

Jude 24-25 "The End of Prayer"

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in a moment of prayer. Father, we ask that you teach us and help us to pray, and we ask that you teach us and help us to adore you. Father, you know how often we pray. You know how, in a sense, good we are at praying. You know our fears and our misunderstandings about prayer, but we just humbly ask you, Father, that you teach us and help us to pray, and that, amongst other things, you teach us and help us to adore you. And we ask this in Jesus' name, your Son and our Saviour. Amen. Please be seated.

So, this week, somebody asked me a question about things which I gave an unbelievably lame answer to. It was sort of the end of the day on Friday. I'd worked a long day, and I went to one of my favorite coffee shops. I wanted to get my final five or six emails done before I went home for pizza. And as I come in, one of the fellows who works there, he knows that I'm a pastor, and he said to me, oh, you're coming in to work on your sermon? What's your sermon about this week? Now, on one level, I love it when people ask me that question. On the other hand, I hate it, because what it did that time is it revealed to me that I only had a very, very, very lame answer.

[2 : 3 0] Like, I think I said something about, oh, it's going to be really good, it's important, or something like that. Just very, very lame. And I like sharing that with you, because I don't want you to ever think that my conversations with people who are outside of the Christian faith, that I'm always just very eloquent with them. A lot of times, I mess it up. And afterwards, I'm thinking about it, and I thought to myself, what, like, first of all, so what should I have said to him? He's a really great guy, a well-meaning guy, a bit of a nominal Christian background, and I know he's a bit interested in the Christian faith, because we've had a couple of talks about the Christian faith, and what should I have said? What I should have said was something like this, and maybe it's not a good answer.

After the service, during coffee, you can say, George, you should have said this, and that would be a great gift to me that I could learn a little bit better how to talk, right? So, what I should have said to him was something like this. I should have said something like, you know, there's lots of riddles about the fact that people pray. Like, you think about it, there's lots of riddles about the fact that, first of all, most people pray, and they know, they don't really think they're just talking, they worry that they might be just talking to themselves, but they pray.

And there's riddles about the way they pray, because it's sort of inconsistent with a lot of other things in their life the way they pray. And I'm going to look at a very wise and insightful text from the Bible that gives some clarity about this mystery and the riddle of prayer. I probably should have said something like that to try to make him interested. I didn't think of it. In fact, I only thought about it later, about 24 hours later. But that's what we're going to look at.

You know, there is, in fact, a mystery and a riddle to prayer. And I'm not going to talk about unanswered prayer or anything like that. But it's, in fact, it's amazing how many people who would

definitely say they're not Christians. I've talked to people who would say they're probably some type of an agnostic. And yet, they'll also tell me that they pray every day.

In fact, many of our friends who are outside of the Christian faith, I mean, I don't usually ask people, by the way, do you pray? Like, I don't ask that question. But we might be surprised at how many people that we know that they pray. And it's a bit of a mystery. Why is it that human beings are sort of almost hardwired? It is intuitive that we pray. And why is it that not only is it seen that people are hardwired to pray, but they pray inconsistent with their other beliefs?

[5 : 13] Like, if you think about it for a second. So the average Canadian, they would say, I think, that when you die, you go to some type of better place, or that you, you know, you sort of live in the trees and the wind, or you live in some disembodied existence, you know, but watching over people. But when we pray, almost always we pray with words, as if we're praying to a personal God.

Well, why is that? Like, that's a bit of a riddle. I mean, and if you, if you go and you, you know, any, if you have friends who are Hindus or Buddhists, and obviously lived Hinduism and Buddhism is often quite different than how it's presented, sort of, to middle class and upper middle class people here in Canada. But at its heart, they basically do have an image of God as being sort of everything, or the soul of everything, or in the case of Buddhism, it's a type of, you know, a nothingness. And when you die, you know, the very common image is, it's like a drop of water entering into the ocean, and ocean is a very impersonal image. And yet when Buddhists and Hindus pray, they pray to a personal God. They use words and pray to a personal God. Like, why is that?

That is actually really interesting, isn't it? That there is this both, it's almost as if there's something innate, and it's almost as if this innate type of prayer is to, is to use words as if God is a person. And I think in some ways it shows that there's a bit of a general intuition, and also a longing about what the true God must be like, or should be like, or we hope that he's like. Even if we use primarily languages of the divine in some type of a impersonal thing, as an impersonal presence, or as everything, or some type of force, the way we pray reveals some intuitions and longings about prayer. And I think, especially when we look at the text we're going to look at today, we see that those intuitions and longings are grounded ultimately in reality. And we need Christ, and we need his word to help us to understand those riddles of our intuitions and longings. So if you turn with me in your Bibles, we're just looking at two verses, and it's a prayer, a prayer that God wrote for us. It's Jude, chapter, Jude, there's no chapters because it's just one book, 25 verses long, and it is verses 24 and 25.

And just so you know, on the computer, I'm going to say, I'm going to probably read these verses quite a few times. And one of my hopes would be that you'd be close to memorizing the verse by the end of the day.

If you can't remember everything I've said, but you remember Jude 24 and 25, I wouldn't view that as a failure on my part. I'll view that as a success, because it's way better you remember God's word than George's word. George's word is just George. God's word is God speaking. And listen to how this goes. Now, to him, and by the word now here means in this prayer, Jude consciously is, in a sense, mindful of everything he's said up until now.

[8 : 39] Now we turn to prayer. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

Amen. It's a very beautiful prayer. And actually, you'll notice there it's a prayer with words, and it's a prayer addressed to him, to a person. That's at the very, very heart and center of the Christian faith is that God is a person. He's a personal God, but he's not just a personal God. He's a personal God who has spoken in his word, and he's a personal God who desires a personal relationship with human beings like you and me. And he desires that personal relationship, and he desires us to pray. He desires us to pray, to pray to him as, well, to pray to him in these types of ways. Now, it's, you know, one of the things about, so the mere fact that when people pray, they use words, it should be, if we think about it for a second, a bit of a hint, a hint about God and a hint about, well, a hint about recognizing the truth when we finally see it. It's like a, it's a type of clue, true, because how do we learn to speak? We learn to speak by hearing people speak.

Some of you know, maybe all of you know, that I have nine children. If, under some horrendous situation, after each one of our nine children were born, they were given to different families, and

maybe adopted in different countries of the world, they all wouldn't grow up speaking English, just because Louise and I speak English. If they got adopted into a French family, they'd grow up speaking French. If they got adopted by a family in India, they'd grow up speaking Hindi. If they got, grew up in, in Beijing, they'd grow up speaking Mandarin. They don't necessarily just going to speak English, because Louise and I speak English. That's sort of, sort of, not grafted into them, but by hearing people speak around them, human beings have the capacity for speech. They have, in a sense, a drive and a longing to speak. And they learn to speak, not only by hearing people speak, but also because with loving parents, and sometimes rude brothers and sisters who are older, but that's, of course, a whole other topic of conversation, you know, their speech is corrected. It's encouraged. You delight. Parents universally are excited when they think they've heard their child speak their first word. And I'm sure the child senses that. And then eventually you start to correct how they speak. And in a sense, it's an intuition. If we have this desire, intuition to pray, if it's somehow a natural thing woven into us, and we speak, it really implies, in a sense, that we should be learning how to pray by learning how God speaks.

And in particular, by learning how God wants us to pray. And that's one of the things which is so beautiful. It's not only this prayer that we're looking at, it's not just a God speaking to us, it's a prayer that God wrote, which means it's extra special. It's a prayer that we can pray, and our service will end with us praying this prayer together, by the way. It's one of the reasons why, if what comes out of the service is you remembering the words, or wanting to memorize the words, that's a great accomplishment, because it's going to help us to understand better how to pray. And it's a prayer not only that helps us to understand how to pray, but it helps us to understand what the gospel is, and how we should understand what it means to live as followers of Jesus.

[12 : 33] So, well, let's just say it again. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, and now, and forever. Amen.

So, it's very interesting that this book, some of you are coming to this, you don't remember the rest of Jude. Some of you are coming to this, you didn't know that we've been preaching through the book of Jude.

We took a break for Christmas, and not Christmas, Easter, and now we're back. But it's very interesting that this book ends with a prayer, because if you go back and read the book again for yourself, the whole book is a call to fight. That's what contend for the faith means.

It means fight for the faith. And as I talked about in other weeks before this, it's not fighting for the faith against people who are not Christians outside. It's a call to warn us that there are those who profess Christianity, or who say that they're Christians, and are part of our churches, but that in fact, they are, and this is what the book of Jude calls, some ungodly influencers. And in a sense, it's not about dealing with those outside of the Christian faith, but that, to use a different imagery, it's as if the enemies to the Christian faith are professing the Christian faith, and are within the gates, and a call to the church to look, to recognize them, and to fight against them.

And you can go back and listen to the other sermons, but it's very significant that this letter, which is about a call to fight, ends with prayer, and ends with a prayer like this.

[14 : 27] Because if you think about it, what we would expect, and by the way, a lot of our prayers that we make are, of course, a lot of prayers that we pray are motivated by guilt and by shame, and there's nothing wrong with that. All of our prayers should begin with where we are.

But a lot, I think, of general prayers are for particular types of power. And it's very interesting that you'd think that in a call, in a book about fighting, that the prayer would be about power, or about victory. You know, Father, you see these terrible people over there, I want you to make sure that they wither, they die, that they're completely embarrassed and ashamed and humiliated.

I pray for our victory, for my side's victory. I pray for triumph over them. I pray for all of these things. That's, in a sense, what we would expect a book like this to end with, with prayer.

But that's not how it ends. It ends in a very, very different way. Listen to it again. Now, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all times and now and forever. Amen. See, one of the things which I think is so emotionally and intellectually wise about this text is it realizes it, and helps us to guard against the fact that we have a, there's something broken in human beings, and Christians are human beings,

so it's broken in us, and that if we're not careful, when we fight, we can end up becoming like the enemy, so to speak. Like, there's a famous line from a military commander during the Vietnam War, where he told the press, to save the village, we had to destroy it. I'm not making that up. To save the village, we had to destroy it. Well, it's just one of those things that he said unselfconsciously, which was very revelatory. Obviously, the village isn't saved if it's destroyed, is it? One of the things which is involved, I'm going to be a little bit political here for a moment, but I think it, I think it will be helpful. Hamas launched a war against Israel by the indiscriminate raping and desecrating of bodies of infants and young women, and the young and the old and everybody. [17:12] It was an unprovoked attack. It was wanton and gleeful, and any of us who have seen any of the videos which came from them because they were proud of what they have done, well, probably for most of us, if we're all like most Canadians, it's actually hard to watch. It's hard to even imagine that it happened. Now, the danger in Israel's response is to become like Hamas.

And in lots of places in life, I'm not just picking on this, and we'll go beyond that now to just in general, there's always a problem that when you start to be involved in something, especially if you see them as being ungodly influencers, and you begin to try to turn your attention to them and use your intellect and use the best of your words and the best of your prayers into that, there's a danger as the things go on, and they're not maybe bound by the same type of understandings and commitments and morals that you are, that you start to believe that the only way for you to win is to, in a sense, become more like them. And the great tragedy could be that you win, in quotation marks, but when you win, you've actually lost because you've become like them.

And that's what's so emotionally wise and powerful about this text. It's what's so deeply wise about it. Listen to, you know, so, because listen to the prayer again. If you listen to this prayer, you realize however it is, you know, through our showing mercy, through our arguments, you know, maybe through church discipline, through a variety of different ways that you come to deal with those who the, you have to go back and read earlier, are described as ungodly influencers. But then it ends with this, before you go out to do any things, by teaching you this prayer to pray.

And look at how it refocuses you on what your end is. And given what your end is, how you should live.

Listen to it again. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

[19:52] It's a very, very wise way to be focused. I mean, that's, at the end of the day, you know, in the end of the day, the reason that Christians should deal with those who profess to be the Christian faith, but are in fact not Christians and taking you away from the Christian faith, is because on one level, the stakes are so high. Like, we, we, I believe, we believe, Christians have historically believed, the Bible teaches us, that when I put my faith and trust in Christ, and I'm made right with God through him, my end and your end is to stand blameless before the presence of God in all of his glory, and to stand there in fullness of joy, not having, and not being blameless or having stumble, but to stand in his presence with great joy. That's the end.

And if people are teaching things under the guise of being Christians that take them away from that, then shouldn't we fight against them?

But even in our fighting, shouldn't we be humbled? Because the fact is, the authority isn't mine. All authority comes from him. The might doesn't come from me. All the might comes from him. The glory doesn't come from me or for me. All the glory is for him and comes from him and is to him. And all the majesty has nothing to do with me.

It, it's, there might be majesty to what I say or what happens in a worship service, but the majesty comes from him. It, it's for him. There is both a, a profound encouragement to press on and a, and a profound humbling of us.

But humbling in the context of such encouragement is a, is in and of itself a profound comfort and joy. Now some of you might say, George, this is a very beautiful prayer, but George, the problem is it's not true, is it?

[22:10] Like, George, do you never stumble? Like, are you blameless? Well, if you've thought about that, reading the prayer and hearing it, you've, you've asked and thought about a very important question, a very good question. And, uh, there's two very, very different ways to, to, to try to understand those two things.

And it's really like oil and water. It, it, they're completely and, and utterly different. And, and so what I, I want to say is that I, I, you know, one of the things I do when I, I drive to church in the morning before the eight o'clock service. So one of the things I do actually while I'm driving is I say the Lord's prayer out loud.

And I say the 23rd Psalm out loud, uh, because my voice can be very raspy if I don't talk at all. And sometimes I've come to church and I've not talked to Louise. So the very first times I talk her at church, I'm all raspy and all like that. So I like to try to actually get my voice moving. And I, I pray. But one of the things I do is I actually confess my sins. I mean, I know I'm going to do it at the eight o'clock and the 10 o'clock service, but I, I confess my sins over the last week. And I never have, it's never the case that I say, Oh, I guess there's nothing to pray about this week.

There's always something to pray about, uh, without fail. And I don't even have to go throughout the whole week. I just, the last 24 hours, the last few hours, I have something to pray about. And so this isn't saying that, um, the people who get to stand before God are the people who don't stumble and the people who aren't blameless. Cause frankly, if that's the criteria, I'm screwed. And so are you. And if you don't think you're screwed, you're really screwed because you don't even realize that you do wrong things like, you know, so, so what, what's it saying?

[24 : 04] Um, just this week, somehow or another on Instagram, um, I came across Denzel Washington, uh, giving some advice and I, I wish Denzel Washington has just such gravitas when he speaks and, uh, just his, the way he speaks. I wish I could imitate it right now. I wish I could fact, I wish I could speak like Denzel Washington all the time. That would be a very good thing, but he's receiving some type of award. And, uh, he's saying, I remember, I remember one time my mommy said, my mom saying to me, uh, you know, uh, Denzel, what makes a man isn't whether or not he falls, but that no matter how many times he falls, he gets up one more time than he falls.

He just keeps getting up. And then he made some comment about, I think she might've said it to me, uh, one of the nine times I got nominated for this award and didn't win it and got everybody laughing.

And, and that's, you know, there's something when we hear that, there's something very, very compelling about that, uh, in our culture. The idea that it's not so much that you fall or you fail, uh, but that after you fail, you can stand up and keep pressing ahead and that you fall and you get up, you fall, you get up. There's something very powerful about that in our culture, but that's now I'm sure if you went on and asked Denzel about it, he'd be able to say something else because in fact, Denzel is a believing Christian. Uh, but in our culture, that's just humanism and it's very inspiring and we wish it could be true, but we all know, and maybe for you, it's been true for you up until now, but live long enough. That will not be the case. Or you'll reach a time that you fall and you stay down. Uh, maybe it's, you reach the end of your career, you reach the end of a marriage, uh, a failure with your kids or your best friend and you fail and you fail, you get up, but at some point in time, you can't get up again. But you see what this text is saying is that longing, that, that, that sense when we hear something like what Denzel

Washington has said, that there's something that we, we think that's wise and we wish we could live it, but we know that in our own, in our own power, we can't. What that is actually, that is a hint to what the gospel promises us and what has been made clear in this text.

See, because what this text is saying is it's not that when George prays this, I'm saying, oh, Father, I thank you so much that I'm not like other people. I've never stumbled. I thank you that I'm not like other people, that I've, I've, uh, I live a blameless life, you know, no, that would be the opposite of this text, wouldn't it? What it's saying is that in Christ, stumbling is not the last word about you. And in Christ, the evil you've done or the good you fail to do is not the last word about you. That in Christ, the last word about you is delivered by God to you face to face as you stand in the presence of his glory with great joy. And he looks at you and he does not say stumbler or sinner. He says, beloved.

[27 : 18] He says, beloved. You know, as this prayer grips our heart and forms us, there is nothing better than this profound truth of what Christ, in fact, does do for us, unworthy as we are when we put our faith and trust in him.

To give you a place to stand on for you to stand up again, to push you forward, to stand up again, to draw you forward, to stand up again, and to press on. And it's not rooted in humanism. It's rooted in the promises of God and what Christ has done for us in the gospel. Listen to it again.

Now, to him who is able to keep you. It's God who does this, not George. In fact, it's very interesting. In some ways, God is being named in this verse. Who is God? God is him who is able. That is who God is. Him who is able. To him who is able. What is he able to do? He's able to keep George from stumbling and to present George blameless before the presence of God's glory, his own glory, with great joy. To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen. One of the things I hear often when I talk to people is it's very common for them to either give me the mountaintop analogy or the elephant analogy. And in the mountaintop analogy, when they discover that I'm a Christian, one of the things, by the way, I have a friend, he's moved away from Ottawa, really, really neat guy, originally from Nicaragua, huge, big, tall guy. And he always wore a black clergy shirt and collar wherever he went because he didn't want the Canada, he didn't want Ottawa to think that there were no Christians in Ottawa. And so he is a former Division I NCAA basketball player who played in the States. Anyway, but for me, an elderly white guy, I wear t-shirts all the time. I'd rather that the people in the coffee shop get to know me before they find out that I'm a pastor. Partially to try to mess up their stereotypes. And often when they hear that I'm a pastor, sometimes, either then or later on, they'll talk a little bit about how, you know, they think, it's sort of neat that you're a spiritual guy, and you seem like a nice guy, enough, nice enough, and you're a spiritual guy. And you know, I believe that all the religions, it's sort of like they're all trying to get to the top of the mountain. And so you have your way of going up the mountain, and, you know, the Hindus have their way of getting up the mountain, and the Buddhists, their way of getting up the mountain, and the Muslims, their way of getting up the mountain, and I have my way of getting up at the top of the mountain. But we all just want to be at the top of the mountain together. Now, I have a variety of things I might or might not say to that. But one of the things I now think I should say is I say, you want to know something really interesting? I disagree with you about that, because I don't think all the different religions are, in fact, trying to get to the top of the same mountain. And they'd say, well, that's not true. I'd probably say, just listen to this.

[31 : 02] And now maybe what I'll do, especially if I've memorized the text, I'll say, you know, there's this text in the book of Jude, and it ends with this. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.

Sorry, I did that too quick. Keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless, present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. So that's not what all religions want, is it? I mean, the average Canadian thinks that when you die, you have some type of vague disembodied existence. You aren't standing before the presence of God in all of his glory with great joy. If you follow the path of Hindu, of Hinduism or of Buddhism or of Islam, you do not end up standing before the presence of the Godhead and all their glory, all God's glory, I should say, with great joy. That's a very different end. But isn't that ultimately really the end you long for and yearn for? Isn't that like, aren't your longings and yearnings a hint as to what really should be true? And what nobody really longs that they just have a disembodied existence?

Some ethereal disembodied existence? That's not what we really long for. We don't want to die, and we long that if we... This idea that there is this great joy, that's what we long for.

This idea of continuing to exist and really exist and to exist with joy, that touches more buttons about what we really long for and yearn, and that's what the gospel makes clear and reveals. And C.S. Lewis has so brilliantly portrayed what this joy is like.

The thing which is so wonderful about this joy is it's the type of joy that when we finally come and stand before God in his glory, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, made clean and pure and washed from all of our sins by what Christ has done for us on the cross, and when we stand before him in the presence of his glory with great joy, that we will feel that joy will be in us and around us, and we will, in a sense, taste of that joy and drink of that joy. And when we drink of that joy, it will satisfy us at the most deep and profound level. But that joy will not just satisfy us or sate us.

[33 : 45] That same joy will trigger within us something that we did not know was there in the very depths of our being. And it will not only satisfy our joy, but it will create within us a longing for more joy.

And even the longing for that more joy is a type of joy. And the same type of joy that is surrounding us and entering into us that satisfies our longings for joy and then creates this new longing for joy, that new longing for joy will be satisfied in him and create new longings which will once again be satisfied in him. That is your destiny in Christ, brother and sister. And now you understand why it is

that we need a savior. Listen, if you're just going to go to a better place when you die, you don't need a savior. If you're just going to, at the end of the day, go through endless series of reincarnation and then be a water that drops in the ocean and loses its identity, you do not need a savior. And if there's any of those other types of ideas about merely climbing a mountain for some other, whatever reason, you don't need a savior. But if your end is this, how on earth are you going to do that by yourself?

How on earth are you going to do that by yourself? Or how on earth is your club or your group going to do that for you? It's impossible. You need a savior. That was God has provided his son. That one of the things is a really nerdy thing. But one of the wonderful things about this prayer in the original language is the exact same words in the original language can be translated two ways. So scholars, when they're translating it now after many years, sometimes generally scholars tend to say, well, you know, English can't do it. We have to pick one and they'll take the one that's most likely.

But the fact of the matter is, is that I think one of the reasons that God chose this particular ancient language to reveal himself is that there's often these double entendres, so to speak. But they're not double entendres that are sexual. They're double entendres that reveal profound truths.

And on one hand, you can translate this text to say that all the glory and majesty and might and authority that we acknowledge goes to God, the Father, that goes through Jesus. And that's a way to interpret it. But the other way that can be understood in the original language is that the way that we're saved is through Jesus. And that's, you see, the wonderful thing about this whole text, and what it helps us to remind us about the gospel, is that Jesus didn't, the story of Jesus isn't just a story. It's not a myth. It's a story very deeply rooted in time and place for all times and place.

[36 : 24] It's very deeply rooted in particular language and particular people, for people of all languages and throughout all of time. And it's this profound story of Jesus, God the Son, entering into our human world, the world that he created, and living the life that we should live but couldn't, and dying the death that we deserve, but a death that would completely unmake us. And so, as all of the wonderful sacrificial language of the Old Testament puts is that, in a sense, in our minds or our hearts, and we reach out to Jesus and trust in him and connect to him, that it's like he touches us and we touch him, and all of the things that I've done that are wrong, in a sense, they go on him. And so, when he dies on the cross, he's taking away and canceling the things that I have done that are wrong. And it's, I'll discover, when I stand before God, in the presence of his glory, with great joy, that he has taken away everything that I have ever done that is wrong. He's paid the punishment for it, that is wiped away. And it's not just now that I am, I am, I'm just completely and utterly naked, that I am clothed with his righteousness. The goodness, the goodness and the wholeness and the holiness that is properly his, he bestows upon me. And so, I stand before God in his presence with great glory, with great joy, the resurrected body. And he looks at me, and he doesn't see George the sinner, and he doesn't see George the stumbler, but he sees George clothed, washed clean by Christ and clothed by Christ. And he says to me, beloved. He'll say that to you too, if you put your faith and trust in Christ.

Just one thing, sort of in closing. You know, one of the things about this text, one of the things that the Bible helps us to do is it helps us to awaken longings and desires that have been dormant. We live in an age which teaches us distraction, not thinking, but primarily an age which encouraged, obviously we have lots of elements in our culture that go different directions, but there's a strong element in our culture that teaches distraction and that sees the world as empty. And the fact is, for most modern Canadians, we have a hard time understanding what on earth glory is and what on earth majesty is.

And in fact, actually, we live in an age where comedians and others will mock ideas of glory and majesty.

But this teaches us that glory is real, that there is something called majesty, just as there is something like might, and there is something called authority, with all of its proper morality and ordered morality and a way of living.

And partly what this prayer should help us to do is to call out to God that we can begin to recognize what glory really is and majesty really is. And even to say, Lord, even if I don't entirely know what it is, I acknowledge before you that whatever glory there is in my life or is within my reign of control or stewardship I should say, whatever majesty there is, whatever might there is, because if you go back that word dominion in the text, if you look at different Bible translations, you'll see it's

translated three ways.

[40 : 11] And if you sort of take the three words, you triangulate them, you're getting at the idea in the original language. Some translate it as dominion, some translate it as power, and some translate it as might. And if you take those three English words, it gives you a bit of a picture of what's being referred to.

You see, everything in Canadian culture is trying to encourage us to be a someone. I got this idea from John Stott.

Everything in Canadian culture is trying to teach us to be a someone. And we read the Bible, we come to expect the Bible's going to teach us how to be a someone, and we're surprised that it doesn't. Because, you see, the Bible says, you know, it's not so much that God wants you to be a someone.

God wants you to meet someone. It's not about how to be someone. It's about knowing someone. In a sense, everything in our culture is designed to try to make us think that we're like flashlights that are fully powered up, that we're a source of light, a source of warmth. And the Bible is vastly more realistic, but it's realistic without despairing.

[41 : 22] Because of the gospel, it's realistic in a very hopeful way. It says, no, George, you're a mirror. And you put a mirror in a dark room, and it's just dark. Mirrors have no light or whatever within them.

But, George, every human being like you is like a light, is like a mirror. And, you know, you've acknowledged that the Bible is revealing that you stumble and you have, you do wrong things. And so what the Bible is trying to help you to understand is that, in fact, George, you're a mirror.

And, George, you're a mirror that's cracked, and some of it's warped. And no light ever comes from you in and of yourself, but George.

You angle your mirror, who you are, towards Christ, who is the light, who is majesty, who is glory, who is might, who is authority.

And just as we can take a mirror, one of the things they do in wilderness things, if you get lost, is often those little things will have something like a mirror, because they know that if you angle that mirror that has no light in itself, that it both catches the sun but shines in that direction, you can have a light which is so bright that people will notice.

[42 : 32] And so, George, when you're learning that all glory, majesty, and all might and authority come from him and go, or properly his, this is a call to so angle your life towards him and towards, and from him towards others, that his glory and majesty, his might and authority is known.

He can fill your cracked and warped mirror and shine into even the darkest places. Even the lowliest Christian can do this in him.

I invite you to stand. I'm going to say the words of Jude. I'm going to turn the words of this prayer into a prayer for us, for each of us personally to say, I don't know where you are with Christ.

Maybe you would describe that you've maybe wandered away from him. Maybe you would describe that you've been trying to figure out whether he's true. I would invite you to consider this prayer as your conversion prayer of giving yourself to him.

But for those of us who are in Christ, it's a prayer. A prayer that God wrote for us because he wants us to learn to pray it for ourselves to him.

[43 : 57] So I'll say a phrase, and if you would pray it after me in response, if the Lord puts it on your heart, that would be good. Almighty God, you are able to keep me from stumbling.

You are able to present me blameless before you. You are able to present me blameless before you. In the presence of your glory with great joy. You are the only God.

You are the only Savior. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. To you be all glory. And all majesty.

And all dominion. And all authority. As it has been from the beginning. Is right now.

And will be forever. Amen. Father, we ask that you would teach us and help us to pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.