

AM Galatians 3:1-9

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Date: 06 June 2021

Preacher: Mr Thomson McKenzie

[0 : 00] I'm going to worship with you this morning. A warm welcome to you all, and especially to anyone who's visiting this morning. In case anyone's visiting, I'm Thompson McKenzie.

I'm a student at Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Just finished my second year. And looking forward to some non-academic time during the summer.

A few intimations this morning. This evening's service will be at 6pm, and it will be led by myself. Wednesday at 7pm will be the prayer meeting and Bible study, led by the Reverend Robert Dale. Robert this morning is preaching by Zoom to his former congregation down in Surrey. The next Lord's Day, I will once again have the privilege to lead worship here at 11 o'clock and at 6 o'clock, God willing.

And there are copies of the June missionary prayer notes at the rear table as you go out of the church. So please pick one up as you're leaving this evening, this morning.

[1 : 15] Psalm 105, verses 1 and 2, the psalmist writes, Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name, make him known among the nations what he has done.

This morning, we cannot quite fulfil the words of the psalmist.

We can't actually still join yet in communal singing. But we can reflect on the words of our first psalm of worship this morning from Psalm 2.

So Psalm 2, from St. Psalms, verses 1 to 6. That's page 2. So Psalm 2, verses 1 to 6.

Why do the heathen nations rage? Why do the peoples fought in faith?

[2 : 19] Their sins combine in enmity. Our rulers join against the strain.

They take their stand against the Lord and judge his anointed one.

Let us take off their chains, no must, with their restraints let us be done.

The one enthroned in heaven loves the Lord and mighty rights them all.

Then he be used to live his love. His praise and terror are on them for.

[3 : 25] The Lord has made it known to them. My chosen king, I have him sold on Zion, my own holy hill.

He is the one whom I have told. Let us pray.

Our Lord and Father of all mankind, we give you thanks for the many blessings which you bestow upon us.

We sing in the words of the psalm. Why do the heathen nations rage? Why do the peoples plot in vain?

Our kings combine in enmity. Our rulers join against God's reign. Lord, it appears each day that there is an ever increasing rise against your teachings.

[4 : 37] But we hold fast in our faith and in your promises that you are a God of power. A God who will bring forth his purpose.

We may see the image of your power waning as Christian teachings retreat across the nation.

But Lord, your power will bring about the rejuvenation of a nation. It will bring about a reawakening in people that people will come to you and bless you for their salvation.

We are far from you, not by your choice but by our actions and our sins. But you, Lord, wish to be close to us.

Always. Always. Not just in our good times or our bad times but always. Though it seems that we are quick at times to remember you and calling you in times of weakness.

[5 : 54] Yet in times of joy we quickly cast you aside and think of our own achievements. It is our sin, Lord, that blocks you out.

But we give you praise and thanks that you did not treat us as we have treated you. Your love for us has been eternal from the day that you created us.

From the day that we sinned against you, you have had a plan to reunite us with you in union.

Through your son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in that plan you were prepared to sacrifice and have sacrificed your son for our sin.

That he took our sin upon himself. That he paid the price of our sin. That he was sacrificed on the cross.

[7 : 04] And in the third day you rose him from the dead. Conquering death, the wages of our sin. In him, Lord, you fulfilled your plan.

And in your Holy Spirit, you have given us the power to follow in his footsteps. You know our needs, O Lord.

And you know the needs of the wider world. You have met those needs through your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our saviour.

And we think, Lord, in these dark days, that we see an end.

We see a light approaching in these strange times of COVID. Yet that is not our doing. It is not man's.

[8 : 09] The glory for that remains with you. And let us not stray our focus from your commitment to us to protect us and to see us safe.

And to see us renewed. As we roll out our vaccination programmes, let us not stray our focus from the needs to be vigilant.

Our needs to care for one another. And our needs to bring glory to you. And we bring glory to you, not just by our words of praise, but by our actions.

And how those actions speak to our wider world. Lord, we bring before you countries still struggling and still battling this pandemic of COVID.

Our TV screens are regularly filled with the events in the Indian subcontinent. And as we remember India in our televisions, let us not forget the nations which are overshadowed by their larger neighbours.

[9 : 36] We think of Bangladesh and Nepal, some of the poorest countries in the area. We think of Nepal and obviously of Suraj and his work within the church in Kathmandu.

That even in these times, he strives to, along with others in the church, to praise your name and to witness for you in that nation.

At home, we remember your church. And we pray that it stays true to the teachings of your word.

And Lord, as we are asked to focus on different churches within our own congregation each week, we think of the three that are highlighted this week. The church at South Yost in Binbecula.

The church at Down Vale in Partick. And the church at Rogart in the North East Highlands. That together they declare your love and purpose to their communities.

[10 : 59] Three very different churches. But a church that has one message to all humanity. A church that brings forth your saving word.

That you are a God of love and a God of care. That you have sent your son to take on the burden of our sin.

And that in the faith in him, we are cleansed and come before you. To give you praise, honour. We pray for our governments, Lord, and for our Queen.

We pray that your governments may be open to the spreading of your word. And may share in the care of others.

We think as the governments of the nations, the seven richest nations meet this coming week.

[12 : 17] That they will have a genuine care for the greater and wider world. That they will share their resources and not hog them for themselves.

Lord, we just pray that you will advance your kingdom among men. That it will grow here on earth as it is in heaven.

These things we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen. Amen. Morning boys and girls.

Good to be back with you this morning. Last time I was with you, we looked at the role of the shepherd. And we looked at Jesus as being the shepherd.

And we learned that David was the one who was the shepherd on the farm. And we've seen how God cared for us through Jesus. This week, now that my time and study has finished at college just

now, I've been working as a gardener.

[13:25] So, that means that I've been employed on a big estate to cut the grass and to keep the plants in order. So, part of that this week has been cutting back the plants and helping them to grow.

And sort of basically put them onto frames that they can have support and grow over the summer. And it reminded me of Jesus telling another parable.

And it's a parable of Jesus as a vine. Does anybody know what a vine is? No? A vine is a type of plant that we associate with grapes.

Everybody know what a grape is? Do you like them? Yeah? Good. So, a vine is a type of plant from which we get grapes.

And Jesus in John 15 refers to himself as a vine. Right? He compares himself to the plant.

[14:35] And he refers to God, his Father, as the gardener or the vine dresser, the person who looks after the vines. And as he was working away, this parable had come to mind.

About how God cares for the plants. Or God cares for the vine. That God's role is to help the vine to grow.

To help the plants to grow. And to help the plants to bear fruit. To help the plants or the vine to bear grapes.

So, how does God do that? How does he help us? So, the idea is, obviously, the vine is Jesus.

The gardener is God. And the branches which will bear fruit are ourselves. It made us think, how does God help us to grow?

[15:43] How does God help us to bear fruit? Anyone, any ideas? Any of the adults got any ideas how God helps us to grow? So, in, in, in, Sanji, it's about, oh.

What did he say? I didn't quite catch it. Okay.

So, one of the things God obviously gives us is his word. He gives us his, his scriptory, he gives us the Bible. And the Bible is a guide for us and how we have to lead our lives.

And in the Bible he gives us promises. That he will do certain things for us. And in return for that, we also should give him praise and follow his way.

And as well as giving us guidance, he also gives us a helper. He gives us the Holy Spirit. So that God is with us wherever we go and in whatever we do.

[16:54] And if we remain in the Holy Spirit, in Christ, just as the plant stays, or the branches stay as part of the vine, so we will grow and we will bear fruit.

And we can bring glory to God and to Jesus. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that you care for us. That, like the gardener, you have a desire to see us grow. You have a desire to see us bear fruit.

Let us grow by the study of your word, by the belief in your promises, and by the ever-present presence of your Holy Spirit, to guide us and to help us.

These things we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen. Amen. Now let's reflect on Psalm 95, verses 1-6 from the Scottish Psalter.

So that's page 357, Psalm 95, verses 1-6. Amen. AIS rate by■, who■ pretext unto the poor, a Renness nation.

[18:46] A court of relates to the ■■ ■■■ary policy, a WEST■■■ founte Roma, Visa, ser■■■ by■■■■ stress. Apostolary■■■■, AMBASSIVAD oredan That's the ■■■■■rico process may notfall, Before His presence come We'll raise and plan new ones Let us sing songs to live with grace And we'll make our joyful voice For God, how great God, how great He is How proud of God He is Yet some of the earth are in His hand

The strangle will be saved To Him, the saints of Seelons For He is a saint in faith The dry and also from His hands Is the time that He has been saved O come and let us worship Him Let us come down with hope And on our knees before the Lord

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Our first reading this morning is taken from Genesis chapter 15 verses 1 to 6 So Genesis chapter 15 verses 1 to 6 So this comes after Lot had been captured by the four rebellious kings And Abraham had been freed and then returned And then God had spoken to him that evening So Genesis 15 verses 1 to 6 After these things

He said So shall your offspring be And he believed the Lord And he counted it to him as righteousness Our second reading is from Galatians Galatians chapter 3 verses 1 to 14 Galatians 3 verses 1 to 14 O foolish Galatians

Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified Let me ask you this Let me ask you only this Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law Or by hearing with faith?

[23 : 47] Are you so foolish? Are you so foolish? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit Are you now being perfected by flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain?

Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain Does he who supplies the Spirit to you And works miracles among you?

Do so by works of the law? Or by hearing with faith? Just as Abraham believed And it was counted to him as righteousness Know then That it is those of faith Who are the sons of Abraham And the scriptures For seeing that God would justify The Gentiles by faith Preached the gospel beforehand To Abraham Saying If you shall In you shall all the nations be blessed So then Those who are of faith are blessed Along with Abraham The man of faith For all who rely on works of the law Are under a curse For it is written Curse be everyone who does not abide By all things written in the book of the law And do them Now it is evident That no one is justified before God By the law For the righteous shall live by faith But the law is not of faith Rather The one who does them Shall live by them Christ redeemed us From the curse of the law By becoming a curse for us For it is written Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree So that in Christ Jesus The blessing of Abraham Might come to the Gentiles So that we might receive The promised spirit Through faith Thanks be to God For the reading of his holy word And his name With the glory And praise Let's once more Listen to the singing Of praise to God's name In the hymn How great thou art And in it we see the beauty And the glory Of God In his universe In his creation So

How great thou art O Lord my God Will I in awesome wonder Consider all The worlds I have to pay I see the stars I hear the rolling thunder I bow through up The universe displayed Then sings my song My Savior God To thee I'll break the board

[27 : 11] I'll break the board Then sings my song My Savior My Savior God To thee How great thou art How great thou art How great thou art How great thou art When Christ With Christ How great thou art With Christ How great thou art With Christ How great thou art With Christ How great thou art And take me home What joy shall fill my heart When I shall bow In a bold adoration And then proclaim

My God How great thou art Then sings my song My Savior My Savior My Savior God To thee How great thou art How great thou art Who For Christ How great thou art How great thou art How great thou art My Savior, I to Thee, I'll break the heart, I'll break the heart.

Father, for the words of my mouth and the thoughts and meditations of our hearts and minds, may they be acceptable in your sight.

You have promised our Lord that your word will go out and not return without fruit.

We do not always see the benefits or the work of your word, but we trust in your promises. And we ask this through Christ our Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

[29 : 58] This morning, I've just got a quick question to begin with. Are you part of the Abraham's family?

This morning we look at the faith of Abraham and its relevance both as Christians and non-Christians today. We often see the Old Testament as dated and irrelevant to our lives.

And we would rather concentrate on the New Testament and the loving message of Jesus and the Gospels. But the Scripture is a complete book.

We can't pick and choose. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. He is a just God and he is a loving God.

Abraham provides an example for us even today. And in his brief biography that Paul uses, it shows that the good news of the Gospel and that today we can still share in the blessings of Abraham.

[31 : 24] Regardless of our race, our colour, that is the good news of the Gospel. Irrespective of class, of gender, of our origin or social standing.

No matter what our past choices may have been, we can be the beneficiaries of Abraham's blessing. In verse 9, in the last verse, referring directly to Abraham, Paul writes, So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

But why does Paul use Abraham? Paul uses the example of Abraham, remember, to counter the claims of the Judaizers.

The folk within the church in Galatia who wish to bring the new Christians back into sort of the teachings of Judaism and having to abide by a law.

The Judaizers would have been happy to claim Abraham to push home their point. After all, Abraham was the father of Judaism.

[32 : 41] If we think, he is the one who is called to leave earth and to follow God. He is the one who enters into a covenant that begins with circumcision.

The symbol of which is the circumcision and the circumcision of his household. And then, throughout the Old Testament, we see more and more laws and more covenants being made. So, Paul shows us how Abraham believed God. And it was counted to him as righteousness. In verse 6, it can also read as credited to him.

Okay? As righteousness. If we think of that bit about counted or credited, it suggests that a status is conferred in Abraham that wasn't previously there.

So, when God credited Abraham's faith as righteous, it means that God is treating Abraham as if he were leading a righteous life.

[33 : 48] As verse 15 in Genesis highlights in verse 6. And he believed and the Lord counted it to him as righteousness.

Timothy Keller, writer and pastor, suggests that many would argue that Abraham's faith is itself a form of righteousness that pleases God.

That his faith was itself obedience to God that merited God's favour as a kind of righteousness. The text, however, does not highlight his faith was righteous.

Rather, it was counted as righteous. And that small word makes a big difference. It counts him, it credits Abraham with a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.

Remember, Abraham is a man, a human, just like you and I. He had human failings. He was not sinless. Therefore, he was not righteous.

[34 : 54] But his faith counted him as righteous. When God counts or credits someone as righteous, he's conferring a legal status on him.

He treats them as actually being righteous and free from condemnation. Even though they are still actually unrighteous in their hearts and in their actions.

They are justified. The same as we are justified in Christ. We are not justified because of our actions. Our sin or our wrongdoings against God prevents that.

But in Jesus Christ, the sinless man, in his death and resurrection, we are justified. He took on the penalty of our sin.

And he conquered death for us. It wasn't anything that we could do by our own hands. It can only be done through God, the moving of the Spirit and faith in Christ.

[36 : 03] Paul and Abraham are showing that it is possible to be loved and accepted by God while we are ourselves sinful and imperfect.

As a parent, we can be displeased with our children's behaviour. Yet we still love them.

And we see that throughout Scripture with God. If we think even back to the very time of the fall when Adam and Eve had disregarded God's command not to eat of the tree of life.

He was certainly displeased and angry with them. But his care was never questioned. The first thing he does for them is he clothes them.

He still cares for them. And he provides for them. As Paul and Abraham showed, we don't change our lives to make ourselves acceptable to God before our salvation.

[37 : 11] Before we were saved in Christ's sacrifice for us. Paul, as we have looked at previously together, was one of the most zealous persecutors of Jesus' followers.

And was on the road to Damascus to arrest more of Jesus' followers. When he had a personal meeting with Christ that changed his life forever.

Through the Holy Spirit, we change our lives after our faith in Christ to give glory and honour to God. Paul makes the same point in his letter to Romans.

He writes in chapter 4 verse 5 that God justifies the wicked. And Paul again calls upon Abraham as proof. About four times in this chapter, Paul goes back to the faith of Abraham.

The justified status is not given because of works. For those who are Christians, you didn't change your life to earn salvation and righteousness.

[38 : 22] Rather, you received it while you were still a sinner. We cannot save ourselves. We are saved by God's grace and the moving of his Holy Spirit.

In verse 7, Paul is clear that it is by believing, it is by faith, that we become a child of Abraham. We are not children of Abraham by birth, but by adoption. But it is an adoption free of the law. You can imagine that the Judaizers hearing that idea of adoption and thinking of a legal status must have been rubbing their hands almost with glee that Paul has actually delivered the very thing, the very evidence they require.

Because we think of adoption, we think of a legal status, we think of the law. But actually, this adoption wasn't by the law, it was by faith.

We are not children of Abraham by birth, but by adoption. Adoption free of the law.

[39 : 40] By faith, we join Abraham's family. There is no extra burden placed on us, such as keeping the Mosaic law. In verse 8, we read that God taught Abraham he would be the blessing of nations, not just of Israel.

That from him would be the blessing to know God in person. That through him God's knowledge, our knowledge of God would flow out to the entire world.

So our adoption into sharing in Abraham's blessing brings us back to the phrase we began with in verse 9. So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

So that's a quick resume of Abraham's involvement, Abraham's coming to faith and being counted to righteousness.

But what is important, but let's look at what is important in sharing the faith of Abraham. Sharing the faith of Abraham brings it into Abraham's family.

[41 : 01] And we will share his characteristics. Not in the way that we share the characteristics of our parents, not in the colour of our eyes, our height, our colour of our hair, rather similarity of our actions and manners.

So let's look at three similarities we should reflect that belong to Abraham in his life of faith. Three similarities that we should demonstrate in our life.

The first of them is a saving faith. The second is an obedient faith. And the third is a persevering faith. The first, a saving faith.

Talking about Abraham in Genesis 15, 6, it says that he believed the Lord. In Galatians we hear in verse 6 that he believed and was counted to him as righteous.

It was not simply enough to believe in God. James reminds us, even the demons do that, even Satan believes in God.

[42 : 13] Rather, Abraham had to believe and trust in God and his promises. He had to believe in God and his promises.

Abraham did not have some simple, vague notion of God. It wasn't some academic principle of there being some supreme being.

like Paul in generations to come, Abraham had a personal knowledge of God, who had spoken directly to him.

And now God speaks to us as he did to Paul through his son Jesus Christ. So to be a person of faith, a child of Abraham is to live a life of faith that is focused in God and his promise to us are fulfilled in Christ.

It is not enough to be a physical descendant of Abraham or to follow mosaic laws and its rights. Remember, we are not saved by the law.

[43 : 20] We are not saved by our actions of our own hands. We require to grasp with faith the promises of God and like Abraham, believe the promises of God.

The promise to renew us and to bring us into a new life, a new and everlasting life. We are all sinners. We all fall short of God's standards.

Each and every one of us, no matter how great we are in this world, we all fall short of God's standards. We are all separated from God because of our sin and wrongdoing and we cannot bridge that gap by our own human efforts.

We can try. I'm sure many of us have tried often enough before coming to faith, but it was not possible.

God knows this and just as he blessed Abraham with a promise, he assures us of blessings under that same promise. In fact, this is not God's first promise to reconcile his creation to himself.

[44 : 35] In Genesis 3, right at the fall, right when Adam and Eve had sinned against God, God states that he will bring forth through humanity one who would crush Satan and his family of evil.

In Genesis 3, 15, it's written, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. In his time, God gave us Jesus, the one who would withstand the temptations of Satan and the desires of being part of this world, the perfect man and the perfect sinless man. God offered up his son as the sacrifice for our sin. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a payment for our sin, that by his blood we would be redeemed, he would be our saviour, for you and I, for all who are prepared to call on his name, to be saved and reunited with God. In that salvation we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead the life of faith like Abraham, focusing on God's promises and now in the new covenant through Christ focusing on the new life through the Spirit.

[46 : 16] The second part is to have an obedient faith. Abraham's faith was alive and it wasn't about navel gazing and earning new life by meditation.

In Hebrews 11 verses 8 to 11 we read, By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance and he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, the designer and builder is God. In faith he followed God's commands even though he knew not where he was going or where God was going to lead him.

Often to believe, people nowadays wish to see things for themselves first. They want evidence of what they are to believe.

[47 : 29] But that is not faith. faith. And we think that Jesus rebukes the crowds when they ask for further signs of who he is.

And reminds them that if many others had seen what he had done, they would have gladly believed in him. In Hebrews 11.1, we get a description of faith.

It says, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So faith is not about blind optimism that things will be okay.

It's not bringing your heads in the sand hoping that difficult times will pass. It's not believing in spite of evidence. It's not irrational. It's an assurance, it's a guarantee, it's a promise of God.

It's a belief in God's promises based on our experience of his grace. We can trust in God's promises, even though we know not when or how they will be fulfilled.

[48 : 41] Because we have already experienced his grace in our hearts. He has brought us to faith. He sent his spirit and his son to save us.

In Galatians, people questioning their faith and considering a return to the old life of servitude under the law are reminded of the faith of their ancestor Abraham.

Here we see that faith in Abraham obeys God and steps out on a journey trusting God will deliver his promises, but not knowing where or how God will bring this about.

Can we say the same for ourselves today? Or do we always want it in front of us? Do we always want the evidence presented? Are we prepared to be called, to be led without having all the answers?

On this modern day, are we prepared to follow God without having all our eyes dotted, T's crossed, boxes ticked? Abraham's faith was so great that we read in Genesis 22 that he was prepared to offer his own son Isaac.

[50 : 00] But James in chapter 2 reminds us that our works are only an outworking of our faith. Verse 21 and 23 of chapter 2 says, Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

You see that faith was active along with his works and faith was completed by his works. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness and he was called a friend of God.

So our actions are important. Our actions demonstrate our faith. But our salvation comes by our faith not by our actions or our works.

Abraham was not saved by his works by the offering his son as a sacrifice. It demonstrated his faith yes. It demonstrated it was an act of faith trusting in God.

His works were a display of faith. Abraham believed God trusted God and it was counted as righteousness because of his trust.

[51 : 21] So like Abraham we are not saved by the works of piety or charity but by faith alone. Our works are a demonstration of our faith.

They are a witness to non-believers to our faith. We need an obedient faith that will show God's love and the power of God in action to humanity.

finally Abraham's faith was a persevering faith. Abraham's faith like ours was not perfect.

Just because he had doubts he tried to take control at times and try and dictate the pace of things for God.

God. How many of us have become frustrated and tried to move things on a little quicker? Missing out the important step of waiting for God and God's timing.

[52 : 23] If we look briefly at Abraham's life, we see his errors, we see the mistakes that he made and we see his lack of faith in doubting God.

For example, trying to engineer his own ear when he doubted God's promises. He was already an old man when God first made the promise to him.

But in verses 1 to 6 of chapter 16, we see Abraham failing to wait on God. And he takes Sarah's maid servant Hagar as his second wife.

wife. And they have a son. And he's named Ishmael. In chapter 17, God repeats his promises to Abraham that he will bring a son through Sarah.

And what does Abraham do in chapter 17? He laughs at God. Abraham doubts God's ability, looking from the limitations of humanity.

[53 : 28] humanity. He questions how a man of 100 and a woman of 90 can have a child. These are rational and human thoughts.

He forgets the power of God who brought forth all of creation. But it was a persevering faith nevertheless. It did not give up when things were difficult.

If we had the calling to undertake his journey today, we probably would never have got started.

Think about it. Imagine the initial call to leave everything that you have, to leave the city of your birth, to leave your livelihood.

How risky is that financially? To leave family support and head out into unknown lands. How physically dangerous could that be?

family. So, if we are to be like Abraham, we must not wallow in doubt and unbelief or to waver in our faith in God's promises.

[54 : 42] He has the power, God has the power to deliver and God has demonstrated it from eternity. He has created our universe, delivered his people out of bondage in Egypt, restored the nation of Israel after a time of captivity in Babylon.

And we have the experience of God raising his son from the dead and fulfilling his son's promise of his Holy Spirit that God would always be with us.

this means that when we fail, which we will, when we fail, when we fall short of God's plans, God's desires for us, we are not to wallow in the misery of our sin.

God and his son gave us a means to overcome our sin and our failings. For the unbeliever, it is in calling in Jesus Christ personally to be your saviour, that he will intercede for you before God, that he will come before God and in that you can be reconciled to God.

For the believer, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, it is about picking ourselves up, repenting our sin, of our sins, our wrongdoings, and getting back to God's task for us.

[56 : 16] And it may sound petty, but when I was reading the chapter and preparing the sermon, it reminded me of my daughter learning to horse ride.

And like any of us learning the new skill, there was plenty of mistakes along the way. The horse knew what was required of it, but my daughter, Rachel, did not.

So the horse would turn right, but my daughter would go straight on, and the two of them would part company. To stay in course, it was important to get Rachel off the ground and back in the saddle as quickly as possible.

As I say, perhaps it appears simplistic, but the gospel message is simplistic, and we cannot get caught up in our own sorrow for our own mistakes.

mistakes. We need to take ownership of them, declare them before God, and once more start on the journey of trusting God to fulfil his promises.

[57 : 21] A preserving faith is not about getting it right immediately, and unfortunately it doesn't mean getting it right all the time, but it means growing in faith over a lifetime.

time. This is the example Abraham has set for us. This is the example we should know of the Holy Spirit bringing slow changes in our life.

Each day we should be growing in our knowledge of Christ, and become more Christ-like in our actions. So to become a member of Abraham's family, and inherit the blessings we need to live our faith, life.

That new life will see changes in us as the Spirit works within us, to make us more Christ-like each day. We cannot achieve it by ourselves, only through the Spirit will we see everlasting change. For some, it will mean a complete change in vacation, location, or their application in life. But whether it is a drastic change in our location, or our calling, or whether it is the simple daily changes to our life, it is ramifications for us all.

[58 : 47] It is implications for each of us. We cannot go on in our old way of life unchanged, as we did before meeting God in person, through our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to get out of this world, set ourselves apart from our world. This doesn't mean that we become remote from this world, it does not mean that we cut ourselves off completely from this world.

Rather, we stop chasing the false gods and the false goals of this world. It doesn't mean becoming a recluse and cutting ourselves from contact with the outside world.

We are to be in the world, but not of the world. We have a part to play in the world. We are not hermits or monks who retreat and live in isolation.

salvation. We have to be part of the world and show God's love and work in the world. We have to show Christ's care for humanity.

[60 : 05] humanity. So we are on a journey which will include possible hardships and sacrifices.

We will only persevere if we have faith like Abraham, believing in God's promises that we may share in the title along with Abraham as a person of faith.

Let us pray. Amen. Father, we thank you that you have provided for us your word, your scriptures to show us how to lead our lives and you give clear instructions in leading our lives.

But you have also gave us living examples. You have gave us people like Abraham who have set out in their lives the values and virtues that we should follow to show our faith as being a living faith, a persevering faith.

You have also shown us how we come to having a living faith in you. That it comes only through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

That he is the only way. That he is the way, the truth and the life. life. And that anyone searching for you will find a way to you, to be reconciled to you through your Son and the acceptance of him as the Saviour for their wrongdoing.

[61 : 53] These things we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen. We will close our worship this morning with Psalm 18 verses 1 to 6 in the Scottish Psalter and that is page 218.

Thee will I love, O Lord my strength, my fortress is the Lord. Psalm 18 verses 1 to 6. Thee will I love, O Lord, my strength, my fortress is the Lord, my rock, and he that doth to me deliverance afford.

my God, my strength, whom I will trust, a buckler unto me.

The horn of my salvation and my high is he.

Upon the Lord, who worthy is of praises will I cry, and then shall I preserve and be safe from mine enemy.

[63 : 35] Floods of ill men have frightened me, death's pangs about me went.

Hell's sorrows me environed, death's nests did me prevent.

In my distress I called on God, cry to my God, did I.

He from his temple heard my voice, to his ears came my cry.

For benediction, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.