

God's Sovereignty, Our Responsibility

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[0 : 0 0] In Jude verse 20 and 21 we read, But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

There are two main possibilities for the identity of the Jude who wrote this letter. One possibility is that he was one of the brothers of our Lord, of whom we know that there were four, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, or Judah, hence Jude, Judah.

More likely, however, although it is a possibility that he wasn't one of the apostles particularly, one reason there might not be one of the apostles is it says, remember, when he talks about verses 17 and 18, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, they said to you, not we said to you, but they said to you.

But despite all that, it is perhaps more likely that this is the apostle described in John 14, at verse 22, as Judas, not Iscariot, who in the list of the disciples in Matthew and Mark is described as Thaddeus.

You might think, well, how does Thaddeus translate into Judas? Well, it's probably that Thaddeus is a last name or a surname, but also if you think of, you know, what Gamaliel, if you remember him, who was saying to the Jewish Sanhedrin about the apostles, and be careful what you do with these men, because if this is of God, then, you know, you can't destroy it, and if it's of men, well, it will fade away anyway.

[1 : 4 9] And he said at one stage, there was one, you know, ringleader of some party that went away out into the desert, killed so many people, and there was another, Thaddeus, he described in Acts 5, verse 36.

Now, Theudas, of course, could be a wee bit like Judas or Judas, but also Theudas is not unlike Thaddeus. Is that a connection? Perhaps.

Perhaps not. Maybe we're clutching at straws here. It's just another of these little strands of possible connection. But leaving that aside, almost certainly Thaddeus in the lists of the apostles in Matthew and Mark takes the place of Judas, not Iscariot in John, but also in the lists of the disciples in Luke and Acts, he is identified in the Greek simply as Judas of James.

That's all that the original Greek says. It's Judas of James, for which some translations, such as the ESV in front of us here, insert the words the son of James, and others insert the words the brother of James.

Now, whatever may be the status of that particular individual, clearly here in Jude, even in the original Greek, this writer, whoever he may be, refers to himself explicitly as the brother of James.

[3 : 1 3] In verse 1, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. So we don't know exactly who he was. But there are possibilities, two main possibilities.

Either he's one of the brothers of our Lord, or he is one of the twelve apostles. But at any rate, Jude is writing in perilous times when the church of Jesus Christ is under attack, not only from without in times of persecution, but more dangerously from within the church.

As we see, for example, at verse 4, for certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation. Ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

And likewise, if we're to go on to verse 12, we read, These are hidden reefs at your love feasts as they feast with you without fear. Shepherds feeding themselves, waterless clouds swept along by winds, fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted, wild waves of the sea, and so on.

And clearly what is common in all these descriptions, whether they're from nature or descriptions of people, is that there is the appearance, the promise of what they ought to be, but the reality simply is not there.

[4 : 38] The substance is not there. This, along with various references from Timothy, from Thessalonians, and from Revelation, to name but a few, we could always multiply examples, rather gives the lie to the popular notion that the early church was pure and saintly until the time that the Roman Emperor Constantine made the church and made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

And after that, all the problems came in. And after that, all the corruptions came in in the fourth century. And prior to that, the church was just pure and everybody loved the way they should and they were all faithful and orthodox.

Well, clearly the record of Scripture itself indicates that there was never a time when that was the case. Even in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, there was a Judas amongst the twelve.

And in the days of the early church, in the days of the apostles, in the early times of the Acts, there was the likes of Ananias and Sapphira, even amongst the very early church.

So there are those who, for whatever reason, join themselves to the Lord's people who clearly have not the Lord in their hearts. Something else is there. But as the reality oozes its way out, the truth of who they are and what they are becomes clearer.

[6 : 04] So obviously the early church, even in the apostolic days, had its problems. It had its difficulties. It had its heresies. There were always problems in the church, even in the apostolic church.

And most of this letter of Judas taken up with warning against these internal dangers. But Jude's objective in writing is not only that the Christians of this day, and indeed of every generation, because it's just as applicable to us in this present day, not just that they should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, but also that the faithful should continue to build and strengthen their own, what it says in verse 20, most holy faith.

Day by day in Christ. It is this aspect described here in verses 20 and 21, upon which we now focus our thoughts this evening for a little while.

Verses 20 and 21. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Now these verses demonstrate, admirably, the twin themes of God's absolute sovereignty and man's absolute responsibility.

[7 : 33] And in each case, these things are, as we say, absolute. God's sovereignty is total. He doesn't really have any responsibility towards us. He doesn't owe us anything.

He chooses to have mercy upon us, but his sovereignty is absolute. Our responsibility is absolute. We cannot claim anything from God.

We have no sovereignty over God. We have the responsibility, the complete, total responsibility to fulfill that purpose for which we were designed to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, to respond to His grace and love in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

It is this requirement, this divine imperative to respond which forms the basis of our responsibility. Our salvation is indeed all of God's free grace and election, that we ourselves have a responsibility to live and witness and respond as those who know what it is to be loved and saved by such a great and merciful God.

Jesus said, By their fruits you shall know them. And failed you on our part to bring forth what John the Baptist called, you know, fruits meet for repentance.

[8 : 55] So we have it here in the ESV in front of us. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. If we don't bear fruit in keeping with repentance, then we're bringing forth the wrong kind of fruit for the kind of tree we're meant to be.

You know, if something claims to be a pear tree, but look, it's bringing forth apples, then something's wrong. Either the labeling is wrong or the wrong kind of fruit has mysteriously come up through the tree and the branches and the buds and the blossoms.

Which is more likely? The labeling is likely wrong. What it claims to be is not what it is in truth. The fruit that it bears will show what it is in reality.

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Failure to live then or to love as children of God ought to love must of necessity call into question the reality of our relationship with Christ.

For Jesus said, Luke 7 verse 47, To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. With this in mind then, we have these, in these verses, four verbs exhorting the believers to four things which must be done in the furtherance of Christ's kingdom in their lives.

[10 : 13] Now remember, this is the ongoing work day by day of believers. This is what Jude is exhorting them to do. These four verbs are, if you look at the verses in front of you, building, praying, keeping, and waiting.

Building, praying, keeping, and waiting. But insofar as our efforts can only ever be a response to what God himself has already done, each one of these human requirements is itself anchored on a foundation which only the Lord can supply, namely, faith, the Holy Spirit, the love of God, and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's look at these verses and the couplings they are. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, which of course we don't have of ourselves, it's the gift of God, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

So although there is that which we are to do, each thing that we are to do is itself anchored and interconnected with something the Lord only can provide and has already provided.

[11 : 43] In addition, of course, there are two further provisions at either end of these verses. Again, if you look, each of which can be supplied only by the Lord.

And that is, first of all, the status of being beloved. Verse 20, but you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith. That's before we get to our bit of building.

It is the status of being beloved. And at the end, of course, verse 21, so waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Eternal life there at the end of this little couplet, which in keeping with the protecting grace of God, go before at the beginning, the status of being beloved, and go on ahead at the end, all eternity, so that all the struggle and conflict of the Christian life is itself safeguarded behind and before by the sovereign work of God.

Now, do you see that? That the things that we are required to do, these four verbs, not only are they each anchored in something only God can provide and only God can do, but also the whole requirement is topped and tailed before and behind with that which God himself is already doing.

[13 : 04] The status of our being beloved and that which is secured for all eternity. It goes before and behind. It's not unlike, I suppose, the example that I probably have used in the past.

Many years ago, my wife used to help with a little sort of play group in a charge I was in before. A little play group some of the young mums and the wee toddlers and so on would come to and when she was in charge, she was responsible for some of the craft stuff that they did and there was all sorts of ideas you could get, things you could download and things you had to cut out and prepare and colouring and paint and so on and invariably for the leader or the person involved, there was all this complicated stuff that you had to do and prepare and paint and make ready and then so the wee toti themselves could come along and take the wee bit of glue and stick that bit onto that bit and they say, look what I made, look what I did, isn't that great mummy, isn't that fine and yes it is but all they did was they took this, they stuck a bit of glue and they stuck that onto there.

All the other work that had been done beforehand and all the, and I'll wrap that up for you now and take that, you take that off the mummy that was done afterwards, that has to be done by somebody else.

somebody who has found out all the details, somebody who's done all the work, somebody who's prepared everything else so you can do that bit onto that and that is not unlike what the Lord has done for us, he has done everything but he still requires us to do our little bit not because we can somehow cooperate in our salvation, he has done it all but we have a responsibility, we are required to respond to the love of God and what he has done for us.

That the Lord's own children are beloved in his eyes, beginning of verse 20 here, is both a logical necessity and a scripturally proven fact.

[15 : 01] The sheer cost of salvation with the highest price that has ever been paid for anything in heaven or in earth, in time or in eternity, no higher price has ever been paid for anything than the life, the death of the Son of God upon the cross.

That is the highest cost ever, anywhere. That means that anyone on whom such a price is expended must be loved in the extreme.

That which you would spend money on for a casual acquaintance would be very different from what you might spend on, say, the love of your life. What we expend on people, the time, the effort, the energy, or indeed the financial outlay that we make for somebody is usually indicative of how important they are in our lives.

This is the highest price that has ever been paid for anything by anyone in heaven or on earth in time or in eternity. It follows then that anyone on whom such a price is expended must be loved.

in the extreme. Otherwise, why would anyone do it? Why would God allow his only son to go through this?

[16 : 21] The agony of the cross, never mind even the cross and all the suffering and agony of it, if we can say that reverently, even the fact of coming from heaven's glory for all eternity down into the womb of the virgin and being born in such obscurity and poverty and living that life of a constricted human being with all the temptations and difficulties and sufferings and sorrows and pains that attend this human life, that in itself would be more than the difference between night and day, between glory and suffering and savagery to which he was exposed before you even get the length of betrayal and scourging and crucifixion and death and so on, that which the Lord endured for us, we just can't put it into words, all that he expended for us.

Why would anyone do it unless those on whom it was expended were so beloved and unless there was no other way? The beloved status of God's redeemed children is therefore a logical necessity.

It is scripturally proven by repeated preferences. If we just turn back a couple of pages from where we are, we see in 1 John chapter 4 at verse 10, in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins, that is that which causes him to be favorable towards us, the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. And if we were to look, for example, back into the Old Testament, in Jeremiah chapter 31, we see at verse 3, the Lord appeared to him from far away, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

I have loved you with an everlasting love. as the old Bible puts it, the Lord appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

[18 : 41] This love is from everlasting to everlasting, it goes before all else, before even the foundation of the world, it is an everlasting love, so says the infallible word of God.

And because he loves his children, he gives them the gift of faith. Remember, we do not have faith because we are worthy or because we've worked hard enough at it.

By grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. And so on this foundation they are to be building.

But you beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit. They are to be building. Now, whatever one is building, if you're building anything, then it implies a going from a foundation layer upon layer, whether it's layers of bricks or layers of concrete breeze blocks or layers of timber or whatever it should be or framework, it implies an upward growth or a strengthening or an increasing little by little, step by step.

And this is like what Peter writes in the second letter, 2 Peter chapter 1, we read it verse 5. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, add to your faith virtue, and virtue supplement with knowledge, and knowledge with self control, and self control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

[20 : 25] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, there's no indication there in Peter on the Christian life of something that is static.

It is by definition an organic, growing, increasing faith. When Jesus uses the agricultural parables and illustrations, he talks about harvest time, or ripening for harvest.

Now, if something is ripening, then it's not static, it's not like a sculpture made of stone that's always the same from day to day and never increasing. It's rather like fruit that is growing and increasing, and its ripeness, and its color, and its juiciness, and its preparedness to be plucked, and then consumed, or grain that is going from green to yellow to gold, and to finally being ready to be harvested.

But it is that which must be increased little by little, day by day, just as the field is not ripened for the harvest except by day upon day of sunshine, and then a bit of rain, bit of a fresh breeze, little by little, it is ripened, it is prepared.

Therefore, he says, supplement your faith with virtue, a little step, a little layer, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with steadfastness, steadfastness, with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, brotherly affection with love.

[21 : 55] These qualities are increasing. They keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Anybody who builds layer upon layer, brick upon brick, step upon step, anybody who builds must work at it. If you're going to build a house, you can't just say, well, there's the site, I'll just stand here and look at it for a few days and hopefully the walls will come up by themselves.

No, you have to work at it. It's going to be slog. You have to put your back into it. Yes, they'll make better progress at building when the sun shines, of course they will, but whatever they build has to be strong enough to withstand the storms and the floods of the darkest winter.

It is not ever the work of a day. It is an ongoing work, a slog, sometimes, yes, arduous, thankless, and at times, unglamorous.

You know, we think of like missionary work abroad and sometimes it can seem like, oh yes, the standard bearers for the kingdom. how great, how glamorous to be a missionary in some foreign land.

[23 : 06] What are they actually doing? They're slogging away where they are. Maybe working away with insufficient resources in a missionary hospital or trying to cross mountain ranges or when the land rover breaks down, they're slogging away on foot, trying to bring tracts or literature or something to outlying areas that haven't had the gospel or haven't got anybody to minister to them.

They are working away unheralded and unsung, doing difficult jobs, doing difficult tasks, which are in many ways quite ordinary tasks but difficult to fulfill because of the circumstances in which they are laboring.

It is unglamorous work. It is slog, it is hard, it is in difficult conditions and likewise we will think in our ordinary everyday lives, well I'm not much of a shining Christian, I'm just trying to get on with my work, just trying to survive, just trying to make ends meet, just trying to keep going, but it is in precisely such situations that we are required to be faithful and to keep building our faith little by little.

Peter is not saying for example, yep, see all these characteristics, whoosh, you're going to have them all at once. No, he says add to your faith, knowledge, and to knowledge, virtue, and to virtue, temperance or self-control, and to temperate brotherly kindness and affection, and so on.

Little by little, layer upon layer, strand upon strand. You know, as the Old Testament used to put it, I think it's Isaiah, precept upon precept, line upon line, little by little, here a little, there a little.

[24 : 41] And this is how it is gradually, slowly built up. Every strand in the spider's web is vital if it is going to catch what it needs to feed it.

Every layer, likewise, in what we build is vital. To make it worthwhile, one must always keep in view the end, the objective for which one labors, the completed house, fit to dwell in.

Building is hard work, designed to last. The old Puritans used to say, to work is to pray, and prayer is a work.

The books of James and of Kings tell us of the prayers of Elijah, and that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Now, it is not for nothing that when the practical affairs of the early church were becoming clamant, the apostles still doggedly insisted, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

There would have been 101 things needing doing, all the clamant of the widows and the Hebrews moaning against the Grecians, and those who are of Gentile background having a moan about those who are of Jewish origin, and so on.

[25 : 59] And they could have got involved and rolled their sleeves up and said, okay, right, who's going to sort out the bread? Who's going to sort out the charity? Who's going to sort out this, right? Peter, you do this, and James, you do that, and Matthew, you take on something else, and so on.

He said, no, look, we'll appoint people to do this. We've got to give ourselves continually to prayer and to the word of God, because that is the core work. Everything else is, as it were, round the edges.

The core work is that relationship with God. If that is right, God will provide for the other things. That's what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, doesn't it? Consider the lilies, how they grow, and they toil not, neither do they spin.

Yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these practical, ordinary, everyday things, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

Without prayer, which is a work, none of our work will prosper, for except we bring it to God, he will not bless. And we should bring all our affairs, our business, our anxieties, our hopes and fears for ourselves, our loved ones, our nation, our personal lives, our relationships.

[27 : 16] If you can't bring it to God with a clear conscience, then probably it's not something you should be engaged in. But if it is right and honorable before the Lord, if you're seeking to be fair and right in your business, bring it to the Lord.

If you're seeking to be right and honorable in your relationship, bring it to the Lord. If you're seeking help to genuinely do your work to the best of your ability, bring it to the Lord. If you're slogging away for an exam and you really are struggling, but you're trying to work and you're trying to do your best, bring it to the Lord.

He is not going to bless laziness, but he is going to bless and help our inadequate efforts when we bring them to him and pray for his help.

Everything that we do in this world, we should be doing as unto the Lord. But without prayer, none of it will prosper. None of it will be blessed. Bring it to the Lord. When Paul writes to the Ephesians about the whole armor of God, he explains that prayer is the means by which all is to be worn and every weapon to be wielded.

Ephesians 6, 18, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

[28 : 35] It is God who supplies the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. But we who must do the praying, but we cannot do it without the Holy Spirit.

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Or as perhaps more helpfully put in the version before us, the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

When you cannot articulate what you want to say, the Lord still knows what is in your heart because the Spirit intercedes with the groanings which are too deep for words.

So this is what Jude is saying to them, but you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in the love of God waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Now the love of God we've already mentioned. It has been there from all eternity.

[29 : 43] It is an everlasting love yet it has neither departed nor diminished for God does not change. But what is it that we are to keep ourselves in that love?

We keep ourselves by returning that love faithfully, consistently, avoiding perhaps the places and practices of temptation which might lead us away from the love of God.

As a man desiring to keep himself in the love of his wife would seek to avoid people or company or practices which might threaten that relationship.

If there is something to which we are especially prone, which we know is interfering with our relationship with God, perhaps some besetting sin, we all have them.

We have different ones or different people and what is a particular temptation for one person might leave somebody else stone cold. It is not a problem for them, but there will be something else. And the devil will know exactly which buttons to push for you.

[30 : 52] But if there is something which is interfering with our relationship with God, we must avoid it, control it, keep it under, keep ourselves faithful, true, ardent in the love of God.

We were singing earlier in the Psalms of course, weren't we, about keeping ourselves for the Lord, making sure that we stayed focused upon Him. Keeping ourselves means that we return that love, that we avoid situations of danger, temptation, or difficulty that He continues to be and He increases to be the object of our affection, the ultimate desire of our hearts.

Keeping ourselves in the love of God. Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Waiting. The sense is of expectancy, of an appointment being kept.

A happy anticipation, you know, of excitement, of an affectionate meeting, fondly anticipated, like on a date with the love of your life and you don't have to worry about them standing you up because you know that they love you and that they are the ones who have arranged it and if they don't show up bang on time or there will be a very good reason why.

There will always be an explanation. God has promised to meet us in mercy, to meet us in His Son, Jesus Christ. We have come to know Christ here below but we long to see Him, to meet with Him, to behold His coming in the clouds of heaven, waiting waiting for His mercy.

[32 : 33] Now we have His mercy at work in our lives, yes, here and now, but waiting for the ultimate expression, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that mercy, yes, as we say, He is already supplied to an extent. That is His very purpose in coming, in dying on the cross. That was for mercy because if He didn't intend all along to have mercy on sinners, God could simply have exacted from us all the full price of the law, broken and defiled, make us pay in full a price which we could never pay, a cost we could never meet, but if so, why bother to send His Son and put Him through all that He endured, which we have already referred to?

Why cause Him to suffer this life upon this fallen earth? Why cause Him to go through the agony and shame and brutality of crucifixion? Why cause Him to have to die and be laid in the tomb?

Why go through all that if at the end of the day God was going to say, ach well, it doesn't matter anyway because I'm going to make them all pay in full anyway. I'm going to watch them all squirm. I'm going to see none of them can pay.

Ah, serves you right, off you go to hell. If God intended to do that, why bother to put His Son through all that He did? No, He has intended from all eternity to have mercy upon His people, to have mercy upon His redeemed through His Son, Jesus Christ.

[34 : 09] It is promised, remember what Jesus says, all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Don't get hung up about, oh maybe I'm not one of the elect or whatever. That's not your worry. That's not your problem. Just like, you know, if you get on the ferry or you get on the bus or you get on the plane, you say, oh what if the engine breaks down?

What if the pilot isn't properly qualified? What if all the safety measures are not in place? What if it drops out of the sky? That's not your worry. Turn up with your ticket, get on board, and leave it the rest to other people.

The Lord invites sinners to come to Him. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. You leave the eternal things of election and predestination with the Lord where they belong.

You and me, we do our bit. We do our responding, the absolute responsibility that we have to respond to the Lord.

[35 : 10] words. Come unto me, Jesus said, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

That is the invitation. Whatever your state, however ground down you are by failure and sin, so yes, we are looking for mercy, and we are anticipating it, we are longing for it, and this is what we are taught, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That leads to what? For this is the purpose of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might be brought to the place of eternal life. Have you ever thought what heaven might be like?

Some things we don't know. What age will we be? Will there be children? Or will the saved who died in childhood be grown to the prime of the life they would have attained?

Will there be elderly saints in heaven? Personally, I don't think so, unless of course we go through all the ages of life and then become renewed again as little children, and so it keeps going on.

[36 : 16] I don't know. I don't actually think there will be any elderly people in heaven. But, you know, I could be wrong. What of the unborn? What of those killed from the womb, or those who tragically died when their mothers miscarried accidentally?

Still an immortal soul that has been brought into being, and then which has perished before ever seeing the light of day? What will at time be like? It will be an eternal Sabbath there.

There won't be anything to interfere with it. All of life there is rest from our labors. Joy in the Lord we worship and adore. Just by being there, just by being there, we show which camp we belong to, whose we are.

Like all the soldiers in a camp in peacetime, you know, or not in peacetime, but before a battle, somebody comes into the camp, see every single soldier in all the tents there, they're on a particular side.

It's not like you've got the two armies mixed together. All in that camp, they're all one side. They all belong to that particular king, that particular country. Go to the other camp, they all belong to the other one.

[37 : 23] And however badly or well they perform in battle, this is the camp they're in. And they show their loyalty of whose side they're on, by which camp they are found in.

And in heaven we are all who are there, are there in the Lord's camp. We are praising him just by being there. No churches, no temples, no restrictions for in glory, we don't have to have the law to guide us because we delight only in that which pleases the Lord.

There are no Christian hating persecutors, no sneering Sabbath trampers, no mocking atheist, no schism or splintering of the body of Christ which is now complete and whole and healed.

No poverty or oppression, just perfected joy, delight in the Lord. Time to rejoice, eternity to rejoice with believers old and new of all races and countries and historical periods and above all time to be collectively and I am sure also individually time to be with him, the Lamb of God, Christ the risen Savior, taking time to talk and walk with us personally by name in love in fellowship.

Well how can he possibly do that with each one of us? You know, because he's got eternity and because he knows us each one individually in love, in fellowship, in freedom at last.

[39 : 00] As the rose among, as the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love. life. This is what eternity is like with the Lord.

This is what we have to look forward to, to be waiting for. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

It is all all worth it. All the building, all the praying, all the keeping of ourselves for him, all the waiting for his mercy, for he and the beloved has gone before us.

He has given the faith and the spirit, the Holy Ghost and the love and the mercy and the eternal life which is already there just waiting to be entered into.

[40 : 18] That is what the Lord has laid up for those that love him. Whatever the world has to offer you, friend, it will pass away.

What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? But this that the Lord lays up for us, it is worth it.

It is all worth it. And he has made it all possible. He is like the child care minder who has done all the work. Take a little bit, stick the one on the other.

Look what I have done. Look what the Lord will enable us to do for this time and for all eternity. It is all worth it.

Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Let us pray. and take some explore.

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