

The Gospel and freedom

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[0 : 00] Father, sometimes we don't know how to explain your word to ourselves, and sometimes we don't know how to explain your word to others.

We acknowledge before you, Father, that there's a big part of us that is still worried about getting too close to you, that if we get too close to you, that in some ways you might make us too weird or too bound, that there's a part of us, Father, that fears you, not in a biblical sense, but in a fallen way. And we also understand, Father, that that is a great fear here in this country of Canada and around the world. So we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would bring your word home to us, and that as your word is brought home to us, that your word will bring healing to our affections and healing to our mind and healing to our will and healing to our emotions, Father, so that we will be disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, living free for your glory.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So I don't know how much of Ken's Bible text that you remember.

It had a fair thing to say about freedom. It's going to be Galatians 5. We're going to look at it in a moment. In fact, we're going to read the main verse, Galatians 5. We're going to read it several times because it's a really important verse.

[1 : 37] But here's the thing. I don't know. Some of you might have been listening to my prayer. Some of you were checked out. That's fine. But here's the thing. I don't know how many of you have become Christians as adults or even in your late teens.

But I think for most Canadians, if you knew in most offices where workplaces or neighborhoods, if they found out that a 30-year-old or a 25-year-old or an 18-year-old was thinking of becoming a Christian, they'd wonder why on earth you were doing it.

Because we as Canadians value freedom and being free. And for most Canadians, to move towards Christianity is to move away from freedom, not towards freedom.

So people might wonder. They might say, well, you know, it's sort of one thing if you're sort of, I'm going to move this over here. It's sort of one thing if you're brought up in the church. You know, you don't know any better.

But gosh, you know, if you've just known what it's like just to live and to be free, why on earth would anybody, knowing that, willingly move away from freedom towards the Christian faith or towards Jesus?

[2 : 44] It's a, I think it's just a very, very common assumption. Moving towards any type of religion, maybe in our country, actually in an ironic way, especially Christianity, is a move away from freedom.

To move away from religion, especially Christianity, is a move towards freedom. I think it's a very common view. And so, you know, basically, who wants this?

And so we have a very, very fundamental problem. And, you know, if we're honest ourselves, for many of us, there still is a bit of a lingering thing about that, that if we get too close to Jesus, too close to God, that won't be like that hymn that would have this sort of type of assurance and peace, but that it will make us weird and make our lives far more bent and small and limited and bent out of shape.

So turn to the Bible, and we'll see why I'm saying this, because, you know, there's this Galatians chapter 5, verse 1, and there's this wonderful, wonderful, wonderful text. And it sounds very nice when we're all here together, and I don't know how if we're all, you know, we're all here together, and for those of us who are Christians, we can sort of say it's nice and it's good, but there's lots of problems with it.

In fact, here's the text, Galatians 5, verse 1. For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

[4 : 13] And that word for that begins it, in this particular case, it's not following along in the argument. It's explaining the purpose for what Christ has died for us, is that Jesus died for us.

Why did he die? He died for freedom. He died for our freedom. For freedom, your freedom and mine, when we put our trust in Jesus Christ, has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

And this is a great, great verse. In some ways, it's what the whole book of Galatians is all about. And if you think about it for a second, if you took this verse and took out Christ, most Canadians would like it.

For freedom, we have been set free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. You could say that in the Women's Study Department at Ottawa U.

You could say it in the gender studies. You could say it in the military. You could say it in an old folks' home, in your neighborhood. And people would say, that's a great, that's true. For freedom, I am free.

[5 : 22] Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. I agree with that 100%. You know, maybe 98% of Canadians would say that.

But you put the word Christ in it, and it's problematic. For freedom, Christ has set us free. I mean, that's how we would read it.

For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. This isn't just a Canadian problem. It's a human problem.

I've been a Christian for a long time now. I was raised in a Christian home. But for me, as I was, and I became a Christian in grade 12, for me, going through my high school years, I found Christianity and whole church life extremely, extremely unattractive.

The opposite of what I wanted to be involved in. And, you know, it's funny, because for me growing up, it seemed as if in the world, like outside of the church, I could listen to any type of music I wanted.

[6 : 33] But in the church that I grew up in, you could only listen to certain types of music. And I didn't like that type of music. Like I would never have willingly bought a record. I'm old.

He bought records back then. 45. Some of us remember what a 45 was. I would never willingly have bought any of that music. And I had to, you had to dress a certain way.

In the world, you could dress all sorts of different ways. But in the church, you had to dress certain ways. And I didn't like dressing that way. And I could go on and on and on. And so it seemed to me as if in the world, there was freedom.

But there wasn't freedom if I got involved in a church and got involved in the Christian faith. And so part of my whole conversion was getting over that particular idea and seeing that, in fact, a verse like Galatians 5, verse 1 is true.

For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. So what do we do? Like, like in our own lives, and if we were trying to explain this to a lot of people in our culture, like, like what do we do?

[7 : 43] I mean, on one level, there's not much we can do. Second Corinthians says very wise, wisely that the God of this age has blinded us. So we don't see the light of the glory of the gospel.

And for many of us, in fact, really what we just need to do is pray for our friends and our families and our co-workers and our loved ones that God's, through his Holy Spirit, would move and work in their hearts.

Like every conversion is a bit of a miracle. Not a bit of a miracle, a complete miracle. And often we come to faith through the most odd and unlikely ways. I mean, just in my own case, because this is now in the time when the counterculture, when there were hippies and all of that.

I mean, there's certain old, there's new hippies and old hippies now, but when it was still a sort of a new and fresh thing. For me, the turning point in my life was seeing a man with big beard and big long hair halfway down his back, opening a Bible and telling people about Jesus.

And it just completely blew the categories that I had. that maybe I could be a Christian and not have to necessarily follow into a certain culture. Although the actual moment when I gave my life to Christ, it was just really me finally giving in to this pressure.

[9 : 08] I now know that it was the pressure of Jesus knocking on the door of my heart, asking to come in. And I finally just gave in to that and opened the door of my heart because Jesus was knocking to come in and I let him come in.

But if we're trying to understand this and what goes on in our hearts and what's going on in our culture, like how do we understand texts like this? Why is it that probably just about every Canadian would willingly say they agree with, for freedom we have been set free, stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

But by just merely putting the word Christ in there, it becomes a text that fundamentally we at times don't agree with and most of our neighbors would never agree with.

In fact, they would see it as the complete opposite. So what's going on there? How can we sort of deal with that? First of all, we want to say this, that desiring freedom is a good thing.

Desiring freedom is a good thing. I mean, that's in a sense what the text is telling us here. For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. We have problems thinking that Christ will set us free, but the fact that Canadians generally value freedom, that's a good thing.

[10 : 34] We should applaud it. In fact, it's a sign that they were, for Christians, just take a step back for a second and we take a step back from the pressure of the world and we just look at it and we realize the fact that human beings desire to be free is a sign that the Bible's true, that the Bible's account of human beings is true.

On Netflix, I'm watching this very interesting, quirky television series called Fargo. I know it's been out for a while. Some of you maybe have watched it a long time ago. It's very quirky, very odd, understated humor, but there's a spectacular scene in it.

There's no spoiler in this. There's a spectacular scene in it when this one guy who's a hit man is driving this other fellow that he's supposed to be protecting and he says to him, he said, you know, there are no saints in the animal world.

There are no saints in the animal world. In the animal world, all there is is breakfast and lunch. Isn't that a great line?

In the animal world, all there is is breakfast and lunch. No saints. And that's true. The fact that human beings desire to be free and have a sense that freedom is something they should experience is a sign that we're not merely part of the animal world.

[12 : 04] That atheism and secularism and materialism and their account of how human beings came to be and what makes human beings, when they bring in freedom, they're bringing in something which contradicts their assumptions.

It's not something that flows from us, but for us as Christians who understand that God made human beings, that we are designed, that we're made in his image, we understand that because we are made in his image and God designed us to be free, that when human beings desire freedom, they're desiring something true and something that goes against how they tend to talk about how things came to be and how the world works.

that they're blessedly, wonderfully inconsistent because God, in fact, has designed us to be free.

And the other things, the other thing that we have to acknowledge is that that Christians often don't model being very free.

that in our own lives, it might be that people look at us and don't say, there's somebody who's really free. Churches can be very oppressive places.

Churches can be very, very, very, very demanding on people's time. Churches can spend a lot of time trying to make people feel guilty. Churches can come up with lots of rules and it can be, we can even be thinking that we're getting rid of the bad old rules to have a better way of being, but the new ways of being are often just as, I mean, like today, you know, a lot of times churches want to get away from the old rules around sex, let's say, and want to have a new way of being which is far more hip and far more culturally acceptable to be hip.

[14 : 01] But they're just different rules that you can't keep. Like, I can't grow a hipster beard. I mean, I know I'm closer to hip replacement than hip, but even if I wanted to try to fake it, I just can't grow the right beard.

And you know what? I have to be more centered and I have to live a more simple life and all of these types of things. And we don't put it as, you have to, you have to, you have to. It's put it as a wonderful thing.

We're going to be centered. We're going to be spiritual. We're going to be simple. As if all of us, we're all like living in Walden Pond. But I don't live in Walden Pond. I live in Ottawa. Like, have you seen rush hour traffic?

Have you had to line up for OC Transpo buses and they don't come for 40 minutes and then six of them come in a row? I mean, have you lived in Ottawa? Like, we might think that we're improving it, but we're not actually improving it.

They're just different rules. And so we Christians often don't live as if we're very, very free. We're not immune to the problems that beset just everybody.

[15:10] But here's the, let's listen to the text again. For freedom, Christ has set us free. For freedom, Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

If you could put up the first point. One of the reasons that I think part of us in our flesh and Canadians in general have a hard time believing that coming close to Christ and trusting him as our Savior and Lord is actually a step towards freedom is because we have a completely false understanding.

Not completely false. We have, within our sense of freedom, we've brought in something which is not truly going to lead us to freedom. To try and live as a God is to live as a slave who does not know that he or she, if you're a she and you're making these as your notes, is a slave.

To try and live as a God is to live as a slave who does not know that he is a slave. The fact is that while we as Canadians desire freedom, that's not actually all of the story because for many of us we sense this problem between something else which we also value which is love.

[16:46] like many, many marriages come to an end because one person desires more freedom and they can't have their freedom and still be in the love relationship that is marriage.

One of the reasons that people don't want to commit to marriage is they have this sense that if they actually fall in love with somebody and commit to them, it's going to hinder their freedom.

that we have this basic sense that somehow or another there's our freedom which we want, there's love that we want, but if we really give ourselves into love, it's going to impinge on our freedom and if we really give ourselves to freedom, it's going to impinge or hurt or cause to suffer our ability to love people.

like the more we just want to be like ourselves, it ends up often meaning that the more we do things that cause problems in friendships and problems in our relationships and yet if we want to try to actually commit to the friendship or the relationship, it ends up meaning that we can't just do what we want or say what we want or, you know, change the way that we want and so we get hesitant about going into it.

At the heart of most Canadians' understandings and our understandings of what it means to be free is this idea that we can do what we want, that we can do what we want whenever we want and the fact of the matter is that in the real world it just doesn't work.

[18:37] It just doesn't work. The other thing that we have, like when I, one of the things about becoming a Christian that was problematic for me is that I wanted to be able to do things that the Bible said were wrong and I didn't want to submit to what the Bible said was wrong because I wanted to be able to behave sexually in a very, very different way than the Bible said I was going to have to behave.

And I grew up in a Christian home and I knew that there would be ties on my money but the fact of the matter is I didn't like giving my money away and the fact of the matter is I always wanted more money.

I mean, I'm just a teenager. You always want more money. I now know now old teenage years were a long, long, long, long, long time ago but most Canadians still want more money.

In fact, what happens for us as Canadians that we understand that to become free what we end up doing is we end up giving ourselves to some pursuit that will make us free.

That we have something that we think that if we just orient our lives around some pursuit or some several pursuits that those, as we attain that, will be more free, will be more complete, will be more whole.

[20:01] And our lives will be more satisfactory so that we trust certain things and give ourselves to certain things to give us meaning, to give us a type of hope, to give us a type of structure, to be something that will deliver us from the different things that we think are bad things that we want to

deliver us from.

It's all part of a desire to be more whole. And so, you know, we give ourselves maybe to, you know, to making more money or we give ourselves to being able to have more power or we give ourselves to relationships because we don't want to be alone or we give ourselves to being in situations where people need us because if they need us and are dependent upon us, we have some type of self-worth.

But all of these things that we give us ourselves to and we think in the eyes of the culture that if we give ourselves to these things, it will make us somehow more free and more complete, but they can't possibly do that because every single one of them will come to an end.

Every single one of them will come to an end. We give ourselves for our kids because if we have kids, it will give our lives meaning and then the kids get old and then they move away and then they hardly call or our children die.

I've been a minister a long time. I mean, it's hard when I've had to do a funeral for children and for teenagers. I think the biggest funeral I ever did was for a guy, this was back when Ontario still had grade 13 and a very, very, very popular student in the high school, he was on a March break spring fling and he started to act a bit disoriented and his friends and the teachers just thought he was drunk.

[22 : 12] But it was a medical problem and he collapsed and he died. And it was devastating for the parents, devastating for the high school kids.

It's the biggest funeral that I ever did, I think. I think the entire graduating class came to the funeral and many of their parents. But we give ourselves to things that will fail.

Why? Because they come to an end. And even if for some reason you have kids who all just, you're able to have kids and they all live right by you and you're able to make lots of money and you die with lots of money, the fact of the matter is, is that one millisecond after you die, you lose it all because you can't be poorer than dead, as Flannery O'Connor so famously said.

the poorest person that lives in Ottawa and Bill Gates have the exact same net worth and the exact same amount of power one millisecond after they die.

So if in fact they fail, if in fact they come to an end, why is it that we think that by giving ourselves to these things that they will make us more free? Or take another particular problem, many people don't give themselves for those things, but even if you do give yourselves for those things, those things, they're completely and utterly impersonal.

[23 : 33] Money is impersonal. Power is at the end of the day just something that you have in an org chart or the ability to boss people around but it's still in a sense something impersonal. People also give themselves to ideas or to ideologies or they give themselves to a political party or they give themselves to a nation or they become consumed with issues around race or issues around gender or issues around sex and they give that we give ourselves to these types of things but these things are all ultimately impersonal things.

Well, we think these things are going to give us freedom but just think about it for a second. If you're in a relationship with another person and the relationship becomes more and more impersonal, we always see that as a bad thing.

So if it's a bad thing to become more impersonal, why is it that we think that if we give ourselves to impersonal things, it will make us more free? If we find out that somebody's working in some faceless office and some faceless bureaucracy and they're just some cubicle rat, some cubicle minion, putting things from one file to another and just living and working in this impersonal thing and going back to an impersonal apartment and we see all of that and we say their entire life is impersonal, it's not very good but the fact of the matter is that money is impersonal, power is impersonal, the nation is impersonal, the institution is impersonal, ideology is impersonal, why is it that we think that if we give ourselves, when we see somebody who's trapped in something impersonal, we see it as something which is not good and yet the things that we think will bring us freedom are in fact impersonal and why is it that we don't realize that that's what we're doing?

Why is it that we don't realize that we're giving ourselves to things that will just fail or that even if they don't fail, if we're successful in giving ourselves to them, they're impersonal, they're less than us, why is it that we don't recognize that?

Why is it that we will choose everything other than God? And we do. For freedom, Christ has set us free.

[25 : 43] Stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. To try and live as a God is to live as a slave who does not know that he is a slave.

What the Bible describes in Genesis chapter 3, you see, the Bible describes why this is the case. I don't think, in fact, I know there is no other book, there is no other religion or teaching that more perfectly captures human experience and makes it plain.

God made us for himself. He makes us as creatures in his image and he makes us free. He makes us to walk in the garden with him, naked and unashamed, knowing him and being known by him. and he makes us to walk in the garden with others, knowing them and being known by them, loving them and being loved by them, being naked and unashamed.

And where there is no conflict between knowing God and knowing another person, that we can be completely and utterly transparent and enjoy walking with God in the cool of the day, in a place of beauty, given a role to tend the garden, to be creative and innovative and to explore this entire created order that God has made us to live in and that is how God designed human beings to be.

[27 : 37] And then human beings in Adam and Eve, we decide that that is not enough. That we want to be like God.

We want to be like God. And the terrible irony is, if you go back and look at the story, is that Adam says, I want to be like God.

And Eve says, I want to be like God. And maybe it's not revealed in the Bible and their consciousness this was something that we would be like God. But if you know anything about mythologies that have many gods, what happens in every single mythology that has more than one God?

They fight. Every mythology that has more than one God, they fight. And Adam wants to be like God.

And Eve wants to be like God. And the terrible tragedy is that when they turn their back on God and desire and try to now be as if they are God by willfully doing what God has said they should not do and turning their back on that blessing, that what in fact happens to human beings is that now Adam cannot be naked in front of Eve without shame.

[29 : 06] and Adam cannot be naked in front of God without shame. And now Adam hides from God even when God is not condemning him but God only wants to walk in the garden with him in the cool of the day and Adam can no longer do that.

He loathes being naked and he is ashamed and he can no longer even have a conversation with his wife and his wife can no longer have a conversation with their husband without passing the buck and putting on blame and distance and trying to put the other one down so that they will be a little bit higher and that ancient break in human nature with all of the complexities of what it means continues to this day.

The book of Romans puts it so wonderfully seeking to be wise they became fools and exchanged the glory of God for the glory of created for created things that we would not bow to God to serve him in heaven and yet the way that God designed us is that as we bow to God we grow bigger.

As we bow to God naked and unashamed we become more full of life and more whole. So instead seeking to be wise we bow to the nation something that will pass away.

We bow to race we bow to sex we bow to power we bow to money we bow to things that are often far beneath us and then we wonder why we have become so much smaller and so cramped and so bent out of shape.

[31 : 27] Seeking to be wise we have become fools. And in the midst of such a world God sends his son to do what we cannot do ourselves.

God could you put up the next point please? I am free as a creature not as a God and to the extent that I continue to pursue a project of being like a God to that extent I will never be free.

you know one of the things that's very common now when people talk about marriage or whatever an equivalent to marriage is that people are looking for their soul mates.

Louise is not my soul mate and I am not her soul mate and to say that in many Canadian contexts it would be you just insulted your wife to say that she is not my soul mate.

Here's the problem with soul mate. The whole language and desire for a soul mate is all part of the God project. That what we desire is that we desire to pursue the blossoming of ourselves the blossoming of our careers the blossoming of our freedom the blossoming of our wholeness and we seek to have the blossoming of all of these things on our terms at our rate of change in our

particular way.

[33 : 12] And so what we're looking for is we're looking for a soul mate. We're looking for someone who also will blossom in the same ways at the same time at the same rate. And so we look for one exactly like that.

And basically what it is is I'm desiring my God project to continue but I think and I hope that I can find someone else who will share my God project with me and we want to be nice and we want to be kind and we want to be Canadian so we hope that they have their God project and I have my God project and the both of us will have our God projects at the same time but it never works.

Every marriage comes face to face with the fact that you have married a sinner. When I married Louise I married a sinner. when she married George she married a sinner.

And we need successful marriages aren't ones where the two people can pursue their God projects together as soul mates.

but successful marriages are ones and marriages that have lasted a long time and look good they might not wear their scars in public but underneath their clothing there are lots of scars because true successful marriages work in dealing with the fact that you are both sinners through acts of forgiveness and service and love.

[34 : 53] acts of just unadulterated forgiveness and of turning the other cheek and of patience and of serving the other despite their sin and despite the fact that I myself am a sinner as well.

So if I desire to continue my God project I will never be free. I am free as a creature but not as a God.

Next point. I cannot be free as a creature until I am reconciled and restored to my creator who made me to be free.

You see if in fact God's plan and design for me was to walk in the garden with him in the cool of the day naked and unashamed and not do that just by myself as a lonely man but to do that with others naked and unashamed knowing and being known loving and being loved then until that fundamental wound is dealt with and I am reconciled and restored to my creator who made me to be free I cannot be free.

Next point please Jesus Christ died a slave's death so that we who would otherwise live and die as slaves can live free today and into eternity.

[36 : 33] This fundamental text that we spent so long on for freedom Christ has set us free stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery this text in the word set us free in the original language it's a particular text that says that something has happened in the past that is a final and its effect continues into the day.

That Jesus dies a slave's death so that we who would otherwise live and die as slaves can live free today and into eternity when we put our faith and our trust in him.

I had the honor to be able to speak on Parliament Hill on Friday at lunch to people who work as staff workers in the Senate and for the MPs Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship and I gave an earlier version of this talk to them and one of the things I said to them is that they all know how the world works in some ways if you work on Parliament Hill you live in a bubble separate from the world but in other ways you actually know how the world works in a very powerful way I gave them this example I don't think anybody would have disagreed with it that in the way it works is that if the MP screws up if at all possible it is an underling who falls on the sword if Andrew Scheer or Justin Trudeau they do something or allow something to happen that shouldn't have happened the very very first thing that will go through most people's minds is how low in the hierarchy in the office can we go to find someone who will fall on their sword and take the responsibility of it because in the real world it's the minions who die for the masters that's how the world works the little guys die the little gals die for the powerful in fact if you think about it this is really partially the entire a huge part of the entire system of what we know of as

Islam who find it completely and utterly incomprehensible that Jesus could die on the cross why because it's the weak who die for the strong it's the small who die for the big it's it's the ones down here who die but the more power you have you don't die for the weak if we were to read that Andrew Scheer or Justin Trudeau that the young girl or guy who files the mail and is the lowest in the office that they made a mistake for which they should be fired and we were to hear that Justin Trudeau would take the blame and be fired instead we would not believe it the same Bible the same gospel that reveals that we are slaves reveals that we are slaves in the context of the powerful dying for the weak of the master dying for the lowly one for the prime minister dying for the one who

works in the mail room and that's why there is no contradiction between a text like this for freedom Christ to set us free stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery there is no contradiction between this text and what Jesus says when he says come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light why is there no contradiction between for freedom Christ has set us free stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery who better to trust to form your life into deeper freedom than the one who took the sword for you who better to trust than the one who took the sword for you and the fact of the matter is the same hands that took the nails as he was hung upon the cross are the hands that we want to have touch us to heal us and to shape us because the fact is that we come to [41 : 48] Christ we come to him like this in fact far more twisted than that I'm not very flexible if I do more than that you might have to pick me up and take me to the hospital but the fact the matter is is that we're all bent and disfigured and disformed and Christ sets us free and we are free indeed and we need the loving hands the nail scarred hands of Jesus the one who died for us and has made us free forever we need those same hands guided by his heart and his mind and his great love and compassion for us knowing how we were created knowing how we have bent ourselves into a pretzel shape trying to flee from how we were created doing crazy things and foolish things and he knows how bent and warped we are and he's made us free and he'll never let us go and so now we need to submit to his touch and submit to his word and submit to his heart and submit to his wisdom as he takes me who's all bent like this and starts to work a work of healing and direction so that I can stand free before him forever and the hands that take me when I call out to him to be my savior those will never let me go I am secure in his blood his sacrifice for me and as I press more into Christ he died for me to be free and at the end of the day I will be know that freedom and its fullness and its beauty and its glory and its spectacularness and in between the moment my conversion and when I die and I peer before him face to face and I know that freedom in all of its fullness where I cry out free at last free at last thank God almighty I am free at last and in between that I submit to his touch and his yoke knowing that as I draw close to Christ he will only make me more free free from idols free from sin free from slavery free from lies free from self deception his hands his yoke those nail pierced hands will only make me more free as I push into him and allow him to draw me into him his yoke is easy and his burden is ultimately and eternally light please stand just bow our heads in prayer actually Andrew could you put up the ninth point please I'm going to invite you to say a prayer with me I'm just going to read it out to you so you know what you're praying oh God creator and sustainer of all things to be known by you and to know you as perfect freedom thank you that despite my slavery and my sin your son came to live and die that I may be free free to know and be known free to love and be loved please pour the Holy Spirit deep within me that I may be gripped by the gospel and grow in hope as I live free for your glory in Jesus name I invite you to pray that prayer with me let us pray oh God creator and sustainer of all things to be known by you and to know you is perfect freedom thank you that despite my slavery and my sin your son came to live and die that I may be free free to know and be known free to love and be