

# You must be Converted

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[ 0 : 00 ] I come to our service this morning as we come before God in worship we pray that his blessing would be upon his word. We shall begin by singing from Psalm 19. Psalm 19 and we're singing from the beginning of the Psalm to verse 8. First six stanzas of the Psalm. Psalm 19. The heavens God's glory do declare, their skies his handworks preach, day that their speech today and night to night doth knowledge teach. There is no speech nor tongue to which their voice doth not extend. Their line is gone through all the earth, their words to the world's end. In them he set the sun at home, who bridegroom like forthgoes. From his chamber as a strong man doth to run his race rejoice. From heaven's end is his going forth, circling to the end again. And there is nothing from his heat that hidden doth remain. God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin at last. God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice the heart. The Lord's command is pure and doth light to the eyes impart. So on. First six stanzas of Psalm 19. The heavens God's glory do the heavens God's glory do declare, the skies his handworks preach. The heavens God's glory do gring, the skies his handworks preach. The heavens God's glory do the heavens God's glory do the heavens. The heavens God at best that nobody'supa and who shirt do the heavens sing. They are ukiskt nh part and boys do the heavens female battle that earth, so on. First six stanzas of Psalm 19. The heavens God, wherever the heavens 32 hah

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

[ 4 : 32 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. The Lord's heart is pure under Light to the eyes and heart Let's join together in prayer.

Let's pray. Ever blessed God as we gather in your presence enable us to be attentive to your voice for your voice is to be heard in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as one of all described that these are the very lips of God and we acknowledge that when you speak we do well to heed your voice.

There are many of us who have a special affection and inclination towards the voice of those that we love.

We recognise these voices in our home settings and even were we to be separated from that environment and placed within a setting where there were many other voices heard even if we heard that voice that we are recognising as the voice that we are drawn to and drawn by we would incline towards it even in a cacophony of noises and we give thanks for the people that heed the word of God and hear the word of God distinct from and superior to any and all other voices that seek to draw our attention even our affection help us to understand that when you speak to us you are speaking wisely because you are the only wise God that you are speaking wisdom into the context of our everyday living whatever our circumstance may be whatever our situations may be there is wisdom behind the word that is able to direct our footsteps and able to give to us a measure of understanding even when we are confronted by the most perplexing of situations we pray for that help that every one of us needs to live in this world that is openly hostile to God we acknowledge the fact that there are many ways in which we too were guilty of such a hostility even though it might not have been open it could well have been overt in our desire to to rather than hear your voice and to listen to what you had to say to us we chose to listen to the voice of our heart which at times was a voice that was leading us astray help us to appreciate the fact that you have an awareness of how we live our life here in this world you created us and as such you have the the knowledge of us that only the creator can have when we think of the many experts that live in this world who have the power of origins of so many devices and so many creations creations that owe their origin to their handwork and their leading in creating these things their expert knowledge because they are the creator of these things is much sought after and their understanding is without equal but so it must be with regard to the God of this world the God of the universe the God

[10:02] who is creator of heaven and earth the God that we were singing about who has sent his ambassadors to speak to us of your handiwork the skies that teach us the heavens that declare your handiworks whether it is the sun the moon the stars whether it is the ocean or the earth beneath our feet its creatures all testify to a God who is God over all may we pay homage to you today even as we worship remember the world in which we live where there is so much sorrow and sadness so much wanton destruction carried out by the hand of one of your creatures we remember the parts of the world that have much cause for sorrow and we despair at what we see and what we hear of we have heart sore and we acknowledge that when we hear and see what is done by the hand of those that are our peers we are so despairing of anything ever remedying that which is wrought by their hand we think of Ukraine we think of those who have to live in that theatre of war those who have been displaced those who have suffered the loss of loved ones we think of other places where similar atrocities are carried out perhaps unbeknown to many we think of that nation of America where once again destruction wanton the awful almost incomprehensible act done by one individual against innocent young people in Texas we think of that place and this grief that is almost unimaginable we cannot fathom how when such a thing can be averted by the creation of laws that would prevent such an ability to be in the hands of those who perhaps are suffering themselves from an illness that is immeasurably difficult to understand we grieve and we sorrow but the unwillingness there is in the part of some to do anything to avert these dangers that exist we pray we pray for this world we pray for your spirit to be poured out upon it that the gospel of your grace would have free rain and that those who proclaim it would do so trusting in

Christ to empower them so that the seed soul would not fall on ground that would swallow it up with the thorns and the nettles that strangle the growth at inception we pray for the fowls of the air even the beasts of hell itself that are ravaging the earth that it would be prevented from frustrating the purpose of God in bringing men and women young and old to know Christ we pray Lord that you would water from on high the seed that is sown even in this place so that those who hear the invitation that is extended in the gospel would truly hear and believe that what is offered in Christ is desirable above all of earth treasure for those who have

Christ have the pearl of great price and those who have Christ will not be taken from him nor he from them and we bless you and thank thee that you are a God who is faithful to every promise that you make unlike us you may promise many things and some of the promises that we make we are unable to keep them and sometimes we are even unwilling to keep them but there is not one promise that we find within the word of truth that you have extended to us and they are many but not only are you willing but able to keep them and fulfil them as they are all yea and amen in Christ bless our congregation we pray bless all who form part of it young and old we pray for our Sunday school we pray for those who lead it we pray for the parents of the children who are taught there may they be confident that what they are taught is healthy and wholesome and soul satisfying and that it is preparatory to their children taking that place in this world that is so hostile to the good things and to the perfect things that you have ordained we pray for those amongst us who are unwell we remember them to you and pray for their healing we pray for those for whom there is no possibility of healing that they might have grace to continue before you and rest upon your ever powerful arms we pray for the grieving and the sorrowful as their hearts are aching with the sense of loss that they must endure us almost from time to time that they may have wisdom to look to the one who is the prince of life who has ordained life without end for all who would put their trust in him hear your prayers and bless your word to us we ask cleanse from sin in

Jesus name amen we're going to hear God's word from the book of the Acts of the Apostles and we're reading from chapter 13 the book of the Acts of the Apostles chapter 13 and we can read from the beginning down to verse 12 now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers as Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaean which had been brought up with Herod Tethar and Saul as they ministered to the Lord and fasted the Holy Ghost said separate me

Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them and when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away so they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed unto Seleucia from thence they sailed to Cyprus and when they were at Salamis they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews and they had also drawn to their minister and when they had gone through the Isles and to Paphos they found a certain sorcerer a false prophet a Jew whose name was Bar Jesus which was with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus a prudent man who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God but Elimas the sorcerer for this soul is his name by interpretation withstood them seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith then

[19:09] Saul who was also called Paul filled with the Holy Ghost set his eyes on him and said O fool of all subtlety and all mischief thou child of the devil thou enemy of all righteousness wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord and now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind not seeing the sun for a season and immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand ■ and men of year and boys and girls

Before you go out to Sunday school, just a quick word with you. Some of you will know that this week I was... Some people believe it was on a holiday.

But if anybody wants to go on this holiday, just let me know and I'll put your name down for next year. But it's a privilege to be back in Edinburgh where I used to study and meet with many of my colleagues and friends in the ministry, many elders that I have known over the years.

It's really nice to meet up with them and to hear how they're getting on in their own ministry, in their own congregations.

And you learn a lot from listening to what they have to say. And it's a privilege to be with them. But some of you will know that where we meet, we meet in a place called the Assembly Hall.

[ 21 : 18 ] It's a simple name given to it because it's where the General Assembly meets. But it's really a church, a church called... Well, that meets in Johnston Terrace.

And it's called St. Columbus Free Church. And the deacon's court of that congregation allow the churches of the Free Church to meet there for one week of the year.

And it's based in a very central location, a very important location. It's based at the top of what is called the Royal Mile.

It's a very important part of Edinburgh. It's a very important part of Edinburgh. It's about one minute's walk from Edinburgh Castle.

And you just come out of the Assembly Hall and turn left, cross the road and you're in the castle forecourt. And if you look down, just as I'm looking down the passage here, you'll see what is called the Royal Mile.

[ 22 : 26 ] And the Royal Mile goes from the castle down to what is called Holyrood House Palace. Now, that is the residence over 500 years, I think, of the Queen or the King of the day.

That's where they usually stay if they're staying at Edinburgh. So, it's a very famous mile. And I'm sure if you've been to Edinburgh, you would have tried to walk down that mile.

You can't do it in a straight line because at this time of year, it's in fact all year round, it's full of visitors and tourists from all over the world. But it's still a famous mile.

And the reason I'm mentioning it today is because in many ways, because of its history, I think when you walk down that street, you're reminded of things that happened many years ago or people that lived many years ago.

And you think of today and what we're seeing today and hearing today and experiencing today. And for me, in a way, it fills me with great sadness because of the fact that almost every corner you come to, it reminds you of the Christian history of Scotland.

[ 23 : 58 ] It reminds you of some of the names that are associated with that Christian history. And you see today, well, I feel, this is my own personal thing, that there is so little evidence of that history influencing the thinking of this current generation.

Certainly not within our parliament. And the sad thing, I suppose, is that if you walk down the Royal Mile and you come to Holyrood House Palace, just alongside it is the Scottish Parliament.

And I think I would advise any parliamentarian to take a walk in reverse up the Royal Mile and see if they're reminded of anything of the history of this nation of ours.

You'll see the house of John Knox, for example. You'll see the church that John Knox preached in, the most famous preacher of the 15th century. And all of these things speak of the history, the Christian history of this church, of this country.

And we have to ask ourselves, why has that not remained? What has happened? And one of the things that I heard at the assembly, and which is becoming more and more commonplace, is to hear that when I became a Christian so many years ago, the church was, at that time, sending missionaries out all over the world.

[ 25 : 51 ] But with the passage of time, in a very short space of time, the number of missionaries the church, the free church, was sending out became less and less.

And now what we're beginning to see and hear is that other countries to which our church was sending missionaries so many years ago, are now the churches that are sending missionaries to Scotland.

Would you believe that? That's the way it is. Other churches in parts of the world that were once the places that missionaries were going to, to tell them about Jesus, are now the churches that are sending missionaries to Scotland, to tell the people of Scotland about Jesus.

Maybe you don't believe me. But that's the way it is. Because there are so few true believing Christian people in Scotland now, who have no time for the Gospel, no time for the Bible, no time for Jesus.

And that's very sad. I hope that you're not like that. I don't believe you are. But it can quite easily be the case that if God doesn't arrest the trajectory, the direction we're going in as a nation, that even the way we frowned on nations who prevented missionaries coming into the country, from other countries, that we might be one of them who would resist the mission of the church to our people, because we see it as a threat.

[ 27 : 39 ] I hope that will never happen. But we pray that God will reverse things, and we'll see once again the Gospel of Jesus prosper in the heavens.

We're going to sing now from Psalm 14. Psalm 14, and we're singing the whole psalm. Psalm 14, and we're singing the whole psalm.

These workers of iniquity do they not know at all, that they might people eat as bread, and on God do not call. There fear they much, for God is with the whole race of the just.

You shame the counsel of the poor, because God is his trust. Let Israel's help from Zion come. When back the Lord shall bring his captives, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall sing.

Psalm 14, the whole psalm, that there is not a God, the fool that in his heart concludes. But there is no one, the Lord of the poor, God in his heart they are ■■■ for a man, o'er God.

[ 29 : 43 ] They are one, they are one, one, and the good. Upon men Sons of the Lord for help If Thou states are abroad To see if any one deserves And if Thou states are abroad They all do care for the Lord They all ask Thou states are abroad

And there is none other good Yes, sure there is no one These workers of liberty Here they don't know I love But if I be found in the threat And on God to long hold That fear they must guard

Is with the whole grace All that I've done You should not come And on God to long hold Let Israel have the whole time And on God to long hold When the Lord shall reign His blood of God With the whole joy And Israel shall reign

I'd like us to turn now to Acts chapter 13 And we can read at verse 12 And the deputy And the deputy, when he saw what was done Believed, being astonished At the doctrine of the Lord Sometimes when I'm preaching I'll begin Some of you will have loved us With a question I don't expect you to answer the question But I'll ask it anyway And I don't know what I would do

If after asking the question Somebody would get up and answer it But the idea is that When I ask the question Which I would like all of you to answer At some point I would like you to think about How you would answer Such a question If it was directed at you And to reflect on What the question Is actually seeking from you What kind of answer Could you give If you were actually put in a position Where you would be expected to answer If you were in an exam situation For example What would you put down on paper But I'm not going to ask you a question At this point But I'm making an assumption

[ 34 : 55 ] And I hope it's not A wrong assumption I am thinking That you're here Because You have an interest In what I have to say But not so much What I have to say But what God In his word Has to say To you And I believe That you are here To listen to What God has to say To you Because Most of you are Christians If not all of you Some of you are Christians With a Big C Some of you Are Christians With a small C Now maybe that's not A politically correct Statement to make What's the difference Between a Christian With a big C And a Christian With a small C Well If I put it like this And if you don't agree with me

That's alright A Christian With a small C Is First of all You're not An atheist You're not Somebody Who believes In God Other than The God Of the Bible You're not A Muslim You're not A Hindu You're not A believer In many Of the Creates Or Cultures That are in the world That do not Agree with The Bible As God's word You have An understanding Of what The Bible Teaches What it says That It speaks To people About their need For salvation And it speaks To people About where That salvation Is to be found That Jesus Christ Is the saviour That the Bible Speaks about And So on Of course You could add

To that You could build On that picture Of what a Christian With a small C is But what's The difference Between one With a small C and one With a big C Well the One with a Christian With a big C is somebody Who not only Knows what you Do about What the Bible teaches But they Believe that It is what They believe It is what They understand To be true They understand The God Of the Bible To be the Only living And true God Not only Do they Understand that He is Their God Not only Do they Understand that The Bible Tells them About Jesus But that Jesus is Their Lord Their saviour They have put Their trust in him They are led By him Guided by him Fed spiritually Through him And so on Again You could Add to that List So you'll See there's A difference Between a

Christian with A small C And a Christian With The big C Now Here is Where the Question Coming Rather than Coming at The beginning If you Have not Committed Your life To Christ If you See the Difference Between That These Pictures If you like Of A Christian Who believes Wholeheartedly In Christ That you Have not Committed Yourself To that Christ Like they Have What would It take For you To move From where You are To where They are What is True is That To use

A theological Term If you like You need To experience Conversion Now This is Where the Question Comes Would You Like to Be Converted Would You like To move From where You are With all The knowledge That you Have about The church About Christ About The things Of God That you Are not Prepared To commit To That you Are not To The creed That the Christian Believes Are not Willing to Subscribe To it Mentally You are not Willing to Commit your Life To the God of The Christian The God of The Bible Would you Be willing To be Converted To experience Such a Conversion Conversion

[ 39 : 58 ] Changed From being The Passion You clearly Believe Yourself To be To the Passion That you Need to Be Now you are Wondering Perhaps what Has that Got to do With this Passage Here I was Trying to Think about Conversion As a Topic Really But I Was Directed To this Passage Here And The Reason For it I hope Will become Apparant Though when I Was coming Home on the Plane I Was reading A book By a Theologian Called R.C.

Sproul And R.C. Sproul Was talking About The Difference Between Religion And The Theology The Difference Between Religion And Theology And He Was Explaining The way He Himself Was Invited To Speak As a Preacher A Teacher Of Theology Invited To Speak To A Faculty In America I Don't Know If He Was Given A Topic But When He Went To The Place He Was Introduced To The Professors The Teachers There And He Was Led Around The Faculty To See The Different Departments

And The Building And All That Happened There And When He Was Walking Down The Corridor He He Saw This Door And The Door Had A Label On It And The Label On The Door The Sign On The Door Said Department Of Religion And He Just Took A Mental Note Of It And Then He Went Back And He Was Speaking To The Professor When Did You Put That Name On The Door And Nobody Seemed To Know And He Said Was That What It Was Always Called And Nobody Seemed To Know And He Said There Is A Difference Between Religion And Theology And Then He Expounded The Differences That There Is

Apparent Between The Study Of Religion Which Can Incorporate Any Number Of Religious Experiences And The Study Of Theology Which Is The Study Of God And All That God Has To Say To Those Who Are In His Creation In His World But Just To Cut A Long Story Short This Is What He Said He Uses An Illustration The Illustration You'll Be Familiar With He Remembers How In The Old Testament In The Book Of Genesis How In The Book Of Exodus Rather When Moses Was Taken Up To The Top Of The Mount To Meet With God And God Gave To Moses The Ten Commandments And If You Remember The Mountain Was Covered In In Smoke And Fire And God Was Present And It Was Clearly Evident That

God Was Pleasant In His Place But While Moses Was Up On Top Of The Mountain You'll Remember That The People Who Were Waiting Down At The Bottom Got Tired Of Waiting And What Did They Do Well They Decided To Shape For Themselves A God And The Direction Of Aaron They Gathered Together All The Gold That Was Available In The Camp And They Melted It Down And Moulded It Into A Golden Calf And They Began To Worship That Calf Now This Is What Sproul Says What Follows Was An Unprecedented Act Of Apostasy The Making And Worshipping Of A Golden Calf This Was An Exercise In Religion One

[ 44 : 41 ] That Focused Its Worship On A Creature They Claimed That The Golden Calf Was God And That The Calf Had Delivered Them From Bondage This Theology Was Blatantly False It Was Also Evidence That False Religion Follows Or Flows Out Of False Theology A Theology And Religion Without God It Had The Elements Of Religious Practice But What Was Worshipped Was Not God Now What Has That Got To Do With You Today If You Are A Christian With A Small C Well There That The Person Who Is Endeavoring To Follow The Practices Of A Christian With A Big C

Without The Spirit Of The God Of That Practice The God Who Is Behind It The God Who Is In It The God Who Is The Focus Of It There Are Always Dangerous Attendant Upon It You Might Not Go Out Of Here And Create Yourself A God Different To The God Of Scripture But You May Be Content With What You Are Doing At The Same Time Not Realizing That What You Are Doing Is Insufficient What You Are Doing Is Not Going To Be A Blessing To Your Soul What You Are Doing Is Something That May For Some Be Something That Calms Your Conscience For A Time And

Makes You Think That It Is All You Need To Be Right With The God That You Are The God Whose Presence You Are In The God You Are Paying Lip Service To In The Act Of Worship Without The Help Of That God Without The Glory Of That God In Your View Now Let Me Make The Firm Connection With This Text You Will Notice That These Words Speak Of A Man Called Sergius Paulus And The Change That Took Place In His Life He Experienced Conversion And What You Ask About This Conversion I Suppose Must Be Asked And It's True Not Just About His Conversion But Every Conversion Why Did This Passion Sergius

Paulus Who If You Read About Them Was Interested In The Things Of God Who Was Curious And Who Was Searching Out Who God Was Who His Son Was And So On It Can Be Understood That That Was True Of Him Why Would Such A Passion Need To Be Converted What Does Conversion Involve For Him For You If You Are Not Already Converted And What Is The Result Of That Conversion And The Experience Of Those Who Experience It Well Why Is Conversion Needed You Know Some People Are Offended By The Preacher Who Insists That If You're Not Already A Convert Then You Must Be If You're Not Already A Christian Fully Appraised Of And Dependent Upon

The Person Of Jesus Christ As The Alone Savior Of Sinners Then You Must Be Somebody Who Has To Come To Experience That For Yourself Anything Less Than That Anything Short Of That Will Place Your Soul In Jeopardy What The Bible Says And I'm Just Going To Very Briefly Mention It The Bible Tells Us That By Nature We Are Strangers To God We Are Alienated From God Give You A Bit Of Homework Read Romans 1 For Yourself And You'll See A Chapter There That Tells You About The Very Nature Of Man In A State Of Alienation From God Let Me Quote To You The Words Of Paul As He Writes To The Ephesian Church Chapter 2 You Hath He Quickened To Where Dead In

[ 49 : 42 ] Trespasses And Sins Where In In Time Past You Walked According To The Course Of This World According To The Prince Of The Power Of The Air The Spirit That Now Works In The Children Of Disobedience Among Among Among Among We We Had Our Conversation In Times Past In The Lusts Of Our Flesh Fulfilling The Desires Of The Flesh And Mind That Were By Nature The Children Of Wrath As Others Conversion Conversion Passion

Is In The Grip Of The God Of This World The Enemy Of Our Soul Doing What He Bids When He Bids If He Bids It Will Happily Leave You To Your Own Devices As Long As You Are Not Doing What God Wants You To Do I Have Said It Often And I Probably Maybe Have To Say It More Often Because I Am Not Convinced To You Although I Am Not I Can Say That I Know It's Not Down To My Conviction Of Your Guilty The Guilt That Everything Depends But The Fact Is That The Moment A Person Genuinely Shows An Interest In Christ To Have Had No Interest Before Then That Is The Moment That The Devil Will Get Up On His Hind Legs And

Come Into Your Life In A Way That He Never Has Before As Long As You Are Not Interested In The Gospel As Long As You Are Showing Any Genuine Desire To Discover Who Christ Is And What Christ Means To The Christian He Is Happy To Leave You Blissfully Ignorant Of That He Leave You Where You Are Because As You Are Without Christ You Are Without God And You Are On The Way To A Lost Eternity And He Is Happy For You To Go There

Your Head Is Filled Full Of Nonsense Something Will Distract You Something Will Come Between You And What You Have Intended To Do For The Good Of Your Soul Prince Principal Donald MacLeod Was Writing A Book About Preaching And He Mentioned These Words That You're All Familiar With In The Gospel Of Matthew Where Jesus Says Come Unto Me All Ye That Labour And That Heavy Laden And I Will Give You Rest Take My Yoke Upon You And Learn Of Me He Says For I Am Meek And Lowly In Heart And You Shall Find Rest Unto Your Souls For My Yoke Is Easy And My Burdens Light You're Familiar With These Words Now

Donald MacLeod Said Something Very Interesting About That I Never Really Thought About It In This Way When You Preach That Text You're Telling To Telling The Unconverted Come To Christ But When The Unconverted Hear That Word They're Saying That's Not A Word To Me Word Is To The The Laboring The Heav To Rest Maybe Some Of You Here Today Who Are Unconverted Know Nothing Of What It Is To Labor Know Nothing Of What It Is To Feel Restless Know Nothing Of What It Is To Be Burdened And Because You Don't You're Thinking Well Jesus Is All Right For Them But Not For Me Jesus

[ 54 : 49 ] Is Someone Who Has To Minister To The Sick Who Has To Heal Those Whose Lives Are Broken And In Turmoil Those Who Are Drug Addicts Those Who Are Drunkards Those Who Are Embroiled In Some Immorality But I'm None Of These Things So I'm All Right I Don't Need Christ But That's The Thing Even In That Word Come Unto Me All You Could Stop There All Who Are Unconverted Need Christ All Who Are In A Religious Position Where Their Religion Does Not Have Christ As It Heart Need To Know Who Christ Is And Where The Need That They Have Of Him Is



Brought To Their Attention Chapter 13 Is Described As A Doorway To The Way That The Gospel Was Going To Be Universally Proclaimed To The World It Was The Beginning Of World Mission From This Point Out On The Gospel Was Not Going To Be Preached To The Jews But To The Gentiles And Not Just The Gentiles Who Lived In The Locality But The Gentiles Who Lived In Cyprus Who Lived In Rome Who Lived Anywhere In The World Where The Persians Had A Soul They Needed To Hear About Christ And The Gospel Was Going To Be Preached To Them And Those Who Were Sent By God Would Go Out That Gospel To Everyone And That Included The People Of Calonish And Brias Glitch And Carloway

And Shaw Bost And Every Person In This World Because Their Soul Had A Need That Only Christ Could Meet And If They Were Unconverted They Needed To Hear That Message For Themselves And That Message For Them Would Require Them To Do One Of Two Things Or Two Things Whether You Do Them At The Same time Or One After The Other You Needed To Turn From Your Sin To God You Needed To Turn From Your Idolatry To God You Needed To Turn From The Things Upon Which You Depended To The Christ That Gave You These Things That You Needed Whether You Knew About Them Or Not Conversion Conversion In The Experience Of A Passion Will Vary The Experience Will Vary Professor Henderson In His Book Of Sermons And In That Book Of Sermons He Speaks About Four Conversions

Four People Who Are Converted And They're Found In The Book Of Acts One Of Them Was The Ethiopian Enoch One Of Them Was The Philippian Jailer One Of Them Was A Man Called Saul Of Tarshish And One Of Them Was A Woman Called Lydia You Put Them In Front Of You And There's Nothing Nothing About Them That Would Say To You They're The Same They're Alike Because In A Sense They're Quite Different But The Thing Is That All Of Them Needed To Be Converted All Of Them Needed To Be Changed All Of Them Needed To Experience Not Just Religion But The Theology That Would Take Them To Christ And Put Their Trust

In Him And If You Examine These Men And Women Closely You'll Find That You Know Some Of Them Were Better Than Some Christians You Would Say They Were Studying The Scriptures They Were Perusing They Were Delving Into The Word Of God And Yet What They Were Looking For That Was Probably The Wrong Thing The Truth Is They Could Not Remain As They Were And That Is What Is True About This Man Sergius Paul Did You Notice That When We Read This Chapter We Find That He Is Described As A Prudent Man Who Called For Barnabas And Saul And Desire To Hear The Word Of God He Was The Pro Consul Of Rome He Was The Representative Of The Roman Emperor

[ 59 : 50 ] In That Region He Had Power He Had Authority He Had Servants A Plenty And He Had An Advisor Somebody Who Was Able To Tell Him What To Do But The Problem For Sergius Paulus Was That His Advisor Was Elnias Whose Advisor Was Somebody Who Was A False Prophet Somebody Who Did Not Want This Man To Come To Christ Probably For Selfish Reasons Because He Was A False Prophet Some People Say He Was Someone Who Made Is Living Is Some Kind Of Dark Arts And He Understood Perfectly Well If This Man Is Converted Then I'm Out Of A Job And My Prophet Making Is At An End So He Did All In His Power To Prevent This Man From Being Converted You

Know Sometimes When A Person Experiences Conversion It Can Be A Long Drawn Out Process If I Speak To You About Saul Of Tarshish Oh You Say Yes That's Him Who Was Converted On The Road To Damascus And It Happened Just Like That The Heavens Opened The Light Came A Voice Spoke To Paul And He Was Converted Instantly Is That What The Bible Tells You When Saul Of Tarshish Was Challenged At That Point What We Also Hear Is Saul Saul Why Persecuted Thou Me It Is Hard For The To Kick Against The Goats And What Is He

Talking About When He Is Saying To Saul It Is Hard For The To Kick Against The Goats Well I Think One Thing That It Says Is That Saul Was Somebody Who Was Exposed To The Promptings Of The Holy Spirit The Promptings Of Providence The Promptings Of God's Word Speaking To Them But He Was Resisting Them He Was Denying The Truth He Was Wanting To Go On As He Was As An Opponent To God Rather Than Yielding His Life And Mind To Paul Do You Know Anybody Like That To God You Know There Are Many People And If They Tell Their Testimony That Is One Thing That Will Feature In Their Testimony That God Was Speaking To Them Through Providence That God Was Speaking To Them Through The Testimony Of His Word That God Was Speaking To Them Through The Testimony Of Their Friends And Their Neighbors

That God Was Speaking To Them Directly And Yet They Were Resisting What God Was Saying Conversion Conversion Was A Possibility But They Didn't Want To They Didn't Want To Experience It They Wanted To Remain As They Were Because They Understood You Understand I Hope You Know There Are Many People And They Think That The Best Way To Ensure A Person Is Converted Is To Tell Them That When They Are Converted Nothing Much Changes You Know Your Life Will Go On Pretty Much The Way That It Was Before Your Conversion It Won't Involve You In Too Many Difficulties Just Maybe A Tweak Here And A Tweak There But That's Not The Conversion That The Bible Speaks About Because For

The Simple Reason The Person Who Is Converted That Person Is Somebody Who Goes Into Experiencing A New Life Through Jesus Christ They Have A New Understanding They Have A New Appreciation Of What God's Word Is Saying They Have New Light On What Life Is Like And What Life Is About You Don't Live Your Life For Yourself Anymore You Are Somebody Who Is Meant To Live It For God And If You Selfishly Incline Towards Self Seeking And Self Well Whatever Self Is At The Heart Of Your Life If It's Not Displaced And Replaced By The Desire To Serve God And To Live For Christ There's Something Radically Wrong With Your Conversion It's A Relationship

[ 64 : 56 ] A Relationship With The Only Living And True God A Relationship That Requires You To Speak To Him And That He Speak To You Now If You Don't Have That Relationship You're Not Converted And Once You Are Converted That Is What Begins To Show Itself Immediately You Speak To God God Speaks To You His Word Is Central To The Life That You Lead It Governs Your Walk It Directs Your Footsteps It Allows You To Understand The Things That Were Impossible To Understand Before But Don't Think That The Conversion Experience Will Be A Simple One Paul Paul Paul Experienced The Strivings Of The Spirit But He Resisted Them Perhaps

There Are Couples Here Or You're Part Of A Couple And One Person Is Maybe Drawn To The Scriptures And Drawn To The Word Of God And God Drawn To The Life Of The Christian and the other is less so.

And that can be problematic. But it's not an insurmountable problem. This congregation here, if you want to find out about its history, many of the converts that came to the Lord were couples.

It was unique in that respect that the core of the congregation, the believers in it, were Christian couples or couples who became Christian and who followed the Lord as families. Now sometimes it doesn't work like that. Sometimes there's things that need to be dealt with within that relationship and it will take time, it will take grace, it will take God's help to do it, but it can't be done.

Conversion is not necessarily an easy thing, but it is a necessary thing. Sergius Paulus found the resistance of this advisor. Somebody had his ear and Paul, the apostle, saw what he was doing and he dealt with him.

[ 67 : 28 ] Well, what did he say? He describes him, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

I suppose that is the key. Because if you are intent, who is a Christian with a small C, to be a Christian with a big C, you will find that there will be, there will be opposition to that, who will try to pervert the right ways of the Lord, to keep you out of the way of obedience, to keep you anywhere but on the right way.

But this man did. was convinced by the miracle of blindness that was inflicted on this enemy of the gospel.

A miracle. This man was blinded, left to be led by the hands of someone else. This was the main thing in his conviction, in his conversion, but it's not.

You read that he says he was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. His eyes were opened to the truth concerning Christ and everything pertaining to Christ.

[ 69 : 15 ] I can't convert you. I can't change you. But I know that Christ can. I can, without any shadow of a doubt, say to you that if you're not a Christian, you need to be converted to one.

And if you are not converted to being a Christian, then that will have consequences for your life here in this world and for the life to come.

And if you are converted, the life that you have in this world will be changed. change. And your future is set out for you in the word of God as something that will not be changed for you or for anyone else like you.

God will convince you whoever you are today, if you're not convinced already, that you need to experience the power of God in your life that would enable you to surrender everything upon which you are laying hold in the hope that it will be sufficient.

the end of it is not Christ and it's not enough. God in his mercy bring the truth home to us. Let us pray. Lord of God, you are the one who quickens, who takes the world and who presses it home with great power upon hearts that are resistant to the truth, a truth that convicts us of our sin, a truth that brings home to us the need that we have to convert and to believe and to put our trust in Christ the Lord.

[ 71 : 13 ] Bless the world who is now. Bless it where it is preached this world over. Hear our prayers, pardon our sins in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to conclude singing from Psalm 107 and at verse 9.

Psalm 107 and verse 9. Sing to verse 14. For he, the soul that longing is, doth fully satisfy, with goodness he, the hungry soul, doth fill abundantly, such as shut up in darkness deep, and in death's shade abide, whom strongly hath affliction bound, and died on fast her tide, because against the words of God they wrought rebelliously, and they the counsel did condemn of him that is most high.

Their heart he did bring down with grief they fell, no help could have. In trouble then they cried to God, he them from straits did save, he out of darkness did them bring, and from death's shade them take, these bands wherewith they had been bound doth thunder quite he break.

These verses, for he the soul that longing is, doth fully satisfy. for he the soul that longing is, the Lord is satisfied, with goodness he had still beaten by sea.

Amen, we Lord have to, Beth CHR penser And I, O house of light, He falls against the words of God, Their own reverend tree,

[ 74 : 06 ] And then I, O house of light, Of heaven that is O night, Their heart he did bring out his grief, And then, O house of light, And from the land he had her gone.

He then promises the true The earth on that I miss he'll bring Only in ■■■ cries Gone It does In the heart In the heart As I Know How I May May grace, mercy, and peace From God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Address and abide with you, more love and all this Amen