

# Envy, riches and fulness

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Date: 26 January 2014

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please then turn to Romans chapter 11 which Ruth read to us. Here are some questions that people might have. How can we keep and maintain the unity of the church?

! Unity of the church is an important thing and the best time to think about it is when it's not a problem so that we are prepared.

We are ahead of the game. How can we be motivated in making the gospel known? How can we keep being fresh and positive about going out with the gospel?

How can we think about our own salvation as we reflect on what God's done for us? What compartments should we put that in into our mind?

And how should we think about the destiny of others? As we look around and we say some countries the gospel seems to be taking off, going well.

[ 1 : 07 ] In our country churches are either holding their own or even closing. What's going on with that? And how can we be people who think about all things like this with trust and worship so that we're not knocked off course but we are able to process all these things in a way which says thanks be to God.

Well there's some quite big questions there but I think that's why Paul has written Romans 9 to 11. He's writing in a particular situation and he's writing to a particular church but I think those are the sort of issues he's addressing.

So he has in the back of his mind there are Jews and Gentiles in the church that I'm writing to. They're very tempted not to get on with each other because there are huge historic divisions between them.

How can I help them to think in a way which helps them to agree and get on together? And how can they be a church which is committed to supporting the work of mission, of going out with the gospel?

Paul wants them to be behind him. How can I get them to be enthusiastic about that? And sort of like the first question, how can I help them to get on well together?

[ 2 : 46 ] Not just to manage but actually deeply to be able to not look down on one another, not resent one another, but praise God with one heart, with one mouth and be a unified church.

And for this particular church the issue is the issue of how Jew and Gentile are to hold hands together as it were, rather than knocking each other down.

So I think these are the thoughts he has in his mind when he writes this particular section of the letter to the Romans. And I need to give you a little introduction to say what he's been saying so far. So the particular crunch point is that Israel has rejected Jesus Christ. So Jews believe differently to Christians, almost by definition.

And this, if you think about it, is really quite something. Because the Jews of all people should have recognised Jesus Christ and should have believed in him.

[ 4 : 04 ] So if you think of a Bible, there's my Bible. The, what we would call the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, the Scriptures that the Jews had, is that part of it.

That part of it is the Christian part, the Greek part, written in Greek. And you think, if they have so much of the Bible, how do they manage?

And if Jesus Christ is predicted in the Bible and described in the Bible and is the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures, how come they missed it? And it really is a very deep puzzle.

And Paul says that it's a little bit like somebody walking along and coming up on a rock. And there's two things that you can do.

You can either stand firm on the rock, or you can stumble over the rock. And Paul says that, if you look in chapter 9, verse 32, he says that the Jews have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

[ 5 : 19 ] As it is written, see, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall. So they've stumbled. But Gentiles, who were completely ignorant and didn't have the Bible, find themselves believing in Jesus Christ.

This is a really remarkable thing. And he says, what's been going on? In chapter 9, verse 30, he says, The Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it.

A righteousness that is, as I've written there, by faith. But Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not?

Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works. And as he says, in chapter 9, verse 32, Yep, they pursued it not by faith, but by works.

They stumbled over the stumbling stone. And in chapter 10, verse 3, he says, They did not know the righteousness that comes from God, but sought to establish their own.

[ 6 : 29 ] They did not submit to God's righteousness. He says, there is this big divergence. You can come up to Christ and respond in two completely different ways.

And the key to it is whether you will put your trust in him, regardless of what you have personally achieved, or whether you will try to be righteous by your own good works and have established your own righteousness.

And Paul says Israel is the prime example of this. Christ came up into their history. And some of them believed, but others said, No, we don't want to do it that way.

And this is what Paul has been going into considerable detail about. How does that happen? How does that happen?

What sort of God is it who allows that, or plans that, or supervises it, or whatever? How does that happen?

[ 7 : 40 ] And this begins to involve us in some very deep things. Now, as I've pointed out before, Paul could make chapters 9 to 11 very quick by saying, Well, everybody has free will, and they either choose this or not.

God can't do anything about that. That's all there is to it. But he doesn't say that. He doesn't use the free will argument. But he says things like this.

He says that salvation is by God's grace. He says that God is kind to save people.

And that leads to all sorts of questions. Well, why is God kind to some people, but not kind to others? Is this how it is? And he says there is a deep truth here that God is a God who chooses who he will show his grace to.

It's the way he has always worked. And Paul gave examples of the families back in the Hebrew Scriptures where one child was chosen and blessed even though they didn't deserve it, and the other child was just passed by.

[ 8 : 50 ] And he says this is the way God has always done it. It's always to do with his generosity and his kindness rather than human deserving. And then Paul has also brought in the fact that there is a free offer of the Gospel.

That God freely says to everybody, if you come to Jesus Christ, you will be saved. If you put your trust in him, you will be saved.

Look at what he's done. That's sufficient for you. You need what Christ did. Trust him for it. There is the free offer. But there is also, and this gets quite mysterious, there is a hardening process whereby people hear that offer but reject it, and then maybe they hear it again and they reject it more, and then maybe they're completely hard.

And the example of that in the Bible is Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who refused to let God's people go, and he got harder and harder. And you may have puzzled over this in your own life.

Perhaps you have, perhaps you are a Christian and there are people in your family who heard much the same as you did who are not Christians. And you may wonder about how hard they have become.

[ 10 : 19 ] So there is a mystery of a hardening process. And in chapter 11, verse 7, he says, What then Israel sought so earnestly, what Israel sought so earnestly did not obtain, but the elect did, the chosen ones did, the others were hardened.

And we'll come and look at that again in a moment. And then we also have the truth of being a free moral agent or personal responsibility. responsibility. If you reject God, you can't turn to God and say, It's your fault because you made me like that.

It's your fault for rejecting him. And if you begin to try and think through how all that fits together, you very soon realize that it's beyond human capacity to make all those things fit neatly together. And we have to stop and instead of saying, Well, I've got that, to say, Wow, I haven't got that. God's way of working is amazing. So Israel heard.

Israel had so many privileges, but she rejected that and ends up being blind blind and deaf and hard.

[ 11 : 43 ] That's what Paul says in 11, verse 8. God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see, ears that could not hear to this very day.

And the question that Paul is now getting to is, Well, okay, you've described all this. Here are a particular group of people, and there's many other groups of people in a similar position, but here's this particular group of people, the Jews, who have heard so much, had so many privileges, rejected it, turned their back, and become opponents of the gospel.

Does this mean that God has finally and totally shut the door on Israel? That's the question that he's asking.

Does that mean, in fact, that no Jews will ever be saved now? Because they've behaved so badly that they've got no further chance.

And I want to say that this is an important question for us, because you might be thinking, actually, I've behaved extremely badly too. And I would hate to hear that even if I wanted to turn back to God, because I'd behaved so badly, the door was shut on me.

[ 13 : 10 ] And you know, if God didn't shut the door on Israel, then it gives us hope. Maybe God won't shut the door on me either.

And if you think about people, perhaps in your family, who are hard of heart, you might take some comfort. God hasn't yet shut the door on hard-hearted people.

Well, that's assuming the answer is no. So let's have a look at what Paul actually says and try and follow it through. So I dare say are you with me so far?

Yes. Ah, Mark's here. Good. Yeah. Thank you. Right. So here's the question. Are the Jews written off? So chapter 11, verse 1, we'll look at actually what it says. I ask then, did God reject his people? And he asks a similar question in verse 11. Again, I ask, did they stumble beyond, so as to fall beyond recovery? And he asks a question twice and twice he says, no way, by no means.

[ 14 : 23 ] And that's a pretty amazing statement, isn't it? Especially to say it twice. Are they so bad? Have they been so perverse and contrary that God finally loses patience and shuts the door?

And Paul says, no. I think there's actually a deep encouragement there, because you might be thinking, oh, I've had lots of chances and I've messed things up hugely lots of times, and I really wouldn't be surprised if God shut the door, but he didn't shut the door on them, and he hasn't shut the door on you.

So I want to follow this through, it's particularly about the way God deals with this group of people, and I'm conscious that in some churches and in some branches of Christian theology, the subject of Israel gets out of all proportion, and let me say that what Paul is talking here, there is not a single mention of land, he is not talking about geography, he is not talking about politics, I know that some Christian people feel that the Bible gives us a certain political stance on Israel, there's not a hint of that here, I know that some Christians would say that the Bible talks about Israel's military success, but I say there's not a hint of that here at all, it is about salvation, that's what it's about, verse 15, if their rejection is reconciliation, of the world, sorry it's not verse 15, it ought to be verse 15, why isn't it not verse 15, verse 14,

Paul says I want to arouse my own people to envy and save some of them, that's what he's talking about, for him, that is the concern, will they believe in Jesus Christ, and he says it again in verse 26, so in this way all Israel will be saved, so, I'm not going to talk about politics or land or anything like that, I'm just going to talk about salvation, and I also say two other things, number one, these are the deep things of God, they are deep things, and we'll have to listen carefully and probably work hard mentally, but can I say, if you're listening to this and you think, oh well it's not very deep, I prefer to hear something else deep, I think you're mistaken, Paul says the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, this is the deep stuff,

I mean there are many deep things in the Bible, this is certainly one of them, if not the deepest, and let me also say, I can't do the whole chapter and I'm not going to try and do the whole chapter today, but let me say it at least this way, I'm not going to pull a rabbit out of a hat, at the end, some of you who've been thinking about the reading, will be wondering about the end, and what I'm going

to say is, I'm not going to pull a rabbit out of a hat, and suddenly give you a completely different picture, because I don't think that's what Paul is doing, anyway you have to wait till next week to make sense of that remark, so, has God totally rejected his people?

[ 17 : 46 ] No, here are some reasons for saying it, proof number one, what God did for Paul, so I read the text, Paul says, did God reject his people?

By no means, look at me, I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Jacob, so, first reason, me, says Paul, look, I don't know whether you realise this, but I'm a preacher of Christ, but once I was an extreme Jew, and I used to have my scrolls, and my book of the law, and telling people to do stuff, and I was as keen as anybody on the righteousness that was achieved by the law, in fact, I outshone many of my colleagues in my diligence, and my self-control, in my radicalness, and that's what I used to be, says Paul, but now I'm a Christian, and I say to people, believe in Jesus Christ, so, number one, has God turned his back on Jews, well, no, because I'm one of them, says Paul, and Paul often, well, not often, but he sees himself as being the sort of example that we're supposed to learn from, he was thoroughly into Judaism, he used to persecute Christians, I don't know even whether he killed Christians, but Paul would say, if God showed mercy to me, I'm a prime example of mercy, if he can do that for me, he can do it for you, this is worthy of all, this is saying, worthy of all acceptance that Christ came into the world to save sinners, says Paul, of whom I am the number one example, so number one is me, if him then maybe me too, number two, God has always in his policy kept a remnant, so number two, and I'm not dealing with all the statements in this text, but this is what it says, verse two, God did not reject his people whom he foreknew, don't you know what scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he appealed to

God against Israel, Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars, I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me, so this is back in Israel's history, when there was hardness and unbelief and rejection, a bit like what Paul experienced, and what did God say?

God said, what was God's answer verse four? I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

[ 20 : 46 ] He says that's what God did then. It looked terrible, and it was terrible, but God had things in his hand that as a matter of his policy, he said, I'm not going to let it be a total defeat, totally black situation, I'm going to save some people, and I've got them in my hand.

It's not the whole lot, but there's still what the Bible says a remnant, a small group, saved by grace, and that's what Paul says, and that's how it is now, there is still a remnant saved by grace, grace, so here's the prophet Elijah, saying, oh it's me, only me, and here's everybody else with their Baal, I don't know what Baal worship looked like, but I did a sort of Easter Island figure there with everybody jumping around and worshipping Baal, and God says, well actually I've got a group of people, I've got a small group of people, saved by grace, they are chosen by grace, and their stand is not on how much they've done, but how they trust God in his mercy, verse 5, and Paul says it's the same now, he's talking about now, so too at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace, and if by grace then it is no longer by works, if it were grace, it would no longer be grace, it's not to do with how good they are and how strong they've been, it's

God's grace, I seem to be repeating myself on this matter because the scripture is emphatic, we're saved by grace, and what about then these people who worship Baal, how come they were hard, how come they were unbelieving, how come they were rejecting, well he says it's the same picture as it's always been and he gives us two quotes, verse 7, what then, what Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain but the elect did, the others were hardened, the others were hardened, and what does hardening look like, well it looks like this, verse 8, God gave them a spirit of stupor, stupor is when you go to sleep and people can't wake you up, have you ever had that expression, have you ever had that experience, my son, when he's in his late teenage years lost his key, a key to the house, and what he claims is, that while we were asleep in the upstairs bedroom with the window slightly open, he climbed up the wall, opened the window, crept in through our room, while we were asleep, and went to bed quietly and we didn't know anything about it until he owned up to it the following day, so God had given us a spirit of stupor, we were totally ignorant of all that was going on around us, and it says here that these people spiritually had a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see what was in front of them, and ears so that they could not hear, and that's what he says, to this very day, that's what it's like, and he also quotes

David from Psalm 69, this psalm is about him being king, and being rejected, and he says, if they've rejected the king, then God do this to them, may their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them, may their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever, it's pretty tough stuff isn't it, so he's actually praying, Lord if they're rejecting the king, then make them like that, make them so that they get to the point that they can't wake up and they can't hear and they can't believe, it's really rather tough isn't it, but it does mean it's so important how we respond to Jesus Christ, even at this moment as you're hearing something about Jesus Christ, you may be inching forward saying, I'd really like to know more about this, or you may be backing off saying, the more I hear the less I like, if you back off, do be careful, it's an invitation to

God to give you a hardened heart, don't get a hard heart, see to it that there is not a hard heart among you, says the writer of the Hebrews, or something to that effect, don't let yourself get hard, pray to God, Lord, I wanted to know, please give me that motivation, give me that drive, I don't want to forget how important it is to be saved, don't let me get hard.

[ 26 : 01 ] So there's what he says in those two proofs. Number one, what God did for Paul himself, and number two, God has always had a remnant by grace, maybe you could ask, Lord, if it's by grace, I know I don't deserve it, but please could it be me, could you open my eyes, could you give your gift of salvation to me, don't let me get hard, Lord, you have for other people, but please don't let me get hard.

Now let's take his argument on two or three more steps, and I'm afraid we'll have to finish the rest next week. So let's go on now from verse 11, where he asks the question again, did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?

And now he's taking us on into some extra thoughts, or some developed thoughts, which I'll try and summarize. And I want to try and try to get a bit of a hold on this, and my first thought is that even hardening, amazingly, has an inner dynamic that leads to salvation.

And you may say, no, that can't be true, that can't be right. But I'm saying, this is what Paul says, there's something in the depth of God's wisdom that even hardening leads to salvation.

And here's the prime example, so let me try and draw this out. So number one, the hardening of Israel is the prime example that hardening and rejection leads to blessing elsewhere.

[ 27 : 54 ] Hardening and rejection leads to blessing elsewhere. Verse 11, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.

Because of their transgression in kicking out the Christian preachers, so there's a synagogue, there's Paul sailing out through the window of the synagogue, because that's what they did to him, they kicked him out, and where does he go?

He goes next door to the lecture hall of Tyrannus, or wherever it is, and a group of people there who want to hear. He gets kicked out of the synagogue, he goes to the Gentiles, and they want to hear. There's one point where he says, referring to his own feet, if I remember correctly, he says, well if you don't want to hear, we'll sort of shake the dust of our feet, and we'll go to the Gentiles and tell them, and the Jews say, that's scandalous, how dare you, but that's what happened.

Hardening and rejection leads to blessing somewhere else, and this is what he says, he says, verse 12, if their transgression means riches for the world, etc, their transgression means riches for the world, so the hardening here leads to amazing blessing over there, and then he says it again in verse, that was verse 12, verse 15, where he says, if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, so same sort of thing, they rejected, but the world, the nations, huge numbers of people with names that they'd never even heard of in those days, so not only Greeks and Italians and Africans and Arabic people, but, ooh, barbarians like the

[ 30 : 01 ] Scots and the Welsh and the English in the end, would also be blessed, riches for the world, because of the transgression, the hardening of Israel, and this is a, that's the prime example, but I can think of other examples too, do you remember that when Jesus went round from one village to another, he was rejected in one village, so he went on to the next one, hardening in one place, led to a blessing somewhere else, and of course, as I've just said, Paul in the synagogue, kicked out, led to a blessing to the Gentiles, and the whole of world mission, the preacher Richard Baxter, quite famous English preacher, he lived in the town where I was born, Bridge North, of whom he said, the hearts of the people of Bridge North are as hard as the sandstone on which the town is built, and he went on just down the railway line, of course there wasn't a railway line in those days, but he went to

Kidderminster, and had a very famous and blessed ministry, so, if one may put it in this simple way, the hardness of my fellow citizens in Bridge North led to blessing for the people in Kidderminster, number one, then, prime example of hardening and rejection leading to blessing elsewhere, number two, he's going to say that this is the prime example of the idea that blessing produces envy, of people saying, I want some of that, so, chapter 10 verse 19, he says, he says, 10 verse 19, and there is more to it than this, I need to come back to it next week, but just taking the surface meaning of the words, did Israel not understand, first Moses says, I will make you envious by those who are not a nation, and then he goes on to say,

I'll make you angry by a nation that has no understanding, but fix on the envious part, because that's where Paul is fixing his thought, I will make you envious, I will make you saying, I'd like some of that, I'd like some of that blessing, chapter 11 verse 11, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious, chapter 11 verse 14, I hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them, you see Paul is saying, I go to the Gentiles, but I'm conscious that even in doing that, there is a positive benefit for my own people whom I care for so much, Gentile ministry has a side effect intended for blessing on the hard-hearted, so let's ponder that for a moment,

Paul is saying, this is the prime example that blessing of one group of people produces envy in another group of people, that they want to be saved, and this is an encouraging thought, isn't it? This is an encouraging thought, that gospel believers, which would be people like many of us here, have received blessings, have received God's strength, have seen God's answers to prayer, and things like that, in such a way that other people near us might say, I don't like them, I don't believe what they believe, or at least I don't at the moment, but I would like to have some of what they have in their lives.

[ 34 : 05 ] And my example was gospel believers' effect on Roman Catholics. Because Roman Catholicism, I would say from the Bible, is a form of Christianity which started off okay, but really has lost its roots in the Bible.

So there are respectful people, there are people who would like spiritual blessings, shall we say, in Roman Catholic churches, and if they were to see Christian believers praying so freely to God, knowing what it is to call God Father, not having to go to the confessions, not having to go to the priest, not having to go through all the rigmarole, not having all the paraphernalia, just simply calling on God through Jesus Christ through his finished work, if people in that situation saw that, I think they would say, do you know, I would really like some of that.

And Muslims are people of the book. They would at least in name say that this is a book from God, God.

But I would offer the thought that if they were to see Christians and understand their love for God and see the quality of life that they have and see the depth of what it really means to them personally, it's not just an outward religion, it's not just an outward ritual, that they might say I would like some of that.

envy can produce blessing and I'm saying so therefore there is a value in blessed and grateful Christians.

[ 35 : 54 ] Lord, make me a good witness to people. I know sometimes the Christian life is hard and I know we have troubles but what a value to go through those troubles with cheerfulness so that people say even look at what that poor fellow has to go through but he's still cheerful, he's still got faith in God.

That's a wonderful thing. I'm not saying we can always do that but I'm saying it's a good thing to pray isn't it? And something with a lot of potential in it. Number three.

Paul says something about the particular value and goodness of Israel's contribution to the church. So here's a church, one of the churches that Paul's planted, quite a lot of Gentiles in the church and here is a Jew who's come to faith who's wanting to join the congregation and what should those believers say?

Should they be anti-Semitic and say we don't have Jews in our congregation or should they rather say hooray here's somebody who has their roots in the things of God joining our congregation? What a wonderful blessing. If you think about it in the time of Paul, you think about some of those churches that he planted and you think of the speed with which they grew and you think of the solidity that they seem to achieve so quickly and you ask how do they manage that?

[ 37 : 33 ] And I'll tell you what the answer is that many of the leaders were converted Jews. So they already knew the scriptures. They already knew a lot of the Bible off by heart probably.

And once it clicked into place it's all about Jesus. These people were the source of amazing richness and blessing and solidness for the churches.

And he says in chapter 11 verse 12 so I'm picking up the remaining half of a couple of those quotes I only quoted the first half. If their transgression means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles how much greater riches will their fullness bring?

It doesn't say will it just says their fullness. And I think he's talking about the state of affairs as it was then. When God's riches. When the Jews that God is saving come in they bring richness.

Chapter 11 verse 15 If their rejection is reconciliation of the world what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Now I'm going to not try and say everything that could be said.

[ 38 : 54 ] I'm going to go on to the next illustration which is the illustration of the olive shoot and the olive tree. Because I think what they're saying remember our question is can Jews ever be saved?

And Paul says they can be. And not only can they be but when they come in they're not a liability but they're a huge asset. And I'll just pick up a little bit of this.

So the Gentiles in the church are saying but Jews don't bring anything. They're the people who killed Jesus. And Paul is saying how little you understand my friend. How little you understand.

They are the original olive tree.

The original vine that God planted. And yep they rejected the branches were broken off. And you were pruned you were grafted in. So here's my grafting picture.

Verse 17. If some of the branches have been broken off and you though a wild olive shoot have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root.

[ 40 : 01 ] Do not boast over those branches. So there's my the original olive is drawn in black and here are some of the branches in black that have been cut off. And here are some wild branches in red that have been grafted in.

So these are the Gentiles grafted in. And Paul says these black branches can easily be grafted back in as well. He says you've been grafted in.

You share in the nourishing sap. Don't boast over those branches. Don't think well we're a lot better. We're a lot better. We're a lot better than those people.

He says you really have not understood. You really have not understood. And he says quite a few things which I haven't got time to go through but we'll read them.

He says don't boast over these branches. Consider this. You do not support the root but the root supports you. Your Christian understanding is based on those thousands of years of God's dealing with the Jews.

[ 41 : 05 ] And all the things that he revealed to them you're indebted to them. You do not support the root but the root supports you. You will say verse 19 branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.

I'm so special you see. And Paul says yes but they were broken off because of unbelief and you stand not by boasting but by believing.

You stand by faith. Do not be arrogant but be afraid for if God did not spare the natural branches he will not spare you either.

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God sternness to those who fell but kindness to you provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off and if they do not persist in unbelief they will be grafted in.

After all you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree. How much more readily will these natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

[ 42 : 15 ] The broken branches can easily be grafted in and it's completely contrary to the whole idea for you to get proud. So look how well we've done.

That's why the original branches were broken off. What you should be saying is how amazing that I should be part of this blessing. I've never done anything to deserve it.

It's Christ who's done it all and I'm putting my full trust in him. You're standing by faith. You're standing in grace. Don't forget it he says.

And it's a call to humility. It's really a very profound call to humility. Christians are ever so good at not doing this. No Christians can be proud.

I remember going to preach at a church not too far away from here and the man said to me are you a Calvinist? And I said yes I am actually.

[ 43 : 17 ] And he said I'm a Calvinist. He said I went past your church I thought you were Arminian and I despised you. And I couldn't work that out.

I thought okay so he's saying it's all by grace and I believe that. And he's telling me he believes it. And then he's telling me that he looked down on what he thought our church was because he thought mentally we hadn't got our heads around that.

And then he thought he could despise us. But it's grace isn't it? If it's grace then you can't despise other people because you know it's by grace isn't it?

Christians are very good at not doing this. We can think racially we're superior race. How many times has the vocabulary of a superior race been employed?

No race is superior in this sense. We're all sinners. We all need to be saved by grace. And we can be proud of our doctrine.

[ 44 : 24 ] Our doctrine matters. There are good doctrines and not so good doctrines. But possessing a doctrine, understanding a doctrine doesn't make me better does it?

It probably just makes me puffed up. We're not saved by understanding correctly. We're saved by trusting in Jesus Christ. And our understanding is not something we're now entitled to be proud of. Or we could be perhaps our achievements. I'll tell the story of, it was actually Terry Virgo who, I heard him say this or it's on a recording that he wanted, he was invited to preach somewhere and he was hoping to be able to preach on church planting which he was really keen on and he was rather disappointed they asked him to speak about Jesus instead.

And I think he told the story against himself that we can be so wrapped up with our achievements and our activities that we forget about the Lord. It's the work of the Lord whereas it ought to be our focus on the Lord of the work.

And he says, you can't get proud. Humility is of the essence of what it is to be a Christian who stands by grace and by faith.

[ 45 : 40 ] We stand in God's grace. We stand only by faith. So we'll continue this next week but I like to say, let's leave us in this place. We're people who trust, aren't we?

That's what we should be. We're people of deep gratitude. Sat next to somebody at a conference last week and I said to him, how are you getting on?

And he said, because I expected him to say, oh we've got troubles with this and we've got troubles with that. And he said, we've always got a lot to be grateful for. And I thought, what a good answer. We have to be people marked by deep gratitude. gratitude. And we're to be people who realise that God is so great. Beyond our fathoming, beyond our finding out as was read to us.

Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out. People of worship. And people who are humble.

[ 46 : 43 ] People of worship. desde people of worship. People of worship. desde desde