138. Psalm 138 we'll sing from the beginning of the psalm to verse 4. Thee will I praise with all my heart. I will sing praise to thee before the gods and worship will toward thy sanctuary. I'll praise thy name even for thy truth and kindness of thy love. For thou thy word hast magnified all thy great name above.

Psalm 130. We'll sing to verse 4 from the beginning to the praise of God. Thee will I praise with all my heart. I will sing praise to thee before the gods and worship will.

Thee will I praise to thee before the gods and worship will.

Thee will I praise to thee before the gods and worship will.

[2 : 1 1] Thee will I praise to thee before the gods and worship will. Thee will I satisfy to thee before the gods and worship will. And thou my feelings to this end, this heaven will ever be.

All kings upon the earth North, say in the air O Lord the Lord When a sick father must come near I do believe him, O Lord Let us pray together.

Almighty God, we bow before you today. We express to you our gratitude.

We express to you our worship. We express to you, Lord, our dependence. We acknowledge you to be the one true God, awesome in power, glorious in might, amazing in grace.

And Lord, as we bow and worship today, we are so grateful to all you have done for us day by day, for the bounty of your provision, which we enjoy, for the peace and security that we know.

[3 : 5 7] We thank you, Lord, that unlike so many Christians, we can gather and open and sing praise to you without fear of persecution or arrest, without fear of oppression and difficulty and danger.

Lord, these things, of course, we do take for granted. And so we pause and thank you and praise you for what we can enjoy here today. We pray, Lord, for this communion season, that it would be a time of refreshing, a time of blessing, a time of grace, that we would be, Lord, renewed in our faith and understanding, that we would seek to serve you even more.

Our devotion and our diligence, our adoration, our willingness to serve, our willingness to obey, our willingness to say, here am I, Lord, that that may increase and grow even more.

That we would be a willing people, a people having learned more and more of the gospel, having been led ever further and ever deeper into the light of the kingdom of Jesus.

May we reflect that in how we conduct ourselves and our choices, our language, our decision. And Lord our God, we pray that in doing so, we might become useful in your hand, that we might be bright, shining witnesses, children of light, in a dark world.

[5 : 15] For Lord, in this world where we are, there is darkness and indifference and sin and wickedness and rebellion. And Lord, we see it day by day.

We feel it. We sense it. We read about it. We see it on our news feeds. We see it, Lord, in our TVs. And we are grieved, Lord, for at times how dark this world can be.

We see man's and humanity to man. We see war and rumours of war. We see hatred and intolerance. We see death and destruction so often, Lord.

And we pray today for those areas of the world where there is such unrest, where there is no peace, where there is warfare. We pray, Lord, for the situation in Ukraine and in the Middle East.

We pray, Lord, that you would, in your grace and mercy, intervene and bring stability and peace, that those working toward negotiation and settlement, those seeking, Lord, that middle ground, would be blessed and protected and no success in their mission.

[6 : 18] We pray for the alleviation of the suffering. So many, Lord, suffer, and it's always the innocence. Lord, we pray for them today. And as we think of the situations around us, Lord, the difficulty and darkness in the world that so often is evidence of lawlessness and sinfulness and wickedness, we come back to the gospel.

We come to the cross. We come, Lord, to where Jesus Christ gave himself for us. And we bless you that this message is still going around the world, transforming lives, changing men and women from the inside out, making them your children.

And we pray today, Lord, that your word would go forth with power and conviction over this weekend, here across our island and in our nation, that there would be accompanying the proclamation of the gospel, the Holy Spirit, that he would bless your word to hearts and lives, that he would bring from darkness to light, that he would bring life where there is death, where he would pour out his blessing and open hearts and ears and eyes to understand and heed the call to come to Christ for forgiveness and sin, for peace and reconciliation.

And we know that there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And we pray, Lord God, today as we reflect on these things and as we consider the gospel, as we spend this time together in worship, praise and prayer, studying the word, preparing our hearts for the Lord's table tomorrow, may it please you, Lord, to come in among us and do us good.

We pray that the Spirit would be here. We pray that the Spirit would be our teacher in these things of grace, that we might learn in you and taste in you and experience in you the wonder of Christ crucified, that we would revel in the salvation we know through forgiveness of sin, that we would give thanks, that we can speak of being hidden in Christ, that we can speak today of being, that you are our hiding place.

[8 : 27] What a wonder and joy and privilege to be a child of the living God. May we, Lord, be ever more grateful and marvel today at the wonder of transforming grace.

And so we ask for your blessing, Lord, today, here and in other communion seasons on our island. We pray that the word and sacrament might be a true blessing and time of nourishment to your people and that in the week to come there would be many ambassadors for Christ seen in our communities, in our villages and in our towns, that, Lord, there would be a witness, that there would be a city on a hill that cannot be hid, that men and women in the week to come, following the proclamation of the word this weekend, it would be indeed stalwarts and signposts as speaking and pointing, speaking of Jesus, pointing to Jesus, living for Jesus, depending on Jesus.

May we be counted with them, Lord, may we be faithful, may we be courageous and tenacious when we must be, may we never shirk from taking up the shield of faith and donning the breastplate of righteousness, may we never withdraw from the good fight, may we press on, running the race, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and we do so, Lord, conscious that the kind of death he died ought to impact the kind of life we live.

May that be the case this day. And so, Lord, we ask for your blessing once more today upon word and sacrament, accept our prayers, hear our praise, for we come to you and offer all our petitions in the name of Jesus Christ, our King and Saviour, confessing our sin, acknowledging our failing, lamenting over the lawlessness that so often besets us and trips us and beguiles us.

Father, forgive us and be with us, we pray. In Jesus' name we ask these things. Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise from Psalm 130.

[10 : 44] Psalm 130, this glorious song of praise that speaks of redemption with the Lord. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear, unto my supplications voice, give an attentive ear.

Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity? But yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be. Psalm 130, we'll sing a whole psalm to God's praise.

verse 1. Amen. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice for you thou hear, unto my shout the climate Delhi and whunker you shall take the Lord until wide Pour in see, forget with me

For his ashes, the fear that made me I wait for God my soul justly, my hope is in His word.

O God may that for more be one, my soul pray for the Lord.

[13 : 10] I say, Lord, I may not to watch the morning light to see.

Let Israel open the Lord for His mercy be.

On plentious redemption, His ever-conversed, And all this is His mercy be.

Let Israel pray. We'll read this morning from the New Testament, from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians, reading from the beginning of chapter 1. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, one of the earliest of the apostles' letters, written to a brand new church.

[14 : 54] It was in its infancy, maybe a number of months, certainly less than a year. These Christians were young in the faith. They needed encouragement and stability as Paul ministered during the second missionary journey, which is the setting for the letter we're about to read from.

Chapter 1, and we'll read from the beginning. Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, and to the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, and we'll read from the first letter of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, one of the first letters of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1, one of the first letters of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Thessalonians, chapter 1, one of the first letters of the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 Thessalonians, chapter 2, 1.

3 Thessalonians 3, 1, one of the first letters of the Holy Ghost. assurance as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake and ye became followers of us and of the lord having received the word in much affliction with joy of the holy ghost so that ye were examples to all that believe in macedonia and achia for from you sounded out the word of the lord not only in macedonia and achia but also in every place your faith to godward is spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything for they themselves show us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how you turned to god from idols to serve the living and true god and to wait for his son from heaven who may raise in the dead even jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come for you yourselves brethren know our entrance in unto you it was not in vain but even after that we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated as you know it philippi we were bold in our god to speak unto you the gospel of god with much contention for our exhortation was not of deceit not of uncleanness nor of guile but as we were allowed of god to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak not as pleasing men but god which trieth our hearts amen may the lord bless his word to our hearts today i will turn to psalm 63 as we worship the lord in song once more psalm 63 singing from the beginning of the psalm and we'll sing to verse 8 lord thee my god i'll early seek my soul doth thirst for thee my flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be that i thy power may behold and brightness of thy face as i have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place psalm 63 we'll sing to verse 8 to the praise of god for thee my god my holy sake my soul doth thirst for thee my flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be the ■■■■■■ and finances of the righteous and snare thyobi not RO ■■■■■■ b y I will ■■■■■■ ap on if you please my son and Voldemort Hoch downhill and your son or ■■■■■■ Bees o nigh they know I'm dei nigh dere ■■■■■■ season and commemorate your ways psalm 63 our tsex of may I use to rejoice my life praying for our th schemes the antism of my sins in a public ges ■■■■■■ the diets of my fall and o'er die tomve to come and repentance of my soul doth their fikowner Peace o este Nemesis of God

[19 : 01] I join thou me on fear I join the clock onllene the o'erate ■■■■■■ i T Parkinson's Ode ■■■■■■ I join the Fro ved Owe de enlightenment and the question of my God Ode om ■■■■■■ or die In the earth, the forest, and the holy place.

Since Bethlehem, I love the night. My dear, see, with your head.

My dear, my dear, where is my heart? I bless thee while I live.

In the earth, the forest, and the holy place. My soul shall live in thee.

Then shall my love with joyfulness sing.

[20 : 22] May it is such a journey. When I do thee upon my bed, remember where is my life.

I bless thee while I live. I bless thee in waters of the night.

In child, O all thy ways I try. For thou, O thine health, I see.

My soul behold, O thine health, I see.

If you turn with me in your Bibles to that passage you read together. In the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

[21 : 56] This congregation that was founded in the ancient city of Thessalonica. A capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. A strategic location, a seaport, a bustling, busy city in the ancient world.

Where we find a team of three. Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Possibly joined by Luke at some point. Bringing the gospel of God to bear in a dark and sinful world.

We know what happened in the city. Because in Acts in chapter 17 we're told. Paul and Timothy, Silas, they came to Thessalonica.

And that Paul, as was his manner, went in unto them. And three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scripture. Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead.

And this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ. And some believed. There were conversions.

[23 : 00] The word of the Lord arrived with power and conviction. As we read in verse 5 in chapter 1. Where we read together. Our gospel came not unto you in word only.

But also in power and in the Holy Spirit. And in much assurance as you know what manner of men we were among you. But things then went downhill rapidly. And Paul and his team.

They had to leave the city under the cover of darkness. Because of the threat of violence that was in there. There was a riot. The Jewish community in the city stirred up the people. They brought charges against the Christian missionaries.

And such was the level of threat. They had to leave under the cover of darkness. And now a number of months later. Paul writes back to them. Out of sheer concern. Chapter 3 in this letter begins.

We could no longer bear it. We thought it good to be left at Athens alone. And send Timothy, our brother. A minister of God. And our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ. To establish you.

[24 : 00] And to comfort you. Concerning your faith. Paul sends Timothy back up the Isthmus. Back from Athens to Thessalonica. In northern Greece. To find out if the church had stood the test of time.

And this is the question that opens up our reflection this morning. And this passage. What did Timothy find when he came back to Thessalonica?

What was he looking for? And we can apply it much more personally than that. What do you look for in a church? If you've travelled or gone on holiday. Or work's taking you away from home.

And you've looked for a church. You've maybe looked at the website. You've asked around. You've heard about a church. But I wonder. What would you want to find when you went there? What would you hope to see?

What would you hope to experience in worship? What would you want to hear from the pulpit? We would want of course an emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ. As being the only way of salvation.

[25 : 00] We would want the gospel proclaimed. That faith and repentance bring us from darkness to light. From death to light. And that by faith in Christ.

And Christ alone are we saved. And the wonderful thing is that when Timothy made this journey back north from Athens. On his own it would seem. To this ancient city.

And went back into this pagan. The city estimates vary. As to how big it was. The outlying areas. It was over a hundred thousand it would seem anyway.

Which is massive when we think two hundred or two thousand years ago. This huge gathering that was just teeming with pagan temples. And paganism. And idolatry.

And debauchery. And all sorts of immorality. And right in the midst of that darkness. A small church had been planted. The root of the gospel had taken hold.

[25 : 56] Men and women had been saved. But they were under such real pressure. That Paul when he couldn't bear any longer sends. Right hand man Timothy. Back to see how they have stood the test of time.

And it is Timothy's return to Paul. Probably by this time in Corinth. When he brings it chapter 3 and verse 5. That he says again. I could no longer forbear.

I sent to know your faith. Lest by some means the tempter has tempted you. And our labour be in vain. But now Timothy has come from you. And brought us good tidings of your faith and love.

When Timothy went back to Thessalonica. He found a living church. A living church. Described and defined by these wonderful words in verse 3 in chapter 1.

That there was a church defined by their work of faith. Their labour of love. And their patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the sight of God our Father.

[27 : 00] Timothy found what he was looking for. And there's always a very personal line of application. That we need to draw to ourselves today.

And apply it to ourselves today. And imagine the scene. But if Timothy was to come back today to where we are. To where our congregations meet and worship.

As he came in among us. What would he find? And what would his report be? It's quite an interesting and challenging application. To think well. How would we fare?

If Timothy came amongst us. And assessed us. And then went back to Paul. To tell what he had found in Calanish. Or Bach. Or Stornoway. Or Glasgow. Edinburgh. Any congregation in our denomination.

What would the report be? Would it be as glowing as this? Paul. They are a body of believers. Who love the Lord. And let me tell you how. What I found. I found their work of faith.

[27 : 58] Their labour of love. Their patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. To be clear and consistent. There are people who love the Lord. There are people who we see at the very end.

In verses 9 and 10. We are going to focus our thoughts now. For our time together today. That they were focused. They were razor sharp. In their understanding.

Of what it was. They were to do. What was expected of them. But there were so many questions. So many gaps. In their understanding. Paul would only be with them. A matter of weeks.

We don't know how long. Maybe just a few short months. At the very most. And so Timothy comes back. With a good report. There already are a people.

Verse 7. Who are examples to all. Who believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord. Not only in Macedonia and Achaia. But also in every place.

[28 : 54] Your faith to God is spread abroad. So we need not to speak anything of you. They have done marvelously. They have progressed. They have grown. They have shown wonderful.

Progression in their. Love and devotion to the Lord. These things. Show of us. What manner of entering. And we had unto you. And how you turned to God. From idols.

To serve the living and true God. And to wait for the son from heaven. Who may have raised from the dead. Even Jesus. Which delivered us. From the wrath to come. Timothy.

When he went. Back to Thessalonica. Found. A people. Defined by. Their devotion. To the Lord. Their willingness. To serve him.

And as well as that. He found them. Marked by. A diligence. In this. They were committed. There's a tenacity here. When we think of the. The persecution. And. Threat of violence.

[29 : 50] And darkness. All around. It's wonderful to find this. Bright. Shining example. To encourage us. That we would. Go and do likewise. That we would. Seek to follow. Just as they did.

What then do we find. This. These people. That the message. That was brought by Paul. Described in Acts. In chapter 17. Is a message. That this Jesus. Who might proclaim. To you.

Is the Christ. And some believed. The word. Went forth. With great power.

And conviction. We thank God. In chapter 2. In verse 13. We thank God. Without ceasing. Because when you receive. The word of God. Which you heard of us.

You received it. Not as the word of men. But as it is in truth. The word of God. Which effectually works. Works also. In you that believe.

[30 : 49] What a wonderful. Declaration that is. And reminder. And summary. Of the word of God. Does the work of God. In our hearts. And lives. And so we need to be.

People of the word. And if we want to be. People of the word. We need to take the word. Not just. Into our mind. But into our hearts. That we might be believers. In the Lord. Jesus Christ.

And go on. From strength. To strength. The catechism. Helps us here. When we. Come into the language. Of verses 9 and 10. It's pretty. This wonderful. And very famous.

Phrasing of verse 9. You turned. To God. From idols. To serve the living. And true God. There's the definition. Of a change of heart. And this is what defined.

This. This brand new. Church. In its infancy. In Thessalonica. They turned. To God. From idols. To the living. And true God. This is.

[31 : 44] The language. Of faith. And repentance. The catechism. Is wonderful. What is. Faith. Faith. Is a saving grace. Whereby. We receive.

And rest upon Christ. For salvation. As he has offered. To us. In the gospel. That is what they turned. To. They turned. To God. From idols. And to turn.

To turn. To God. With all. Purpose. Of an endeavor. After new. Obedience. A change of heart. And this is what. Timothy found. When he came back.

To this city. He found. Evidence. Of a change. Of heart. He saw. A change of heart. And this is what. Timothy found.

When he came back. To this city. He found. Evidence. Of a change. Of a change. Of heart. He saw. A dynamic. Change.

[32 : 39] Had taken place. And it was. Evidence. In how. These Christians. Lived out. Their lives. They lived out. Their lives. In such a manner. As to please.

And serve. God. Faith. And repentance. Has done. Its work. A wonderful. Phrasing of this. By John Murray. In his book. On redemption.

And he puts things. This way. It is impossible. To disentangle. Faith. And repentance. Saving faith. Is permeated. With repentance. And repentance. Is permeated.

With faith. And this. Is what. Timothy finds. And reports on. And we can now. Reflect on this evening. Today. Together.

This afternoon. So we found. A people. Who have turned. To God. From idols. To serve. The living. And to wait. Is there. They're turning.

[33 : 34] And they're waiting. And. It's not. Language. That speaks. Of a dullness. There's nothing. Static. Here. There's a kinetic. Spiritual.

Energy. Coursing. Through. The hearts. And lives. That they face. And so the first thing. Let's think about the devotion. They turned. To God. From idols.

To serve. The living. And true God. This word here. In the ancient Greek. To serve. The language. Literally. To serve. As a slave. To serve.

And to be. Given over. To a life. Of servitude. To the master. And this is a very. Forceful phrase. To use. And it should impact us. And stop us. And attract us.

To serve. To give ourselves. Without restraint. Willingly. Lovingly. Fully. Unreservedly. Giving ourselves.

[34 : 29] To the service. Of our Lord and Saviour. Here then. Our fellow believers. And they were. Worshipping. And living. And bearing testimony.

In an ancient city. In a world. That despised their Saviour. And ridiculed the gospel. And on that. We can relate. We too live in a world.

That despises. Our Saviour. And ridicules. The gospel. And so. As they. Stood. Up. They. Stood.

Out. And that is the same. In everyday. In generation. For the child of God. By standing. Up. And. Confessing. The Lord.

By nailing your colours. The mast. You stand out. Why? Because the light. Of the gospel. Disperses. The darkness. All around you. The darkness. Of unbelief.

[35 : 24] And indifference. And ambivalence. And intolerance. And secularism. And atheism. And pluralism. All these things. That dominate. So many hearts. And homes. Suddenly.

You. You break. That chain. You break. The mould. You're now. Coming from. So many of our culture. And so many of our. Our people. Around us.

You now. Begin to live your life. Walking. On the narrow way. The king's highway. As Bunyan. Puts it. In pilgrims. Progress. Christians. Then.

And today. Share this tension. Of standing up. And standing out. And it's the newness. Of life. In Christ. That is the. The defining principle. Here. What this new life.

Looks like. Is here. Described. Nine. As. Serving. The living. And true. God. What. A joy.

[36 : 19] And privilege. It is. To be servants. Of God. And becoming. A Christian. Is to enter. Upon this life. Of service. It's to put the Lord. First.

On every level. Of our lives. It's to put the Lord. As a forethought. Not an afterthought. It's to give the Lord. The very best. We can. It's to give him.

Our. Our diligence. It's to give him. Our devotion. It's to show. And how we live. And speak. And conduct. Ourselves. That we actually. Do adore.

The Lord. You could maybe. Think about it. Along these. To work for an organization. Usually involves. An interview process. Submitting your CV. Getting references. PVG forms.

Eligibility. There's all sorts of. Screening. And qualifications. Have to be. Checked. And confirmed. Security. Clearances. All sorts of things. It's all about.

[37 : 14] What you. Bring to the table. And the company. Or the employer. Want to see. What it is. You can bring. To them. But for service. In the kingdom.

It's entirely different. We bring nothing. We come to the cross. As sinners. In need of forgiveness. Forgiveness. And when we come. In faith.

And repentance. When we. Receive. And rest upon. Christ. For salvation. As he has offered. To us. In the gospel. And as we. Turn.

From sin. With grief. And hatred. Acknowledging. The awfulness. And reality. And guilt. Of sin. And. For forgiveness. And cleansing.

In Christ. Then. What happens. Is. And we do. So. Through faith. And hope. And love. Just as these. Young Christians.

[38 : 09] Did so many. Generations ago. Chapter one. And verse three. Defined by a work. Of faith. A labor. Of love. And patience. In our Lord. Jesus Christ.

It wasn't about. Their might. It was about. Their goodness. Christ. Caution. Through them. Changing them. And having. This effect. Upon them.

That changed them. From the inside out. They're marked. By devotion. We serve. Then. By acknowledging. The Lord's rule. Over us. And.

Doing his. Will. It becomes. Our. Our ambition. In our. Likeness. Christian friend. We know. Well. That.

Our Lord. And Savior. Was given. Over. Completely. In his. Perfection. To do. His. His. His.

[39 : 04] His. His. His. His. His. His. His. His. His. His.

His. His. Lord. Thy. Teach. They're. Me. We see. Lord. Teach. We pray.

In. In. Heaven. Ten. Years. After. To the. The. Colossae. And. There.

He. Would. And. Become. All. The. God. As. A. One. One.

Christian. Song. Puts. It. This. We go. labor. On. The. Way. The.

[39 : 59] Way. The. Master. Should not. The. Servant. Thread. It. Still. The. form.

It. Basically.ogan■ meer■t. and tragically he would die just 43 serving as an army chaplain in egypt during the first world war he didn't recover from a time of illness but in his ministry in his teaching and in the devotional writings that have been passed down to us across the generations one of which is the most famous my utmost for his highest oswald chambers said this speaking of the life of service and devotion he said i am determined to be absolutely and entirely for him and for him alone keep yourself before god for this one thing only my utmost for his highest and so where does our devotion to the lord find us it finds us here in his house gathered around his word today where will it find us tomorrow if we are spared gathered at his table we go there in devotion not because we're good not because we're upstanding and upright we don't go there to be saved we go there because we have been saved we go there to give evidence of our lord and savior being our master we go there because we love the lord and we will obey him do this in remembrance of me sometimes of course in the heart there's this struggle this sense of not being good enough and we know well that over the generations that sentiment has kept many of the lord's people from the lord's table that's sad it should not be and i'm convinced that if some of these early christians in thessalonica were among us tomorrow and they knew of a christian who wasn't at the table they'd be astounded they would want to know why and they would ask you i wonder what your answer would be if that applies to you today friends i can only urge you to ensure you are at the table tomorrow to express your devotion to your lord and savior it's where he wants you to be he bids you come for all things are now ready isaac watts said this in one of his many hymns jesus my god i know your name your name is all i trust you will not put my soul to shame or let my hope be lost it's hope that brings us to the table it's love and devotion that brings us to the table it's obedience that brings us to the table where our lord and savior meets with us and grants us blessing and grace and nourishment in a spiritual meal in a moment that sacrament that we eat and drink to his glory in remembrance of him we show there our devotion we show that we too have turned to god from idols to serve the living and true god the table is a place and moment and time of testimony where we show forth the praises of him who called us from darkness and we do so humbly we do so joyfully we do so because faith and repentance has worked in our hearts and we go there to remember our savior these young christians then were marked by devotion and they were secondly marked by diligence they turned to god to serve the living and true god and to wait they're serving and they're waiting there's a combination here of devotion and diligence they are committed they're prepared to run the race to fight the good fight looking unto jesus paul we know had such a short time with them and yet

as as the the the the essence of the gospel had been shared and as they knew about christ and had learned about the resurrection and redemption and the cross there were so many things they didn't quite understand i hadn't fully grasped and so paul teaches them and writes to them reminding them while he had been with them he he taught them as as as a nurse as a mother and he'd also instructed them as a loving and committed father you know in chapter 2 in verse 11 we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father does his children that you should walk worthy of god who has called you into his kingdom and glory and so on three times that this phrasing of of walking in a manner that is worthy of god comes in comes to the fore and not to encourage to instruct to exhort to motivate and this has had its impact on these young believers and they are not only devoted they're also a people who were diligent that's what timothy found it's a wonderful thing that he found among this that the brothers and sisters in thessalonica a living faith a loving church and he came back to paul with that message and so even though time had been short paul had taught them that jesus as he had come once to suffer and die would come again to reign in glory and majesty and throughout this letter you'll find this this returning to the theme of the second coming but he does so because he has instilled in him an understanding of the first coming and that that first coming of the lord led to his giving himself to the cross it led to his death for did not finish there because he taught them about the resurrection and he taught them that as christ had suffered and died once so he would come again chapter 4 and verse 14 we believe that jesus died and rose again the hope of the gospel is here the hope of a living risen savior who paid a price we could not pay and so the focus here becomes one of resurrection hope and redemption hope he they're serving and they're waiting because they know the son who was dead now was alive and he will come back from heaven and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead even jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come there's so much packed into that chapter 1 in verse 10 we are serving and waiting for jesus who will come from heaven who was dead but has been raised and because of his perfect life and his sacrificial death and his atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world he has delivered us from the wrath to come at the heart of the gospel there is a savior who died for us acts in 17 describes paul preaching in thessalonica that we preach christ crucified as is put as he as he did in in the in corinth the next city on his travels after athens following his time in thessalonica and berea and we find him saying this jesus i proclaim to you is the christ the son of god they knew then as we do today of the cross the death burial and empty tomb paul explained and proved it was necessary for the christ to suffer and to rise from the dead they knew all about the suffering servant they knew about the son of god who loved us and gave himself for us and so this this understanding

of the resurrection it's written all over the church in thessalonica they'd come to understand the significance and centrality of the cross and the empty tomb and because of the empty tomb there are people full of hope they are serving and they're waiting because as he came once he's going to come again paul has taught this and he's instilled in them this this understanding to give themselves as oswald chambers said i am determined to be absolutely and entirely for him and for him alone as with chambers so with these early christians in thessalonica and so friends it must be with us today if we would give ourselves to our lord and savior in a willing attitude of service waiting what does it mean to to wait it's to wait it's it's a sustained patience and trust there's an expectancy here there's there's a there's an energy here there's an anticipation here we know that christ is going to come again and until then what do we do we serve him waiting show me thy ways oh lord thy paths o teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth thereto my teacher be and as we have this teachableness and hungering after righteousness and hungering after the word as they did back in their day the their exhortation that they heard it was not in deceit not of uncleanness and it was not in guile but as we were allowed of god to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak not as pleasing men but god who tests our hearts they brought the truth of the gospel to this ancient city and the spirit blessed that word in the same way the spirit blesses his word in calanish and across our island today the same gospel the same savior the same hope and our challenge is that we would nurture and protect the the same anticipation that these early christians had a same desire to serve and honor and obey the lord to be loyal to the gospel to be found at the means of grace at the lord's table at the prayer meeting bibles open at home and in church living day by day every day to the glory of our lord and savior faith hope and love mark these early believers and it must mark us also if we're going to give god the glory so there's a there's there's a church here with the resurrection written all over it there's also here a church with a clear understanding of the need for personal redemption to become a child or to become a christian is to become a child of god it is to me to be made as righteous as christ through our guilt being removed by the blood of the lamb who takes away the sin of the world this is a personal transaction which what's it's what some historical writers would describe as the sweet exchange he takes our sin and gives us his righteousness it doesn't get any sweeter to be made a child of god transformed from being a child of wrath to be brought near by the blood of christ to know this eternal redemption that he has secured for us through repentance and faith lord be merciful to me a sinner who's sung it already today here together the testimony of every christian confessing our sin acknowledging our fault grieving our

weakness and so we turn to god we turn to god from lawlessness and sinfulness we turn to god from the guilt and power of sin and then coming to christ we find that sin will no longer dominate and reign over us that power is broken the guilt is taken away by the blood of jesus our sins forgiven and now there is a new power at work in us the power of the gospel having responded to the effectual calling we come and we come as we are thought about that a little bit last night and the sweet exchange takes place our filthy rags are exchanged for the robes of his righteousness and we become as righteous as christ himself and what does that result in it results in our being delivered from the wrath to come the end of chapter 1 in verse 10 we are delivered from the wrath to come this is a solemn reality it's a reality that we acknowledge that when christ comes for some there will be a resurrection to life but for others a resurrection to judgment all the more pressing that we make our calling and election sure that we look unto christ that our faith is rooted in him and that we're not trusting in anything or any one any system or any process or procedure or distinctive uh presbyterianism whatever a denominational flag may be we must ensure that is not what we're looking to for our hope for heaven that our hope for heaven is grounded in nothing other and nothing less and no one else other than jesus christ as our lord and savior paul opens this letter paul and silas timothy to the church of the thessalonians which is in god the father and in the lord jesus christ his favorite definition of christian men and women in the new testament in his writings is always that we phrase in christ time and again you find it in his letters to be in christ is everything there is the definition of the sweet exchange of coming to him in repentance and in faith their lifestyle then spoke of their faith chapter one again verse eight for from you sounded out the word of the lord what a testimony what an encouragement for us today who knows how the lord will use us in the days and weeks to come should we be spared we have no idea how the lord may be prepared to use our faithful witnessing our consistent and quiet christ likeness to his glory and the furtherance of the kingdom maybe your testimony next week were the means of bringing someone to faith in christ that's how god works in and with and through his people chapter one in verse eight from you sounded out the word of the lord in how they lived in their conduct in their conversation their testimony spoke of their savior as usual tomorrow at his table do this in remembrance of me their lifestyle spoke tonight or today we we pause and reflect on on the great saying that the kind of death jesus died ought to shape the kind of life we live and may that be true of all of us

[56 : 18] today and tomorrow and in the weeks to come because we have a loving savior described so powerfully in isaiah he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed and it's that healing that gathers us in at his table tomorrow on his day when we remember in any special way in a powerful way our savior and lord who gave himself for us a final mention of oswald chambers who also said that service is the overflow of super abounding devotion devotion and diligence they go so closely together the deeper the deeper our devotion the stronger will be our diligence the stronger our diligence the deeper our devotion they go together like a hand in a glove and may it be that as the lord finds us tomorrow he finds us serving and waiting for his son from heaven giving thanks in our praise and in our prayers for the grace we have experienced in the gospel and for the savior we know and love it is him we remember at his table tomorrow and may he bless us as we go there waiting in anticipation until he come again we'll join in prayer together lord our god for your goodness to us for the grace and wonder of the gospel for the joy of our salvation in christ we praise and thank you today we ask lord god that you would bless your word to our hearts that the spirit would take this seed of life and this light of the gospel and bless it to our understanding that we would take what we understand and know into our hearts and into our lives go before us lord we pray and forgive our sin for jesus sake amen we'll close our service by singing this morning from psalm 62 psalm 62 and we'll sing from verse 5 to verse 8 to god's praise psalm 62 singing from verse 5 my soul wait thy with patience upon thy god alone on him dependeth all my hope and expectation he only my salvation is and my strong rock is he he only is my sure defense i shall not move be we'll sing from verse 5 to god's praise my soul wait thou with patience upon thy god alone on him for the end and które and ■■■■■■ he only dodg i

I shall be the truth, I shall grow with thee.

He only is my true defense, I shall not let thee.

In God I only exist, and I shall be the truth.

In God I have walked with all of my strength, my grateful Savior.

[60 : 56] He, ■■■■■hood! to subscribe.

God is the refuge right. God is the refuge right.

God is the refuge right.