

# Privilege?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hello, friends. Just before we begin, for some reason the Wi-Fi has died and then came back to life or restarted.

It's not resurrected, just resuscitated. And we were promised stuff that would have come in on Wednesday to allow us to connect directly into the Internet. That hasn't come. So hopefully next week these problems won't be there.

So just please pray about these things. And let's just pray now. Father, we're going to open your word and we ask that your Holy Spirit would draw your word deep into our hearts, deep into the very center of who we are, that we might be disciples of Jesus whose confidence is in Jesus and the gospel and whose joy is in Jesus and the gospel.

And this we ask in Jesus's name. Amen. Amen. There's a famous story of David Foster Wallace, a celebrated writer who committed suicide a few years ago.

And he did a commencement address at a university. And in that commencement address, he told this story. He said two young fish were swimming along one day and they come to an older fish swimming the opposite direction.

[ 1 : 19 ] And the older fish says to the younger fish, how's the water? And the younger fish say, fine. The younger fish keeps swimming.

And then finally, after a couple of minutes, one of the younger fish, one of the fish says to the other fish, what's water? And it's something that, I mean, that's just, and David Foster Wallace used this to talk about something that happened, different things that happen in human life that we just take for granted, so take for granted that we don't even notice that they exist.

He used it to talk about the problem of idolatry. But we could also use it to understand the problem of privilege. And obviously, privilege has been in the news a lot the last week or two.

Demonstrations here in Ottawa and many other cities in Canada and around the world, and demonstrations and riots in the United States connected to the problems of privilege.

And one of the things, you know, one of the things, I'm not going to say that, I'm taking a bit of a risk, actually, talking about privilege. I would suggest that it's really only, it's only when we can sort of get out of our own culture, because privilege is like water.

[ 2 : 35 ] It's, we're like fish, and fish don't recognize water, and we human beings don't recognize privilege and the complexities that go along with privilege very easily. Unless we get very, very broken or God intervenes, or if we actually maybe get, in a sense, out of our water, our organized privilege into a different culture.

A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to go to a part of Angola that tourists never go to. I was invited by the SIM to address a gathering of missionaries from all over Angola at their sort of week-long time to recharge their batteries.

So I went to a part of Angola that tourists didn't go to. And while I was there, there were two times, there's many, many ways that I came face-to-face with the difference between Angolan Christianity and Canadian Christianity.

And, but two of the ways that I saw the privilege and how privilege worked in that country, even though it might be hard for me to see privilege in my own life, the first one was there were gas, diesel shortages.

And in fact, most of the gas stations didn't have any diesel fuel. And when the word went out that there was diesel fuel in a particular gas station, there would be immediately huge lineups.

[ 3 : 54 ] And we were coming back from the conference that took place on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. And as we're coming along the road, we see a lineup of vehicles.

So we realized they must have diesel. So we pull in and join the line. And there was, I don't know, you know, 30, 40, 50, 60 vehicles, all sorts of people on little scooters, people with cans. And we were there in the lineup. And the lineup moved very, very, very, very slowly. And after we'd been there, I don't know, 45 minutes, 50 minutes, quite a long time. I'm just sort of trying to take it in, get used to a new culture.

There was a particular person. And she just walked up. And she hadn't been part of the lineup. And she just walked up with a couple of men. And she just took the very, very front place in the line. And she got her gas. And then after she got her gas, the men took the different containers. And then they walked away. And it was very interesting. And I'm watching this thinking to myself, I asked the missionary that I was with what was going on.

[ 4 : 55 ] And he said, well, I don't understand. He said, she must have some type of important role in this particular area or this region. The interesting thing was, is that none of the people, as much as I could read the body language of Angolans, none of them seemed to be bothered by this at all, that she could just ignore the long lineup and go to the very front of the line and get her gas when she wanted.

An example of privilege. At a more personal level, I saw privilege when, and one of the things, if you've ever been to a country which is very poor, a very poor country still have very rich people. They don't have maybe as many rich people as we have in Canada, and they don't really have a middle class. But they have people who are well off. And in the part of Lubangu, where I was, about a 10-minute walk away, there was this really odd thing.

It was almost as if aliens had invaded and brought this very, very, very different thing into this very poor city. I walked the 10-minute walk. The sidewalks are all wrecked.

The roads are all wrecked. There's more pothole than road on the road. And it's an interesting thing, watching cars weaving in and out of the other direction of traffic to get around it.

[ 6 : 07 ] There's sewage in the, like, open sewage that you have to step over. But then you come to this mall. And this mall looks like it came right from Europe. Like, literally.

Everything else, there's a type of rundownness to everything that you see, a tiredness to everything you see. And then you come to this mall that have Hollywood movies dubbed in Portuguese.

And it could be like a mall here in Ottawa, with the shoes, the athletic equipment, the high-end clothing, all of those types of things, and a high-end grocery store. And I come in and go, I was looking for some milk.

I like to drink milk. And the people I was staying with hardly ever drank milk. So I went off to buy some milk, as well as to have a bit of an adventure, wandering the streets of Lubangu, all by myself. And the interesting thing is, is that there's lots of security guards watching people come into the mall.

Because Lubangu is a city of over a million people, and most of them are quite poor. And they really give many people a hard-looking over. They don't search them, but they give them a hard-looking over as they go into the store.

[ 7 : 17 ] I didn't get that at all. I'm white. I'm obviously from the first world. I mean, they glanced at me as a bit of a curiosity.

But they definitely didn't look at me in terms of the same way that they looked at people from the neighborhood or the community. I, by my color, by the way I was dressed, was obviously first world, obviously could afford that.

This is the exact... I was the exact type of person they were hoping to go there. Two examples is a privilege. Now, I'm not saying these things because there's something particularly wicked about Angola.

And I'm not saying these things because I want to try to downplay whatever privilege and its dynamics goes on in Canada. I point it out because I say that it's in some ways easiest to see how privilege works when you get out of your own culture than it is to see it within your own culture and in your own life.

And one of the things I'd like to suggest is that the Bible, in effect, is God's provision for human beings to start to see the water that we live in and dwell in.

[ 8 : 28 ] But we just... It's so much part of our environment, we don't even think about it. We just sort of accept a whole piles of things, a whole lot of things about our consciousness, about our sense of understanding the world, about how religion and intellectual things should work.

We are completely and utterly immersed in water. And one of the things that God has done by providing his word written is providing, in a sense, for every human being the experience, the potential for the experience and the power of the Holy Spirit to actually be... Start to recognize parts of our human condition and our human problem and our human experience. We don't have to travel to Angola.

We can be wherever we are. And as we hear the Bible, God's Holy Spirit can help us to start to recognize the water that we inhabit and take for granted.

And one of the things I think the Bible will show us in this particular text that we're going to look at today is that, in fact, privilege is a human problem. And when I say that privilege is a human problem, I'm not saying that so that we can give it a pass.

[ 9 : 36 ] We can say, oh, okay, well, you know, privilege is a human problem, so we don't have to deal with whatever privilege white people might have over others or privilege that this group might have over... No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. The Bible, by confronting us with the fact that privilege is a human problem, it starts to address us who we are at the level of our heart in the context of the living God, the triune God, so we can begin to deal with it.

To begin to deal with it in a way that creates freedom for ourselves and freedom for others, in a sense, flourishing for ourselves and flourishing for others. So if you turn in your Bibles to Philippians chapter 3, we're going to be looking at verses 12 to 21.

Philippians chapter 3, verses 12 to 21. And the story starts like this. Paul has just been talking about the three great aspects of salvation, that because of what Jesus has done for the cross for us in his life and his death and his resurrection, he is God's means by which we can be made right to himself.

God does what needs to be done so that we, by faith in Jesus and what he's done for us, we can be made right with God. And at the same time, he talks about how we are continuing to be made right with God, learning how to live right with God, and that the destiny of every human being who has put their faith and trust in Jesus is that we will end right with God.

Why? Because it's God's work from first to last. And then Paul continues by saying this, verse 12. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[ 11 : 21 ] Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We're just going to pause there. We're going to read till the end of the chapter in a few moments, but I just want to pause there and notice a couple of things about this particular text. And it sounds a little bit confusing, doesn't it?

Like, look at it, but it is a little bit confusing, but when you start to understand what it is and what it's addressing in your lives, all of these three verses are verses that would be very wise and very helpful for Christians to memorize.

They're very, very packed and very, very powerful. Look again at verse 12. Now, what is he talking about in terms of forgetting everything that's going on?

Behind you? Like, I mean, George, you might be saying, excuse me, that doesn't make any sense. Like, I thought we were supposed to live in the present and meditate upon the past a little bit, not always be living off in the future, but this seems to be talking as if we're supposed to be living off in the future all of the time.

[ 12 : 55 ] And, you know, it doesn't make any sense to forget what's past. I mean, that just doesn't make any sense. So what's going on here? Well, first of all, what the Bible is saying is, this is going to be one of the points that you might be able to see on your screen, or later on you can look up on the webpage.

If you think it is wrong for someone to use their privilege against you or others, why is it all right for you to claim privileges against the triune God?

That's the question. If you think it is wrong for someone to use their privilege against you or others, why is it all right for you to claim privileges against the triune God?

Now, okay, George, why are you saying that? Well, it's what the Bible text says here. You see, in verse 12, when it says, I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own, what this is saying is this.

You can never be the hero of your own life. You can never be the hero of your own story. Never. Ever. Ever. In fact, the entire quest to try to be the hero of your own story is going to lead to your ruination.

[ 14 : 14 ] But you can never be the hero of your own story. You can never be the hero of the one who will triumph over the adversity and make yourself... You never can. Now, that's very offensive.

Give you another type of example, and then we're going to unpack some of these ones a little bit. One of the questions that some people ask, maybe you've asked, is like, what is God... Why has God brought COVID-19 upon us?

And people, some people at least, maybe not you, have wondered about that. And with that wondering is often a bit of the issue of like, I mean, we're a good country. Like, why is it that God has done this?

Or why is it that this particular hard thing has come on in my life? And we never ask the question, why is it that God has blessed us? When our economy is going full and we're making lots of money and we're very successful and we have good jobs, we rarely ask ourselves, this is an intellectual problem, a moral and spiritual problem for me.

Why is God blessing me? We never ask that. We only ask the question when things are hard. Well, why is it that we ask the thing, these questions when things are hard? It's because we actually think we have privileges in regard to God.

[ 15 : 28 ] I've had many conversations with people who say, you know, I don't know why I don't have children. Like, why is God doing this to me? Like, I want children. I'd be a far better mom.

Like, I work in a store and I see all these moms and they're terrible moms. I would be a better mom. Why is God doing this to me? Like, I'd be a far better wife or a far better husband. And I see these people and there's jerks and all that type of stuff.

But why do they have this and I don't have this? Why is God, or I'll hear people say, you know, I prayed and prayed and prayed and I tried to be good.

And I tried to be kind. And I'm stuck in this crappy job. And I don't have a relationship and things just aren't going well. Like, why is that happening? How can there be a God who exists when these types of things happen to me?

I've heard Christians say, you know, I taught Sunday school. I've given generously to church. And now this is happening to me. There's a sickness in my life. Why is God doing this to me? Every single one of these examples is us claiming a privilege against God.

[ 16 : 32 ] Every single one. And the biggest obstacle any human being has to becoming a Christian is this. You have to die to the idea that you can be the hero of your story.

Why do I say that? Not that I have already obtained this or I'm already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Jesus Christ has made me his own.

He does it all. It isn't as if I jump a little bit and he comes and catches the rest. And if I can jump a little bit and then he catches the rest, or I can accomplish these good things, I can do these good works, I can have this success, I can be really talented, I can just be me, and therefore I contribute this and Jesus contributes the rest.

Then we have privileges. We can do a quid pro quo with God. I've done this, you do this. There's privileges. There's privileges. So the question is this.

If you think it's wrong for someone to use their privilege against you or others, why is it all right for you to claim privileges against the triune God? And here's the second point, which might be there. The Lord Jesus Christ gave himself fully, utterly, unreservedly, lovingly, and effectively for you.

[ 17 : 53 ] And he does that for you when you do nothing for him and can do nothing for him.

You know, it wasn't as if, in a sense, I hang on the cross for 25 minutes or for an hour, and then I go down and Jesus takes my place for the rest.

No. It is when I am not, in a sense, the Bible says that we are an enemy in God. When we think we have privileges in regard to God. When we think we can be the hero of our own life.

The hero of our salvation. When we are thinking all of these things, Jesus gives himself. He sets, that's what Philippians 2, 5 to 11 is all about. How God, the Son of God, he sets aside his prerogatives, his privileges, his appearance of God.

In a sense, the full fellowship of heaven. He puts all of these things aside. He empties himself and becomes his nothing. And he continues to empty himself to take into himself our human being. And now as he appears to us as what he really is, which is God, the Son of God, and fully human.

[ 19 : 03 ] He lives a normal human life. He suffers trials and temptations. He's misunderstood. He's disrespected. He's betrayed. He dies on the cross, naked, beaten, bloody, as a sacrifice for you and me.

He descends and tastes all there is to taste of death. All for me. All for you. His resistance of temptation is emptying himself of his glory. His leaving of heaven. And he gives himself fully, utterly, unreservedly, lovingly, and effectively for you.

And I say effectively because when you put your hands in Jesus and you allow him to take you, he makes you his own. It is effective. It is so effective that you are now made right with God.

And as we go through these things here, which will help us to become more Christ-like, he will continue to free you up from your pride and envy and anger and privilege.

Privilege. To become more free, more human. More generous. More loving. More forgiving. More compassionate.

[ 20 : 14 ] More self-effacing. Less full of yourself. Until that final day when you see God face to face and you're like Jesus and it's all been a work of his.

See, that's what I said. It's when you look at the Bible. You see, that's what the forgetting part is, right? If you look at verse 13, brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. You know, we live, Christians live the already not yet life. I'm already his. I already have this guarantee of being his forever and eternity because of what he's done, not because of what I have done, not because of my privileges, but because of him.

But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. You see, the forgetting is our privileges.

The putting to death in my mind of any sense of privilege, of any sense of quid pro quo, of any sense of, well, of course, because I'm middle class or because I'm well educated or because I'm a pastor or because I can, I know the Bible very well or because I can preach or because I can counsel or because I've, I said a prayer once and a man who was about to die came to, was fully and utterly healed.

[ 21 : 36 ] You know, or because I can't.

And I shared last week, you can go listen to the sermon, how we look at them and we go, that's really lame. But that's how all privilege works. When others look at it, it looks lame.

And we'd say, what a stupid thing to put your confidence in. And that's exactly the same thing that people will say about us if we could be clear. And that's what he wants us to see. He said, that's what I'm forgetting.

In fact, if you, if you go back, he says, I can't all that stuff is done. You know what the cattle have left behind after they've done their business. That's the entire value of all those things that I have as my sense of privilege.

I want to forget them. In fact, I even want to forget whatever it is that I did. You know, if, if, you know, if this sermon ends up being going viral and a million people look at it, listen, tomorrow, I got to forget about that.

[ 22 : 58 ] That's not a point of privilege. If only three people watch it, I have to forget about that. I have to forget about it. Not that I can't sort of try to learn and analyze and do better or improve, but I forget about it because the fact of the matter is, it's not about me being the hero of my story.

It's not about me making brownie points so I can have a quid pro quo relationship with God. It's all grace with nothing left over, only thoroughly, utterly grace.

Grace for the unworthy like me, the undeserving like me, the hopeless like me. It's all grace.

It's all grace. And so Paul is trying to say, given that it's all grace, what are some things that we can do to help you to enter into this and to live with this?

And I'm going to give you four short little prayers. And if you don't have time to write them down or if you can't see them in the notes later on, you can go to the web page or you can email the office.

[ 24 : 06 ] I'll share them with you. Four prayers that pray out of this text. And the first one is this. I'll pray it again.

See, that's one of the reasons why we need church. It's one of the reasons why we need small groups. Because brothers and sisters, inquirers, seekers, the curious, the skeptic, whoever might be watching this, I forget.

I get up on a Monday morning and I forget that Christ has made me my own. And I think I have to make me my own. And I think I have to deal with things. And I think I have to beat myself up over the failure that I did yesterday.

Or I think I have to deal with how puffed up I am at my success the day before. And I forget. I have amnesia. I need to spend time in the word of God. I need to be with brothers and sisters.

Brothers and sisters, I need to hear this. The old, old story over and over and over and over again. And you just, you notice how wonderful it is?

[ 25 : 31 ] Look again at verses 12 and 13 and 14. Because my first two prayers come out of this. Excuse me. Not that I have already obtained this or I'm already perfect. But I press on to make it my own.

Why? Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind me. In other words, forgetting all claims to privilege.

Putting that behind me. I press on and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

You know, it's really, really interesting, isn't it? What does Paul say here in terms of living out this truth that Jesus has done something utterly, in a sense, shamelessly loving and effective and powerful in terms of self-giving of himself to do what needed to be done so you could be made right for God because you could never be the hero of your own story.

And then what does he say? He doesn't say, well, you've got to learn to meditate this way. He doesn't say, you've got to learn mindfulness. He doesn't say, you've got to say prayers five times a day in a particular type of way. He doesn't say you have to do this.

[ 26 : 41 ] He doesn't say you have to do this. He, in a sense, he wants to fan into flame within us a pursuing of God's call to each one of us who have responded to the call by grace.

This is wonderful news. You know what this means? This means that today, I know that the times are all different. This means that a young woman doctor in Singapore who is a follower of Jesus, or a person in a slum in Nairobi, or a person who's an important government official in Nigeria, or a plumber in Chile, or an African-American teenager in Minneapolis, and me.

We don't all have to become like each other. I don't have to learn how to live a Christian life in their context, and they don't have to learn it in mine. They don't have to become more Canadian.

I don't have to become more Nigerian. This is this wonderful thing, and that whatever culture we're in, Jesus is called to you.

God the Father's called to you. The Holy Spirit's calling you. As it begins to take hold of you, it will begin to transform your inner life and your culture. This is why Christianity, this is why the gospel is the only world faith.

[ 28 : 02 ] To become more Buddhist is to become more Thai, or more Chinese, or more Mongolian, or more Tibetan.

To become more Hindu is to become more like you are from India. To become more Muslim is to become more Arabic. But to become more Christian is to become more human.

And to liberate you to be in your cultural context. And so that's why this prayer is there.

Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, deliver me from my amnesia, and help me to live, knowing you have made me your own. Here's a second prayer. The fourth point, the second prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, help me to put to death my addiction to claiming privileges against you.

[ 29 : 05 ] Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, help me to put to death, to repent, my addiction to claiming privileges against you.

You know, how come you gave me this church of the Messiah? Like, I'm a better pastor than that mega church pastor. Why don't I have a big church like that? Why do I have to deal with these people? Like, what? Put it to death.

You know? Put it to death. And I see addiction because there's, until we actually see Jesus face to face, there is this tug, there is this pull.

And it's a tug and a pull that comes from within me. And it's a tug and a pull, tug and a, it's a tug and a pull that is, in a sense, made worse or encouraged by my culture and encouraged by demons.

But I need to pray this prayer. That's what it's telling me, right? Look again at what it says, you know, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[ 30 : 17 ] Let's just finish the chapter. We'll do two more prayers. But let's read the rest of the chapter. Here's how the rest of it goes. Verse 15. Let those of us who are mature think this way and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Now just sort of pause. This isn't saying that type of moral relativism. Oh, you know, whatever. You know, some people like to knit.

Some people like to do power lifting. You know, whatever turns your crank, lights your fuse, you know, puts energy in your bulb. No, it's not saying that at all. It's an old-fashioned word about backsliding.

Don't go backwards. Okay, so we're going to see in a moment he's going to warn us about certain types of behavior, certain types of following certain types of people. So he's not saying everything's the same.

He's saying, listen, the goal is to go further up and further in into the life of the triune God. The goal is to have less amnesia about the fact that you, that Jesus has made you your own, his own.

[ 31 : 22 ] And the goal is to learn how to die to privileges. That's the goal. That's the upward call. And you're going to figure it out in the context of Ottawa or Nairobi or Chile or Nigeria or Singapore or Hong Kong or Beijing or Saudi Arabia or Iran.

You're going to figure it out in your own context. God is going to help you to figure it out in your own context. But whatever it is you do, keep moving forward. Keep moving forward. And then he continues, verse 17.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. And here I'll share the prayer and I'll try to unpack what's going on there.

The prayer is this. My fifth point, my third prayer. Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, connect me to others who are self-effacingly answering your call to them.

[ 32 : 37 ] Say it again. Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, connect me to others who are self-effacingly answering your call to them.

You see, the fact of the matter is, and we all know this, we know that there's churches that can be, they can begin with grace and then it's as if, okay, I made Christ and I got the t-shirt, got the tattoo, got the hat, but now it's all about getting money or now it's all about connecting to the alt-right or now it's all connected to decolonizing Christianity or now it's all connected to having a high aesthetic or now it's all connected.

No. No. We all know. And I'm not saying this to point fingers at other people because I'm somehow pure, but we all know that the constant problem for the Christian faith is to turn into yet another religion that encourages privilege and is refusing to die to the addiction of privilege and tells you how to become the hero of your own story.

And Paul is saying this. In a sense, we can't see him physically, but he wrote a big part of the New Testament. We can read and learn what his example is by reading the New Testament. It's partly to calling us to read the Bible, but it's not just about reading the Bible because brothers and sisters, we need each other.

If you don't have a church, connect to a good church. If you're watching this from another city, contact us. We'll help to connect you with a good church. If you're in Ottawa and you don't have a good church and you're far from where we meet, we'll help you to connect to a good church.

[ 34 : 11 ] If you can connect to ours, we'd love to have you. But we need others. The people in Nairobi, they need to see others in Nairobi.

The mechanic in Chile, he needs to see people. The woman bureaucrat, the high official in Nigeria, she needs to see other Nigerians answering the call and figuring it out.

We need each other in that way. And that's what Paul is telling us to do. To stop looking to those people that are just trying to twist the Christian faith into all sorts of privilege.

And it might be hard to know exactly who is what, but pray out to God that he will give you those examples of prayer, of holiness, of self-effacing goodness, of concern for the poor, concern to share

the gospel, seeking the good of the city in a way which is coming out of answering the call of God and not accruing a whole pile of privileges.

Try to figure out who they are and connect with them in prayer. Just see how it closes and then we'll wrap up. Verse 20, But our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 35 : 25 ] And who is he? He will transform your lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

That is the person who has made you his own. And that is our goal. Beyond the horizon.

You know, if you're lost in the bush, if you're lost in the bush, hopefully you have a compass. You may be, and as you start to realize, you can't just look at your own horizon because all you see is bush.

What does a compass give you? It gives you something which points beyond what you can see in the bush so that you can start to orient yourself and start to move. And that's in a sense what the resurrection of the body and the hope of heaven is.

It's something beyond the press of the immediate to help orient you to your life, to know where you are so you can answer the call to Jesus to go further up and further in into the life of the triune God in a way whereby grace starts to transform you more and more and more that you experience the renewing and the reforming of your mind to be free.

[ 36 : 36 ] Free to say no to privilege and free to live a self-effacing life for the good of others. Here's the prayer. Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, fan into flame within me, a longing to be completely with you as your child in heaven.

Lord Jesus Christ, as I press on to answer your call to me, fan into flame within me, a longing to be completely with you as your child in heaven. Friends, if you have not given your life to Jesus, pray that prayer.

That's how you enter the Christian life. Any one of these four prayers, it's how you enter and live the Christian life. Let's just close. Father, we thank you for your word.

We acknowledge, Father, it's hard to acknowledge, but we acknowledge before you, Father, that we have a deep addiction to being the hero of our own life.

We have a deep blindness, Father, about the water, the world that we inhabit. So, Father, we desperately need the Holy Spirit to bring us to Jesus and bring us to your word that we can start to understand how we live and where we live and the wonderful good news of what you have done for us in the person of your Son and his work and his sinless life and his sin-bearing death and his mighty resurrection all for us.

[ 37 : 58 ] Father, make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel. May these prayers, may this scripture text today, may it be the anthem. May we lose our amnesia day by day and fan into flame within us a longing and yearning to see you face to face and a deep, growing, humble knowledge that we are yours, Jesus, because you have made us yours.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.