

Better to be at home with the Lord

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[0 : 00] We're going to sing now some verses from Psalm 68, Psalm 68 at verse 18.

Psalm 68 at verse 18. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious led captivity.

Thou hast received gifts for men, for such as did rebel, yea, even for them, that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell.

Blessed be the Lord who is to us of our salvation God, who daily with his benefits us plenteously doth load. He of salvation is to God who is our God most strong, and unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong.

We'll sing these verses, Psalm 68 from verse 18. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, And today, a victorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious led.

[1 : 44] Captive, captivity, the earth has received gifts for men, for such as to prepare.

Male dafür, the earth, O Lord, most hein■■■py, tall joyside the earth, In■■ch's leadership, follow great, and not only a■■■■■ who is our God but theood. Pray,■■■■ welcome, please■■y'ti Hopkinsultural one o'er, extend up on high, and part of goal plastic that is made use of the truth.

God bless you.

He will this benefits us thank you to the Lord.

The observation is a God who is a God most strong And to God the Lord from death The Jesus still belong We can turn now for a short while to the passage of the scripture that we read Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians chapter 5 And we can read again at verse 6

[4 : 22] Therefore we are always confident knowing that Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord For we walk by faith not by sight We are confident I say and willing rather To be absent from the body And to be present with the Lord We know from a reading of this passage that The apostle is delivering an assured statement Of his own awareness of the present realities that affect him But what lies beyond that

He begins with a word that shows us that assurance We know he says that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved We know there is nothing uncertain about the knowledge that he possesses And he also knows that when he dies That that will not be the end of the matter He knows that provision has been made for him And that however the physical body will come to diminish Perhaps enter into decrepitude before the time

That that is not how the murder will end His confidence is based upon What God himself has promised in his word And his acceptance of that Now we know that the apostle at the time that these words are written That they belong in the context of a response to those who are his detractors They despise him And they despise his gospel The gospel that he preaches And they despise everything that they see As being opposed to what they believe And what they trust in And we have to remember that Paul

In a sense has to defend his name Defend that gospel From those who would deny The truth of it But The thing that Is important to Paul Is not what they think But the fact that What he is doing He is doing Before the judgment seat of Christ He goes on to speak of that But That is as it were The thing that is most important To him Whatever people think Whatever Opinions The world may have about him Or his ministry Or anything to do with him The thing that is most important To him Is that he does What he is called to do And declare The gospel of Jesus Christ As the only means of salvation

So there is At the very start Of the chapter This assurance That he has In what Is true of his own ministry And what lies At the end of it He goes on in verse 6 We are always confident He says Knowing that While we are at home in the body We are absent from the Lord We are confident He says in verse 8 I say And willing rather To be absent From the body And to be present From the Lord We can Dismiss from our thinking I would say That Paul's Incessance Or Paul's confidence Is Attributed to anything That is to do With himself It is Entirely to do

[9 : 33] With the confidence That he has placed in God So I want us to think About the words That we have here First of all Remove from our thinking Any false notion That we may have Of a confidence That is Other than Placed In the right way Or Upon the right Premise Paul's confidence Is Entirely Placed Upon a sure Foundation The second thing He states A certain truth In two different ways First of all As we see in Verse 6 He says We are confident Knowing that While we are at home In the body We are absent From the Lord And The Other The obvious Of that Or the What comes

As a As a truth That must Accompany that We are willing Rather to be Absent from the body And to be present With the Lord So Paul understands That That in the first Instance That While he Is living In this world That it means For him And for everybody Else Who believes The same truth As he does That it means For them That they are Separated From the Lord And When Death intervenes That he understands That To be absent For the body For him Will mean That he is going To be With the Lord And that's His understanding And we'll Say something About The way that He said that Before us Here And the third

Thing we have Is A clear A clear Understanding That what He believes And what He says Is based On his Trust in The Lord Jesus Christ Because he Says There's a Sort of Parenthesis Which is Sandwiched Between these Two thoughts We walk By faith And not By sight This is why I am able To say this I am not Placing my Confidence On any Other Thing But that I have Complete Another Trust in Christ My faith Is in The Saviour Christ Jesus So what Does his Confidence Mean What do we Understand by Paul's Confidence Well Clearly We can't We can't Dismiss

Any Thought that We may Have That Paul is Somebody who Is self Confident And there Are many People that We meet In the World And they Are Clearly Quite Self Assured They are Self Confident Because They are Placing their Trust in Material Wealth And Because of Their wealth They are Completely at Ease With Whatever it Is this World Brings That way And that's Probably We often Hear people Say to Us That One of The Problems That The Gospel Has In a Modern Context Is Our Materialism Has Made Us So Full of

Our own Self Confidence And self Assurance That we Don't need To look Beyond Ourselves Unlike A past Generation Which Because They lived In Virtual Poverty That they Could not Rely Upon Their Own Resources So they Had to Turn Elsewhere And Inevitably For them That meant That they Turned Their Face Towards God Now Whether Whether That is Something That you Can Argue As a Reason Why the Gospel Is not As prosperous In our Generation As it Was in Previous Generations It's probably A factor But it's Not the Only Factor I Remember When I Used to Work in The Dealing With People Occasionally And they Were Clearly From a Different Social Strata

[14:38] To Myself And they Knew that And I Knew that And they Treated you Accordingly Very Many Very Often You Met People And they Just Looked Down Their Noses At you And they Ignored You Now Paul Was not Of that ilk And his Confidence Was Nothing Like that Nor was His Confidence The Confidence That is Based Upon His Ability I Don't Know how He was Placed Materially He Probably At one Point in His Life He Was Not In The Lower Strata Of Society He Would Probably Well He Would Be In The Better Off Category But Certainly He Was He Was Unable Person He Had He Had A Powerful Intellect And he Was

Schooled In the Things of God In the Law And so On And again You come Across People And Because Of their Ability They Look Upon Others Who Are Less Gifted In a Way Where They're Looking Down Their Noses At Others And You Could Argue That Paul Was Well Able To Resort To That Kind Of Thinking But It's Not What We Believe That He Places His Confidence In If We Look To The Scripture We Know That Paul At One Point In His Life Was Clearly Putting A Lot Of Stock In His In His Upbringing In His Training Theologically You Go To Philippians And Chapter Three There He

Describes His Pedigree And He Is Somebody Who Was Putting A Lot Of Emphasis On On What He Was By Way Of Of His Bloodline And So On But He Comes To The Stage Where Where He He Is By God's Grace Taken Out Of That Kind Of Environment And He Is Translated From The Kingdom Of Darkness Into The Kingdom Of God's Marvelous Light He Is Made Perfectly Aware Of The Foolishness Of Putting His Putting His Trust In The Arm Of Flesh Because He Knows That That Will Not Suffice So All All of These Things That

Could Possibly Be Reasons For Stating A Confidence In Something They Are Not What Paul Is Trusting In Maybe Maybe You Wouldn't Think Of It Anyway When You Read This Passage But I Think You Have To Take This Into Your Thinking Because There Are Many In This World And That Is The Very Thing That They That They Gravitate Towards With A View To The Future That They Are Putting Their Trust And Confidence In What They Are And What They Possess And Giftings And So On But Paul Is Nothing Like That So When I Was Thinking Of This I Was Thinking Well Paul Was They Suspect That He Was Someone Who Was Small Of Stature And Whether That Is True Or Not I'm

Not Really Sure Whether You Can Argue It From The Scripture But That Didn't Necessarily Mean That Paul Wouldn't Be I Remember Many Occasions Going Going To The City And Especially Glasgow Or Edinburgh You Saw These Diminutive Characters Who Were Four Foot Nothing And Yet They Walked As If They Possessed The World You Know They Were Self Confident And Quite Quite They Believed In Themselves Whatever It Was That Made Them Think Like That They Had No Fear Of Their Fellow Man Or They Portrayed Themselves Like That And That Was These Are Things That Some People Will They Will Either Resort To Or Present As Something In Which They Are Confident In Which They Have Put Their Reliance In Some

[19:39] Way But What We Find Here Is The Thing That Paul Is Confident In It's Not Anything To Do With This World Or Anything That This World Has To Offer It Is Something Completely Different Now There Is A Sense Which We Have To Take With Us In Our Thinking Of What Paul Is Saying As Well When He Is Expressing This Confidence He Is Expressing A Confidence In The Face Of The Kind Of Environment In Which He Has To Live And If You Knew The Kind Of Life Paul Had As I've Said Part Of The Section Of Second Epistle To The Corinthians There Is A Defense Of The

Gospel A Defense Of His Own Apostleship And He Is He Is Constantly Under Threat He Is Victimized He Is Constantly Accused Of Being Something That He Is Not And When You Think Of The Apostle In That Kind Of Setting You Wouldn't Be Surprised If His Groaning And His Grieving And His Sorrow Would Lead Him To Request Or Desire To Be Away From This World And With His Face Firmly Fixed On The World To Come To Get Away From This World To Get Away From The Things That Were So Tiresome But You Have To Understand That The Picture That Is That Paul Portrays Is Not Of A Victim Who Wants To Flee From This World

And The Enemy That Is In It Towards Him But A Picture Of Someone Who Is Going To Something Because Of The Longing That He Has To Embrace What Is Before Him If You Read It Again In Verse Two For In This He Says We Groan Earnestly Deciding To Be Clothed Upon With Our House Which Is From Heaven Again He Says In Verse Four We That Are In This Tabernacle Do Groan Being Burdened He He Is Not Denying The Fact That There Are Trials And Testings For Him In The World But The Burden That He Carries Most Of All Is The Burden That He Has To Be Away From The World To The World To Come To Be To Be With Christ As He Puts It Elsewhere And We'll Quote That Later On

It's Not In A Sense Of Escaping From The World But In Embracing What He Knows To Be Before Him Now That's Important For Us To Recognize That It's Important For Us To Ask Ourselves The Question And I'm Sure Every One Of Us Here Are On Occasion So Fed Up Of This World Perhaps Illness Or Perhaps The Things That Grieve Us In The World Things That Confront Us In The World We Want Away From That But The Abiding Thought That We Have Is Not What We Are Going To But What We Are Leaving Behind

In God In God While We Are Atom In The Body He Says We Are Absent From The Lord Now Paul Attributes This One Thing To One Thing Alone The The Work Of The Holy Spirit You Can Remind Yourself Of Verse Five He That Hath Wrought Us For The Self Same Thing Is God Who Also Has Given Unto Us The Earnest Of The Spirit This Confidence This Awareness This Desire That He Possesses Is His By Virtue Of God Working In Him And Not Only Is It The Result Of The Work Of God In Him It Is Also The Spirit Of God Which Is The Earnest Of The Possession That

[24 : 59] Awaits Him He Is Given This By God Which Is A Foretaste Of What Will Ultimately Be His The Divine Charles Hodge Says This God Has Not Only Prepared Him For Future Glory That's What He Does When A Person Comes To Faith In Jesus Christ The Preparation Begins The Person Who Closes In With Christ And At That Moment The Work Of Sanctification Begins Not Only Are They Definitely Sanctified But They Are Progressively Sanctified Preparing Them For Their Time Their Eternal Destiny But Hodge Goes On But He Has Given Him The Assurance Of A Blessed Immortality Of

Which The Indwelling Of The Spirit Was The Earnest A Foretaste A Pledge Of What He Is Going To Do Go Back To The Very Start Of This Epistle You'll Read In The First Chapter That He Which Establishes Us With You In Christ And Has Anointed Us Is God Who Has Also Sealed Us And Given The Earnest Of The Spirit In Our Hearts This Is What God Has Done And When The Person Who Is In Christ Comes Into The Possession Of That It's Inevitable That Their Thought Thoughts Their Thinking Their Expectations Gravitate Towards Not This World But The World To Come Again If You Look At The Previous Chapter

In Verse Fourteen He Says There We Have Verse Thirteen We Having The Same Spirit Of Faith According As It Is Written I Believed And Therefore Have I Spoken We Also Believe And Therefore Speak Knowing That He Which Raised Up The Lord Jesus Shall Raise Up Us Also By Jesus And Shall Present Us With You He Knows He Is Confident His His God Has To Do With Not A Crucified Christ Who Is Buried And Remains Buried But A Crucified Saviour Who Is Risen From The Dead And I'm Not Sure Which One Of The Commentators Was Talking About The Empowering Of Paul As The Empowering Of Every Christian Being is what gives impetus to our testimony as Christians and which ensures that what we proclaim is a certain awareness and a knowledge of a risen Christ and what that risen Christ not only accomplished but will accomplish yet in our lives.

We are willing, he says, to be absent from the body and present from the Lord. We are willing. As Hodge puts it, it is not, when it comes to death, when it comes to the grave, it's not an object of death, an object of dread.

Death is not an object of dread. Dread for the believer. Because if they understand what the scripture is, if you read what Paul says in the first epistle and chapter 15, he describes there what gives confidence to the believer that the Christ that was buried is risen.

[29 : 05] And he maintains that if he's not risen, then it's just misery. There's no gospel to proclaim. Christ must have risen. And because he is risen, he is assured, he is confident of this.

When we read the words of Paul to the Philippians, there we see his description of what Christ means to him.

And in a sense, it corresponds or it walks alongside what we have here in this chapter. What he is certain of is that when the believer dies, they are instantly, instantly ushered into the presence of Christ without a delay.

Nothing could be plainer as far as the apostle is concerned. And as he says in his epistle to the Philippians, it is better by far.

What he will experience there is better by far than anything that he will have in this world. But he says he understands. And I suppose this is the difference between, you know, there are many sects, there are many religions, and they present the notion of death as being triumphal, and ushering the person into some kind of higher sphere of service or status, as if it was something that was a badge of honour for them.

[30 : 55] That's not the way Paul treats it. He understands the awfulness of death. He understands the gruesomeness of death.

But his triumphalism has to do with the victory that is secured for the believer by Christ Jesus the Lord.

He says in verse 7, we walk by faith, not by sight, and we believe the promise, articulated in the larger catechism in these words.

Immediately at death, the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue, united to Christ, and so on.

That's what Paul believes. That's where his confidence lies. He knows that while he lives in his body, that means for him to be separated from Christ.

[32 : 09] When he dies, it means for him to be with Christ. And as he says elsewhere, for him that is far better.

It is something that he longs. Paul does not doubt what awaits for him. But he is trusting in God that while he has to live in this world, then that God will be with him in this world.

And for as long as he has to be in this world, and I suppose that's the key for every Christian, that we always need to ask ourselves the question, what is our longing for glory?

What is it made up of? What does it say about us? I think the Christian preacher, Jonathan Edwards, he saw the believer who was contented in this world as someone who, on a journey to a destination, stopped off at an inn, or a hotel, shall we say, and who was happy to stay in that inn without any further desire to go on to where he was going to begin with.

The believer is someone who has set out on that journey. And that journey is glory. That journey is to be with Christ, which is far better. And, we have to, I suppose, ask ourselves the question, where are we in relation to our thinking?

[34 : 01] Are we like Paul? Is our confidence, are we so earthbound in our thinking? Are we so time-bound in our thinking? Are we so materialistic in our thinking, that we're not really often thinking about heaven or glory or what awaits?

I think it's R.C. Sproul that was talking about his own grandmother, who was a Christian lady. And he was speaking to her, and she was in her 80s.

And he said, on one occasion, I could see clearly someone who, who were wanting away from this world, but not because of anything the world held for her, but that she felt herself to be kept back from what the world to come held out for her.

Her tears were not tears because her body was aching or she was grieving for anything that was in the world. Her greatest sorrow was that she wasn't getting to be with Christ.

And that is, I think, what distinguishes the apostle here. His confidence is based upon a truth that God has made known to him and he's content with that knowledge, knowing that that what awaits him is sure and certain.

[35 : 40] Well, these are thoughts, just simple thoughts, and each one of us can assess them for ourselves. What kind of thoughts do we have with regard to our heavenly destination, if that indeed is what our destination is?

how do we think about it? How often do we think about it? When do we think about it? What are the circumstances that prompt these thoughts?

Paul clearly had a desire to be with his Lord and Saviour where he promised to take him to be with himself.

Well, may he bless to us these few thoughts. Let us pray. Lord, help us to understand that there are subtle differences between what is a burning desire to be with the Lord for the right reason and for what is clearly not a reason that you hold out to us for which we should seek to be away from this world.

There are many who have left this world hurriedly because the reasoning was wrong and the reasoning was perverse and while we understand that circumstances may create such a situation we need to understand that your word tells us that for the believer in Christ the God of heaven who has ordered those steps ensures that we understand that for as long as we are in this world we are separated from Christ in a physical sense because by his spirit he is in the world but bodily he is at the right hand of glory and his people will be taken to be with him at death and we give thanks that that is assurance that your word gives to us may we have that confidence that the apostle had and understanding that no matter what no matter how selfish this world is in trying to deny us these thoughts and the truth of them that we would believe your word before any other and we pray your blessing upon those who are yearning for glory yearning to be with the

[38 : 34] Lord for all the right reasons that you have captured their heart and laid them captive to the desire to be with the Lord which is far better hear us and pardon us every sin in Jesus name amen we're going to finish our service singing in garble from psalm 16 the last two verses of the psalm psalm 16 explodes' k imagine O■ ■ ■

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.