

Exiles look different

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 August 2023

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] Thank you, Ruth, for reading the first few verses which just remind us of the context.! We're going to be looking at verses 13 through to chapter 2, verse 3, and next week David is going to be taking us on from there.

Let's pray. Lord, we ask that you will give us the appetite like newborn babies to crave the spiritual milk of the Word.

Help the speaker this morning and help us as hearers to drink in what you are saying and that it might take root in our lives and that we would grow through it.

We ask this great mercy of you in Jesus' name. Amen. I've become a little bit of a connoisseur of babies these days.

It's great when you don't have to change them yourself. You just hand them back to somebody else. There's a little baby on the... Which babies have we got? We've got little Kian. We've got Jar Jar.

[1 : 12] Got any other babies here? I mean, I know of other babies. I'm thinking of our grandchildren and etc. And Nick's sister's got a baby, a little baby as well. And so is Jesse's sister.

So a lot of babies around. Babies growing up. They're born tiny little things. Every time I see a newborn baby, I'm surprised at how tiny they are.

All scrunched up. But they grow. And they turn into hulking great things like your good selves. And the first part of it, boys and girls, can you tell me what intake do they have to make them from these tiny little scrunched up things that go...

Like that. To great big bruises like your good selves. What do they take in? Food. Food. Is correct. Now, the particular sort of food that babies have. Milk. Yeah. It's all done on milk. It's amazing. They feed on this watery white stuff.

[2 : 22] And they go from being little tiny things to being... To growing up. And babies develop. I really got interested in this. I can never remember at what stage babies do what.

But they learn to... What things do babies learn? They learn to speak. That's correct. That is not the first thing that they learn, though.

What sort of things do they learn earlier than speaking? I couldn't hear that, was it? They learn to walk.

They do. Before they learn to walk, they learn to something else. Crawl. Yeah. And I think babies are so interesting when they learn to crawl. Because they know they do this with their hands.

And what our grandchildren do, they do this, but they do it the wrong way around. So they go backwards. And they get stuck under tables. And they get stuck under chairs. Because they don't quite know how it works.

[3 : 21] But they go through stages. They learn to move. They learn to grab things. In the end, they learn to talk. Which is pretty amazing. And then they grow up and they become part of a family.

And they do things together. So perhaps as a family, you have or you might or you will go on holiday together. And you all have to help.

You all have to carry stuff and work together. And one of the important things that children have to learn as they grow up is there.

To do what daddy and mummy... T something LL. T H something M. T something D something. I don't know. They have to learn what daddy and mummy... I have no idea here.

[4 : 20] Gracie was first. Tell them to do something. That's right. That's what I was aiming for. Tell them to do. Do what mummy and daddy tell them. What important lessons.

I think a little round of applause. We're getting all those words. Yes. And actually, this matters a lot to God. Because he's put one of the ten words that he gave to Israel.

One of the key things he gave to Israel. Honor your father and mother. Honor your father and mother. It's built into the old covenant.

And it carries on into the new covenant. Jesus took this to heart. He always did what his heavenly father wanted.

It's one of the key things about Jesus. He says, I can do nothing on my own. But only what the father shows me. He never did stuff on his own. He only did it in the closest relationship with his heavenly father.

[5 : 21] Now, this passage, I think, we can understand it as being to do with growing up as children in the Christian life.

So, let's just do a little recap from last time. The Apostle Paul is writing to a network of Christians who are just beginning to experience marginalization that precedes actual persecution.

And you could, I think, it's a reasonable summary of the letter to say what Peter says at the end. I've written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying to you.

This is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. You're not wrong. You haven't put your eggs in the wrong basket. Being a Christian is where God is at.

It is the true grace of God. And stand fast in it. Whether it's persecution or whatever, you stand fast in it. And we looked at the, geographically, the churches were in this area of what we would now call Turkey, Bithynia, Pontus, Cappadocia, blah, blah, blah.

[6 : 26] And that's where they are geographically. But spiritually, the first few verses tell us they're caught up in the eternal trinity. So, in God's eyes, these are very special people.

Socially, they're like exiles, like the ancient Jews who went over to Babylon. And in Babylon, it was only their temporary home. And their real home was somewhere else.

And these are exiles. Their real home is glory. And Peter reminds them of this fairly early on. You've been born again into a living hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

You're not at home. You will be one day when Jesus is revealed. And we looked at the now and the future. Now you might have to suffer grief. In the future, there will be glory.

Already, you have salvation. Already, you have real faith. Already, you have genuine hope. Already, you genuinely love the Lord Jesus. You're in the middle of the now and the not yet.

[7 : 34] And the already. And he says, this is what the Christian life really is. Stand fast in it. And looking at standing fast. It's holding on in faith to the grace that Jesus has already given us, despite persecution.

But here, I think he's talking about holding on to the pressure, despite the pressure, to live as if nothing had changed. There's a big pressure to live as if nothing had changed.

He says, I want you to resist that because your lives have changed. Not giving in to pressure to live as if they had not received grace. And to live in the sort of ethical sense, the moral sense, the way you behave.

There's several words about behavior. In verse 14, he says, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

He says, what you conform to in the way you behave. And verse 17, he says, live out your time as foreigners here. And the translation live out, meaning conduct yourselves in a certain way.

[8 : 45] And in verse 18, he talks about an empty way of life. You are redeemed from the empty way of life. The empty conduct.

The way you used to conduct yourselves. But now it's different. And this is what he's going to be talking about. The way we behave. I mean, he's addressing us as well.

If it's true for them, it's true for us. The way we behave. And I'm always interested in how you put this across.

And I think he does it in a jumpy way. So I found it quite difficult to get all his different thoughts into some sort of order. But it does seem to me that a lot of what he's saying is based on the idea of being born again.

He said at the beginning, you've been born again. And I think that underlies at least quite a bit of what's in this passage. So let's work through it.

[9 : 50] How does he address their conduct? How does he say this is how you should live? How does he address their behavior? So I've got four answers.

One is how he doesn't do it. He doesn't do it saying you earn your salvation by being good people. Answer number two, I think, is to do with being a functioning family.

So I'm going to talk about obedient children. Number three, he talks about their homeland. Their heavenly home. And number four, he talks about their source of life and energy, which is the word. So I'm sorry, those aren't very memorable headings, are they? But hopefully at least they make some sort of sense. How he doesn't do it, number one. Number two is to do with family.

Number three is to do with home. And number four is to do with food, if you like, the source of life and energy. It might make some sort of sense as we go through.

[10:53] So what does he not say? He's trying to get them to behave as they should. And he does not say, you need to behave well to earn your salvation.

Now that is the normal thing that people, human beings think. They think, if I live a good enough life, then if there is a God, he's bound to pardon me.

That's right, that's what most people say, isn't it? If I try hard enough, if I'm reasonably good, I can get to heaven by my human effort.

And it's interesting that most people think that they're sort of good and that God will think that they're okay. This is not what he says.

This is not the Christian message. Just to emphasize that, the Christian message is not live a good life so that God will pardon you in the end.

[11:55] That's not what the Bible says. It says something completely different. That's what people think. Sort of default position.

God will accept you if you earn it by your good life. But Christianity says, you will want to live a good life because you are already accepted by God.

Opposite way around. And this is what he says in verse 18. He said something about their behavior in verse 17.

And then verse 18 he says, For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. He says, you have been redeemed.

[13:12] And he says, you don't redeem yourself, but you have been redeemed. And just to recap, redeeming means to be brought back from slavery or captivity by the payment of price or the expenditure of effort.

So I already gave this example of a sister being sold into slavery to pay the bills, cost of living. I mean, what else can you do? And just imagine uncle steps in and says, this is terrible.

Fancy selling Bethany as a slave. It won't do. I will put up the money to buy her back. And uncle says, I will put up the money.

And you later learn that he had to sell his favorite car to get the money. And he had to sell his huge TV to get the money. And he had to sell his house with a great big swimming pool to get the money. She must have been sold for a lot, mustn't she? I would think a couple of million at least, worth every penny. But uncle put up two million quid.

[14:26] What would you think? What would you think about uncle if he'd done that? What would you think? He's very generous, yeah. How would, if you were a family member, how would you feel toward uncle?

Grateful. Yeah, you would, wouldn't you say? Oh, I'm so, you're so great. I'm so grateful. We really needed help. You stepped in. And you did it at enormous cost yourself.

We're so grateful. And here we're told, Christian, you have been redeemed. But it wasn't with money.

It was with the blood of Jesus. And he says, this is precious. Precious blood was shed for you.

And that, surely, is going to change things. I mean, the normal person, on hearing the story that I told, which is imaginary, I'll just stress that, would be very grateful and would naturally want to express that.

[15:35] How much more are Christians in a position of being grateful to our Savior? And are we grateful?

This should produce a response within us, shouldn't we, if we've grasped what he's done for us. The greater the redemption, the greater the gratitude, the greater the impact.

And for Christians, this huge, almost unimaginable cost paid for us, just think how grateful we should be and what an impact this should make on us.

A small redemption, a small impact. A great redemption, a great impact. And the classic Christian response is, Lord, you've done so much for me. What can I withhold from you?

The classic Christian, I give my whole life to you in gratitude and in response. There's nothing I can hold back. Lord, I give myself to you.

[16:48] That's only reasonable. And this is the basis that he uses to talk about behavior. So you're not trying to earn salvation, but he's done so much for you.

How can you possibly withhold anything from him? You have been redeemed, not with perishable stuff, but with the precious blood of a lamb.

So, first thing here, the way that he approaches this, not by telling us that we save ourselves by our good works.

Second thing, second answer that I'd like to come to is the matter of the purpose of salvation and the matter of obedience.

I'm just trying to put these things together to make some sort of sense of them. God has a purpose in salvation. He is aiming for something.

[17:52] And he is not aiming simply to end up with a group of people who are forgiven and carry on just as they were. But that people would be changed.

And he is looking for a group of people who become, these are my words, little fountains of willing, active goodness.

And walking around in this world, little sources of blessing, little examples of heaven. Walking around.

That's what he's aiming for. That's the purpose of it. That's what he is like. He is a fountain of goodness. And he loves that. And he hates sin.

Just notice in verse 17, he says, you call on a father who judges each person's work impartially. So he's saying, please don't think that because you're a Christian, when you sin, God says, oh, that doesn't really matter.

[18:56] I don't count that as sin. After all, that's one of my chums. When we sin, it's still sin. God is impartial. He says, well, if so and so, you know, if some evil person had done that, I'd count that as sin.

And if you as a Christian do that, I'd count that as sin too. So let's be real about this. God does care about what goes on in our lives. And you might object and say, well, I was told in Christianity I'm set free.

And that means I don't have to do anything that anyone tells me. I just do what I want. And if you're thinking that that's what the Christian life is, you really haven't understood it at all.

You're not free if that's what you're saying. You're a slave. But you're a slave to yourself and your selfishness. That's what sin is, really. True freedom is freedom to be who God wants you to be and to do what God wants you to do.

That's real freedom. That's what you are meant to be. So just coming in on this idea of a functioning family. Born again for active obedience.

[20:13] So let's just follow this through. See if you can follow my thought on this. On chapter 1 verse 3 he says, In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope.

So born again. Given new birth. It's one of the classic Christian sayings or ideas that you must be born again.

Normal life is not where it's at. You need a big change in your life to be born again. In verse 23 he says, You have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God.

And when he refers to this new life, this new birth, he includes in it obedience. It's in verse 2. You were born again through the sanctifying work of the Spirit in obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood.

So right at the beginning he's saying this new life that you have is a life in which obedience is instinctive. And in verse 14 he says, he addresses them, and I think this is important that he says this, As obedient children.

[21:38] Or if you like, as children of obedience. What sort of children are you now you've been born again? You're obedient children. You've got that in you to be obedient.

In verse 22 he says, you have purified your souls by obeying the truth. So right at the beginning of the Christian life is a principle of obedience.

When we believe the gospel it is actually an act of obedience, isn't it? Believe what you're told and you come into faith and obedience. So this principle is there and he says, that's a principle for you to live out.

Just think back to Jesus. For him, if anybody could have said, well I'm not going to do what I'm told, I'm going to do my own thing. I'm the son of God after all.

That's exactly what Jesus didn't say. He says, I come to do the Father's will. For Jesus it is the rightful thing and the delightful thing to obey his Father.

[22 : 51] It's not a burden but a delight. And I think you could even go as far as to say that at the heart of the universe is a trinity in which the eternal Son delights to do the will of the eternal Father.

I think you could take it back as far as that and say this is at the heart of the universe. This idea of the Son honouring the Father and expressing perfectly the Father's will.

So if we bring that back down to us, what is God's purpose? His purpose is to have people who show him through their obedience.

He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. He chose us to be like that. Or Hebrews chapter 2 verse 10, to bring many sons to glory.

A son is an obedient relationship to the Father. Or Romans 8, 29, the firstborn among many brothers.

[23 : 55] We are to be, to emulate the way Jesus did things. He obeyed his Father and so should we. And the specific thing that's mentioned here is in verse 16.

The Father, just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. For it is written, be holy because I am holy.

It's a command. Be holy. And we're to obey it. To be holy because God is holy. Loving what God loves.

Hating what God hates. Doing what God says. And if you'd like some examples of how that would work out, I guess the fruit of the Holy Spirit would be an example where it produces within us love. Joy. Peace. Forbearance. Kindness. Gentleness. Faithfulness. Sorry, goodness I mean.

[24 : 59] Self-control. These things, at least, are what it is to be holy. Be holy people. So, something there about obedience as children.

Third thing. This matter of the heavenly home. Born again with a new home.

To belong to a home of heavenly glory. Right, this has got out of order. Boys and girls, did you know this? In Sri Lanka, people don't eat their rice and curry with a knife and fork, but with their fingers.

Did you know that? It's right, isn't it? It is the best way to eat curry. Because you don't have these nasty metal things in your mouth.

Yuck. Yuck. How can you do that? But you clean your hands first, of course. But you can mix up the flavours and you can make a little bit of this and mix it up with that and you make it all into a nice little tasty ball and you go bang into your mouth.

[26 : 13] Beautiful way to eat. Best way. Best way to eat. And I'd like you to imagine a Sri Lankan family. Do you get the idea? This is how Sri Lankan people eat. A Sri Lankan family living in England and the children say, Oh, mum, dad, everybody else at school is eating with a knife and fork.

Can't we eat with a knife and fork? And mum and dad say, Well, here we are in England. Yeah, I know people eat with a knife and fork, but one day we're going to go back home and we'll eat the proper way.

And let's eat the proper way here while we're in our house. Let's think about the way we do things when we're at home in Sri Lanka and we'll do it here in our home.

Let's start now. Let's eat the proper way at home with our fingers. This is an example. Do you get the idea of it? And I tried to think of an example. That's all I could come up with.

I think Peter is saying, We have a home. They do things a certain way. Our home is in heaven.

Now, I know we're here on earth for the time being, but let's, as best we can, let's do things the way we really ought to do them.

[27 : 29] I'm not talking about eating with our fingers, but I'm talking about living in a heavenly way because we're going to go home to heaven. That's where we really belong. And I think that's the sort of thing that Peter has in mind when he says in verse 13, Therefore, with minds that are alert

and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

He's saying, look forward, think about that world, and then let that affect the way you behave here on earth. Live in a heavenly way.

He talks in verse 22. Now that you have purified your souls by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for one another, love one another deeply from the heart.

Let's see whether I'm at least on the right track here.

He's telling people to love one another. And that love, I've got love deeply. You've got love one another deeply.

[28 : 54] The word means sort of like strenuously. Putting effort into it. Love one another from the heart. And I think it's fair to make this connection and say, heaven is a world of love.

And when we love one another, we are living the sort of way heaven is, even here when we're on earth.

We'll take that transition then from verse 13 to verse 14, where he says, think about the grace that will be revealed. And now, as obedient children, live, do not conform to the evil desires that you had when you lived in ignorance.

Perhaps a more, perhaps the connection I'm trying to make is a little bit subtle. But it's certainly here in Colossians 3. Since you've been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Therefore, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bear with one another, forgive one another, put on love, which binds all things together.

[30 : 26] There's something here, isn't there? We're headed for home. We're headed for heaven. Let our lives here already have a heavenly quality.

Let's behave in a heavenly way while we're here on earth. So, a born again to a home of heavenly glory. And lastly, in terms of influencing our behavior, a new source of energy, born again by the word of God.

Now, I'm looking down at verse 22, 23, around there, where he says, you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

For all flesh, all people, are like grass, and their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this, says Peter, intriguingly, is the word that was preached to you. And then he says, therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

[31 : 59] I'm just trying to pull this together and to say that here he's saying, here's a reason to change your behavior because of this food, if you like, this new source of energy in life, the word of God.

So we looked at what newborn babies want, and the answer is, they want milk. Quite remarkably insistent, you know, you might have memories or you might, thankfully, have moved those memories all to one side, have been woken up in the middle of night unceasingly by a hungry baby who won't go back to sleep until it gets milk.

Milk, milk, there, there, milk, milk. Now, milk, what does it do? It keeps them alive and it helps them to grow, quite remarkably so.

And what does Peter say is like milk for Christians? Well, I think he's saying the word of God is like milk for Christians. And he's actually very interested in this matter of the word and it flows through all the things he's saying, actually.

In, when he says, be holy for I am holy, he's quoting from the Old Testament from Leviticus, which is an interesting place to quote from because most Christians try and avoid that.

[33 : 27] But he says, this is actually, this is a key thing here. It says in the Old Testament Leviticus, be holy for I am holy. So this applies to you Christians through Jesus Christ. And he's already said about the prophets in verse 10, actually, the prophets prophesied about Christ and the glories that would follow.

So he's interested in the prophetic word of the Old Testament. And then in verse 12, he linked it up with the preached word. They spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

So he's very into the word, isn't he? The Hebrew scriptures, even the difficult parts, the prophets as they look forward and the thing that you heard when you first heard Christian preaching, it all fits together in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he says, this word caused you to be born again. It's in verse 23. You've been born again. Now, the classic Christian, if you ask a Christian how to be born again, you'd say, this is by the Spirit. You need to be born again by the work of the Holy Spirit, which is true. But interestingly, Peter says it a different way. He says, you've been born again by the word, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God.

[34 : 57] The word had power in itself to bring you to new life. And of course, it is in conjunction with the Spirit, but the bit he points out is here, the power of the word.

It's a seed which grows. It's imperishable, he says. Imperishable seed, living and enduring. So you've got a really high view of the word of God.

The word of God is living and active. It says here, imperishable. It's a bit of heaven, sort of, that you can hear, an audible bit of heaven or you can see written.

And it's enduring. Nothing will remove it. Jesus told a parable, didn't he, about a farmer sowing seed in his field. Do you remember the parable of the sower sowing the seed?

And it falls in different places and does different things. And they ask him to explain it and he says, well, the seed is the word.

[35 : 59] Yeah. And perhaps Peter's remembering hearing Jesus saying that when he talks about the seed is the word. And another thing here in verse 24, he quotes from the Bible, all people are like grass, their glory is like the flowers of the field, the grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

He's quoting from the Bible. So do you see how much the word of God is in his thinking? He's quoting from it, drawing from it, saying this is what's affected you and the preaching of the gospel sort of encapsulates it all and sort of spearheads the effect of the word.

And this quote is a... Why are you quoting this, Peter? I don't think he's just quoting it because it says something nice about the word of the Lord.

I think he's saying, if you take it back into the context, it's Isaiah saying that human plans will fall, but God's plan to redeem Israel and rebuild Jerusalem will prevail.

And Peter is saying, yeah, that's right, and that is fulfilled when people who weren't Christians hear the gospel and believe it and this is the word that was preached to you.

[37 : 30] There's a fantastic set of connections he's making. So, at least he's emphasizing the word. And continuing on that subject in verse 2 of chapter 2, he says, crave this pure spiritual milk.

Interesting, isn't it? He's saying, how are you going to grow? How are you going to stay alive? Well, think of how babies do it. They need milk, milk, milk, and you need word, word, word.

You need to be drawing on the word. You need to be drinking in the word. You need to be feeding on the word. You need to have the word running through you to give you life so that you, he says, so that you may grow in your salvation.

That's a pretty realistic thing to say, isn't it? I mean, Christian, what's your relationship with God's word? Do you crave it as babies crave milk?

I mean, I guess it wouldn't be entirely cruel to say, at the back of Christian's mind is how little of God's word can I manage today? I'm quite busy. How little can I make do with?

[38 : 48] Whereas Peter is saying, actually, how much can you take in? Crave this spiritual milk so that you can grow.

Interesting that, isn't it? And perhaps something that we should take on board, that are we craving pure spiritual milk? It's the word that predicted Christ.

It's the word that's fulfilled in the good message of Jesus Christ. It's the word by which God came into your life and changed you forever. And it's the thing that continues to give you life and energy. And if you think about milk, milk from a warm, loving, human mother makes babies into warm, loving, growing humans.

I mean, they're made of milk, aren't they? And he says, you guys, just crave that milk. It's pure, he says.

[39 : 47] Crave pure spiritual milk. Pure meaning, it hasn't got faults in it. It hasn't got, what's the word, pollution in it. It hasn't got, what word am I looking for?

Impurities. It hasn't got impurities in it. It is pure spiritual milk. And he says that, well, I'm trying to make this connection, I think it makes some sort of sense, that the quality of the milk affects the people who eat it or drink it.

If it's pure and spiritual, it makes us pure spiritual people. And he says, there's a taste, verse 3, you've tasted that the Lord is good.

There's a goodness in this diet. And if, just to continue the analogy of babies, I don't know, babies, our grandson used to love gravel.

Ah, gravel. Where does it go? In the mouth, in the mouth. And you say, no, you shouldn't be putting gravel in your mouth, you should be putting milk or mushed up mush, which is what babies go on to next.

[41 : 02] Get rid of that. Proper food. And if you like, maybe this illustration works, he says, there's some stuff to spit out.

And he lists it in 2, verse 1. Rid yourselves of, malice and deceit. Malice is nastiness, wanting bad things for other people.

He says, just spit that out. You don't want to be thinking like that. Deceit is when relationships are based on truth and true communication.

Deceit is when you undermine that by falsehood. He says, just spit that out. hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, play acting, hiding the reality of who we are.

I know we don't have to reveal absolutely everything about ourselves, but we can be honest, we're all sinners, aren't we? We're all people who have failed the Lord in one way or another.

[42 : 05] We all need help, we all need forgiveness. He says, don't be a hypocrite and pretend you're something you're not. Envy. Envy is despising God's providence.

It's saying, God chose to give such and such to somebody, such and such to somebody, and such and such to me. I'm unhappy with that. It's despising God's providence. Spit that out.

Spit that out. Envy. Slander of every kind, he says, is trying to belittle somebody by destroying their good name. We should be concerned for the good name of other people, their good reputation.

Slander is when we chip away at that and vandalise that and try to destroy that. He says, just spit that out. Get some milk. It's pure. It's spiritual.

It'll build you up. Anyway, I've been trying to lead us in our thinking about how we behave and the motives for our behaviour.

[43 : 07] here. And I've said, number one, our motive isn't because that's how we're going to be saved by being good.

Our motive is being grateful for redemption. Yeah? We're redeemed by the precious blood of a lamb. What a price. How that should affect us.

How grateful we should be. Number two, thinking about this matter of an obedient family. God doesn't want us just to be forgiven and stay exactly the same.

He wants change because he's looking to produce a community of people who in their own little way echo the Lord Jesus, who was obedient and always loved to do what the Father said.

Thirdly, like the Sri Lankan way of eating, the proper way of eating, when we're at home, everybody will be eating like that. Here, can we live like heaven?

[44 : 12] Heaven is a world of love. Heaven is a world of purity. All those sorts of things. Can we live now as in the heaven that we're heading for?

And fourthly, the source of energy, the food, the seed that brought us to faith in the first place, and the food that keeps us going, it's a seed, it's milk.

Let's spit out the opposite stuff, and let's feed on. Let's suck in as much milk of the word as we possibly can.

sing together how great thou art.

And this looks forward to our heavenly home. It says, when I think that God, his son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in. So it reminds us of our redemption, and it also says, when Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.

[45 : 24] So we're looking forward and we're looking back with gratitude and looking forward with anticipation.