

Living Lives Worthy of the Lord

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Preacher: David Parker

[0 : 00] The verse that I want to focus on this evening is found there in verse 10 of Colossians chapter 1.

We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way. That you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way. I know that at the time of the new year I was thinking that this is a very good motto for myself.

And I preach this, I should say to you, firstly to myself, first and foremost to myself. And then by extension to all of us. But I thought this is a really good motto for every one of us.

You might say that it's a bold motto. Because none of us will ever in a sense live a life that is worthy of the Lord. Not one of us.

[1 : 09] And of course we fail every single day. However, this is what God would like us to have, I believe, before us as we move into another new year in 2020.

That this would be our desire. This would be our resolve. This would be our motto. This would be our commitment. That we may live a life worthy of the Lord.

And you could then ask the question, how does a life lived worthy of the Lord? How does such a life look? And I think that Paul here mentions four things.

And that is the areas that we will look at just a wee bit later. But before I do that, I just want to, almost in a, not quite an arbitrary fashion.

But I want to lift a couple of important words out of Paul's introductory comments. Before we look at the qualities that he mentions that constitute living a life worthy of the Lord.

[2 : 26] And the first word that I want to look at is the word gospel. And we find that in verse 5, 5b.

Where Paul says, the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven. That you have already heard about in the word of truth.

The gospel that has come to you. Notice his language there. Notice his phraseology. The gospel, which is the word of truth. Which is God's message.

Is something that has come to them. All over the world, he says. This gospel is bearing fruit. And growing.

And notice in this language, bearing fruit and growing. That for Paul, the gospel is dynamic. The gospel is something that is powerful.

[3 : 33] That has force. That has energy. And of course, that's exactly what Paul said, didn't he? In Romans 1, verse 16.

When he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel. Why, Paul? Because it is the power of God unto salvation. And remember, he said also that the preaching of the cross for unbelievers is foolishness. But unto us which are saved, says Paul. It's the power of God. Now, my point here that I want to bring across is to encourage us.

It's to recall and remember that God, Paul puts it in another way, as though God did beseech you through us be reconciled to God.

This gospel is not simply a message. It's not simply a set of truths or a set of propositions. This gospel is the theater and the place and the stage where God's power is being offered to every single one of us.

[4 : 45] And I also want you to notice the missionary nature of the gospel. As Paul uses this word here. The gospel that has come to you all over the world.

This gospel is bearing fruit and growing. And we must not lose sight of that fact either. That this gospel that we're preaching. Okay, we can have exposition.

We can have this and that. But this gospel is the missionary organ. Where God is seeking to bring his truth to the people of this world.

It's also a message of hope. It's a message that has the drama of salvation in it. And also, lastly, just thinking of the gospel.

I want to say to you, it's the sign. The gospel is a sign. The gospel is the sign that God is still offering people reconciliation.

[5 : 55] Offering people forgiveness. Offering people hope. Offering people life and meaning and purpose. This is what it's the sign of.

That God has come. And that he has brought redemption. And through the proclamation of the gospel. He wants to constantly and continually remind people of that.

The second word that I want to share with you. From these introductory remarks that Paul is making. Is the word grace.

You'll notice there in verse 6. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing. Just as it has been doing so among you since the day you heard it.

And understood God's grace. And all its truth. And he adds after that. You learned it from Epaphras. And Epaphras is a faithful minister of Christ.

[7 : 01] Now, whether he's referring to. Their understanding or their full understanding of God's grace. Or whether he's referring to the gospel. It doesn't really matter.

Because the gospel is the gospel of God's grace. But then. What is grace? Bonhoeffer opens his famous book.

The cost of discipleship. With these words. Cheap grace. Is the deadly enemy.

Of the church. We are fighting today. Says Bonhoeffer. For costly grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote these words in the 30s.

When the Lutheran church. Could probably fairly be described as nominal. When the Lutheran church. Knew.

[8 : 05] The doctrines of grace. It knew. That we were justified freely. By his grace. Knew. That grace meant. Unmerited favor. Knew.

That grace meant. That we. Cannot be justified. By. By any merit. Of our own. Or works of the law. But Bonhoeffer still began his book.

By saying. Cheap grace. Is the deadly enemy. Of the church. And we're fighting today. For costly grace. You see.

We need. A holistic view. Of grace. You will notice. How Paul. In the context. Of bearing fruit.

And in the context. As we will see later. Of good works. Sometimes. Good works. Em. Is like a swear word. In our tradition. But.

[9 : 06] Let's never forget. That Paul tells us. That God. Has foreordained. His people. Unto good works. So.

We need. A holistic view. Of grace. When that lady. Touched. The Lord Jesus. That we heard about. This morning. That was not just.

Her moment. If I could put it this way. Of being justified. Freely by grace. It was her. Moment. Of being. United.

To Christ. Who is divine. And as. Christ tells us. In John 15. Verses 1 to 8. You cannot. Be in the vine.

And the life of that vine. Flowing through you. And be a branch. Attached to that vine. Without bearing fruit. Remember. Christ. Cursed the fig tree.

[10 : 05] That had no fruit. Remember. Christ said. By the fruits. You shall know them. We have to be careful. That we do not make.

What I might call. An unbiblical. Divorce. Grace. And if we ask. What is the connection. Between grace.

And good works. I would suggest. It's relational. And it's the result. Or the response. Of grace. True grace.

That burdens. Within a soul. That has been redeemed. End. Notice. What Jude says.

Or. Perhaps. Firstly. What Paul says. In. Second. Corinthians. Chapter 6. Second. Corinthians. Chapter 6.

[11 : 03] Verse 1. Paul says. As God's. Fellow workers. We urge you. Not to receive. God's grace.

In vain. And then. If we. Go to. Revelation. Not Revelation.

I'm sorry. Jude. In verse 4. There we read. Certain men.

Whose condemnation. Was written about. Long ago. Have secretly. Slipped in among you. There are godless men. Who change. The grace of God. Into a license. For immorality. What is grace? Grace. Is the power of God. God. That not only.

[12:03] Justifies us. Freely. In his sight. But empowers us. To bear fruit. And to live. The Christian life. And the two.

Ought not to be. Separated. In any kind of. Absolute way. And I'll just read.

The. The. A little bit. Of. Of. John. 15. In support. Of the point. That I. Am. Making. Here. Here. Jesus.

Jesus says. The branch in me. That bears. No fruit. While. Sorry. He cuts off. Every branch in me. That bears. No fruit. Every branch. That does bear fruit.

[12:58] He prunes. And then he says. Remain in me. And I will remain in you. No branch. Can bear fruit. By itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit. Unless you remain in me. I am the vine.

You are the branches. If someone remains in me. And I in him. He will bear much fruit. Apart from me. You can do nothing. If anyone does not. Remain in me. He is like a branch. That is thrown away.

And wither. Such branches are picked up. Thrown into the fire. And then he says this. In verse 8. This. Is to my. Father's glory. That you bear much fruit.

Showing yourselves. To be my disciples. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So. What I'm asking you. I'm asking you to think.

Of the power of the gospel. And how God. Has. Has committed himself. To the proclamation. Of that gospel. I'm asking you to think. About grace.

[13:52] In a more holistic way. Thirdly. God's will.

God's will. Just take. Get my. Back to. There. Now. For this reason.

Since the day we heard about you. We haven't stopped praying for you. Verse 9. And asking God. To fill you. With the knowledge. Of his will. There was a.

Philosopher. Bishop. Called. Bishop. Butler. I think he lived in the 18th century. I did have his book once. And I did read some of it.

It was an old. Sort of broken book. And falling apart. But. I don't really know where it is these days. But I do remember this. He did say. The whole of piety.

[14:51] Is summed up. In this. Thy will be done. Paul.

Is. Will never stop praying. Asking God. To fill you. With the knowledge. Of his will. And.

And. We can ask ourselves. What. What might that mean. It will. It might mean. One or two things. It might mean. That we personally. Will.

Learn. More and more. What God's will. Is. For us. As individuals. And what pathway. That he wishes us. To follow.

Will. And in that sense. I think. That the model. Must always be. Not my will. But your will be done.

[15:52] But. You could think of this. In a second way. You could think of this. As. As a. The knowledge. Of God's. Great purpose. In history. The knowledge.

Of God's. Eternal purpose. In Christ. Remember. There's a statement. In the scripture. Saying. I could only feed you milk. Because you're babes. I couldn't give you meat.

Because you're not mature. God doesn't want us. To stay. Like babies. God wants us. To grow. In the knowledge.

Of this. Great. Eternal purpose. That he has purposed. In Jesus Christ. He wants us. To grow. In becoming. More.

And more. Like his son. Jesus Christ. Which is our. Inherited. Destiny. But.

[16:48] One last thing. I'll say. Just as. Before we go on. To the. The. The four points. That constitute. Living a life. Worthy of the Lord. You know.

Knowing God's will. Is certainly. A prerequisite. Would you not agree. Or a presupposition. Of living a life. Worthy of the Lord. Because.

How could you live a life. Worthy of the Lord. If you don't really know. His will. So I would say. It's a prerequisite. And a presupposition. Of living a life.

Worthy. Of the Lord. So. What. What are. Some of the qualities. In this point. Of Paul's. A thinking. That he flags up.

In terms of. Living a life. Worthy of the Lord. Well there is. In verse 10. Bearing fruit. In every.

[17:44] Good. Work. Now. In a sense. What I want to. Emphasize. About this phrase. Is every. Good work. Work. Far. From. Work.

Far. From. Work. Being. A swear word. With Paul. It is. The very. Goal. That he. Aims. At. For all. For all. The Christian. Communities. And in. Every. Single. One. Of his. Letters. And. I would. Rather. Suggest. To you. That. This is. The point.

In his. Introductory. Comments. That he's. Been. Moving. Towards. That you. May. Live. A life. Worthy. Of the Lord. And.

If. If we. Ask. What does it. Look like. It looks. Like. That you'll. Be people. Knowing. Knowing. For. Every. Good. Work. Every.

[18:42] Good. Work. Spiritual. Every. Good. Work. Social. And. Every. Good. Work. Secular. Notice. That I said. Secular. That's. Another. Word.

That can. Often. Only. Be used. In. A. Pejorative. Way. It's. It's. Not. Always. Used. In. That. Way. And. It's. Certainly. Not. Always. Used. In. That. Way. Historically. It's.

Used. In. To. Separate. The. Two. Are. If. You. Like. Where. God. Has. A. Staken. If. You. Like. The.

The. The. Secular. Organs. And. Government. And. Rule. And. So. On. Of. Society. And. So. What. I'm. Saying. Here.

Is. These. Good. Works. Should. I. Believe. Should. Be. Seen. In. Society. How. Can. We. Be. Light. You. Are. The. Light. Of. The. World. Said. Jesus. How.

[19:35] Can. We. Be. The. Salt. Of. The. Earth. If. A. Religion. Is. Privatized. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm.

Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm. Mm.

Mm. Not just in pious places. But in the public square. In the marketplace. And then secondly.

Paul says. Living a life worthy of the Lord is not only a life where you're bearing fruit. And you're bearing fruit in every possible good work.

But it's a life where you are growing in the knowledge of his will. Look there down at verse 10.

[20:47] Bearing fruit in every good work. Then growing in the knowledge of God. Growing in the knowledge of God. Now. Growing in the knowledge of God.

Is not really being able to pass an exam. On the attributes of God. Or in a systematic theology paper. And especially.

The word that Paul uses here. Is a word that. Not. I don't believe that Paul. Um. Um. Discounts. Uh. Intellectual knowledge. No I don't. But. As long as it's a servant. To relational. And experiential knowledge.

What Paul is concerned about. Is that we get to know God. Better. That we become more familiar with him. That.

[21:48] That. That. That. That he's. A. Our sense of his. Being with us. And us being with him. Is. Is. Is. Is. Is. Is. Greater. And I think.

It's that sort of thing. That. That he means. When he talks about growing. In the knowledge. Of God. Of. Of.

Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. His. Being. Of. The glory. Of. His. Being. Of. His. Magnificent. Love. I. I. I. Read. Today. And. From. The business of heaven. In. C.S. Lewis. And. It was a lovely. Line. C.S. Lewis.

Says. You know. God. Did not. Create us. Create. You and I. In order. For us. To love him. He. Created. Us.

[22:44] In order. For God. To love us. God. So. Loved. The world. That he.

Gave. His only. Begotten son. He. That. Spared. Not. His own son. I. Have. Loved. The. With. A. Neverlasting. Love. I.

Will. Never. Leave. The. Nor. Forsake. The. Growing. Growing. In. The. Knowledge.

Of. God. Isn't that. Interesting. That great book. Of. Proverbs. That great book. Of. Wisdom.

Literature. In. Its. Very. First. Chapter. In. Verse. Seven. You must. Know. It. One of the. Early. Verses. I. Learned. As a. Christian. The. Fear. Of. The. Lord. Is.

[23:39] The. Beginning. Of. Knowledge. That. Was. The. Tragedy. Of. The. Fall. Was. It. Not. That.

They. Were. Trying. To. Get. Knowledge. Without. The. Fear. Of. God. Abandoning. The. Fear. Of. God. Oh.

Yes. To. Live. A. Life. Worthy. Of. The. Lord. Is. Bearing. Fruit. In. Every. Good. Work. To. Live. A. Life. Worthy. Of. The. Lord. Is. Growing. In. The. Knowledge. Of. God. And.

Thirdly. To. Live. A. Life. Worthy. Of. The. Lord. Is. In. Verse. 11. Being. Strengthened. With. All. Power. According. To. His. Glorious. Night. So. That. You. May. Have. Great.

Endurance. And. Patience. Here. Is. A. Characteristic. That. Is. Worthy. Of. Our. God. That. We're. People.

[24 : 33] That. Will. Endure. That. We're. People. Of. Whom. Will. We. Will. Be. Characterized. By. Patient. Endurance. In. All. The. Vicissitudes. In. All. The. Peaks. And. Troughs. In. All. The. Valleys. In. The. Mountains. In.

All. The. Dark. Veils. That. We. Are. Called. By. God. To. Walk. Through. Life.

The. Christian. Life. Is. Not. A. Sprint. Remember. These. Great. Words. Of. Hebrews. Run. The. Race. With.

Patience. It's. A. Long. Race. It's. A. An. Endurance. Sport. If. You. Like. It's.

[25 : 28] An. Endurance. Race. And. Sometimes. You. Might. You. Might. Be. Alone. And.

Not. Only. That. The. Christian. Life. I'm. Picking. Up. A. Phrase. That. One. Of. My. Brethren. Is. Used. Here. Is. Not. A. Life.

Of. Being. A. Board. In. A. Luxury. Cruise. I. Think. I. You. Be. Here. Jesus. Said. Through. Much. Tribulation. We.

Must. Enter. The. Kingdom. Of. Heaven. Jesus. Said. The. Servant. Is. Not. Above. His. Master. If. They. Persecuted. Me. If. They. Spat. On. Me. And. Laughed. At. Me. They'll. Do. The. Same. To. You. You. You. Jesus.

[26 : 27] Said. He. That. Endures. Unto. The. End. Shall. Be. Saved. Let. Me. Tell. You. That. The. Final.

Mark. Of. The. Authentic. Believer. Is. That. They. Endure. Unto. The. End. End. And.

You. Know. This. Patient. Endurance. Is. Not. Simply. Stoical. Because. Paul.

Goes. On. To. Mention. A. Fourth. Characteristic. Of. A. Life. That. Is. Lived. Worthy. Of. Our. Lord. And. That.

Fourth. Characteristic. There. Is. In. Verse. Twelve. Giving. Thanks. To. The. Father. Giving.

[27 : 26] Thanks. Remember. Jesus. Once. Said. Hey. I. Thought. There. Was. Ten.

Lepers. That. Were. Cleansed. Only. One. Has. Return. To. Give. Thanks. We.

Describe. Our. Breaking. Bread. And. Taking. The. Wine. Various. Don't. We. As. Communion. As. The. Lord's.

Supper. Lord's. Table. And. Some. People. Describe. It. As. The. Eucharist. And. I. I. Love. That. Because. That. Word. Eucharist. Means. Thanks. When. We. Have. Communion. In. This. Church.

[28 : 23] And. We. Come. Forward. To. The. Table. Among. Other. Things. As. We. Come.

Forward. What. We're. Saying. Is. Thanks. Lord. And.

You. Know. If. You. Are. A. Believer. And. You. Do. Not. Come. Forward. To. The. Table. Why.

Are. You. Not. Willing. To. Come. Forward. And. Say. Thanks. When. I.

Was. Minister. Up. In. Northwest. Sutherland. In. In. Locke. Inver. One. Of. The. Ladies. In. In. My. Congregation. Was.

Elma. Mackenzie. And. Even. When. I. First. Went. There. In. 1995. She. Was. A. Good. Age. Now. To. Get. To. Elma's.

[29 : 20] House. You. Drove. Along. A. Single. Track. Way. From. Locke. Inver. Then. You.

Turned. Off. Towards. Ach. Melvick. A. Place.

Called. Ach. Melvick. Along. Another. Single. Track. Road. And. Then. As. You. Were. Going.

Along. There. You. Turned. Along. There. Another. Not. A. Proper. Road.

But. Very. Very. Bumpy. And. You. Came. To. The. Foot. Of. A. Huge. Hill. And. About. Half. A. Mile. Up. That. Hill.

Lived. Elma. Mackenzie. And. I. Went. For. Elma. To. To. Collect. Her. For. The. Prayer. Meeting. Every. Single.

Wednesday. And. Winter. Autumn. Spring. Summer. Elma. Walked. The. Half. Mile. From. Her. Home.

[30 : 12] Down. To. The. Foot. Of. That. Hill. And. She. Had. A. Little. What do you call it. Mary. Where did you. Kept. Her. Boots. Little. Storage.

Thing. And. She. Kept. Her. Boots. In. There. And. She. Opened. It. Up. And. Changed. It. Then. She. Came. Came. Into. The. Car. She. Never. Missed.

A. Prayer. Meeting. Now. Every. Time. I. Said. To. Elma. Elma. How. Are. You. She. Always. Answered.

In. The. Same. Way. Every. Single. Time. And. This. Was. Her. One. Word. Answer. Thankful. This. Is. Paul. Is. Not. Talking. Here. About. Occasionally. Saying. Thanks. If. Something. Good. Happens. That's. Not. What. He's. Talking. About. Paul.

[31 : 10] Is. Saying. You. Should. Be. The. Most. Thankful. People. On. The. Planet. Giving.

Thanks. Says. Paul. To. The. Father. Who. Has. Qualified. You. To. Share. In. The. In. Inheritance. Of. The. Saints. In. The. Kingdom. Of. Light. None. Of. Us. Had. The. Qualifications. He. Qualified. Us. And.

None. Of. Us. Will. Ever. Have. The. Qualification. No. Matter. How. Magnificent. A. Specimen. Humankind. Can. Produce. Even. In. The. Future.

I. Was.

[32 : 06] Reading. A. Story. And. Be. Finished. In. A. Few. Minutes. I. Was. Reading. A. Story. There. About. A. Lady. In. In. The. States.

And. She. Something. Went. Down. The. Wrong. Way. It's. A. True. Story. And. She. Couldn't. Breathe. And.

She. Was. Out. With. A. Couple. Of. Her. Kids. Eating. In. A. Restaurant. And. A. Stranger. A. Man. Came. Up. And. Did.

Well. I. Not. Quite. Sure. I. Can't. Remember. What. You. Call. It. Now. But. That. Move. That. Seeks. To. Help. Somebody. In. That. Sort. Of. Distress. And.

It. Wasn't. Working. And. She. Was. Getting. More. You. know. She. Just. Could. Not. Breathe. Through. Her. Nose. Or. Through. Her. Mouth. Anyway. Eventually. She.

[33 : 01] Was. Helped. And. What. She. Was. Writing. About. Was. How. Do. You. Say. Thank. You. To. Someone. Who.

Has. Saved. Your. Life. And. She. Says. It. Seems. So. Inadequate. Just.

To. Say. Thank. You. And. She. Says. Then. This. Came. To. Me. The. Way. That. I. I. Going. To. Say. Thank. You. To. This. Stranger.

Is. By. Publicizing. All. The. Kindness. And. All. The. Goodness. And. All. The. Things. That. You. Did. For. Me. In. Saving. My. Life. Now.

If. She. Can. Do. That. How. About. Us. Can. We. Not. Publicize. And.

[33 : 55] Promote. And. Proclaim. About. The. One. Who. Has. Saved. Our. Lives. Not. Just. For. Time. But.

For. Eternity. There. Is. Then. That. You. May. Live. A. Life. Worthy. Of. The. Lord. I.

Put. It. To. You. A. Great. Motto. For. 2020. And. That. That. Life. That. Is. Lived. Worthy. Of. The. Lord.

Is. A. Life. That. Perhaps. Some. Other. Things. Paul. Is. Just. Flagging. These. Things. Up. At. This. Point. But. It. Certainly. Will. Be. A. Life. Growing. In. The. Knowledge. Of. God. Showing. Great. Endurance. And. Patience. And. Bearing. Fruit. In. Every. Good. Work. And. Being. A. People. Who. Are. Characterized. Perhaps. Above.

[34 : 48] All. By. Being. A. Thankful. People. Just. Like. Elmer. I. Thankful. David. We. We've. Been. Reciting.

Creeds. Add. This. Bit. To. Our. Creed. We. Give. Thanks. May. The. Lord. Add. His. Own. Blessing. To.

Our. Message. For. His. Glory. And. For. Our. Good. Thank. you.