

Can I be sure I am one of God's elect?

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[0 : 00] And we're reading Ephesians chapter 1 and verses 1 to 14. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

[1 : 38] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Well, good morning, everyone. Why don't we pray as we come to God's word? Lord, we praise you for your nature, that you tell us that a bruised reed you will not break and a smouldering wick you will not snuff out.

Lord, we thank you for your gentleness and your patience with us when we struggle to be sure that we are even a Christian.

Thank you that you are for us in your gentle nature. Please reassure our hearts this morning by your word. In his name, amen.

Amen. Well, one of the lovely images that the Lord gives us so that we can have confidence that we will receive a warm welcome into heaven is that of a heavenly book, a book.

[3 : 02] I'm not sure if you're into books or not, but this book you will be into. It's called the Book of Life, with each and every name listed of those who are going to receive a warm welcome into heaven.

One place we see this book appear is in Revelation 20 at the Last Judgment, the picture of the Last Judgment, where each individual person has their own book, a record of everything they've done. Now, that is a terrifying thought, but then onto the scene comes this other book, the Book of the Lamb who was slain. And it's those who are written in that book, not their own book of what they've done, but the Lamb's book.

They're the ones who have the warm welcome into heaven. It's a very personal image, this book. Your name is written.

And it's a permanent image. You don't write something down to forget it. It's to remember it. It's permanent. It is written there. For all those who put their hope in Christ, the Lord reassures our hearts that your name, my name is written in this book of life.

[4 : 20] Now, this divine guarantee of salvation is what our series in the Doctrins of Grace has been about, really. The Lord wants us to be secure in his arms.

Now, just to recap the series, because in a sense we're kind of finished the Doctrins of Grace. There's an acronym to remember the five points, the five doctrines.

It's called CHULIP. So you might want to write this down if you haven't heard this before. So like the flower, CHULIP, let's quickly run through what we've covered so far.

So it's not the order we did it in in our series, but here goes. So T. Actually, let's get some audience participation. Can anyone tell me? What's T?

Total depravity, or another name is total inability. That, you know, born in Adam, we are dead towards God, Ephesians 2.

[5 : 21] It's not total depravity in the sense of we're as evil as we possibly could be, but it's total in the sense that sin has infected us in every faculty, in our mind, in our desires, in our abilities.

In and of ourselves, we're unable to want God and seek God. Okay, you. What's you? Anyone? Heard these before? Joel?

Help. Unconditional election. Unconditional election, what we looked at last week. The only election that matters. The only election. Yeah. Thanks for that political comment.

The only election that matters. In eternity past, the Father chose, by his mercy alone, those sinners he would adopt as his sons.

Unconditional. Nothing in and of ourselves did he look at us and go, you're worthy of my choosing. It's not about that. It's unconditional. It's his mercy alone. Okay, L. Limited atonement.

[6 : 27] Another name for it is particular redemption. So, it's not that Jesus died for the whole world and goes, whoever wants to take up my offer, come and get it.

It's that God, the Father, sent Jesus into the world with a particular mission to save his people. And he did it. He actually redeemed. He didn't just make it possible.

He saved his sheep. He died for his sheep. Okay, I. Irresistible grace.

While we're still dead towards God, God intervenes. The Holy Spirit works inside us to make the gospel message effective in our hearts, making us new on the inside, opening our blind spiritual eyes to see Christ and so put our trust in him.

It's irresistible. The Holy Spirit just go, just makes us want to put our trust in Christ. Okay, last one, P. Yeah, so, perseverance of the saints or better still, as Don said, preservation of the saints.

[7 : 41] That God is working, is totally committed to finishing what he starts. He's working in us to keep us for heaven and therefore, we're going to persevere because God is working to get us home.

So these are beautiful truths. Some start to finish. Our salvation is resting in the sovereign grace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's a free and utter gift.

It's all him. So, in a sense, we kind of finished our series, but there are some common questions that come up to do with God's sovereignty and salvation.

And we just didn't have time in each of the sermons to deal with these important questions properly. So, we're going to change gear a bit and try and address four of these common questions.

And those questions that we're going to cover over the next four weeks are, can I be sure I'm one of God's elect? We're going to do that one today. And then, can a Christian lose their salvation?

[8 : 41] Does predestination mean that evangelism and prayer are pointless? And do the doctrines of grace really matter in 2021? Like, can't we just put them to the side?

Do they really matter? Okay. So, that's where we're going. So, it's a bit different in these next four weeks, but let's get into the first one. Can I be sure I am one of God's elect?

There was this one wedding where Emma and I and some friends we thought were invited to. Emma and I weren't as confident, but our friends weren't sure if they were invited or not.

So, they went to the reception before the bridal party arrived and they went up to that list of table place names and checked out is their name there? No, it wasn't. So, they rushed out again.

I tell that because I imagine when I talked about this book in heaven, those who are asking this question at a personal level this morning, can I be sure I am one of God's elect?

[9 : 51] Are probably feeling like those friends who went to the wedding reception going, I really don't think my name's going to be there. This is a very personal question.

It is an agonising question to wrestle with. It's a restless place to live. You're stuck between the beauty of the gospel that God is absolutely sovereign in salvation and yet you're also, but then you think God is angry at you because of your sin.

The very one you want to rest in is the one who's angry at your sin and you're just stuck in between. Which one is it? Amen. Now, I want to say from the outset that I do not expect this sermon to be a quick fix.

It could even be dangerous because if in tomorrow or during the week you wake up in despair again, you might think, well, that didn't help. I'm even more stuck.

What do I do now? I don't expect this sermon to be a quick fix. Unlike what Simon says, I don't have all the answers. But I do want to hopefully give you some tools to go away with.

[11:05] Some new perspectives that you can keep preaching to yourself whenever this fear arises within you. So the five perspectives I want to touch on this morning, you'll see it in the outline.

The first one has to do when it comes to passages in the Bible that seem to question our security of salvation. So, when you come to those, we need to be asking ourselves, am I sure that this is what God is saying here?

The second thing you need to keep asking yourself is when doubt arises, doubt your doubt. Ask questions of your doubt. Why are you doubting?

The third is, is this even a good question to be asking? What is God's question of you? The fourth perspective is, when you look inside yourself and you see the muck of your sin, don't live there. You need an external reference point. You need to look to Christ. And the last one is, don't dwell on yourself, dwell on what God has done.

[12:18] So, let's just go through each of these one at a time. Okay, what about those troubling texts? Am I sure that I've understood the text correctly?

So, we're going to use 2 Peter 1.10 as a case study. We don't have time to go to the text that can really trouble people. But 2 Peter 1.10, gee, that's it.

This one's, this one's up there as one that troubles people. Could you turn there with me actually because we'll spend a few minutes here. So, 2 Peter 1.

And we'll come back to Ephesians towards the end. So, here's 2 Peter 1.10 and I'll read verse 11 as well. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[13:25] So, it's talking about an entrance and falling and it's saying be diligent to confirm your calling and election. now, if you read that, it just jumps out at you and it sounds like you must confirm it.

It's up to you. If you've got to be diligent to confirm it, then it mustn't be settled. If I don't, then I fall and not enter the eternal kingdom.

And you think, okay, what are these qualities I'm meant to be putting into practice? And you go back and read, supplement your faith with virtue and virtue 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.

And that list just hits you hard, doesn't it? Virtue? I can list a dozen things I've stuffed up this week or today alone. And then knowledge.

I don't read the Bible as much as I want to. Self-control, my lust, my impatience, my anger, steadfastness. I waver in and out of faith all the time. Godliness, brotherly affection.

[14:36] That list just hits you. You come to the conclusion, I must be failing the test. Maybe I'm not elect.

When a passage has this effect on you, the emotions just are strong. They're very strong.

Those strong emotions I think can make you think you've interpreted it correctly but can I encourage you to pause, take a deep breath, maybe even get the help of another believer and make sure you've understood what God is saying correctly.

slowly. Slow down and re-read. Look at the details. Let's do that together. I'm not going to leave you hanging.

Let's do that together in this case. firstly, look at verse 5, the start of this little section.

[15:39] It starts with for this very reason. For this very reason, it goes on to say, confirm your calling in election. So it should indicate, well, what's the reason?

Where's this coming from? So let's go back. Verses 1 and 2. To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now we elevate the apostles and they do have an authority because they saw the risen Christ but if we trust in Christ we have the same standing of faith as the apostles in the sight of God.

How does that come about? By the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. That's an encouraging verse but verse 2. Why is Peter writing this letter? May grace and peace be multiplied

to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Grace and peace. He wants us to have grace and peace. I think even there that should make you think that's a funny way to give you peace to then make you question whether you're one of God's people or not.

[16:57] Even there it's like I'm not sure I've read this correctly. But then we go on. Keep analysing the detail. Verses 3 and 4. What's the truth for this very reason confirming you're calling an election?

What is that reason? We find it in verse 3 and 4. His, God's, divine power power, has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

God's divine power is given to you and me for all things, for life and godliness. Growing in the knowledge of him, he's given us his precious promises that we might partake of his divine nature. All God's power is at work to save you, to transform you into his likeness. So for this very reason, God is at work in you.

You have all his help to become like him. So for this reason, add virtue, knowledge, brotherly love and so on.

[18:33] He's at work, therefore add these things, do these things. things. That's the basis, what he has done. And then if you go, look on the other side of the text, verse 12.

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth you have. He's not talking to people who are out of the faith, he's saying you're in it.

God's power is at work, therefore join him in that transformation process. All this should make us re-examine verse 10.

Have we understood it correctly? Is it a test that you pass or fail? I don't think it is. It's not. Because if it is a test, it would be demanding perfection.

And no one can pass that. It's not a test, it's a road map. It's a road map of what we should be striving towards.

[19:49] Having been saved through the faith in God's promises, having God's power on our side, verse 10 is saying join God in working towards that same goal that he is calling you towards, that he is working you towards.

It doesn't mean you have to take great strides each day in becoming more like Christ, but if you're stumbling in that direction, that same direction, that's evidence that God is at work bringing you towards himself.

I think we can get confused here because when the Bible talks about salvation, it can talk about it in three ways, past, present and future.

So some verses are saying you have been saved, Christ has saved you, you are saved. Other verses are saying when Christ returns you will be saved. Here is an example where a passage is saying you are being saved.

And we're meant to be active in that process. God is saving you to transform us to become like him, sharing in the divine nature, so let's be active in doing that.

[21:10] That's what verse 10 is saying. Get on board with what God is already doing inside you. It's not a test, it's a roadmap to say keep striving towards that.

An unbeliever doesn't have that as the goal. But if you want that, even though you're so aware of failing that so often, if that's your trajectory, even though you might stumble one day, you might even stumble for a period of years, but if your overall trajectory is that you want to be with God and like him, that is great evidence that God is at work in you to bring you to himself.

So I hope that demonstrates that when texts trouble you, just slow down, pray, get the help of other Christians, and just make sure you're actually hearing God correctly.

So that's the first one, troubling texts. Another perspective that can help someone who's wrestling with this question is doubting your doubt.

Now, how do you do that? Just ask questions of where is this question coming from? So for me, it makes me think, what kind of person asks this question? Can I be sure that I am one of the elect?

[22 : 44] This isn't a theoretical question. I. Can I be sure that I am one of the elect? It's someone who wants to be saved. But it's someone who for some reason thinks they're not elect.

And the only thing I can think of is that they're so aware of their own failings. Now, who would be aware of their own failings?

Someone who doesn't want God or someone who does? It's someone who does, who would be aware of their own failings.

Or you could ask the question, what does a person already believe in order to ask the question, am I one of the elect? They already believe that the Bible is the authority on this matter, God's word is the authority on whether you're saved or not.

They already believe in sin, that sin is real and that it's a big problem that you're going to be saved or not. They already believe in their sin that they need a saviour.

[23 : 57] They already believe in this is they already believe in Jesus, that he is the saviour. and they already believe that their only hope is if God sovereignly works to elect.

That's a lot of truths that you're already believing to even ask this question. How else can you doubt your doubt? I'm looking at the word sure there.

Can I be sure that I am one of God's elect? How would you go about proving that? What evidence would you look to to go, okay, I'm looking at that, I'm sure I'm one of the elect now.

It's got to be irrefutable. It's got to be absolutely rock solid. If you're looking to your own fruit, then you would need 100% good fruit for you to be sure you're one of the elect, if fruit is the measure of being sure.

But then you already know that's not the gospel. you know it's not by works, but by trusting. So if it's not our own fruit, what else could make you sure?

[25 : 13] There's only one thing really that could make you sure that you're elect. That's if God says, you are elect. I think that's the only place that would be solid enough for you to go, I must be elect.

God says so. Which then just pushes us towards faith. Trusting, not what we do, but him saying so. So there's just a few ways to just doubt your doubt. Your doubt can feel so strong, but when you ask a few questions of it, it's not as strong as you think.

Only someone in the arena of faith actually cares about this question. You're believing so much of the Bible by even asking this question. And it drives you towards not looking at your fruit, but what God says is true.

So doubt your doubt. A third way to be thinking is well, maybe this question isn't a good question.

[26 : 27] Does God want me to ask this question? Can I be sure that I'm one of the elect? Is that God's question of you and I? When we hear the gospel, are we meant to think, okay, now I need to work out, God wants me to work out, is my name written in the book or not?

Am I elect or not? Is God asking us that question? Well, where in his word does he ask us to work that out or not? I can't think of anywhere.

You can correct me if I'm wrong, but every time election is mentioned, it's spoken as words of love from God, saying to reassure you, you are one of my people.

And it's spoken like we saw in 2 Peter, because you're one of my people, strive to become holy like me, because I'm at work in you. It's never spoken in the Bible as work out if you're elect or not.

Now, why would that be? That's because election is God's business, that's his divine business, that's what he does in salvation, that's not our responsibility. And he tells us about that, not for us to do anything with it, except be reassured and motivated to keep striving.

[27 : 55] So what question does God ask us to answer? What's our responsibility? And this is where we come to Simon's question that you guys were discussing before I started.

So when it comes to the doctrines of grace, these are wonderful truths of the Bible. They are central in the Bible. They are central in understanding salvation.

And so as a church, we want to keep them central. They're beautiful truths that we can rest in God's sovereignty in our salvation. But do you need to believe in total depravity to be saved?

No. believe in sin, you don't need to believe that to be saved.

Do you need to believe in the irresistible call of the Holy Spirit to be a Christian? The call of the gospel, yes, but the irresistible call, no, you don't have to believe that to be a Christian.

[29 : 04] Do you need to believe in Christ's particular redemption to be a Christian? That Christ is the only way to be redeemed, yes, but in particular redemption, no.

Do you need to believe in the preservation of the saints to be saved? that a Christian needs to make it to the end believing, yes, but that that's guaranteed, you don't actually have to believe that to be saved.

Do you need to believe in unconditional election to be a Christian and be saved? No. Now let me reiterate, these are beautiful truths.

I wouldn't give them up in a moment. I pray anyway. These are beautiful truths. We want to keep them central in our church. But there are other Christians, evangelical Christians, who don't believe these points.

Now that, and we should call them brothers and sisters because they look to Jesus' death and resurrection alone to save them. They are Christians. Now that should make us stop and think, is wondering if I'm elect or not, is that a good question?

[30 : 25] question or what is the most fundamental question that God is asking us to answer when we hear the gospel? Let's look at a few passages to illustrate what that question is, what's our responsibility.

So Acts 13, 48. Paul is preaching to a crowd about who Jesus is, what he has done, and then Luke makes this observation.

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life, believed.

Now, these non-Jews who believed, were they asked to work out if they were appointed to eternal life?

No, I doubt they were even aware of that at this stage. That's Luke's divinely inspired interpretation of why they believed. What was their responsibility to work out?

[31 : 31] They heard from Paul who Jesus is, what he has done. The question they needed to work out was, will I believe this or not? Will I trust this?

How will you respond to Jesus? That's the question that you and I have to ask. That's the question God asks of us and we have to answer.

Or consider the thief on the cross. He has minutes to live. What question is he confronted with, with Jesus hanging beside him? He doesn't have time to go into the depths of God's sovereignty and salvation.

Yet Jesus says, today you'll be with me in paradise. From this man's words, we hear that he says two things. Remember me when you enter your kingdom.

Your kingdom. He recognises that Jesus is king and he asks for mercy. Remember me. I deserve to die. Remember me. Give me mercy. Jesus is king. Give me mercy.

[32 : 36] That's the question. He was responding, what are you going to do with Jesus, says God. And the thief on the cross says, you are king. Please give me mercy. That's the question of the gospel.

Not are you elect? What are you going to do with Jesus? Or John 5, 24. Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

This is Jesus speaking. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. He who believes has crossed from death to life based on believing.

So the question of the gospel isn't, are you elect? The question of the gospel is, what are you doing with Jesus? Are you trusting him?

Are you looking to him as your only hope? Because if you are, you have crossed over from death to life. So that's the third way we need to be talking to ourselves.

[33 : 52] What question is God asking us? Am I, how am I responding to Jesus? The fourth one is to do with self-reflection, self-evaluation.

When we look inside ourselves into our mind and desires and feelings, and when we look, we just don't see much excitement for God, but instead we just see all this sinful muck.

What do we do with that? What do we do? At first we can rationalise that and go, well, I'm a sinner and therefore I need to be saved. But if we keep our eyes fixed on ourselves and just see all the muck, it just becomes overwhelming.

You're not seeing any change. If your gaze is just fixed within yourself, you're so desperate to want improvement. But the problem is, because you want improvement, you're just so sensitive to your own failings.

What do we do? Is there a better way to be self-reflective? Because I think doing that is like sitting in a dark room, straining your eyes to see some skerrick of light within yourself.

[35 : 11] But it's not going to come. All you're going to find is darkness if you just stay here. There's got to be a better way to do it. The better way is to open a window. I'm not sure if this picture is going to work or not.

Open a window and let some light in. In other words, don't use yourself as the reference point. You need an external reference point. You need God's grace to speak into you, not just keep looking at yourself.

The Lord doesn't want us to stay staring at our own failings of faith or obedience. He wants us to look at the light, at Christ, his forgiveness, his divine help, his relational warmth.

We need him pouring into us. Now, can I pause and say that some people don't look inside enough. Some people just almost make a habit of not looking inside.

Their problem will be a superficial understanding of sin and of God's holiness and therefore of God's wonderful grace. But that's not this person's problem if you're asking this question this morning.

[36 : 21] We should be looking inside. The light of the gospel exposes more darkness within us. But don't live there.

Don't stay there. Don't set up camp within yourself. When you see darkness, that's meant to drive us to want light. So don't have yourself as the reference point.

Have Christ as the reference point. And we do that by his word pouring into us. And I think his word can pour into us through the community of the church and his word, obviously, his written word.

We need his light flooding into us. So don't just live within yourself. We need to be feeding off his word, his promises, his gospel.

So let's do that for the remaining time, shall we? We've come to the last point. Don't dwell on what you have or haven't done. Dwell on what God has done.

[37 : 21] That's the reference point. That's the light that floods in. So please turn back to Ephesians as we finish. We'll spend our remaining time here.

So just jumping to verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Paul starts not by looking within ourselves, but looking to what God has done. This is a... I love this passage. If you're allowed to have favourites, I think this is my favourite chapter in the Bible.

It's... It's... It's... It's awesome. Now, every spiritual blessing... I used to think, okay, that's cool.

I've got this undefined spiritual blessing somewhere up there that I suppose I'll see one day. I don't know what that is. That's not what Paul's saying here. He goes on to define what we have, what that blessing we've received.

[38 : 28] Verses 4 to 14. At this point, I want to hand it over to you. Not talking to the person next to you, but I want to practice focusing on letting the light in.

So, I'm going to give you a minute just to write down, and we'll start with that first question on the outline. I want you to list all the ways the Father has given you every spiritual blessing.

How has the Father blessed you? Just list it. So, let me give you a minute to do that. Okay, I'd love to hear...

Let's just do this really quickly. I'd love to hear some input from some... Whoever. Let's just work through this together. What has he done? What has the Father done, given us? Just call out.

Verse 4. He chose us before the foundation of the world. He chose us. It was his initiative. Okay, what else? Sorry, Will.

[39 : 31] I'm just going to go with the first one, adoption. Yes, he's adopted us as his sons. He's called us to the praise of his glorious grace.

Can I go back there? He's predestined us. He's decided beforehand, I'm going to save you. You're going to be on a path of destruction, but I'm going to intervene.

You are going to be adopted. You're going to be one of mine. And even before that, that we should be holy and blameless before him. I think we can feel pressure there.

I need to be holy and blameless. That's true, but this is a commitment here. God is determined to make us holy and blameless. This is more a promise here than anything.

Okay, what else? Verse 7. Thank you, Will. I'm just trying to get lots of input. Verse 7. He's redeemed us through his blood. We were caught in sin.

[40 : 29] He's bought us. We belong to him now. He's redeemed us through his blood. Okay, forgiveness of our trespasses. Verse 9.

Yeah, he's made known to the mystery of his will. He's told us where the world's heading, that everything is going to be united in Christ. We're not aimless and purposeless in this world. We know where it's heading. He's got a good plan and we know it. We can live in line with that. We can get on board with it. Yeah, verse 6. Accepted in the beloved.

Yep. Okay, verse 11. Obtained an inheritance. Again, we've got that predestined. I think verse 12 there.

To the praise of his glory. I think that's a gift as well. We have a great purpose. It's a purpose outside ourselves. It's to the praise of his glory.

[41 : 26] Even that is a gift. What about verse 13? Yeah, we're not alone, are we? The word here is, it's like a pledge. It's like God has given us a down payment of eternal life.

His Holy Spirit himself. Eternal life has begun. I would argue as well in verse 13 that when you heard the word of truth, even hearing the word of truth, I would argue from other parts of scripture that God sends us the gospel.

Even that is a gift. Okay. Let's do that again. Can I give you another minute? What part does Jesus have to play in all this? And you're going to see in him, through him.

I would really love you to write it down every single time. So can I give you another minute? What part does Jesus have to play? Okay, there's probably not quite a minute. I'm conscious of the time here.

Instead of getting responses, I'm just going to read all the times. I'm not going to read all the verses, but in him, through Jesus Christ, blessed us in the beloved.

[42 : 41] In him, we have redemption. Through his blood, we know the plan that he set forth in Christ. Christ is the one bringing about this plan.

And Christ is the object of our faith. In him, we are included. That we hope in Christ.

It's just in him, through him. It's just all about Christ. It's everything we receive from the Father is in Jesus. It doesn't come to us by another means.

It's in Jesus. Okay, one last one, and this one should be really quick. What part do we have to play in all this, in salvation? What part do we have to play? I can only see two things in verses 12 and 13.

Put our hope in Christ and believe the gospel. I think they're describing the same reality there. It's all him.

[43 : 40] It's just putting our hope in him. It's a beautiful passage. Salvation is by God. Dwell on what he has done, not what we have or haven't done.

Let the light in. If you are sure, in and of yourself, you have no hope of entering heaven based on what you do.

If you have any hope, it's got to be only what God gives you in Jesus. Then whether you believe it or not, whether you feel confident or not, in a sense, it doesn't matter whether you feel confident or not in that.

But if your only hope is in Jesus, God says, your name is written in the book of life. This might plague you, but know God's love.

He speaks these words of love for us. Your name is written in the book of life. You will receive a warm welcome. Why don't we pray to finish? Would you pray?

[44 : 46] Lord, we praise you for just your goodness, your patience with us, that you are the one who guarantees that we'll make it home to glory.

Lord, I pray again that you would be comforting the hearts of those who are really wrestling with this personally. Lord, we know that no one can snatch us out of your hand.

Your hand is too strong. So I pray that you might, in your good time, give them peace and rest in you. But Lord, we thank you that ultimately it doesn't come down to our sense of assurance, but it comes down to the fact that you are a faithful God in that we do, that we are secure.

So we praise you for that. In Jesus' name, amen.