

Living with Christ - Living For Christ

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- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning as we join together in the worship of God we pray that he would bless us as we come unto the sound of his word.
- We can begin our service by singing to God's praise from Psalm 61. Psalm 61 and we're singing from the beginning to verse 6.
- Psalm 61 from the beginning. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend.
- From the utmost corner of the land my cry to thee I'll send. What time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity do thou me lead unto the rock that higher is than I?
- For thou hast for my refuge been a shelter by thy power, and for defence against my force thou hast been a strong tower. Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, and under covert of thy wings with confidence me hide.
- [1 : 30] For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord my God, it's here. Thou hast given me the heritage of those thy name that fear. A life prolonged for many days thou to the King shalt give.
- Like many generations, he the years which he shall live. And so on. We can sing these verses 1 through 2 through 6.
- Psalm 61. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend.
- From the utmost corner of the land my cry to thee I'll send.
- What time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity do I believe until the rock.
- [3 : 15] The utmost corner of the land my cry, unto my prayer attend. The utmost corner of the land my cry, unto my prayer attend. For thou the Lord'erg mayst need the Loan Of odour I presence. For thou hast gone, O Lord my armour plead and my cry.
- By our love, most never happen. For thou hast given up, O Lord my silic guest.
- My, my God, and my defense against my bones, the heart in the strong time.
- Within the heart of the night, for heaven will I.
- And I am over all thy wings, when confidence behind.
- [4 : 42] For thou, my God, such a great way.
- O Lord, my God, bless him. Thou hast given me the man with his.
- All those that I am not here. And I am prolonged for many.
- The good of the kings of the earth. Like any man ever is to me.
- Thy king, thy king, thy king. Amen.
- [6 : 05] Let's join together in prayer. Let us pray. Ever-blessed God, we are reminded from the words that we have been singing, that your people are a praying people.
- A people who discovered in their own lives and through their own experiences that the God who was their God was a prayer-hearing God.

And a God who answered prayer, even far above their asking. And that is so in the experience of your people the world over.

To the present generation, nothing has changed. You are the God who gives to us the words by which to approach a throne of grace.

You have given access to us through Christ. We have been encouraged to come anticipating a reception that will be in mercy.

[7 : 17] And we are instructed to pull our hearts out before you and to seek from your hand that which will meet our need.

Even though our need is sometimes far greater than we would ever anticipate. There are times when we ask and we ask, thinking that our need is greater than the God before whom we set it.

There are other times when we come thinking that our greatest need is. And yet, the reality is that it far exceeds our asking.

But our asking, nevertheless, is commended and commanded. And we pray for wisdom to know when to come, how to come, and with what to come.

Do not allow us to think that there are any sacrifices that we can offer that can sway your mind. Do not allow us to believe that because of anything that we are, that that is sufficient to ensure that you will reply to our petitions.

[8 : 41] But rather to have our eyes fixed upon Christ, through whom, not only we are received, but through whom we get the reply that is sometimes perplexing to us.

We give thanks that we give thanks that he is the great mediator between God and man. Great high priest of his people. And that he is set before us in your word as one who undertook that office.

He is the great priest of Jesus. That he became God. He was God and became man. And entered into the experience of this world fully engaged with the offices that belong to his role as the redeemer of his people.

He is prophet, he is priest, and he is king. And we give thanks that we can speak to you through him today. And that it is he who brings you in word to our mind's eye, to our attention.

And that we can ask for our mouth to be filled from on high. And that we can seek guidance through the spirit upon what our needs truly are and how they are to be addressed.

[10 : 14] Open our eyes to the truth that is your word. Given to us in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Remind us of the veracity of the word of God.

That it is true. And every word of man is false in comparison. You will one day prove yourself to all as the God of all truth.

Those who live their lives possessing the word of God but living in fragrant denial of what it says. Because it suits themselves.

Because what they understand the truth to say they cannot, cannot in any way live by the light of. We pray for forgiveness for any way in which that may be true of ourselves.

That we may manipulate the word. That we may make it say what it doesn't say. And we may make it suggest to us that the word is not as clear as it ought to be.

[11 : 31] As we gather under the word today help us to believe it and to accept it. To trust in the God who gave it. For the good of our soul. For the well being of our whole man.

We give thanks for the fact that you are a good God. And even though this world often raises its voice and shakes its puny fist at the heavens.

You are the God who is ever the same. Your goodness declared in the creation.
Continues to be experienced by this world.

The goodness that is undeserved. Because we have sinned against you and gone away from you. And yet you remember us daily by providing for our creature needs.

The food that we eat. The clothes that are on our back. The shelter that we call our home. All of these things we do not deserve. We have not and cannot bring them to ourselves.

[12 : 32] There are many in the world who are devoid of all such. And were it in their power. They would be clothed. They would be satisfied with food. They would be in more ample shelter.

But the reason for their condition is that they are unable. They are without strength. And our blessings are many.

And they are entirely attributable to your grace. There are many blessings that accompany the gospel. That are undisclosed and unattributed.

And yet your word suggests to us and provides to us the source of the truth. That ensures that we can understand that every good and perfect gift is from God.

Remember your people here today. Encourage them in their faith. Do not allow them to be in any way dissuaded from their faith.

[13 : 35] Distracted from believing the truth. Do not allow them to succumb to the error that is prevalent in the world. That would deny God and would have God belittled.

Encourage them to look unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of their faith. Without him we can do nothing. Not one of us came to faith without his involvement.

And we give thanks that he persuaded and enabled us to embrace him as he is freely offered in the gospel. We give thanks for the intervention of his Holy Spirit in our lives.

For the empowering of those who preach the world to preach it in a way that our mind's eye was opened. And we were able to fixate upon the Christ who is the altogether lovely one.

Encourage any here today who are yet to see him. To see him as your word would have us see him. That we would be captivated by him. That our heart would be drawn towards him.

[14 : 45] And that we would yield ourselves to his blessed hand upon our lives. Remember those who cannot be with us today.

We pray for your people deprived of the privileges that we enjoy today. Some who were constantly present in your house when it was their opportunity so to be.

We give thanks for their witness, for their testimony. For the affection that they clearly have for the Lord. Even though the day of grace as far as attending God's house is at an end.

But we give thanks that the day of grace for them is clearly not at an end. Because you minister to them in their homes, in their hearts, in their intimate moments where they are alone with yourself.

Rekindling experiences, reminding them of what was once theirs and what remains theirs. We pray that you would remember each one of them. Whether they are at home or in hospital, being cared for by others.

[15 : 53] In homes appointed to that end. Remember those who are approaching their last days on earth. As they are cared for in the hospice. We pray for those who have terminal care given to them in their homes.

Whoever is administering such care, guide their hands that they may alleviate suffering. And that they may be able, with your help, to do all in their power to ensure that our loved ones, as they live out their days and hours in this world, that they are not overly vexed.

Remember the grieving and the sorrowful. We know your voice is often heard amongst us. And even in these last few days we have been reminded of how the lives of many are turned upside down in the twinkling of an eye.

When you come, you come unexpectedly at times. At other times, disease and old age, the ravages of time play their part.

And soon the eye will close, never to open again. For those who are experiencing the grief that surrounds such an experience, we pray that you would remember them, sustain them, grant to them that they might look to the Prince of life, and that they may know in him the comfort that he alone is able to afford them.

[17 : 22] Remember, Lord, this world in which we live, where there is so much harm being done, so much suffering, so much sorrow. Our nation is a nation that is wayward and negligent.

The graces that were once ample have now been suppressed, and the gospel of your grace has been overtaken by those who would seek to live out their life without its influence upon their life.

We pray that you would measurefully undertake for us, pour out your spirit upon us, enliven those who are entrusted with the proclamation of truth from on high.

Open the mouth so that we may declare the unsearchable riches of Christ fearlessly and without favour. Do not allow us to enter into declension, believing that there are other ways to God other than the way that you have appointed, which is the way, the truth and the life, as Jesus Christ represents it to us.

We pray for the nations of the earth and all who form part of it, those who are suffering from want. We pray for the mercies of God to abound towards them.

[18 : 44] So hear our prayers. Forgive our negligence in not praying for that which we ought to be praying for. We cannot but lift our eyes to the heavens, seeking that you may rend them asunder and come down, and that the dew of heaven would be a reminder to us of how you are able to clothe with glory even those that are dead in trespasses and sin as your spirit visits us in mercy.

Continue to watch over us. Bless our service. Bless the children as they meet together at the Sunday school. Bless the teachers as they impart the truth to them.

May they be reminded of the privileged position that they have to present Christ to tender hearts, that they may learn what it is to have a savior, even Christ Jesus.

Forgive us in his name. All we ask, we ask in him. Amen. Going to read from the New Testament scripture.

And we're going to read from the second epistle of Paul to Timothy and chapter 2.

[20 : 12] 2 Timothy chapter 2. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wareth entangleth himself with the affairs of his life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partakers of the fruits.

Consider what I say. And the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

[21 : 20] Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds. But the word of God is not bound. Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings.

For they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will reach as does a canker. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus.

[22 : 40] Who concerning the truth have heard, saying that the resurrection is past already. And overthrow the faith of the son.

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure. Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Flee also youthful lusts. But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

[23 : 45] But foolish and undeniable questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Amen. And may the Lord, at his blessing, to a reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. Amen. And boys and girls, as you go out to Sunday school, just a quick reminder of what you're looking at in the Sunday school.

You've been following the journey of the children of Israel as they make their way through the wilderness to the promised land.

Through their experiences as they're in the wilderness, they have shown themselves to have a very poor memory. They forget very easily the many things God does for them.

[25 : 07] And in that way, they're so like ourselves. I think every one of us, I think every one of us, can recognize these feelings on the part of the children of Israel.

Well, if we don't, we should. Because we don't remember the many ways that God has helped us through their lives here in the world.

But he does help us. And we find in the lives of the children of Israel, they forgot much of what God did for them. And as they were going through the wilderness, as we saw last week, they were hungry and God provided them with food from heaven.

Now they're thirsty. Now they're thirsty. And you would think, well, God has made us, made our bellies full. Surely now he will provide water to take the thirst away.

But they didn't remember that. So they complained. They complained again. They complained bitterly to Moses, first of all.

[26 : 15] And God wasn't far away from their complaints. They were taken from their comforts in Egypt only to die in the wilderness.

So God was going to be blamed for that. Moses was going to be blamed for that. I wonder if we know anything of that.

How ready we are to blame God for what he hasn't done or he hasn't done the way we would want it. Well, God was willing, which is amazing, is it not, to hear the way the complaints of God's people were uttered.

He was willing to hear and not just dismiss them from his sight, but answer the prayers of the righteous, those who did pray.

And I'm sure there were some. It's easy for us to overlook that. That not everybody was the same. Not everybody was to blame, although the vast majority were.

[27 : 26] I'm sure there were some good people who knew God and who remembered God and who prayed to God. And their prayer was that God would answer.

Well, God sent his servant Moses and he told him to do something very strange. The very last thing you would expect.

He told them to go and strike a rock. And out of that rock, water was going to pour out.

That was going to meet their thirst. You know, if he had told them, go and dig a well or get the people to dig a hole and eventually get down far enough and water would be found.

Isn't that not normally the way water is found? By digging deep wells and finding a water source. But no, he told Moses, go and strike the rock.

[28 : 25] And the only thing I want you to remember is sometimes God provides answers to our needs in different ways.

And sometimes they are ways that we would not expect or anticipate. And I suppose the best picture of it is in the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Jesus died on the cross. He was put to death. And the last thing you would expect by somebody dying is that we would find life through his death.

It's extraordinary. It's completely opposite to what we would expect. And that's the way God works. Sometimes, at least, he answers our need with answers that seem to us to be completely at odds with what we need and how our need is to be met.

I probably told you the story before about, and it's so typical of the way we are when we pray. It's a story about somebody, a congregation over in America.

[29 : 44] And they lived in a part of America that knew a lot about drought. That they would go for long periods of time where there would be no rain.

And because there was no rain, the crops would die. And we are hearing a lot of it today because of global warming and the lack of rain is causing a whole host of difficulty in the world.

We hear it on the news, don't we? The dangers of global warming. Have you ever heard on the news anybody tell you to pray?

Have you ever heard anybody on the news say, The danger is so great that we need to do something great for it to change?

Have they told you to pray? And I haven't ever heard anyone suggest to us that we need to pray. But in this place in America, there was a congregation of believers.

[30 : 53] And they decided this Sunday, after talking about how difficult things were, that they would gather together the next Sunday to pray.

And that they would pray for rain. Well, that's what God's people do, is it not? When there's a problem, they pray. And they know it's wise to pray.

If you're a Christian, you know it's wise to pray. But simply knowing the wisdom of prayer doesn't mean to say that you're actually believing that the prayer that you're offering is going to be heard or answered.

And that was the case in this congregation. They knew the wisdom of praying to God. They knew it was the right thing to do. But unfortunately, there weren't many of them who actually believed that the God they were praying to was going to answer.

But there was one little girl. And when she set off for church that morning, she took her umbrella. She took her umbrella with her. And they were looking at her because the day was bright sunshine.

[32 : 10] And they were saying, where are you going with your umbrella? Well, she said, are we not going to be praying for rain? And the people were laughing.

They were laughing at her. And she said, because she had her umbrella, but there was no sign of rain. But she said, you are going to pray for rain.

Do you not believe that God will answer? Well, she had her answer because, according to the story, before the service was over that morning, the heavens opened and the rain came down.

And everybody went home soaking apart from a little girl who had an umbrella. And maybe that's a true story. Maybe it's not. But unfortunately, what is true is that when we pray, that we don't pray with faith and believing what God can do.

Because sometimes, in fact, often, God does miracle after miracle in ways that are miraculous.

[33 : 18] And they exceed the asking of God's people. The children of Israel were not only hungry, but thirsty. And he said, I will give you drink.

I will give you drink out of the rock. And they did get that. And their thirst was removed. But God was able to supply spiritual drink also from the same rock that he himself was.

But God reminded us of who he is, even in different and strange ways. We're going to sing as you go after. From Psalm 57.

Psalm 57. From the beginning to verse 5. Be merciful to me, O God, and mercy unto me do thou extend.

Because my soul doth put our trust in thee. Yea, in the shadow of thy wings my refuge I will place, until these sad calamities do holy overpass.

[34 : 25] My cry I will cause to ascend, to the Lord most high, to God who doth all things for me perform most perfectly.

From heaven he shall send down, and me from his reproach defend, that would devour thee. God is truth and mercy forth shall send.

We'll sing to verse 5 of Psalm 57. Be merciful to me, O God, thy mercy unto me. Be merciful to me, O God, thy mercy unto me.

To thou extend, because my soul doth further trust in thee.

Yea, in the shadow of thy wings, my refuge I will place, unto thee, O God, thy mercy unto me.

[35 : 55] Until this sad calamities do holy overpass.

My cry I will force to ascend, and through the Lord most high, To go to the Lord most high,
To go to the Lord most high, To go to the Lord most high, Wherefore most high, ngall in
the Lord most high, And through the Lord Xbox One lo so badly doing, Hell and come
he■ng for the Lord most high, From heaven he shall set down, and the Lord most high,
From heaven his reproach defend, Thine, O divine, may God his death, and bear before
the end.

My soul, I'm on, your cry of death.

I find, Brazil, my heart, men's son to thee.

I see the Lord, I shall absorb his hand.

[38 : 14] Be thou exalted, bear behind.

I will, I will, I will, I will, I will, I will. Let thou thy glory be at us, for all the earth above.

Amen. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe
not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.

The subject of Paul's words here is Jesus Christ and the relationship that his people have
with him.

[40 : 02] Now, some of you here today are not Christian. You're not Christians by your own
profession. You have not come to believe in Jesus Christ.

You have not committed your soul to his keeping, and your life reflects that. I would
suggest to you that you must have a good reason for that.

I can't imagine for one minute any person living his life in the world, especially those who
have been listening to the gospel, who have been in church, who have been in Sunday
school, who have had face-to-face encounters with God's word.

I can't imagine that you can be in a situation where your confession is, I'm not a Christian.

But I have to admit that that is the way it is. And I always have to correct my thinking,
because simply, I wasn't always a Christian myself.

[41 : 29] I know myself to be a Christian today. I don't doubt that I'm a Christian. But I also
understand that, in a sense I mean the word Christian, that very early on in my life I wasn't
a Christian.

I had possession of all the information that you have today. I had read my Bible. I had
heard the Bible read to me.

I had learned the Bible by rote. I had learned the Shorter Catechism. I had done all of
these things.

But I wasn't a Christian. I didn't believe what the Bible was telling me. And, of course, I
would, at that point, have a reason for not believing.

And maybe you're like that as well. You have a reason for not believing. And I've heard
some of these reasons. I've had some of these reasons come to mind in my own
experience.

[42 : 46] And, for example, people will say, and they have said very clearly that, Christians are
hypocrites.

They're hypocrites. They say one thing and they do another. They suggest that they
believe something and then they go against what they say they believe.

And their life is inconsistent. Or, these Christians are always at war with one another.
These Christians, they speak about the gospel of peace.

And yet, they're never at peace. There's always some factions saying that they're right and the others are wrong. And they're always at each other's throats.

And if that's Christian, I want nothing to do with it. But if you delve deeper into these expressions of righteous indignation against what Christianity suggests to them, you'll find that it is really not a reason but an excuse.

[44 : 00] It's not really a reason for not believing the gospel. It's not really a reason for not putting your trust in Jesus Christ. Because if the problem is hypocrisy, the Bible doesn't at any level commend hypocrisy.

It doesn't encourage hypocrisy. It tells us quite plainly that our yea should be yea and our no should be no.

It tells us that the Christian is somebody whose life should be impeccable, honest, consistent, based upon the word of truth.

It tells us, the same Bible tells us, that we are to follow peace with all men and at the same time holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

So if you find fault with Christians on the basis of what they're doing, that they shouldn't be doing, or not doing that they should be doing, remind yourself, yes, there is fault on the part of the Christian who is exposing your critical analysis of their Christianity not being what it should be.

[45 : 31] that the wrong that they do is indicative of the need that they have of the Christ that they profess.

It is indicative of the need that they have to improve on the relationship that they should have with Christ, but they clearly do not. But it is not a reason for denying the Christ that they profess to be the wrong kind of Christ, or the wrong kind of person to put your belief in.

What you should always remind yourself of is this, and don't forget it, there is no Christian in this world who is part of the Christian church who is not a sinner.

They have sin in their lives, they have sin in their lives, they will have sin in their lives, and the remedy for their sin is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they know that. It's not an excuse for them going on in sin, it's not an excuse for covering their sin, it's not an excuse for denying their sin, far from it.

[46 : 53] But it is a reality. And that some Christians, all of whom are sinners, are in a school of hard knocks where they discover the reality of their sinnership and the only redress that they have for it in Christ Jesus.

So don't look down on them, whatever you do, because you think you're better than them. You're not. The only difference between you and them, in one sense, is they have Christ and you don't.

They have an understanding of what Christ can do for them, you don't. Clearly that is the way it is. Now why do I begin this sermon like that? Because some of these things that are so odious in the eyes of the unchristian, of the non-Christian, are referred to by Paul here.

And you have to remember the background to the words of the apostle here. And the apostle is writing to a young Christian and he himself, it seems, is coming to the end of his Christian ministry.

And Paul, despite being an apostle, despite being the author of so many of these wonderful epistles where he speaks clearly, lucidly, gloriously of the person of Jesus Christ, that apostle has found himself in a situation where many of those that he spoke the truth of Christ too have turned their back upon him.

[48 : 40] That seems really grim, does it not? It seems really grim that that should happen. And of course you're tempted to say, well there's Christians for you.

Well no, I wouldn't encourage you to think that. I would say there's sin for you. There's the nature of sin for you. And Paul in his epistle here tells us that there were those that he was seeking to minister to, seeking to speak about Christ to.

And they had turned on him. If you go back to the first chapter, read it for yourself, please do. In verse 15, this thou knowest that all they which are in Asia, all they which are in Asia, the church in other words that is in Asia, turned away from me, of whom are fragellous and hermogenes.

Paul was in prison because of the gospel and some people did not appreciate his imprisonment being for righteousness' sake.

And they disputed what Paul had to teach and they denied the apostleship of Paul on the grounds that were very, very fragile.

[50 : 26] But he wants Timothy to believe. And I think if you want to understand what Paul is saying here, try and understand how circumstances can sometimes colour out judgment.

And if you think of the believer, the young believer, Timothy, and looking at the experiences of Paul, how that would affect his thinking, how that would affect what he thought of the Christian faith, how fragile he himself would feel.

And Paul is concerned that whatever affects Timothy, that it should not affect what he believes about God, what he believes about Christ, what he believes about God's word, what he believes about the truth of the gospel, that he should not allow experiences that are negative to impact upon him.

Unfortunately, we do have such experiences. when you're not a Christian, the wisdom of this world may impact upon your thinking. And you're saying to yourself, well, the world is right, and the Christian is wrong, and the church is wrong, and the Bible is wrong, and God is wrong.

Paul is saying to Timothy, don't allow your thinking to be affected by anything that you see happening to me, or to the church, or to the word of God as the word deals with it.

[52 : 18] Though therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And a lot of the commentators want us to understand that Paul is clear in his emphasis there.

He's not saying to Timothy, be strong, you know, holding out a fist and saying, be strong Timothy, just handle this opposition with fortitude, with resolve, based on your own ability to resist it.

No, he's saying, be strong in the Lord. Be strong in the way that you deal with people according to God's word.

Be strong in the way that you handle God's word, remembering that it is God's word that you have at your disposal and that God has entrusted it to you.

Though therefore, he says, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and so on. So his instructions are to somebody who may be affected by what they see around them and so on.

[53 : 32] But looking more particularly at these words, I want us to think about them today, very briefly. He begins with something that affects or can affect the believer's relationship with Christ.

In verse 11 he says, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. Now that seems to some maybe quite strange to speak about dying with Christ.

What does it mean by it? And there is a danger, quite obviously a danger, because as we said in the context here, what we're reading is that Paul has encountered suffering.

Paul is in prison. Paul has people who belong to the church turning on it. People that he wants associated as believers resisting his message and disputing his apostleship.

And you would imagine that the sufferings that Paul had in mind had all to do with that. And some have suggested that it may be that Paul was thinking of the martyr's death, that maybe Paul was thinking of the future as being very bleak for him, that at some point it would all end with him, being put to death because of his faith.

[55 : 15] But Paul wants the person who is Timothy here to understand that the sufferings that he is speaking of are the sufferings not of a martyr, not even of somebody who is to experience natural death, which is what we are all going to suffer at some point if Christ doesn't come first.

But he wants us to understand the implications of our relationship that the believer has with Jesus Christ. Do you remember when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans?

He writes in chapter 6 stating the following. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, that is Christ's death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that the old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

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

For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Now there's a lot in these words, but essentially what we need to understand is that when Paul is speaking here to Timothy and saying to Timothy that he is dead with Christ, he is identifying something that is essential to the faith that Timothy has that rests upon the passion of Jesus Christ.

[57 : 23] He is speaking in one sense about what is true about a person who comes to put their faith in Christ, and that is that when they put their faith in Christ, they are putting their faith in somebody who is, according to the teachings of the Bible, the sin bearer.

He is somebody who came into the world and as much as everything we can say about him, he is God's son who died on the cross for sin, but the sin for which he died was not his own, but the sins of his people.

And those who put their trust in the Christ that the gospel holds out to them are those who believe that their sins are dealt with by him in his death.

And theologians would say this tells us something about justification by faith. This tells us something that, put it in the simplest terms, which I suppose is open to contradiction and open to misinterpretation, justification means it is just as if you had not sinned.

There's awfully more to it than that. But the teaching that Timothy needs to hold on to is this, that he has died in Christ, and that as somebody who has died in Christ, they have died to their sin.

[59 : 12] Their sin is no longer going to be something that waits for them to be answered to, that will not be required at their hand by God on the great day of judgment.

The sinner's sin, of the believer's sin, are borne by him to the cross. He is the believer's surety, he has paid the debt of the broken law for the believer.

And the fact is, he wants Timothy to understand, as he would want you to understand, that every person who by faith has put their trust in Christ, that they are in Christ, and they live their lives in him and for him.

They are united to him in his death, and shall share, because of that, his life also. It is our faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

The faithful saying, I suppose, has caused many people to wonder what it Paul gets. is he quoting some prophets in the Old Testament? Is he quoting the Lord himself?

[60 : 46] Or is it a collection of sayings that he has gathered together where he can trust the meaning of them to be true? true? But essentially, what Paul is saying to Timothy is, the doctrines of the New Testament allow you to believe that if you have put your trust in Christ, the life that you enjoy through him is eternal life, you will no longer be required to suffer eternal death because Christ died on the cross what God was judging the sinner for.

If you read in his epistle to the Corinthians, the second one, Paul teaches this, for the love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if one died for all then we're all dead.

This is the logical argument that Paul makes. If one died for all then we're all dead he says.

But he goes on, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live for themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.

It's an impeccable logic that Paul has to do with the faith that unites a person to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. The faith that unites them is the very source of Christian life.

[62 : 36] They live with Christ but also what we need to remember is that we live for Christ. There is new life within the Christian which enables them to apply the truth of God to their lives and live consistently with it with the grace that God enables them so to do.

But it needs their application. It needs their willingness. God has made them willing. Of course he has. But it requires them to put into practice the truth that God has made true for them.

a new principle is reigning in their heart. A new life is within them. Now this is where many people get it wrong.

They think that the order is I will do what God tells me to do. And when I do what God tells me to do then God will bless me because I have done what he has said.

and that moment is the moment where you say God is obligated to me. I have done just what God expects and now God is required to give me life.

[64 : 08] But that's the exact opposite of what really happens. it is because there is new life in you the Christian that you are able to do what God asks or what God tells you to do.

And without that new life, without that faith, without that grace, without the infusion that God gives to all who are his believers, by their vital union with Christ by faith, they are not able to do what they would want to do.

read again these words, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we have died with him, in other words, if we have trusted that he died his death on the cross for sin, if we believe that that is what Christ was doing, if by putting my trust in him, my sins are his sins, then his death is my death.

And if that is the case, it follows on that my life is the life that he lives in me, or the life that I live is the result of Christ's life in me.

Sounds complicated, but it sounds. Sounds as if it's impossible, but God makes it possible by his intervention in the life of those who would not and could not, do what he wanted.

[65 : 51] It talks about sufferings, and in the context, as I said, it might make us think that the sufferings that he is talking about are anticipating what the believer will suffer if they are going to be like Paul, or if they are going to be like many others who were like Paul, who would be put to death because of their faith.

death. There are other sufferings that the believer has that do not involve physical death.

if the believer is to persevere in the faith, then they will have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings.

And some of these sufferings may eventually, as the martyr may experience death, but some of these sufferings, which are equivalent to Christ's sufferings, will involve them in being the focus of persecution, or being the focus of those who pour scorn on the life that is led by the believer.

And I know, it makes me wonder at what I hear on television. There's always emphasis placed upon the wrongness of a person being abused because of their sexuality or because of their race.

[67 : 24] And that is quite clearly wrong. Nobody should abuse a person or be guilty of any kind of wrong saying about a person because of any of those things.

But one thing that is overlooked and often takes place is the abuse of a person suffers because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's something that's been in these communities of ours in the workplace. Christians were openly maligned and abused because they were Christian.

Because they chose to follow Christ and they chose to obey God's word and they chose to testify to the change that Christ had made in their life.

And yet in the whole list of things that you heard mentioned that is clearly an abuse of a person's life. Very little is said about the abuse that a Christian suffers because of their profession of faith.

[68 : 43] But it is there and where the Christian is overlooked as if his position doesn't matter, his belief does not matter.

It's easily forgotten but God doesn't forget it. God doesn't overlook it. God saw it in the experience of Christ Jesus.

Jesus encountered it because he said to him even on the cross, this man said he believed in God. Where is his God now? The very thing that put him to the cross is obedience to his God.

And they poured scorn on him as if his belief didn't matter, his faith didn't matter, his God didn't matter.

if we endure, the word suffer is used in the AV, but later on in the next few verses the same word translated suffer is translated endure in this text.

[69 : 55] text. The wider context is that of suffering for the gospel. In verse 9, wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds, he says.

I am unchanged because of what I believe. I am unchanged because of what I preach. I am changed because of the Christ that I witness to. nothing has changed.

The world is not a better place. The world is just as intolerant of Christ today as it ever was. But Paul is not commending suffering for its sake or allowing us to engage in acts that will bring about suffering, but reminding us that we are to persevere if we are Christians, in the face of sufferings that we may have to endure because of our faith.

I know there are many Christians in the workplace who have to bear much because of the people that they work with are so intolerant of the life that they have chosen to embrace.

And if they don't do it openly, they do it covertly. But God knows and God's not blind and God is not indifferent.

[71 : 29] But what God is saying through the apostle to the believer is persevere in the faith because the faith has introduced these sufferings to you, but understand this, that God will bless them to you.

The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. If children and heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, he says, that we may also be glorified together.

It's not the end. Your sufferings, your griefs, your sadnesses, some of you might want to be Christians. Some of you may say to yourself, well one of these days I'll be a Christian, but not today because if I become a Christian today, if I align myself with the cause of Christ, it will expose me to all the negativity that is in the world.

How am I going to have the same friends? How am I going to have the same people enjoying the same things? I can't do without that.

The Apostle Peter said, even here unto you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps. Because we are his, we are joint heirs of his glory and the reward that awaits the reward that he himself has set before us.

[73 : 13] Very quickly we need to understand that the Apostle Paul identifies here for us that there are implications for denying Christ.

You know, the temptation is that if things get difficult that we deny Christ. Just put yourself into the shoes of the Apostle Peter.

There he was in the high priest's hall, following from a discreet distance, Christ. And a scullery maid went to him and said, you too were one of his followers.

And Peter says, not me. I never knew him. Three times as Christ had foretold that was his experience, that was what he did.

There's a danger and we're all exposed to it and we all might do it because of the difficulty there is. if we suffer, he says, we shall also reign with him.

[74 : 31] If we deny him, we also will deny us. If we believe not, he abideth faith for he cannot deny himself. Now that is difficult for us to explain, but explain it very quickly I will.

That there is always a danger for a believer to find themselves in a situation where they will deny their Lord. Even without, all we have to do is say nothing.

If there's a company and we're in it and they start swearing and cursing and whatever, and we say nothing, that we're not in some way guilty of denying Christ, it's easier not to say anything.

but Christ is saying, I will show you I am consistent with what my word teaches you.

People foolishly think that God can do anything and they say that God will do anything. And they're only half right because God will only do what is consistent with his own nature.

[75 : 47] and he's a holy God, therefore he cannot love sin. And the person who's a sinner and who continues in their sin and he says, God is a God of love and yet I am a sinner going on in my sin, God is bound to love me, well that does not conform, it doesn't come together.

the only way God can love a sinner is if this sin is being dealt with and God has dealt with sin in the passion of his only begotten son, Jesus Christ.

He has dealt with it, he has obliterated it, he has removed it and it is no longer standing between a holy God and a sinner.

There's no inconsistency, he cannot violate his own world, he cannot punish innocent creatures, he cannot forget the kind of world that we are in.

He knows all of these things, he is who he is and who is who he says he is. But God in Christ is not only faithful to his promises, promises, which is what we cling on to.

[77 : 11] He is faithful to all his promises, the ones that remind us of the good that will be ours when the day of reckoning comes, but also the things that he is obliged to do to those who have neglected his word and denied himself.

I think it's B.B. Warfield who says that there is a threat under girding what he has to say here. He has to mean what he says, otherwise his word is meaningless.

There is hope for the back slidden, as long as the person who is back slidden did not have a spurious face. The backslider like Peter can be restored, but that restoration will not be without pain, it will not be without suffering, but it will be a restoration on the basis of the promises of God that all who are his, none of them will be lost.

They are at large on the palms of his hand, they are engraven there, it is not just pen and ink, they are written there, and he will not forget them.

But you read what you have here, if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Well, may God in his mercy remind us of all that Christ is to his people.

[78 : 53] He is the sin bearer, he is the one who went to the cross on our behalf, the life that we live in him, we live that life to glorify him in this world and to enjoy the glory that he has laid in store for us.

Those who deny that, deny that their cost, the cost that is immeasurable, but they will know all about it in the day that Christ will bring all to account.

Let us pray. Hear our petitions, O Lord, you are the God who hears and answers prayer. Watch over each one. All we entrust to your care and keeping.

Forgive sin in him. Amen. Our concluding Psalm is Psalm 111. Psalm 111, we're going to sing from verse 5.

We're going to sing to the end of the psalm.

[80 : 12] He God to God herb here and ever Nevermore, His Son, He in His mind will bear.

He did the power of His word, unto His people show, where He the Hegel's heritage upon them is His love.

His hand gave us the truth of life, all His love was the truth.

Undone in good and of rightness, they evermore endure.

His hand redeemed unto His foes, His children and glory.

[82 : 20] It is fallen holy, His name, a prayer renders away.

Wisdom's beginning is not fear, but honors not yet.

Amen.