

# Why stay a Christian?

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[ 0 : 00 ] So that was the subject. Is it worth carrying on being a Christian? To make quite a bit of difference.

So when you become a student, the parental influence changes. And that might bring into question whether you really intend to carry on being a Christian.

You will also almost certainly have a change in your church environment. So whereas it used to be perhaps a habit to go to church every Sunday, then now this changes.

You don't have to. You have to make a different effort to get along, etc. And if you were brought up in a church youth group, that will all change as well.

So these things will put pressure on whether you're going to carry on as a Christian. And I've put some other things. You will now find that you have pressure from your peer group.

[ 1 : 26 ] A peer group meaning the people in the same class as you or the same accommodation as you. And there will be pressure and influence, perhaps with your mates of the same sex.

And not inconceivably of the opposite sex, which will become an issue. In becoming a student, you're exposed to a whole set of new, possibly new, but certainly present, moral possibilities.

And a whole set of freedoms. And these, you have to come to terms with how you cope with them. And if put on top of that, there are intellectual and social challenges.

So you will perhaps meet clever people who completely disrespect your view. Your view of life, your Christian faith, and you might face things like that you hadn't had to face before.

And then there will be the social challenges of how you fit in. Because previously, perhaps as a Christian, at school and at home, you had a set of Christian friends. So your friendships and your Christian faith nicely overlapped.

[ 2 : 45 ] But now you might find that you feel attracted to a group of people who are not Christians at all. And so there are social challenges that you have to face.

And then, so those are the things that might pressurize you and attract you away. And then let's just think about the Christianity that you have been living with so far before you became a student. It's not entirely impossible that the Christianity you had was very much based on having fun and a social life.

So youth groups operate quite rightly on having fun and being friends. But there's always the possibility that your Christianity was rooted in those things.

And those things are now changing. There's also the possibility that your Christian faith up till now has been sort of child faith, to put it that way.

[ 3 : 55 ] What you're taught in Sunday school, you never questioned it. It's untested. And now as you face these tests, it's not so much that the pressure from outside, but the vulnerability of what's on the inside.

You might have a child sort of faith, which has been untested. You might also find that you have a youth culture faith, which is based on things like being passionate, always seems to be a highly desirable thing in youth culture, on being high emotionally, and being with an enjoyable, convivial group of people.

Because that's what youth culture Christianity has those things. And I suppose it's inevitable that it does. But youth culture Christianity may not be robust enough to cope with the fact you've got hard work to do.

It might not be robust enough to cope with the fact you might be lonely. It might not be robust enough to cope with intensity of temptation.

So these are all new factors that make somebody say, is it actually worth carrying on as a Christian? So that's my introduction. So I'll stop for a moment.

[ 5 : 26 ] Does that make sense? Anybody want to ask any questions? Anybody want to enlarge on that or challenge any of it? Add to it.

thank you very much yes that's true yeah yeah yes it doesn't it doesn't always doesn't necessarily produce that question is it worth carrying on as a christian yes thank you it certainly can it certainly can yeah okay let's go a little bit further then so with that as an introduction oh i've had one more bit there that it's not unknown for people as they go on in years to come to a point where they say well i don't care what my mum and dad said i want to do what i want to do and that can be a good thing or a bad thing so yeah people do need to have their own faith you can't live off the faith of your mum and dad you have to have faith for yourself and of course if that means i go my way so whatever mum and dad says i'll do the opposite so if your mum and dad were christians they might have actually got a very good reason for the way they did things and if you say well i'm just going to do the opposite anyway that's not not a particularly wise thing to do so i just add into that the sort of independence factor people want to be independent right let's look at some theology of this look at what the bible says about it and i have four points god knows god plans god promises and god warns okay i'm addressing the question is it worth carrying on as a christian assuming that that's that that's our topic somebody saying is it worth carrying on and i'm going to say well god knows and god plans and god promises and god warns so let's go through those so number one god knows let's look at some text from the bible jonah chapter one might take a little while to find jonah you can always look it up in the index at the front which i think is what i'm going to do jonah chapter one verses one to four ben please could you read those to us the word of the lord came to jonah son of abitai go to the great city of the river and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before me but jonah ran away from the lord and headed for tarshish he went down to jonah where he found a ship bound at that port after paying the fare he went aboard and said to tarshish to flee from the lord then the lord said the great wind of the sea such a wild storm arose that the ship threatened to break up okay thank you very much interesting this is as we can see it's part of the bible this is the prophet jonah and he has instructions to go in that direction what's that direction is east he's got instructions to go east to the great city of nineveh and preach against it because his wickedness has come up before me so the lord has got a mission for him and he doesn't do it we could say a little bit more about the decision making process that he went through but the upshot of it is that he says i'm not up for this i'm not doing this i'm not going to carry on being a prophet i've finished with this and he he runs away from the lord and heads for tarshish he goes down to joppa he finds a ship bound for that port tarshish some people said it was spain let's assume it's spain he says i'm i'm not up for this i'm going off to spain i'm going to have a holiday in spain and coincidentally you see there's a ship going for the very for that very port so that's great isn't it and off he goes to run away from god but god is on the case and god sends a great storm which unsettles things that's a not a very pleasant thing for jonah to be chased by god like this but i'm just making the point that in the bible there are people who just run away say i'm not going to carry on with this i've had enough and god knows about it and god has ways of of chasing people so there's one example god knows here's another example about ships 1 timothy chapter 1 verses 18 to 20 so we've gone hundreds and hundreds of years forward from the prophet jonah 1 timothy chapter 1 18 to 20 chris could you read that for us please thank you so here's another example paul says to timothy i want you not to do what these other people have done what have they done or what should you do you should hold on to the faith and a good conscience you should hold on to trusting and obeying some people have rejected these and they shipwrecked their faith it does happen and there's the names of two of them and again paul is on the case but i'm making the point that we're not talking about something so theoretical that no cases ever arise i'm not talking i'm not and i don't want want us to think we're so spiritual that this is irrelevant to us paul thinks it's relevant to timothy he says i really really don't want you to do what those guys have done so you must hold on to the faith fight the good fight hold on to a good conscience keep trusting and obeying and let's look at psalm 139 psalm 139 verses 1 to 4 and then verse 7 psalm 139 so you want to go in the middle of the bible and root about in there it's page 6 to 8 if you've got a bible from the back of the church psalm 139 verses 1 to 4 and also verse 7 mark please could you read those for us oh lord you have searched me and you know me you know that i sit and i arise you perceive my thoughts from afar and discern my going out and my lying down you are familiar with all my ways before the word is of my tongue you know it completely oh lord where can i go with your spirit where can i flee thank you there's a i'm just

picking out those bits from psalm 139 but you see the point of it he's saying it's not only that god knows these things happen and sees these these people who have said i'm not going to carry on it's not just that it's just it is that god actually knows very deeply what goes on inside me the struggles that i have the vexations that i feel the fears that i have the anxieties the the elations and the depressions lord you have searched me and you know me you know when i sit and when i arise you perceive my thoughts from afar before a word is on my tongue you know it completely oh lord so god knows it's a it's a double-edged thing isn't it because it's scary that god knows what we're thinking but it's also immensely comforting other people might not understand other people might not notice other people might not be able to help us very much with perhaps deep struggles that we go through but god does god does understand you know me says the psalmist and then that extra verse i can't run away from you even if i did go on holiday to spain or or quit or throw it all in i can't actually run away from you so god knows that was the first point let's look now at god plans now it used to be part of the campus crusade evangelistic methodology to say to people god has a wonderful plan for your life it's an interesting thing to say to people god does have wonderful plans there is a question of who he has wonderful plans for so i think it's not i don't think it would i think it would be a very bold person who could really and genuinely go up to any random individual and say god really does have a wonderful plan for your life i think that would perhaps be a bit irresponsible to say that to people but god does have wonderful plans let's look at the way that god describes his plans so i've got some verses here 1 corinthians 2 new testament paul's letter to the corinthians his first letter to the corinthians chapter 2 verses 6 to 10

thank you 1 1 4 5 1 corinthians 2 6 to 10 this is paul saying we you know don't think that what we're talking about is just superficial and frothy it is a powerful and deep message and please could paddy paddy could you read us 1 corinthians 2 6 to 10 we do have a speak message of wisdom and not mature and not the wisdom of this age or the wisdom of this age who are the things of nothing and that we speak of god's secret wisdom for wisdom that has been created in the world and destined for the world before time began and the owners of the age who stood in for they did not crucify the people before have had such a trick no eye to see no interest no mind can see no God can see no God can see no God can see thank you very much he talks about the revealing by the spirit and he talks about the message this is the message of the gospel that he's talking about and if people receive that message and if people believe that message then it is certainly true that God has wonderful plans for them and it's so wonderful that as it says here no eye has seen no ear has heard no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him but God has revealed it to us by his spirit so there is a wonderful amazing things a wonderful amazing plan that God has for those who receive the gospel and let's focus this in the words of Jesus particularly in his plan to keep his people so

[ 19 : 54 ] John 10 25 to 30 John 10 25 to 30 John 10 25 to 30 this is to do with sheep this is to do with Jesus being the good shepherd Julie please could you read that John 10 25 to 30 Jesus answered I did tell you but you do not believe the miracles I do in my father's name speak for me but you do not believe because you are not my sheep my sheep listen to my voice I know them and they follow me I give them eternal life and they shall never perish no one can snatch them out of my hand my father who has given them to me is greater than all no one can snatch them out of the father's hand

I and the father are one thank you very much it's a very clear statement by Jesus about his sheep not everybody is his sheep the sheep are the ones who listen to him and follow him my sheep listen to my voice I know them and they follow me I give them eternal life and they shall never perish no one can snatch them out of my hand so he's talking about a policy of security that his sheep are in his hand and there is no power in heaven or earth or anywhere else that can snatch his sheep from his hand and then Jesus goes on in a Trinitarian manner to say my father who has given them to me is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my father's hand if they're in my hand says Jesus then that is neither more nor less than saying they're in the father's hand because I and the father are one and the sheep cannot be snatched cannot be taken from the father's hand it's the doctrine that's sometimes called the eternal security of the believer if somebody is a believer God has a plan for them and undertakes to keep them so that nothing will ever take them away from God and I include in that not even themselves because sometimes we're our own worst enemies aren't we but God says I won't even let you snatch yourself out of my hand nothing no one can snatch them out of the father's hand and let's look at John 6 37 to 40 which makes the same

sort of statement about God's plans and his policies John 6 37 to 40 this is Jesus talking about him being the bread from heaven and then he changes the metaphor from bread to the will of God John 6 37 to 40 Angela could you read that for us please all that the father gives me will come to me and when he comes to me I will never drive away for I have come down to heaven not to do my will but to do the will he sent me and this is the will of him to send me that I share it to all and all that he has given me raise them up at the last day and my father's will is one that everyone looks to the son and believes in him shall have a son of life and will raise him up the last day thank you very much thank you very much do you notice there's some interactivity between Jesus heavenly father and Jesus himself so verse 37 the father gives me people all that the father gives me will come to me whoever comes to me

I will never drive away so Jesus reveals to us that there are certain people who have been given to him by the father and those people in fact will come to Jesus and he never drives them away perhaps that's a way of saying I will certainly keep them and then this will I have come down from heaven not to do my will but the will of him who sent me and there's two expressions of God's will anybody like to tell us one of them what is the will of him who sent me what is the will of the father thank thank you verse 39 so this is one way of saying the will of the father that Jesus loses none of all that the father has given him but

[ 25 : 33 ] Jesus raises them up at the last day so that one expression of the will of God this is what God has planned and purposed this is his settled you could say counsel this is his decision he's given them to the son and the son will lose none of all he has given me but raise them up at the last day and there's another expression of the will of the father thank you so both these sentences end up the same thing raising up at the last day raising up at the last day one of them is to do with God's secret dealings the father gives to the son those who are given actually come to the son the second one is what's in the public domain everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life so there's what's above the surface everybody can see and what's below the surface that is really part of

God's secret plans secret plans the father gives and they come to Jesus above the surface anybody who looks to the son and believes in him will have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day so something there about God's plans so anybody want to make any questions or observations about either of those two so if you were thinking I don't know whether I'm going to bother carrying on being a Christian you you have got this side of it that you are not just fighting this on your own you are not just struggling God's miles away there is a work of God to keep and defend his people and to not let them be snatched away that's an important truth and it's certainly a truth to encourage people who aren't going through that particular struggle at the moment you're walking with the

Lord you're believing in him and he's keeping you something to be grateful for you know the Lord is keeping us the Lord is surrounding us with his salvation so that's a wonderful encouragement okay let's go on a little bit further next to God promises and God warns so God makes promises and the response the correct response to a promise is to believe it so God makes promises to be received by faith and what I want to say is so this is Bible Christianity it's to do with receiving the promises of God and believing them and there's a whole range of promises that are made in the Bible but if you were to balance them up the balance tends to be towards the world to come the balance tends to be towards the world to come there are promises for today there are promises for how

I live my life now but the promises that Christianity offers aren't that's not where the center of gravity is they're all lumped up on today and tomorrow and my life here and now the weight of them is really on the world to come and what is beyond death that's where the weight lies and we have to learn to focus our Christianity in that sort of direction otherwise we're going to get unbalanced and become vulnerable let's look at Hebrews chapter 11 which is a famous chapter about people living by faith and I think what the writer of the Hebrews is doing is saying to his Christian readers we've been teaching you about Christian faith and the Christian readers are saying yeah but the Old Testament has got a lot going for it and that's not really about faith at all is it and the writer is saying well hold on it is this faith business isn't a new thing all the people in the Old Testament they all had faith too just look at the sort of ways they lived that's faith so I'm not asking you to do something new I'm not asking you to forsake your heritage I'm asking you to grab hold of what your heritage is faith has always been the key component of the spiritual life and he references a large number of people in the Old Testament and if you notice the way he references them is to say they

had faith that stretched beyond their current lives into the future and even into the distant future and that's Christian faith too it isn't just no God's going to help me catch the bus tomorrow it although [ 31 : 18 ] God does say he will help us catch the bus tomorrow but our faith the weight of it is much further in the future which helps us to carry on believing even if we miss the bus tomorrow because that wasn't the main thing do you see what I mean so Hebrews 11 verse 4 by faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did by faith he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings and by faith he still speaks even though he is dead that's interesting isn't it his faith lasts beyond death that's the sort of quality of faith in the Bible and certainly Christian faith and verse 5 Enoch take for example Enoch guy in the Old Testament he was taken from this life so that he did not experience death he could not be found because God had taken him away for before he was taken he was commended as one who pleased

God that he had faith and interestingly you see his faith took him beyond death he did not experience death his faith went beyond this life into things to come now verse six I think doesn't have the same sense of being to the future it just says without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him and as we shall see the reward is a future leaning sort of thing verse seven by faith Noah went warned about things not yet seen in holy fear built an ark to save his family that was faith by faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith he wasn't just thinking of this present world his faith went beyond that and condemned the world it says verse 10 speaking of

Abraham who is a great example of faith says he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God so his faith was looking well into the future beyond his own lifetime to things that he never experienced himself but he still believed God for the future that's the way faith operates that was verse 10 verse 13 all these people were still living by faith when they died they did not receive the things promised they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance and they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth people who say such things show they're looking for a country of their own if they'd been thinking of the country they'd left they would have had opportunity to return instead they were longing for a heavenly city says the writer that's what their faith was really all about

God has promises to be received by faith verse 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead this is in the business with his son Isaac and figuratively speaking he did receive Isaac back from the dead he was thinking with a faith that goes beyond this world beyond this life beyond death verse 20 by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future looking ahead verse 21 by faith Jacob when he was dying blessed each of Joseph's sons and worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff he was thinking beyond death that's the sort of faith that he had and verse 22 by faith Joseph when his end was near spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones he was thinking beyond his lifetime into the future that's how his faith operated and verse 26 this is

Moses who regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward so there was the here and now but he said that's not the main thing I'm concerned about it's what happens ahead it's the distant future it's the reward beyond my current experience into the world to come he was looking ahead to his reward verse 35 this is a long list of names of whom it is said women received back their dead raised to life again well that was for this life others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection so they were looking ahead of this life so long list there but to do with the life of faith if we live the

[ 36 : 55 ] Christian life with our eyes simply focused on today and our current situation and how well we're doing and whether life is easy or successful or whatever we will fall short of Christian faith because Christian faith looks ahead and you could even say that Christians are the people who are prepared to run at a loss in this world for the reward ahead so if you think of Moses for example he gave up his university education the chance of promotion high political power flashy cars all the Apple upgrades he he he said I'm not going to be too bothered about that because I'm going to go and join this group of fairly random refugees because they're the people of

God and they have a future so he was prepared to lose all that and to live by faith and God said that's far better he left behind the treasures of Egypt for the sake of as the writer would say what he was really looking at was the sake of Jesus Christ so what I was going to say was if you're wrestling

with shall I carry on being a Christian this is the perspective you need to have not just will I be healthy and wealthy and successful but where will this all work out long term what is really worth staking my life on what is really worth pressing forward to what is the real aim in my life and for Christians it is that long term goal one day we will see

Christ one day we will see him face to face one day he will say behold I make all things new that's the day that will make it all worthwhile and that's what we have to bring into the equation as we're thinking about our faith nowadays let's look at 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 and 4 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 and 4 speaks about the sort of promises that we've just been looking at 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 and 4 Aaron could you do that for us please yeah that's fine thank you so he says you know these promises are very powerful these promises enable us as it says in the NIV to participate in the divine nature and to actually break free of all the psychology and all the spiritual web which would otherwise keep us in this world with its values with its system with its corruption and with its evil desires he says you know we would just be locked into that if it were not for these promises that sort of strike through all that into the world to come he has given us very great and precious promises that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires so this is my third point there are promises to be believed there are promises to live by and the mark of the elect or one of the marks of the elect one of the marks that

God has chosen you and has that the father has given you to the son one of the marks of that is that you believe the promises and not just any old promises but these promises laid out in this sort of way so I could ask you do you believe the promises will you believe the promises will you stake your life on the promises that God has made do you get the sense of what it is that he's promising you get that sense of the glorious future of the final regeneration of all things of Jesus saying well done good and faithful servant is that what it says on that block behind me enter thou into the joy of thy lord yeah that good well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy lord that's what this plaque says this man lived for he lived with his eyes set on that and so the question is will we live by those promises as an encouragement to do so and fourthly and lastly

[ 42 : 50 ] God realistically warns us so I think we could say this that the mark of the elect is even more than what I said before the mark of the elect is that they believe the promises and heed the warnings the mark of the elect is that they believe the promises and they heed the warnings they say there's something really wonderful to be believed and there's something really scary to be avoided those two aren't opposites I mean they're not incompatible the elect who fear the Lord do both of those they believe the promises and they heed the warnings so I've got a few examples of this it's Galatians 5 16 to 21 these are to people who one way or another were thinking along lines that would take them away from

Christian faith not necessarily going back well perhaps going back perhaps going off course because Paul says at the beginning I'm absolutely amazed at you that you are so quickly departing from what I came and told you about God and in Galatians 5 he sets out the two possibilities to them Galatians 5 16 so he says I say live by the spirit you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature living by the spirit is to do with believing the promises as he makes clear earlier so that's the way to go the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the spirit the spirit what is contrary not do what you want but if you are led by the spirit you are not under law the acts of the sinful nature are obvious sexual immorality impurity and debauchery idolatry witchcraft hatred discord jealousy fits of rage selfish ambition dissensions!

factions and envy drunkenness orgies and the like that's the other way and I warn you he says I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God so the bible has warnings you see it says if you were thinking of carrying on in that route or going back to that route or dabbling in that I warn you that is not the way into the kingdom of heaven you will not arrive at that wonderful destination if you go down that route people who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God there's a warning there you see have you ever been to Beachy Head it's a huge cliff there's a lighthouse near the edge there's another lighthouse down below actually there's a place where the road goes round and it's quite near the edge there and I once went there and I saw a couple who were sort of teasing each other to see who would go nearest to the edge you know in a sort of well let's see how close to the edge we can get sort of way and it's fantastically dangerous and if you ever look sideways from another part at where the edge is there's bits where it hangs over like that and you could be mucking about on the edge there and you would easily fall over

I do not recommend playing the game of see how close to the edge you can get without falling over the way to do it is to lie down with somebody strong holding your feet and just see how close to like that but Paul says some people live the Christian life like this they just see how close to the edge they can get maybe they've got a false idea of God promising without an idea of heeding the warnings that doesn't fit you're not really trusting the promises unless you have a mind to heed the warnings as well as an experiment how close we can get to the edge that's there's a guy who came along to the church and thought as an experiment he would try not ever reading his bible and not ever praying and seeing whether seeing what happened very dangerous experiment if i remember correctly after some months he thought actually i will read my bible and start praying which was great but it's a dangerous experiment there are warnings hebrews chapter 3 hebrews is a letter of warnings hebrews 3 and this is the letter to the hebrews is to people who are toying with the idea of not being christians anymore they think they will go back to being jews because judaism is tried and tested and all sorts of other reasons in hebrews chapter 3 verse 7 the writer quotes the old testament the jewish old testament as the holy spirit says today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion during the time of testing in the desert he says that still stands don't try hardening your hearts don't try hearing god and then doing the opposite of what he says don't try doing that and he says in verse 12 see to it brothers that none of you has a sinful unbelieving heart that turns away from the living god make sure you don't do that make sure you don't try any dangerous experiments turning away from the living god but encourage one another daily as long as it is called today so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness interesting that the opposite of turning away is being in a community in which people encourage one another to hang on to the lord but encourage one another daily while it is called today so that none of you may be hardened it's an interesting insight into the value of christian community living the trying to live the christian life as a lone ranger on your own is a dangerous thing to try need to be in a community of believing people so that was hebrews 3 7 and 12 and then 10 23 to 29 which sort of says the same same thing it says we've got the gospel we've got the blood of jesus christ we've got the way to approach god and in hebrews 10 23 he says let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess for he who promised is faithful and let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds let us not give up meeting together as some as are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another all the more as you see the day approaching if we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth no sacrifice for sins is left there's no plan b if you don't if you stop believing in jesus christ and his cross there is just a fearful expectation of judgment and raging fire that will consume the enemies of god if anyone who rejected the law of moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses how much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the son of god underfoot and has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him and who has insulted the spirit of grace he's quite stern isn't he he's saying really really really if you turn your back on jesus christ if you're saying i can't be bothered with him if you're saying i can't be bothered with his shed blood uh it means nothing to me he said well there's no plan b you know what a terrible thing to do there's no way back from that how much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished if they do that and then he goes on to say i'm sure you're not really thinking that are you uh he says uh um don't throw away your confidence it will be richly rewarded uh we're not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who believe and are saved so i don't want to make that into a blanket condemnation but it is a stern warning don't get near the edge of the cliff john 15 verses 5 and 6 also functions as a warning this is the bit about jesus being the vine and his people being the branches and the importance of abiding in jesus abiding is a very favorite word in john's gospel john 15 verses 5 and 6 i am the vine you are the branches if a man remains in me and i in him he will bear much fruit well it's great promise isn't it if we if we stay close to the lord and the lord is in us which we pray may be the case you will bear much fruit very important promise and he says apart from me you can do nothing i meant to say in hebrews 11 that the achievers were the people who didn't have their ultimate focus on this world and that's a true statement isn't it there people say oh that such and such a person is so heavenly minded that they're no earthly use well actually people don't say that but it's a saying that you can do that some people say that they say i never actually heard anybody say it in real life but the idea of being so heavenly minded they're no earthly use the bible says the opposite it says it's the people who are heavenly minded that are the real achievers on earth did you notice that in hebrews 11 they did this they resisted lions they had their heads chopped off they

hid in caves they stopped they contradicted kings all those people did those achievements because they were looking ahead to their reward it's the ones who are heavenly minded who are the achievers now come back to john 15 without me you can do nothing all the real achievements are done with and through jesus christ and then here's the flip side of it if you don't remain in me if anyone does not remain in me he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers you cut yourself off from the source of real fruitfulness such branches are picked up thrown into the fire and burned so it's a warning isn't it of losing connection with jesus christ he says don't do it the way where that leads to is fruitlessness

[ 54 : 35 ] and uselessness and uselessness and an end that does not merit does not bear thinking about so those are the four things god knows he knows and god plans he's got plans that's very comforting to know and god has got promises for us to believe and he's got warnings for us to take notice of so if you were somebody who'd come along this evening and you were seriously thinking well this might be the last time i ever come to church because i'm not sure whether i'm going to whether it's worth carrying on what i'd say is just have a really good think about all those factors and i reckon you probably have something to settle in your heart you probably need to go home and get a place where you can really pray to the lord and say what am i really aiming for in my life am i aiming just for this world and all it has to offer which is quite a lot or am i aiming for the world to come which is even more which is so great that it makes this world look tawdry and pointless and empty compared with what christ has to offer in the future so you need to settle that and then you need to take some deliberate steps of obedience to make some deliberate actions based on what you're really aiming for so there'll probably be things that you have to say i need to say no to this and there are other things you need to say i need to settle it in my life i'm going to say yes to god in these particular ways it might be very hard but that's nobody said the christian life was easy okay let's stop there so any questions or observations