

I lay in Zion a Stumbling Stone and a Rock of Offence

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[0 : 00] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 65. Psalm 65 from the beginning down to the double verse marked 5.

Psalm 65. Praise waits for thee in Zion, Lord. To thee vows paid shall be. O thou that hear an art of prayer, all flesh shall come to thee.

Iniquities, I must confess, prevail against me do. But as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou. Blessed is the man whom thou dost choose, and makes the approach to thee, that he within thy courts, O Lord, may still a dweller be.

We surely shall be satisfied with thy abundant grace, and with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy place. O God of our salvation, thou in thy righteousness by fearful works unto our prayers, thine answer dost express.

Therefore the ends of all the earth and those afar that be upon the sea, their confidence, O Lord, will place in thee. These verses, Psalm 65 from the beginning, praise waits for thee in Zion, Lord.

[1 : 23] This wind's warning in Zion, Lord, to thee vows vision, O thou that hear an art of prayer, on flesh shall come to thee.

Iniquities, I must confess, prevail against you.

O Lord, will place in Zion, Lord, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea. O Lord, will place in Zion, Lord, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea.

O Lord, will place in Zion, Lord, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea. O Lord, will place in Zion, Lord, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea.

O Lord, will place in Zion, Lord, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea, and be upon the sea. May this approach to thee, that he witheth, thyience marches on.

[2 : 56] That he witheth, thy glory, O Lord, may kill our glory.

We surely shall be satisfied with thy abundant grace.

And with the goodness of thy house, even though thy holy grace.

O God, all others of vision, though in thy righteous gaze.

I will be a poor word, and to the Lord, my God, my God, my God, my God, my God, my God.

[4 : 26] The poor hands of all the earth, thy Lord shall not be.

O God, all others of vision, though in thy heart.

Let us pray together in prayer. Let us pray. Ever-blessed God, the word encourages us to come.

And to come with words of praise and thanksgiving. Words that show our appreciation for the God that is the recipient of our praises, of our worship, even at this evening hour.

May it be truly directed towards the throne of heaven upon which the God of heaven sits.

[5 : 52] And the Lord of glory at the right hand of the majesty on high. We give thanks for the grace of God. We give thanks for the way in which our eyes are opened through grace.

That you have given to Son that knowledge of God that enables us to see you with the eye of faith.

And we are able to take in some of the glory that is yours. Even though sin has limited the extent of our appreciation, we come confessing our sin.

Again, as your servant, the psalmist encourages us to do. To confess and to acknowledge it in your presence.

And to seek forgiveness and cleansing. Through the only cleansing agency that is available to sinners. By which they are persuaded that the stain of sin can truly be blotted out.

[7 : 11] Help us to appreciate the efficacy of the sacrifice for sin offered. By Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that we are told took away the sin of the world.

And we give thanks that such a Christ is set before us in your word. And that we are directed to him. And that we are encouraged to yield ourselves to his care and keeping.

That he is the Lamb and the Shepherd. That he possesses the flock. And that his ownership of it ensures that not one of that flock will be lost.

He spoke by way of parable. Reminding us of the way that the Good Shepherd was one who would even though ninety and nine were present that he would seek out the one that was lost.

And he speaks to us through the world telling us that that is what he has come into the world to do. To seek and to save the lost. We give thanks for everyone that has experienced the shepherd's touch upon their head.

[8 : 34] Drawing them to himself. For all who are ongoing in the experience of being shepherded by the Good Shepherd. And that they know what it is to have their wounds healed.

And their hurts assuaged by the tenderness of his care. We bless you and thank you for the way that your people are encouraged always to come to him.

And to place their trust upon him. Remember all who are his this evening to pray. From our own midst and beyond.

We give thanks to the world's end. That he will have a people. And not one of that people that the Father gave him will be lost.

They will be brought in to the fold. And they will be cared for. And looked after by his hand. Until such time as he will bring all to himself.

[9 : 43] Whenever that will be. We bless you and thank you for the fact that your word teaches us. That he will take from every tribe and every generation throughout the world.

Even places in the world that we may think have no interest in the gospel or no gospel interest in them. That they have not heard the gospel preached.

That they have not discovered the fact that God is God indeed. And that they have their own gods. And they have their own ways of worshipping such a God.

And yet you have intruded into the darkest recesses of this world. And laid bare the souls of men so that they would discover for themselves that any God but the God of heaven would not suffice.

that their needs are beyond anything that the fabricated gods and idols of this world may suggest to them.

[10 : 52] But that there is one who is God alone. The only living and true God. And by way of Christ you are able to bring to yourself a people who have through time discovered the unsearchable riches of that saviour of sinners.

So we pray for the word that is proclaimed today to be blessed even that which is preached in this place. We give thanks for the opportunity of having the word read and contemplating meditating upon it and seeking the blessing of the most high God upon it so that it would penetrate so many hearts and that it would in some way deal with us according to the needs that we have not just temporal needs or material needs but spiritual needs above all else that we may appreciate the truth of the gospel and the truth of the word of God as it sets before us our need and how that needs to be met preeminently in the person of Jesus we pray that you would bless all who have been sent out with the word to the far corners of the earth whoever they may be may they receive a hearing here and may the seed that is sown yield fruit in your appointed time we pray for our nation that is wayward and negligent that is so clearly departed from the foundations of the gospel and we pray

Lord for mercy that you may restore once again even the departed glory and that we would once again be made aware of the power of God and salvation and that you may stir up the dry bones and that you may breathe upon these bones that they may knit together and come to one to be demonstrating life even spiritual life we pray Lord your blessing upon the preaching of the word to that end bless the villages and towns that we belong to remember all amongst us who may be needed to be remembered in prayer that need whatever it is you know it and we bring it before you even in our own ignorance those who are sick those who are frail and weary with the way because of old age we pray for them remember those who are struggling with concerns that have to do with the mind and are hidden therefore from the eyes of their fellows we pray that you would mercifully undertake for them we would ask that if there are any that are disturbed in their soul that you may continue to disturb them until they find peace in the

God of peace that peace that passes all understanding that they may discover that it is only to be found in the one one place and the one passion and you have provided him for us in the gospel and we pray that you would work amongst us to that end taking from the young from middle aged and from old not allow the young to deceive themselves into thinking that there are many years before them that they can spend or misspend and when they think appropriate they can give time to the things of God how many are the grey hairs this evening who may have had that very thought in their youth and now they are gospel hardened now they have little thought or inclination towards God and we fear for them as they approach the very brink of eternity and not understanding that the hours of the days are lessening that lie before any one of us so be merciful to all open the eyes of our understanding that we may cry out to

God in heaven that you may come down round us heavens and come down pouring out your spirit upon us that the safety that we seek will be in Christ alone we ask that you would bless the congregations of our presbytery the presbytery that mark us as our denomination as in future days we meet together in general assembly may you visit such a gathering with a sense of the presence of God that anything that needs to be done may return to your glory and your name be heralded and highlighted before the eyes of men remember our nation and all who govern us in it be a God to them also that they may turn from the foolishness of their ways the wisdom of man is clearly not what it should be may they instead discover what it is to come face to face with the wisdom of

[16 : 51] God and the passion of Jesus Christ remember our King and his family again we pray for life to be imparted to him that he may understand that while there are faiths and there are religions in the world that there is but one God the only living and true God and the faith that is necessary for the salvation of souls must be fixed upon you the God who has made provision of a saviour in Christ without him we can do nothing and we pray for wisdom to be imparted to all such who believe otherwise grant mercy for our sins grant blessing upon the singing of your praises the one who leads us and as we join together may our voices be one in the praise of your name cleanse from sin in

Jesus name we ask it amen let us again sing to God's praise this time from psalm 89 psalm 89 and we're singing from verse 7 psalm 89 at verse 7 great fear in meeting of the saints is due unto the Lord and he of all about them should with reverence be adored O thou that art the Lord of hosts what Lord in mightiness is like to thee who camp us round art with thy faithfulness even in the raging of the sea thou over it dost rain and when the waves thereof do swell thou stillest them again Rahab in pieces thou didst break like one that slaughtered is and with thy mighty arm thou hast dispersed thine enemies the heavens are thine thou for thine own the earth dost also take the world and fullness of the same thy power didst found and make the north and south from thee alone their first beginning had both both tabernacle mount and helm on hill shall in thy name be glad these verses great fear in meeting of the saints the steward to the lord ■ aopard and

O thou, thou darest, Lord of hosts, one Lord in mighty hand, is like to thee, O thou, our great life is whole, and even in the raging of the sea, the Lord is the king, and when the winds of all is well, the stillest end of the end.

Rehab in his loudest way, like one of slaughtered, and with thy mighty hour, the lost is there as I am.

Rehab in his loudest way, O thou, our great life is whole, and thy heart is the one of my greats.

[22 : 26] In our lands of Rome, the Lord, let words begin in the light, O devour We can hear God's word as we have it in the New Testament scripture.

Paul's epistle to the Romans. And we're going to read chapter 9. Romans chapter 9. We'll read the whole chapter.

I say the truth in Christ. I lie not. My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren. My kinsmen according to the flesh. Who are Israelites.

To whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants. And the giving of the law. And the service of God. And the promises.

[24 : 06] Who are the fathers and of whom as concerning the flesh. Christ came. Who is over all. God blesseth forever. Amen.

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children.

But in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is that which. They which are the children of the flesh. These are not the children of God.

But the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come. And Sarah shall have a son.

And not only this. But when Rebecca also had conceived by one. Even by her father Isaac. For the children being not yet born.

[25 : 02] Neither having done any good or evil. That the purpose of God according to election might stand. Not of works but of him that calleth. It was said unto her.

The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written. Jacob have I loved. But he so have I hated. What shall we say then?

Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses. I will have mercy on whom. I will have mercy. And I will have compassion on whom.

I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth. Not of him that runneth. But of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh.

Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up. That I might show my power in thee. And that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy.

[26 : 03] And whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me. Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Nay but, O man. Who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it?

Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay? Of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?

What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?

That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had aforeprepared unto glory. Even us whom he hath called.

[27 : 01] Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he saith also in Hosea. I will call them my people, which were not my people.

And her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them. Ye are not my people. There shall they be called the children of the living God.

Messiah also crieth concerning Israel. Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness. Because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, except the Lord of Zabobah had left us a seed, we had been a Sodomah and been made like unto Gomorrah.

For shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not of the righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

[28 : 13] But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written, Behold, I lay and sigh on a stumbling stone and rock of offense. And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to a reading of his word. And in his name be the praise. Let us sing on to God's praise.

This time from Psalm 32. Psalm 32. And we're singing from verse 3 to the double verse marked 6. Psalm 32.

When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my turn, my bones then walked stalled, because I roared all day long.

[29 : 25] For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie, so that my moisture turned days in summer's drought thereby. I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, and likewise mine iniquity I have not covered.

I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, said I, and of my sin thou freely didst forgive the iniquity. For this shall every godly one his prayer make to thee.

In such a time he shall thee seek, as found thou mayst be. Surely when floods of waters great do swell up to the brim, they shall not overwhelm his soul, nor once come near to him.

Let us sing these verses, Psalm 32 from verse 3. When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my turn.

When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then walked stalled me for.

[30 : 53] I wrote it all year long. For upon me both day and night, thy hand did heavy lie, so that my heart was my soul, and I was my soul.

My morning's good for the day and summer's love there lie.

I there upon the day and night, thy heart was my love there.

I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, said I, and of my sin thou freely didst.

For this shall every godly one his prayer make to thee.

[33 : 08] And such a time his holy sea has found the day and day.

To swell up to the brim, this shall not overwhelm his soul, nor once come near to him. This shall not overwhelm his soul, nor once come near to him. I love you, this shall not overwhelm his soul, nor once come near to him. This shall not overwhelm his soul, nor once come near to him.

And such a time his soul, nor once come near to him. over where there is no one come near to him. nor one come near to him. nor one come near to him. nor one come near to him.

we turn once again. we turn once again to the passage of the scripture that we were reading together.

Paul's epistle to the Romans on chapter 9. We can read at verse 30. Romans chapter 9, verse 30.

[34 : 36] What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

The apostle Paul, as you know, is a Christian. He's a Christian who is a converted Jew.

[35 : 53] And he does not hide his fact. And he makes, I would say, that something that is a driving force behind his preaching often.

Part of the reason for the burden that he carries is the fact that this is the race that he belongs to.

In the following chapter, chapter 10, he says, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that they have a seal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

And he continues, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. At the beginning of chapter 9, we have the same acknowledgement of a heart's desire expressed before God and before men, that he desires this people to know Christ for themselves.

[37 : 34] I say the truth in Christ, I lie not. My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

And this is the part that's difficult for many to believe. That he could actually say this and mean it. I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

How could anyone understand what a lost eternity is all about? Consciously say that they would rather embrace that if they thought that their kinsmen would experience salvation.

Do not think that that is going beyond any intellectual grasp of what lostness involves.

And yet it appears on the face of it anyway. I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

[38 : 54] But I think it demonstrates the heartfelt desire that is his for the salvation of sinners. Perhaps you who are a convert might understand something of that.

The desire that you have that others would embrace Christ Jesus as their saviour. Maybe the language is extreme, but I think it describes to us what motivates this man of God to endure much in the name of Christ.

In the promotion of the gospel, the proclamation of the truth as it concerns Christ. But he understands the privileged people that he once belonged to.

And the privileges themselves were something that were a deceit in many respects for many. They thought that the privileges meant that they were free from condemnation.

If you read verse 4, we read there, Who are Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises, Whose are the fathers and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever.

[40 : 35] All of these things speak of a people who are exceptionally favoured in the goodness of God.

But the problem is that they mistook in that favoured position to be a sure harbinger of salvation for them.

That that was all that needed to be true of them. But Paul describes not only the privileges that they have, but their true condition by nature.

And that is that they have rejected God. And God has rejected them. They rejected Christ.

And because they rejected Christ, God would ultimately reject them. Some would argue that that seems to nullify the covenant promises that God made concerning a people that would be a good one.

[41 : 46] A people that would bear his name. But the original covenant promises remained the same. The promises were conditional upon obedience.

And they were directed to all who would hear the gospel and believe in it. And only the reality of the election of God ensured that such a belief would actually come into being.

And to be. The writer Charles Hodge says of the Jews that the way Paul speaks of them here reminds us that God is at liberty to select the objects of his mercy indiscriminately.

He is at liberty to select the objects of his mercy indiscriminately. From amongst the Jews or from amongst the Gentiles.

Because he is the author of salvation. And they want us to look at the passage before us very briefly and very simply.

[43 : 01] And we see a division made by the apostle. And what lies at the heart of that division. We see a description given to us of a people who are demonstrating where they are at with regard to salvation.

By reason of their relationship or lack of it to the person of Jesus Christ. And similarly the exact opposite of that.

Those who are of the faith have a relationship with Christ that is demonstrated by the way that they have put their trust in him.

Now just as in the morning we saw the word of God was used as the basis for the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the apostle Paul similarly applies to the scriptures of the Old Testament. To witness and to bear testimony to the truth that is concerned here.

[44 : 25] The rejection of Christ by the Jews is a rejection that will result in their rejection. And the reason for it is entirely to do with the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two distinct passages. Both coming from the prophecies of Isaiah. The first in chapter 8 and verse 14.

And the second from chapter 28 and verse 16. The way the apostle uses them. He takes the truth and he marries the truth from both passages together.

To undergird the teaching that he wishes to bring to bear upon the hearts and the minds of those who are reading this epistle.

In Isaiah chapter 8 we read. He shall be for a sanctuary. But for a stone of stumbling. And for a rock of offence.

[45 : 36] To both the houses of Israel. For a dune and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These are the words of verse 14 in chapter 8.

And then in Isaiah 28. And then in Isaiah 28. Therefore thus saith the Lord God. Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation stone. A tried stone.

A precious cornerstone. A sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste. Coincidentally the apostle Peter also applies to these teachings of the Old Testament prophet.

And he applies them to his own context as he preaches and teaches the generation that he is ministering to.

In Isaiah 28. In Isaiah 28. What we are reminded of is this. That there is always a divided opinion about God.

[46 : 41] A divided opinion about the Son of God. As to who he is and what he is about. And that opinion will itself result in a division.

To some as you will understand. The person of God is a person like no other. He is a God who is holy.

He is a God who is high and lifted up. He is a God who is to be worshipped. A God who is to be served. A God who is to be followed. A God who is to be followed.

And for others. That truth. Is not applied. They do not. Believe God to be as holy as God says.

They do not believe God is to be obeyed. As strictly as he is to be obeyed. They pick and choose what word to apply to their own behaviour.

- [47 : 47] And so on. The word of God tells us about this God. That there is a division.
- In the opinion people shared with regard to God. God. And in the prophet Isaiah's day. He was speaking to a people.
- Who had dispensed with God. Many of them at least. They chose other gods. Or they followed paths and courses. That were not ordained by God.
- And then in chapter 28. God's promise. God's promise. God's promise. The■■■■ in the Lord.
- Is a promise. It's a promise. It's a promise. His promise. It's a promise. How to move. It's a promise. It's a promise. The promise.
- [48 : 46] If you're not contains. Because of your righteousness. The source. And being Ev czyliVe. to whom they can turn in the face of all kinds of enmity.
- And yet, there are others who dispense with such promises of God. The unbeliever is someone who pays no heed to what God has done, no heed to what his ways are, no heed to the promises that he gives concerning his own provision.
- Even as we looked at the words of the Lord Jesus today, as he quoted from Isaiah, and he preached the words of Isaiah to others, the truth that he expounded in the same way that Paul expounds the truth, the same way that Peter expounds the same truth, that truth is neutered by them.
- It is nullified by them, because they are of the conviction. And it is a conviction that is so difficult for a person to shake, that they need to resort outside of themselves to avail themselves of salvation.
- I am not sure which one of the Puritans was saying, explaining the stance of the children of men throughout the ages, has all to do with being under the covenant of works initially.
- [50 : 26] that that is so deeply ingrained in a person, that they cannot shake it off, that they believe that it is by their own endeavours, by their own good works, by their own solutions to problems that confront them, that they will achieve salvation.
- salvation. And yet, as is often pointed out, such thinking is at odds with the thinking that God sets before us in his word.
- Salvation in our own strength, by our own works, on the basis of our own worthiness, can only conclude in the perverse spirit of self-righteousness that will ultimately bring shame to our faces.
- And this is what Paul is confronted with here. He is confronted with a nation that he desires to see, embrace the provision of God in Christ Jesus, but he sees in them a people who are intent upon securing salvation by their own endeavours.
- To find out that this is not what God is looking for, is a stumbling stone to many, a rock of offence. And is it not the hardest of truths to accept that your best is not good enough?
- [52 : 13] That's something that's so difficult for man to agree to, because inevitably, we compare ourselves to others, and there are always others who are worse than ourselves.
- And if we are slightly better, or perhaps in our own eyes, a great deal better than they are, then God surely owes us something.
- But it is wrong thinking, and it is perverse thinking, and as far as God is concerned, any person who continues in that vein of thought will suffer because of it.
- And here, it seems that when you see what Paul's argument is, he says, what shall we say then, that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.
- Can you not see in that, somebody, you see, it's not fair. It's not fair. We Jews have lived according to the scripture.

[53 : 36] We Jews have taken on board the standards that God has set out for us, and we've applied ourselves diligently to them.

We've lived by them, and surely because of the knowledge that we have and the awareness that we have, however short we might come occasionally, however we may appear not to live up to them completely, surely compared to those who have no such knowledge of God or the moral law or the standards that God has set before us, surely we deserve more than they.

and yet the apostle is saying the righteousness of the Gentiles, not every Gentile, but the Gentiles that have embraced by faith Jesus Christ, that is the righteousness that God looks to, not the self-righteousness of the Jew that does not acknowledge Christ who is God's provision.

and that's the obvious of the argument that Paul is making. He is reminding us of this, that the true believer in Christ is not someone who will rely on anything that they themselves are able to provide by way of suggesting that they have done something that is pleasing to God.

Their relationship with Him shows their delight is in Him. Not in their own doing, not in their own saying, not in their own path, but on, they are focused upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[55 : 36] They believe in Him, they rest upon His finished work for their salvation. They trust in His finished work for salvation. And they have no desire, well, maybe, they should have no desire to embellish what Christ has done for them, to improve upon it, or to make out that there is something that they have done that Christ would expect from them, so that what He has done would be more, a better work than He had done.

If you are a believer in Christ, it is your knowledge of Him as the provision that God has supplied for the salvation of your soul, for dealing with your sin, for blotting out the iniquity that marshaled your experience of life.

You can do nothing, and you need Christ, and you need to understand that, and that is what is true of the believer, that our inability confronts us, our standing before God is, is of somebody who is devoid of strength, sufficient to lift our head above the ground where we find ourselves because of our sin.

The morass of sin that besets us is before us always, and not one of us can raise ourselves up beyond that, except with God's help.

and the spirit of the world, you understand that because it once dominated your own thinking, you know that the spirit of the world dismisses that, and you were once dominated by it, you were once persuaded by it, but this is something that God has enabled you to discover as being a fraudulent understanding, of your true standing in his sight.

[58 : 00] It's interesting when you go to the cross, you go to the Bible, and the Bible in prophecy describes to you the experiences of our Lord on the cross.

Psalms 22 tells us something of the sufferings of Christ. One of the experiences which we believe, was part and parcel of his sufferings, that they cast up into his face his relationship with God, that it wasn't what it should be.

This man, they said, to trust in God, that he would free him by his might, let him deliver him, since he had in him such delight.

God, it was as if they were pointing the finger at Christ and saying, well, he made out that he had this relationship with God, and that God was his redeemer, and that God would deliver him.

where is that God now? The very thing that was true, they poured scorn on him as if it was not. The Lord's people, the truth concerning them is this, they will never have sorrow, or feel sorrow, for having trusted in Christ as their savior.

[59 : 32] Because as Christ reminded us in the passages that he referred to the place that God gave to him as the anointed of God, as the Messiah of God, it was in order to save the lost.

And here the apostle directs us to the same scripture, and tells us this Christ is your safety, he is your savior, he is your rock, he is the one upon whom you can rest, and in whom you can find shelter.

I was reading in the afternoon the words of Jesus spoke to the apostle Peter, words that are often misrepresented, especially by a counterfeit church, where it says, upon this rock I will build my church, and then it says the gates of hell will not prevail against it, and this is the rock, Christ is the rock, rock, he builds his church upon this rock, and this rock is a secure rock, it is a fixed rock, it is a rock that is the safe haven of God's people, and this is what they believe, this is the truth that they have entrusted the salvation of their souls to, unlike those who did not.

By faith they take this truth to be their truth, in comparison or in contrast with those who sought it not by faith, who sought not salvation by faith, but by works.

They stumbled at the stumbling stone, Paul says, and is that not the truth? Christ alone is the saviour to sinners, and he saves entirely, he saves to the uttermost.

[61 : 54] There is nothing that he has left to chance, there is nothing he has left to the sinner to do for their salvation, but this is a stumbling block to the unbeliever.

Bishop Ryan, speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ and speaking about it in the context of his own experience of the church, he says, Christ, he says, is the great architect of the church.

He is the one that guides and directs all that is done within it, all that is done by it. His ministers are there at his calling, and then he points to Paul, whom he planted, that Apollos may water, and he says, Christ alone gives the increase.

Ministers preach, writers write, Ryan says, but the Lord Jesus alone can build. And that is something that faith latches onto, that is something that faith grasps, that is something that faith must continue to lay hold of.

You know, in a day when we see the church diminishing in size by all accounts, the power of God in abeyance, the mercy of God hidden from sight, and we think the only response to that is by me doing more, or by you doing more, or by some other means, but God alone is the author and finisher of our faith.

[63 : 45] Christ alone is the security that belongs to his people, and upon him, and him alone they rest.

In all the storms of life, this is where the believer finds comfort and succor. looking out of the window of my family home in Shaw post, you look down onto the beach and if you grew up in that region, you would know that in front there is a bay and it is a safe bay for bathers, it's a sandy beach and you can walk out and the sand is firm under your feet and the tide is always benign.

those who have lived there will look out and in the bay what they see is a reef and the reef is hidden from sight.

But those who read the tide and see the tide they will see that at times of storm it's almost as if a white line is dragged across the bay there and it forms around the reef and the reef is something if you know the area you will steer clear of it.

People do not understand that where Christ is concerned as the rock of salvation he is a safe haven for all who know him to be God's saviour to be God's provision he is the one to whom you can go and in whom you find relief and shelter but the same rock is the rock by which the sinner is condemned the sinner that refuses to put their trust in him instead of it being a safe haven and a shelter it is the place where their very existence will be shivreck and they will suffer there are many illustrations in the scripture to us of the same Christ held out to the sinner as a saviour and he becomes their saviour by reason of their faith in him their trust in him the same

[66 : 31] Christ rejected and turned away from is the same Christ who will condemn at the last and that is what Paul holds out to us here he describes to us from the words of the prophet how the two people exist side by side in the world some who believe God's word some who believe God's promises provision and trust in it and some who choose not to who choose to trust in their own devices trust in their own ways thinking that salvation will be secured by their own endeavours that is not God's way behold he says I lay in Zion as a stumbling stone and a rock of offence and yet he says that stumbling stone and rock of offence he says whoever whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed and that is that is the the gospel for us believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of your soul the believer is not someone who would be ashamed of that saviour nor should they be and the unbeliever will be one who will have eternal shame and damnation upon their heads because they did not believe in that Christly display O Lord our God as we come before you in this act of worship we give thanks that the only one worthy of receiving your worship is the Christ of whom your word speaks we we give thanks for the attractiveness that belongs to him in the eyes of your people that they see in him beauty like no other whereas there are those perhaps sitting beside us who see no beauty in him or anything in him that would cause us to decide may we understand the need that there is for faith the need that there is for the grace of God that passes all understanding to be imparted to us that we may surrender all and trust in him for the salvation of our souls cleansed from sin we pray in Jesus name

Amen I'm going to conclude singing from Psalm 118 Psalm 118 and verse 17 down to verse 23 I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover the Lord hath me chastised its sword but not to death given over O said he open unto me the gates of righteousness then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless this is the gate of God by it the just shall enter in thee will I praise for thou me herds and hast my safety been that stone is made head cornerstone which builders did despise this is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes these verses I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover I shall die but live and shall the works of

God is ever the Lord have Can can Zu who O Lord, O send ye open unto me the gifts of righteousness, then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God by it, that God shall enter in.

[71 : 47] The with thy praise for the me, and has my safety been.

That stone is made, and for the stone, with mellum in his light.

This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.

Amen. May grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.