

A Good Person?

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[0 : 00] I'm going to go into the sermon. I have to get some of my stuff put together for us to do that. My notes. As I turn in my notes, I want to think of myself as a good person.

And in fact, not only do I want to be able to think of myself as a good person and know myself as a good person, I want you to think of me as a good person. And chances are, in fact more than chances, every single one of you who is listening to this probably thinks the same way, that you desire to be able to think of yourself as a good person and you hope that other people think of yourself as a good person.

It's very Canadian and very human. Part of the reason I was thinking about this is not just because of the scripture text that I've been meditating upon all week, but also because just a week or so ago I finished watching with my wife the two seasons of the Ricky Gervais show that's on Netflix, *Afterlife*.

By the way, when I mention shows that I've watched, I'm never recommending that you necessarily watch these things. As you know, Ricky Gervais, many of you might or might not know, he's a very, very funny English comic, has a very type of biting humor, and is a very, very well-known atheist.

And the show, on one level, deals very powerfully about the whole theme of suicide and grief. But especially in the second season, a very, very important part of the show is the question as to whether or not the main character, Ricky Gervais, is whether he's a good person.

[1 : 33] And he obviously has a great desire to be able to think of himself and be recognized as a good person. So it's very, very Canadian. But if you think about it, though, let's say we call this the good person project that most of us, including myself at different times, although I'm going to qualify it as the sermon goes on, if you think about it, there's lots of problems with the good person project.

If we're honest about it, seeking to be a good person is very fragile. Now, some of you might not think that's the case with you because you've had a long time of nobody ever getting mad at you or calling you names or you haven't been fired, you haven't been called out by a boss or something like that.

But for those of us who've had people come up and say, you know, you say very, very hard things about us or being dressed down by a spouse or a child or a brother or sister or your friend or a neighbor, you realize that, in fact, many of us, our sense of being a good person is very fragile.

I think every single one of us is aware of how a person who might say something about us, pointing out some major character fault can cause us to be depressed and anxious.

And for an hour, for a day, a week, a month, it can really bother us. And if you think about it, it's partially because the good person project is very, very fragile. And the second thing is that, in fact, there's a problem with it.

[3 : 07] Like I just said, that probably every Canadian would say that they want to be able to think of themselves as a good person and they want others to think of themselves as a good person. But if you think about it for another moment, there's lots of problems with that.

I mean, that means that the person who listens to CNN and watches CNN wants to think that they're a good person. And the person who watches Fox News wants to think they're a good person. But what do people who watch CNN think about people who watch Fox?

What do people who watch Fox think about people who watch CNN? What about the very, very, very orthodox and devout Muslim and the very, very, very secular atheist? Both of them want to be thought of as a good person.

And both of them will think that there's huge parts of the other person that are just fundamentally wrong. So we see that if we think about it for a second, on one hand, there's this human desire to think of yourself as a good person, to in effect have a good person project as, whether you recognize it or not, a part of who you are, part of your human existence, so to speak.

And at the same time, you think about it, there's actually lots of problems with this. The Bible text that we're going to look at today actually has very, very powerful insights into this project.

[4 : 20] And we'll end up taking people who follow the Bible and listen to its wisdom in a very, very different place to look at the whole project in a very, very different way, but really in a way that actually answers the longings and yearnings of your heart in a wise and very powerful way.

So just before we look at it, we're going to be looking at Philippians chapter 3, verse 1. I'm just going to say a brief prayer. Philippians chapter 3, verse 1, if you want to follow along in your Bible. But here's just a brief prayer.

Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would lead us and guide us into all truth. And that as the Holy Spirit leads us and guides us into all truth, that we would have a new and deeper appreciation for who Jesus is, for what he accomplished for us in his sinless life, in his sacrificial death, in his mighty resurrection.

And Father, grip us with this deep truth of what you have done for us in the person of your Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So just before we read this, just some of you know this because you've watched some of the other videos, the book of Philippians, Paul is writing this to the very first European Christians, and he is in chains.

[5 : 37] So that's actually going to be one of the ironies of looking at the good person project, being a good person project, by Paul, who's in chains for a criminal, and he's not sure if he's going to be executed for being an enemy of the state.

And he's under house arrest. And he's writing to these Christians in another city. And here's how this particular chapter begins. One of the things we do, by the way, at Church and Messiah is we preach through books of the Bible as much as possible.

So there's no fine print. We look at everything. And anyway, let's go. Chapter 3, verse 1. It's going to be a bit... Well, let's go. Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.

To write the same thing to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. And I'll just pause here for a second. There's two pieces here, rejoice in the Lord, brothers and sisters.

And then there's this statement, to write this, the same thing to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. That second part of the sentence is a Janus. That's not something that most of you are thinking of.

[6 : 38] It's a god of antiquity who had two faces looking in the opposite direction. And what he says is good for me to write to you more and more and more is looking both what he's just said, that in fact, to rejoice in the Lord, that's a really good thing to be able to do.

It's very, very safe. There's lots of medical evidence that gratitude gives you a healthier life. It makes you just a better person. And then on the other hand, what he's also going to say is what I'm about to write to you, which is going to be a bit of a summary of the gospel and the good person project.

It's good for me to write about this and talk about this more and more and more and more. So the statement looks sort of in both directions at the same time. But then, all of a sudden, the next bit is very shocking for Canadians.

And in fact, you think that what he's going to do now is maybe talk to you a little bit about gratitude, a little bit about rejoicing. But all of a sudden, he goes way off course in a shocking way.

Well, what happens? Look at verses 2 and 3. Here's how it goes. Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

[7 : 49] For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. So just a couple of points to understand what's going on with this name-calling, which is what it seems like to us as Canadians.

And the first one is, and I think it'll end up being in your notes or on the screen or something, I have four different points. I like trying to be able to have sermon points as a way for people who are a bit more visual to get to understand it.

It helps me to stay on track. And here's the first thing. Christian, in quotes, is not a synonym for good, in quotes. That's a really important thing for you to understand.

If I said that I could say that my ministry intern, Matt, is both he's done really bad things and he's a Christian, and I haven't contradicted myself. In fact, I could even say that he's a bad Christian, or I could say that about myself.

And I haven't contradicted myself. It's not like saying I'm bad good. And that's because, in fact, it's a very important thing. We Christians, we breathe the air of our culture and want to live the good person project.

[8 : 59] And that's why we need to gather and worship. That's why we need to be in small groups. That's why we need to have mentors and spiritual friends and read Christian books to try to be formed by God's Word.

And we can try to start to live the good person project ourselves. But at the end of the day, a Christian is one who is a disciple of Jesus. That's what the word means.

That we've come to understand that we need to have Jesus as our Savior and Lord to trust Him and to follow Him and be formed by Him. And it doesn't mean we're good. Now, so, George, are you saying that's why the Bible here has this name calling?

No, this brings me up to the second thing. And if you think about this, then you're going to begin to have a bit of an understanding of what Paul is doing here in the book. And here's the second point.

To live wisely and well, you need to both flee and pursue, reject and embrace. I'll say it again. To live wisely and well, you need to both flee and pursue, reject and embrace.

[10 : 06] We're all very conscious right now of the terrible, unjust killing of that African-American man that just took place and the riots that have ensued around it.

And we're all very conscious of racism in the States. And to different degrees, we're conscious of the racism which is in Canada. Racism is a human problem. It's a human problem in every country.

I'm not saying that to belittle it. I'm saying that because it's something that we need to deal with. And how do you deal with racism? Well, if you think about it for a second, your own racist beliefs, what do you want to do? If you identify parts of you in your own experience that are racist, or if you see that in your child or your spouse or your best friend, what do you want them to do?

You want them to flee from it. You want them to reject it and run as far away from racism as they possibly can. But you don't want them to just merely run away from racism as if they're then just indifferent.

You want them to embrace something. You want them to pursue something. What do you want them to embrace or pursue? You want them to embrace compassion. You want them to embrace being very comfortable with the other and with difference.

[11 : 15] You want to have people actually have a love for people, regardless of the color of their skin or their sexual orientation. You want them to embrace love and reject hatred and evil.

And we all understand that. And if you understand that, what you see going on here is this. Now, this is one of the cases where, and you sort of have to take my word for it, but in the original language, what you have here is biting irony.

It's a little bit like a very, very well done political cartoon that you might see in the newspaper or somewhere on the web. And it's very biting and it's very ironic.

And there's very powerful plays on words. And it's still going to be a little bit shocking because one of the things that he's rejecting is all human credentials to be used in the Good Person Project.

But what he does is, just think for a second about how people who are enamored with CNN think about people who wear MAGA hats. Or think about those who wear MAGA hats and how they might think about people who, you know, who love CNN.

[12 : 27] And the types of names that they use for each other. And so what Paul is doing is he's taking people who want to turn the Christian faith in the gospel into a type of religion which focuses on exalting human credentials to make themselves feel that they're more important and are confusing people about it.

And he's using the language that they use of other people. And he turns it on them and says they're actually the ones who are doing this. And it's especially powerful because the key idea of mutilation and circumcision, the original hearer, people wouldn't have been reading this letter.

They would have been hearing the letter. And the two words sound very similar, but they have completely opposite directions. And so what Paul's doing is he's really calling people out in terms of what they're doing.

And he's doing it in a very, very stark and biting way. But it doesn't sound quite as bad. I mean, it's very direct, and I'm sure they'd be upset. But it doesn't sound as insulting quite in the original language as it does in English.

And we're not going to talk about verse 3 right now because we need to understand, if you understand verses 4 and 6, you'll understand a little bit about what he's doing by contrasting these people who want to turn the Christian faith into a type of religion based on human credentials.

[13 : 49] So look at verses 4 to 6. Now, what Paul's doing here is he's saying, listen, if you want to go down the human credential corridor, if you want to walk down the human credential path, I get an A+.

All those people who are against me, they think they have a good score on human credentials. You can add all their human scores together, and I'm going to beat them all by myself.

That's how great I am at human credentials. And that's what he does. Look at verses 4 to 6. Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh, that is, in a sense, on human credentials.

Every time you see the word flesh here in this text, one way to understand it is just thinking from things from an earthly point of view, from a human credentials point of view. So I'll read it again.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in human credentials. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the human credentials and divine credentials, I have more.

[14 : 50] Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Now, just sort of pause there. Now, this text, indirectly, is part of the Bible's great revelation to us about the problem of human credentials.

Like, let's be honest. I just blew it up by saying, if you're going to go down the human credentials route, all of my opponents, I whoop them. I'm way better.

And you listen to that and you go, what? Who cares about any of those things? Who cares that you're circumcised or a Pharisee? Who cares about any of that stuff?

Paul, that is so lame. That is so lame. But here's the point. That's the whole problem with the human, the good person project, isn't it?

[15 : 54] I mean, the type of things that if you're connected to Antifa, or if you're connected to the alt-right, the human credentials that you would use to establish that you're a good person will be radically different and you will find the other ones repulsive.

Or it could even just be historical. I mean, it's hard for us to believe, but if you go back to the right time period, everybody loved residential schools. The who's who in government, the who's who in business, the who's who in academia.

Like if you went back in time, or you brought one of them there back from a time machine into today, and they were to get up and to tell you why they're a good person, and they were to say, well, the reason I'm a good person is I was one of the masterminds and one of the architects and one of the fundraisers and the supporters for the whole residential school project.

And they would be shocked to see everybody, well, I bet we'd want to lynch them. And you can go back to anything else.

You could go back to the late 1800s in England, and one of the ways that you know that you're a good person is because I've served the crown in India and in Africa, and I've helped to extend the British Empire, and I've brought good British order to all those.

[17 : 07] So you'd be going, what? You'd be throwing, putting your finger in your throat. You'd be gagging. But it's not just political, and it's not just historical. It's about yourself. You know, I hope there's somebody here who's watching this who's 15, so you can't get this illustration at all.

Maybe you could if you just think about the fact that maybe your four-year-old sibling thinks they're really good because they watch Paw Patrol, and you just think that's so lame. But the fact of the matter is, is if you think about it, if you're 30, you think about the type of things that you would have thought made you a good person when you were in grade 10, and you'd be embarrassed.

Or 10 years ago, those of you who were 70, at one time you were cool hippies, and if you think back about the types of things that you thought made you a good person back then compared to now, they're lame.

Or you want to throw up over it because it's so completely and utterly ridiculous. But you see, that's, by the way, that's one of the whole problems with the main way that Canadians think is in terms of they want to be authentic to their real self.

But if you just think about how much, if you lived to be 50, what your real self was when you were 40, and when you were 30, and when you were 20, and when you were 14 is so different, you realize that trying to base your identity on those things which are authentic to you is vapor.

[18 : 31] It's like trying to build a house in a snowstorm, not on the ground while the snow's thingy, but on top of the snow that's falling. You can't do it. It just collapses. But our good person project is based on these things.

And just as Paul's saying, here we go, what, this is so lame. The fact of the matter is, is that our own grounds for thinking that we're a good person is so lame. And on top of it, if you think about it, like you use the Antifa example, use the alt-right example, use CNN, use, you just even, look, anything.

One of the reasons why you think you're good, part of the good person project inevitably means looking down your nose at others. And if you think about it for a second, the entire good person project is the very definition of being self-righteous.

But we always use self-righteous of other people as a put-down. But our whole good person project is a project for self-righteousness.

So what does the Bible do? It goes deeper. Paul is going to say something about that whole list that he just gave you. Look at what he does in verses 7 and 8. Verses 7 and 8.

[19 : 48] I'll read that to you again.

And I'll read that to you again. Actually, before I read it, Paul is using a different type of analogy here. The analogy that he's using is of bank, because this is actually how the good person project works.

I check this in. If I go to my Simply Financial online record of my finances, which, by the way, are almost always dismal, there's funds in, there's funds out, and there's a running balance.

And if you think about that, and of course, to open a bank account, you have to have an opening balance. And if you think about that, that's how the good person project works. And this is part of the reason why we, on one level, comfort ourselves, but other times people can find what we do so reprehensible.

Because we say, well, because I'm me, because I'm me, my opening balance starts at \$10 billion. And then we look down our nose at somebody else and think, boy, their opening balance probably just started at \$5.

[21 : 12] In fact, they probably started at a negative. And then what we do is we go throughout life, and you know what? You do something bad, and that means that your balance goes down. But then you do something good, and that means it's like you're putting money back into your bank balance.

In fact, if you watch the Ricky Gervais show, *After Life*, you'll see that's very much how the whole show works. In his preoccupation in the second season with whether or not he's a good person, that he does, he says abysmal things about people, but then he says good things about people, or does something generous.

And you can see that in his own mind, and in the mind of each of us, he's just revealing how we think. That, in fact, if you do something mean, okay, your good person balance has gone down, maybe even into the negative.

But now you do something really good, and so now it's gone back up. But if you think about it for a second, and this is how it all works for us, right? The fact of the matter is, is we don't like banks because they're brutally honest.

We all have the experience. You look at your credit card bill, and you say, oh my, how on earth did it get that high? And then you maybe look, did I really spend \$523 on cigars?

[22 : 20] I'm sure it was just \$150. It's hard to believe it was so much money. And in terms of our good person project, what we do is we don't write down the \$523. We put down \$125.

And the money we invest, it's more, and it gets better interest, and all of that type of stuff because we play with the books. We're brutal with other people, but really, really giving ourselves mulligans all the time on our side.

And it really bothers us that people are brutal with us, not giving us mulligans. We see them giving themselves mulligans while they're brutal with us. And once again, why often the good person project can lead to conflict and insecurity.

What Paul comes to realize, I'm going to read it again, is what Paul comes to realize is that because he was engaged in the good person project in the religious form as being a devout Jew, that all of the things that he thought were actually putting money in the bank in his good person project were actually things that were withdrawing money.

And he was in an impossible debt situation. Listen to it again, because he uses actually literally, he uses literally the language of finance. Verse 7, but whatever gain funds in, good operating bank balance, I count as loss for the sake of Christ.

[23 : 42] I'm going to explain that in a moment. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ's Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, as dung, in order that I may gain Christ.

Have Christ be the one who handles the balance, handles the debits, and handles the assets. Put it all in Christ's hands. In fact, Paul literally is saying that he suffered the loss of all things because he's bound by chains and he's under house arrest and he's lost his prestige.

He's lost his economic security and his finances and all of those things. He's literally lost them. Here's the point before we go on a little bit more about this. It's my third point. The gospel reveals that you are far worse than you ever realized and far more saved and loved than you can ever imagine.

Say that again. The gospel reveals, this is what came to Paul as he understood the gospel, the good news of what God, the triune God, has done to make us right with himself in the person of his son.

And what Paul came to understand was that the gospel reveals that you are far worse than you ever realized and far more saved and loved than you can never imagine.

[25 : 04] And that's part of the reason why to be gripped by the gospel is one of the things that allows you, in a sense, to die to the good person project. And actually, as the more the gospel grips you, the more the gospel grips myself to have a type of security to look at the bad that I've done.

And to not be completely and utterly unmade by it. Because I know that whatever is revealed about me that is bad, it probably is bad.

And I'm far worse. Far worse. Far more need and salvation than I can ever realize. And far more loved and saved than I can ever know. So, if you think about it, the good person project, not only is it insecure, the different ways that I've shown it, but many of us, and those of you who are listening to me, you know who we are.

You know who you are. We know who we are. One of the deep fears underlying many people is this, that if people really knew me, they wouldn't like me. That if people really got close to me, they'd like me less.

And that's a very, very deep, unsettling fear underneath the whole good person project. But the Bible reveals that the triune God knows you perfectly.

[26 : 25] And knowing you perfectly still shows you unmerited kindness in working to make you right with him and fit you for heaven.

Just before I read the next few verses to finish this, Philippians chapter 3, verses 9, 10, and 11, I just want to say a summary that summarizes these three verses.

It's my fourth point, and it goes like this. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, I am made right, grow right, and end right.

I'll explain what it means. It's a way to understand what these next three verses are teaching. There's three verses which would be very, very wise for you to memorize and to meditate upon.

But I'll say it again. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, I am made right, grow right, and end right.

[27 : 26] So look at verse 9, which talks about that first thing of being made right. And here we mean being made right with God. And to be made right with God is to begin to be made right in terms of who we are as a person, because God made all things.

He made human beings. He knows what human beings are supposed to be like. So to be made right with God is the first step towards being made right in terms of growing right and ending right. Listen to verse 9.

It goes like this. Remember it says, the last part of verse 8 is that I may gain Christ, continues, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, that is from rules, but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends or is grounded on faith. So what does this righteousness from God mean? Well, here's a very simple analogy to help you understand.

It's just a whole idea of something needs to be made right. So just go back and think a year from now, and we're able to go to restaurants again, and you have a mom, and the mom goes into the restaurant with her three kids.

[28 : 40] And she ends up having the restaurant visit from hell. It's as if it's not from hell. She's descended into hell. And the waiters ignore her.

The waiter ignores her, doesn't bring water. You know, you can tell he's really bothered by the kids. And then he brings the wrong food.

And when you say that's not what you ordered, he attacks you, and he does it in a loud voice and makes it look like you're too stupid to know how to order things, too stupid to look after your kids. You just get more and more and more red.

You just feel like crying. And then he gives you the bill, and, you know, he said, you know, you better leave me a good tip, and all that. And it's just a horrific experience.

You're embarrassed in front of everybody. Your kids are unhappy. You feel ashamed. Everything is wrong. And you just sort of feel, you're just having one of those days where you just feel like you can't really defend yourself either.

[29 : 39] You know, with the kids, and you're tired, and all of that type of stuff. And this was going to be a special time. You really wanted it to be special for your kids, and now it's all ruined, and all of that type of stuff.

And you're walking out of the restaurant, and there's tears in your eyes. There's tears in your eyes as you walk out. And as you're walking out, this older woman, a middle-aged woman comes in and sees you crying.

She says, what's wrong, dear? And you say, oh, it's nothing. And she said, no, no, no, no. Like, what's wrong? Like, I own the restaurant. Like, if there's something that we've done here, I want to know about it.

And then it just gushes out of you. It just gushes out of you. The waiter, the food being cold, and how he treated you and embarrassed you in public. And you know that when you were leaving there, what do you want?

You want someone to make it right. And what does make it right mean? Well, she says, she takes your hand. She says, dear, I'm going to make it right.

[30 : 37] And she really does make it right. And she goes in, and she fires the waiter. And she tells to the whole room, by the way, I just want to really apologize for the behavior of my waiter and how humiliated this young woman and the kids.

We love kids. And just because I'm really bothered by the reputation that might have happened, all of you are having free desserts on me. And then, you know, and then she turns to the, you know, the woman.

And as they're going out, she says, you know, I just want to make sure you come back. Here's four free meals to come in the future with you and your kids. And just everything. And the owner has to pay, in a sense, for the tickets.

The owner has to pay for the dessert. But the woman goes out, and she feels vindicated. And she feels listened to. And she feels loved. And she feels respected.

And she knows that things were made right. And as she walks out of the room, she has satisfaction because things have been made right. And the owner has acted to make it right for her.

[31 : 41] And she feels made right. And the owner did it at cost to herself. And that's what Jesus does for you. That's what Jesus does for you.

Everything that you have had a hand in to mess up, to do wrong, anything to do with shame, anything which has been all of that stuff, that's why he left heaven.

That's why he became human. That's why he identified with you. That's why he lived the sinless life. That's why he does it on thighs on the cross. He does it knowing what you're like and loving you.

And he dies to do everything that has to be done in the way that only the owner can do it to make it right because you can't make it right for yourself.

And you enter into what Christ has done for you purely by faith. I don't deserve it. You've done it for me out of love.

[32 : 48] It's a love I don't really deserve. Do you really, God, if you really knew what I was like, would you? No, God says, I do know what you're really like. And loving you, I did it for you to make things right with me.

And that's what it means when it says here, a righteousness from God that we receive through faith in Christ. And we're made right with the triune God through union in Christ.

It's as if Jesus takes your hands. You call out to Jesus, will you be my Savior? And he takes your hands and says, oh, my beloved, I love you so much. And in a sense, as he embraces you, there's that union with him.

In a sense, you become united in him so that all that he did with his life, all he did with his setting aside his glory, his life, his death, his tasting everything there is to taste, to death, to bearing your sins, all of that, you're united in that he's done that all for you and you're in him.

You now have his standing before God. You're made right in him. And you have union with him. That's what this is telling you about. Remember I said, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, I am made right, grow right, and end right.

[34 : 02] Because verse 10 talks about being made right. It's a completely different way to understand the good person project. It's not a good person project. It's something different. Listen to verse 10.

So verse 9 is, And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. Verse 10, That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

This is a very, very, very beautiful passage. You know, one of the big problems with the good person project is the good person project can't handle suffering. The good person project can't handle death.

And what this is talking about here is that when we have this union with Christ, we're made right with the triune God through faith in Christ. We have union with him.

And that means we're now in Christ. It doesn't just mean that we're made right with God, and then we have to wait until he dies. That we have union with him. If you're a Christian, you have union with Jesus right now. And when it's said earlier in verse 3 about worshiping by the Spirit, there's a bit of a mistake nowadays.

[35 : 14] A lot of Christian churches say the part of time of singing is worship, but the word for worship is a certain type of service. It's a 24-7, 365 word. That my whole life is to now, in a sense, as I remember the gospel, as I remember that I'm united with Christ, as I remember that I am vastly worse than I ever realized, but vastly more loved and saved than I can ever possibly imagine.

And as I remember that and I live out of that, as that begins to frame the way I understand myself and my identity and my destiny and my presence, it's not just that I do that on my own, but Jesus is with me and the Holy Spirit is with me to empower me to do this and empower you.

And the word know, you see, is a personal knowing. It's not just ideas, it's to know in a personal type of relationship. And so the gospel gives you Jesus' presence and the power of the Holy Spirit at the same time a whole new way of understanding the world and understanding yourself that grounds you and shapes you.

And it does more than that. But it begins to draw you. Look at verse 11, you see, because remember the point was that by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, I am made right, grow right, and end right.

You see, because some of you might say, George, I don't know, like you, I know you say you're not like a good person, but you're like a good person. You're religious. Like you read the Bible. Like you pray. Like I'm not like that, George.

[36 : 46] Like if you knew, if you knew how much envy controls me, if you knew how much anger controls me, if you knew how I can't let go of certain types of things, you'd know, George, that I might do this for a week or a month or three months, but then it would collapse because I'm just not like you.

I have good news. I am no different than you. And God knows all of those things. The triune God knows all of those things, and still Jesus died.

Remember I said you're vastly worse than you ever realized, but you're vastly more loved and vastly more saved in the gospel than you can ever possibly imagine. And the Holy Spirit is with you with all of those things.

The Holy Spirit and Jesus, they're with you in your anger. They're with you in your envy. They're with you with your lack of forgiveness. They're with you with your fears. They're with you with your depression. They're with you and not abhorred by you.

They love you, and they're with you. And the thing that the Bible wants you to understand is that when you put your hands in the hands of Jesus, and he takes you as yours, and you are now made right with God, and you now begin to be able to grow right with God, the end of the matter is that you will end right with God, not because there's anything excellent in you or me, but because the triune God is unfailingly, unstoppably loving.

[38 : 07] Listen to verse 11. that by any means possible, and this is just him being humble. It's not that he has any doubts. It's just self-depreciation. It's being self-effacing.

I may attain the resurrection from the dead, which is the perfection of everything that it means to be human, in a perfected creation, with perfected other people who are in Christ, and in a perfect walk with God.

Friends, there is no better time now than to put your hands in the hands of Jesus if you have not done so. No time better than now, just to call out to him and say, all you have to say is, God, all this stuff in Philippians 3, I want it to be for me.

That's all you have to say. There's no match. I want it to be for me, and thank you that you will not say no. And Jesus, come in and be my Savior and my Lord and never let me go.

And for those of us who are in, actually for some of you, this can be just a daily prayer. It's actually in the blog. It's the prayer that I write every week in the blog.

[39 : 13] If you don't get the blog, just send us an email, and you can get on the mailing list for the blog. This is a great prayer for every day, and it's also a conversion prayer, and I'll close with this prayer from the pastor's blog.

Heavenly Father, in times of hardship and suffering, and in good times as well, by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, please help me to know more and more deeply that in Christ I have been saved, am being saved, and will be saved.

Amen. Amen.