

Cursed for Us

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 April 2019

Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] And this morning I want to help us to survey the cross. to survey the cross. And really to answer the question, what happened there?

this morning a portion of scripture from Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Galatians chapter 3, verses 10 through 14. So if you have not turned there yet, if you would do so, we'll read together.

I will read as you follow along. Galatians chapter 3, beginning in verse 10. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

For it is written, cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

[1 : 23] 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 a 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.

Father, we are gathered in this place to reflect upon and to survey the wondrous cross.

[2 : 34] Lord, it is my task to lead us through the survey. And Lord, I sense my deep inadequacy.

I sense my helplessness without your help. Lord, only you understand the mysteries of the cross. You're the only one who understands fully what took place on that day as Christ hung suspended between heaven and earth. Lord, I pray that you would grant me grace to be faithful to, as best I can, open the window that we may see and survey the cross of Christ.

I ask for divine enablement this morning. I ask for the gift of your spirit to bring illumination upon all of our eyes that we might see.

I pray that you would open our ears that we might hear, that we may comprehend this great act of grace, which we easily forget, we can easily overlook.

[3 : 59] So God, come by your spirit. Come by your power. And help us to survey the cross. We ask that you would do this.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. I think you'd all agree this morning that we live in a world that is divided along many lines and over many things.

One of the things that we are not divided on is our view that our world is broken. That our world is filled with problems.

The problems of sin and sickness, poverty and greed, crime and corruption, war and strife, divorce and broken families, drug addiction and human exploitation, the list goes on.

We all agree that these and many other things are wrong in our world. And we watch governments and charities and other non-profit organizations spend billions of dollars with millions of volunteers and employees trying to fix the problems.

[5 : 34] But the problems stubbornly remain. Committees are established. Studies are commissioned. Laws are passed. But very little changes.

The problems persist. And in some cases, they even deepen. And our world remains broken. And the question is, why?

Well, governments and organizations that get involved in trying to solve these problems tell us that the reason is that the problems are complex. And the problems are many.

And that's why they remain. And they're hard to fix. But Scripture takes another view. The witness of Scripture gives a one-word answer to the question of why these problems exist and why they

persist.

That one-word answer is sin. But Scripture not only tells us the problem, Scripture also provides us with the solution.

[6 : 50] And in the same way that the problem is a one-word, the solution is also one-word.

The one-word solution to the problems of our world is Christ. And in our remaining time this morning, I want us to consider this problem of sin and how it was addressed by Christ in His crucifixion.

Speaking about these verses that we have just read, in his commentary on Galatians, British pastor and theologian John Stott, who's now deceased, pointed out, although these verses seem difficult in both concept and vocabulary, they are fundamental to an understanding of biblical Christianity. I fully agree with John Stott. We should not miss the kind of Christianity that these verses are fundamental to understanding.

the fundamental to understanding biblical Christianity, which is Christianity based on the Bible. Not cultural Christianity that is so popular in our country and around the world that's based on moralism and positivism and the false belief that doing good deeds and living a good life will lead to eternal life.

[8 : 27] Scripture is clear. They will not. Eternal life is secured through what Jesus did and not through what we do or don't do.

But before focusing on the verses, I want to briefly give a background or context to the verses we'll consider this morning.

The Apostle Paul is the one who founded the church at Galatia, the churches of Galatia. He preached the gospel to them and he called them to put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. And after he left, there were false teachers who came in after him, legalists, who challenged the Galatians and told them that in order to be saved, not only did they have to put their faith in Christ, but they also needed to keep the law of Moses.

And in this text that we're considering this morning, the Apostle Paul is continuing an argument that he's been making from the outset of the letter where he is pointing out the impossibility of keeping the law.

[9 : 38] And he's also pointing out the result of this inability to keep it. In a nutshell, what Paul says to the Galatians and what he says to us by extension is this, all people are under the curse of sin that is only removed through the cross of Christ.

All people, all people without exception are under the curse of sin that is only removed through the cross of Christ.

I have two simple points this morning and they address the two issues in these five verses. The first one is the curse of sin which we see in verses 10 through 12 and the second is the cross of Christ which we see in verses 13 and 14.

So let's consider them in order. First, the curse of sin. Galatians 3.10 describes a universal dilemma.

At first glance, it appears that Paul is only addressing those who are actively trying to be justified by the law, trying to be saved by the law. But when we look at it more closely, what we see is that Paul applies what he says far more broadly.

[11 : 04] He applies it universally. In verse 10, Paul makes two universal statements. First, he says, for all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.

All of them. all is a universal word. All includes you and it includes me. All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.

And Paul refers to relying on the works of the law. What he is referring to is doing your best to keep the laws of God, to be accepted by God, to be seen as righteous in his sight, to be seen as justified in his sight.

So all those who believe that doing good deeds and living good lives and they rely on those good deeds and they rely on their good lives as the basis of salvation, Paul says, you're under a curse. Now why is this? Why is this seemingly good thing trying to keep the law, living a good life, seeking to please God?

[12 : 26] Why is that a bad thing? Why is the seemingly good thing a bad thing? Well, Paul explains it in verse 10.

Notice what he says. For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and to do them.

Let's read it together. Look at what he says. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse for it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

That's the reason why what seems like a good thing is really a bad thing. Notice that Paul is making yet another universal statement in the second part of verse 10.

He says, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book. And here Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy chapter 27 verse 26.

[13 : 43] And the quotation explains why those who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. And the simple reason is that the requirement to avoid the curse is you must abide by and do everything that is written in the book of the law.

And I think we would all be honest enough to say that's just not possible. And hence the curse. So Paul is not just saying those who rely on the works of the law are not just those who are actively doing that, but all those who do not fulfill what the law requires, what God requires in his law come under a curse.

So when we think of it in this way it should be clearer. God gave his laws to the nation of Israel. They had it, they had it written for them, they had it spoken to them, but he didn't give it to the rest of the nations, didn't give it to the Gentiles.

But when the Gentiles broke those laws they came under the curse as well. when the Gentiles worshipped idols instead of having no other God before the Lord, they came under the curse as well.

When they murdered or did whatever was contrary to the Lord, they came under the curse. Cursed is everyone who does not abide by everything that is written in the law.

[15 : 25] And, you know, even if it were possible for us to behave in a way that conforms to the law, if it was possible to outwardly not do anything to break the law, I think we should all be honest and say, in our hearts we sin.

Lawbreaking is not just a matter of outward behavior. Lawbreaking is when in our hearts we fail to meet the requirements that God has of us.

And what Jesus did in his ministry was Jesus helped us to see that it really was more than outward behavior. Jesus said to us in the Sermon on the Mount, he says it's not good enough not to murder. He said if you hate your brother in your heart, you've murdered him. Why? Because anger is the first cousin of murder.

he tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, it's not good enough not to commit adultery. Jesus says if you look at a woman with lustful intent, you have committed adultery with her in your heart.

[16 : 32] Why? Because sexual lust is the seed of sexual immorality. And so Paul's point is everyone who does not keep everything in every law, in deed and in heart, comes under a curse.

That's our dilemma. curse. And the curse that Paul is referring to here is not a swear word or a bad word.

It is the curse of the condemnation and the wrath of God that rests upon all those who fall short of keeping any aspect of God's law.

Even the smallest aspect, even the person who keeps 99.99% of the law in their heart and in their behavior falls under the curse because with God you need perfection.

If God accepts anything less than perfection, he's not a perfect God. But because he's a perfect God, he cannot countenance even the smallest sin.

[17 : 37] He requires the law to be kept perfectly. Outward behavior and inner thoughts. But sadly, many who are relying on the works of the law and on their good lives, they don't understand Deuteronomy 26, 27, 27, 26, and what Paul is saying here, or they don't understand the sinfulness of their own hearts, or they're just being dishonest about it.

Take for the example of the rich young ruler who we read about in the Gospels. In Mark's account, in Mark 10, 17 through 27, Mark tells us that he ran up to Jesus and he said, good teacher, what must I do to obtain eternal life?

And Jesus in turn questioned him and said, why do you call me good? There's none good but God. And Jesus proceeds to tell him, well, keep the commandments.

Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't be a false witness, don't defraud, honor your father and your mother. And he said to Jesus, I've kept them all from my youth.

Mark tells us that Jesus looked at him and Jesus loved him. And Jesus told him, there's one thing you lack, go and sell what you have and give to the poor and then you will have treasure in heaven and then come and follow me.

[19 : 19] And Mark tells us that this young man who ran to Jesus asking about eternal life walked away sorrowful. He walked away sorrowful because he had, according to Mark, great possessions.

Brothers and sisters, this young ruler came face to face with the reality that he loved his great possessions more than he desired eternal life.

We can see that though he thought he loved God, he was unwilling to do what he was told he needed to do to gain eternal life with God.

But away from that encounter with Jesus, he'd have probably told people, I love God and I want eternal life to be with God, but he didn't understand his own heart. But there's one thing about the rich young ruler, the rich young ruler helps us to see something.

here he is, he's saying to Jesus, all my life I've kept these commandments for mine was a little child. But he comes to Jesus and he asks Jesus, what must I do to obtain eternal life?

[20 : 37] Because he knew deep in his heart that all of his law keeping didn't make him right with God. He knew there was a deficit, he knew there was a vacuum, he knew there was something lacking despite all the keeping of the law that he did.

It wasn't enough. And so he comes to Jesus and essentially what he's saying to Jesus is this, I've kept the law before I was a child, but I know I don't have eternal life in the law, what must I do to obtain eternal life?

He at least is recognizing that, that it's not enough. in verse 11, the apostle Paul says, now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith.

In verse 11, something I want us to see, we can substitute and interchange the words justified and righteous because they mean the same thing.

They mean to be in right standing with God, they mean to be declared by God to be righteous. Not based on anything that you do or hope to do, because we already know that there's nothing that we fallen sinners can do that will be perfect enough to be accepted by God.

[22 : 23] And so this righteousness that Paul talks about, this justification before God that he talks about, can only come by way of God's declaration that we are righteous, even though in and of ourselves we are unrighteous.

And God doesn't just look at a sinner in a vacuum and say, oh, you're righteous. No, he does it because he can legitimately do it. And before the end of the sermon, we'll see how he's able to do that.

But look at verse 11 again. We can read verse 11 in two different ways, interchanging the words righteous and justified.

So we could say, now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law for the justified shall live by faith.

Or we can say, now it is evident that no one is righteous before God by the law for the righteous shall live by faith.

[23 : 32] Righteous and justified, they mean the same thing. They mean to stand before God without condemnation of sin. Again, not because we have no sin.

Not because we're perfect. But because God is able to do that in a legitimate way because of Christ living a perfect life for those who could never live it.

And then dying a substitutionary death to pay for the sins of those who God will, because of that, call righteous and call justified.

But let us make no mistake this morning where the Apostle Paul is saying, this is a statement without exception, no one is justified before God by the law.

And the point is, don't even try. Not saying don't keep the law, not saying don't do those things we know to be right, but don't rely on them for your salvation because no one can be justified before God by keeping the law.

[24 : 52] The latter part of verse 11, Paul makes another universal statement concerning all those who will be considered righteous by God.

He says, for or because the righteous shall live by faith. Here again, Paul is quoting the Old Testament. In this case, he quotes from Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4, which says, the righteous shall live by faith.

So, what Paul is doing is in contrast to this righteous living that only is by faith. Paul is in verse 12 pointing to another problem with keeping the law.

The law is not of faith. The law is not of faith. That is the other issue. So, notice the argument.

Verse 11, 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.

[26 : 04] In other words, Paul is saying, Paul is saying, the righteous, they will live and not die before God because of faith, not because they kept the law.

He says, but then you can't come to the law and the reason is you can't come to the law and say, I'm keeping the law by faith. No, you have to do it. The law is not by faith. The law is by deed.

You have to do the law. And that's the dilemma that he is pointing to. The law is not by faith.

You either keep it and live by it or you break it and you die. And again, since none of us can keep the law perfectly, we all come under the curse of the law and the judgment of death.

Every one of us without exception. On this very day, there will be babies born in the Princess Margaret Hospital.

[27 : 06] Every one of them will be born under this curse. Not one of them has a hope in and of themselves of escaping this reality that only those who are able to do the law will live by it and because we are not able to do the law we will all break it and we will therefore be under the sentence of death and under a curse.

And that's our reality. So the question is how does a person move from being under this curse of sin and this judgment of death?

And Paul answers that question in verses 13 and 14 and it brings to my second and final point. The cross of Christ. Of course the curse of sin now the cross of Christ.

That's how we come from underneath the curse of not being able to keep the law. We don't come from under the curse by trying to do the impossible which is to keep the law to please God.

Because we can't do it perfectly enough. The only way to come from under the curse of not being able to keep the law as Paul tells us in verses 13 and 14 is this.

[28 : 44] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us as 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.

Notice verse 13 begins with the word Christ. That's how we come from under the curse of the law. We come from under the curse of the law through Christ.

Now verses 13 and 14 are a bit complex. It's a complex sentence so let's try to make sure we understand what Paul is saying. How does Christ redeem us from the curse of the law?

We're told in verse 13 by becoming a curse for us. And how did he become a curse for us? Again we're told in verse 13 by hanging on a tree being quoted from Deuteronomy 21 verse 23.

Christ became a curse for us when he was crucified and hung on Calvary's cross. When we consider that it was not enough for Jesus to simply come and die.

[30 : 09] We sang about the blood of Jesus this morning. It was not enough for Jesus to simply shed some blood. The blood that is referred to in the songs we sing when we talk about the blood of Jesus, it is the life blood of Jesus that he gave his life, not just a little bit of blood.

And it was necessary that Jesus die the way that he died. You know, today there's a big debate about how you should execute criminals.

Some, they say, you shouldn't hang them, you should lethally inject them, you should do other kinds of things, but you shouldn't let them die that way.

Jesus had to die this way. Because this was the death of a criminal. this was the way criminals were to die.

This is the way that lawbreakers were to die. And so Jesus died as a lawbreaker because he died for lawbreakers. And it's only when we pause to understand and to think about the way that Jesus died and the reason Jesus died.

[31 : 31] That we are sobered by his death. We sang this morning, why should I gain from his reward? It's not a matter, when we think of the cross, it isn't so much, oh, Jesus died for us, but he did, yes, he did.

It has to be personally, he died for me. He died the death I deserve to die. I was the criminal he was representing, on the cross. I was the criminal he was substituting on the cross.

It wasn't enough for Jesus simply to die. He died in that manner because he was dying for rebels and lawbreakers.

Jesus died a shameful death. Jesus was hung on the cross, naked, before the gazing eyes of strangers, taking shame and taking guilt and taking sin on himself.

And more than that, taking the curse of the law on himself so that those who were under that curse, those who deserve that curse, would be freed from it.

[32 : 45] They would be redeemed from it. That's what Jesus did. On the cross, Christ was cursed for the cursed.

And the language that Paul actually uses is even stronger than that. What he literally says, what he actually says is Christ became a curse for us. Didn't just bear our curse, although he did that.

But it is so graphic, Paul is saying that what happened to Jesus, though he bore the curse, it was so graphic, he became the curse. He became the curse for every act of law-breaking, for every sin, for every infraction of all those whom he came to say they were heaped upon him.

Every sin without exception. what do you think about that? If every sin was not heaped on Jesus, it means that some sins are not paid for.

And I don't want us to think for a moment that God kind of like said, oh, that's enough, that's a lot, that represents, no, no. A just God required that every single sin be punished on Jesus.

[34 : 15] And I don't want us to think this morning that God was some kind of a drama king, God was some kind of person who would exaggerate things just to get a particular reaction, no, no.

What we see in the cross of Jesus, the punishment that God poured out on Jesus, the wrath that God poured out on Jesus, is nothing more and nothing less than our sins deserve.

A just God will not do anything more, anything less. The crucifixion that Jesus endured was a just crucifixion.

It was the right crucifixion for sinners. It was what our sins deserved. It should help us to see sin from God's viewpoint.

And when we do, which you can never see it fully from his viewpoint, but when we do see it, to the extent that we can see it, it should make sin not be a light matter for us.

[35 : 29] So why did Jesus do this? Paul tells us in verse 14. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised spirit by faith.

That's why he did it. And brothers and sisters, think about it. If there was another way for this blessing of Abraham to come to us was possible some other way, some other way that is not as cruel as this way, or as severe as this way, then God would be most unjust to have put Jesus through what he put him through when it was not necessary.

But friends, God is not unjust. And every bit of that punishment, the nature of it, the extent of it, was necessary.

Receiving the promise of the Spirit is the language of salvation. salvation. Receiving the Spirit means to be saved. Receiving the Spirit refers to us being born again.

Christ died on the cross to bring us to God, to bring us to God that we might be saved, that we might have salvation. So who are the us that Paul is referring to in verse 13?

[37 : 15] And who are the we that he is referring to in verse 14? These are very important questions. There are some who would say that the us in verse 13 and the we in verse 14 is the entire world.

Every person who has ever lived and every person who will ever live. Well, if that is so, then the curse of God's condemnation of guilt for breaking his law has been addressed, has been removed from the world, and no one will stand guilty before God.

And that is because the death of Jesus Christ was a real purchase. The substitutionary death of Jesus Christ was an actual substitute for real sinners.

Wasn't some potential maybe it'll happen. No, it was an actual purchase. It accomplished something. Didn't hope to accomplish something.

It actually accomplished something. Here's what we can safely say. those for whom Jesus died, those for whom Jesus paid a natural price, those for whom Jesus bore their sins, they will receive the benefit of that.

[38 : 49] They will receive, whoever that is, however you want to answer the question this morning, they will receive the benefit of that because it was an actual purchase. It accomplished something. But I want to say to you that I don't believe on the witness of Scripture, on the witness of this Scripture, the witness of the rest of Scripture, that this was, that the us and the we that are in these verses is the whole world.

us and the we, the us in verse 13, the we in verse 14, refer to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ to be accepted by God and declared righteous and justified before him.

Listen to how again John Stott, in his commentary on these verses, put it. Referring to verses 13 and 14, he wrote, does this mean that everybody has been redeemed from the Lord's curse through the sin-bearing, curse-bearing cross of Christ?

Indeed not. For verse 13 must not be read without verse 14, where it is written that Christ became a curse for us, that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

It was in Christ that God acted for our salvation and so we must be in Christ to receive it. Christ died for those whom he came to save.

[40 : 48] He paid an actual price, not a potential price. It was the actual price of salvation. Stott goes on to say this, we are not saved by a distant Christ who died hundreds of years ago and lives millions of miles away, but an existential Christ who having died and risen again is now our contemporary and as a result we can be in him personally and vitally united to him today.

And brothers and sisters, that's good news. That's good news. Although we commemorate our Savior's death on Calvary, he is a living Savior.

And all those who have put their faith in him have been united to him and they are in him. But the Jews had a problem with all this.

they could not fathom that Jesus was the Messiah because he was cursed by having hung on a tree. But they missed the point.

Jesus was not cursed because he was cursed. Jesus was cursed because we were cursed. Jesus was cursed because he was our substitute, the substitute for our sins because he had no sin.

[42 : 19] He became a curse by being a curse for us. being our substitute because it was the only way to redeem us from the curse of the law.

So there are really only two spiritual places where men, women, boys, and girls can stand. Two places. The entire world, we stand in one of two places.

and that is outside of Christ simply by being born or in Christ only by being born again.

Only by being born of the Spirit. Only by being born through the means by which the death of Jesus Christ accomplished. That the promise that was given to Abraham, I'm going to bless the whole world through you.

But that promise, that promise of blessing was the promise of salvation. That is the greatest way that God blesses the world. By reconciling undeserving sinners who deserve to die to himself.

[43 : 34] Jesus died that that promise may come to us. Through the new birth. That's the only way to be removed from being outside of Christ and under the curse to come in Christ and to be redeemed from the curse.

Now, does that mean that when we come to Christ and we are now in Christ, we don't sin? That's obviously a rhetorical question. No. It doesn't mean that at all.

We still do sin. but we in Christ are no longer under the curse of sin. Because Jesus Christ has paid the price for every single sin.

He has become the curse. He has borne the curse for every single sin. Past, present, and future. Every bit of it.

And I know sometimes when we say that, when we say that Jesus Christ has died even for our future sins, for the sins we have yet to commit, that sounds controversial. It sounds even scandalous.

[44 : 54] But here's what's more scandalous. If Jesus did not die for our future sins as well, who's going to pay for them? Who's going to cover them?

Who's going to atone for them? When we sing this song, Jesus paid it all, it means that he paid it all. He paid it all.

Christ did two things for us that we could never do. He came to this earth and he kept God's law perfectly.

didn't breach to the smallest degree the law of God. And when he did that, he wasn't doing it for himself to please God.

He did it for us who could never please God. When Jesus kept the commandments to the last degree, he was doing it for sinners who never could.

[45 : 58] it. And then when he went to the cross to die as a substitute to bear sins, he did it because sinners could not do it for themselves.

so he not only kept the law for us, but he paid the price of all of our law-breaking because we could never pay it.

And by the grace of God, we are not called upon to try to pay it. Friends, the only way for us to truly be in Christ is we have to put our faith in Christ, and that requires that we own our sin.

That requires that we accept that we are sinners before God, that we away from Christ are under the judgment of God and under the curse of sin. And as Paul says, there's only one way to be removed from that.

Christ has to redeem us from it. And so Paul's argument to the Galatians this is argument to us this morning. And I want us to consider every single one of us this morning, where are you standing?

[47 : 19] Are you standing outside of Christ under the curse? Or are you standing in Christ, redeemed from the curse because of what he has done?

And if you're standing in Christ, redeemed from the curse, you'll never know the curse. You'll never know the curse.

God keeps all whom he redeems. He loses none of them. Jesus says, all that the Father gives to me, I will lose none of them.

But I will raise them up on the last day. And when we hear that, those of us who are in Christ, we don't want to run out and sin. We don't want to run out and say, oh, I can do whatever I want because I'm in Christ and it doesn't matter.

No, when we hear that, we want to fall down and worship. We want to thank God for amazing grace. You sing the song, nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling.

[48 : 36] And that's what we must do, brothers and sisters. If we bring anything in our hands, believing that it is of some saving value, our grip on Christ's cross cannot be strong, cannot be sufficient.

It is only when we empty our hands, and we realize I have nothing of saving worth before God, we cling to the cross.

We cling to it fully. not just to be saved, but to continue in Christ, because he's our only hope before a holy God.

Brothers and sisters, our righteousness, the Bible says, are filthy rags in the sight of God. They're like filthy rags, and if we're trusting in anything other than Jesus Christ alone, it is a helpless, hopeless, filthy rag that is of no value in the sight of God.

The only thing that's of value in the sight of God is the perfect life that Jesus lived, and the substitutionary death that he died on behalf of sinners, is the only things that are worth salvation in the sight of Jesus.

[50 : 13] Now, I'll close with this thought. we always talk about what God would say when we get to heaven, and nobody knows, because he doesn't say anything.

But one of the common questions that people will say, if you stand before God, and he says to you, why should I turn to heaven, what would you say?

That's a common question that we are asked. It's put out there time and time again. if we hear what Paul has said, the proper response should be, Lord, you shouldn't.

You shouldn't let me into heaven. I deserve to go to hell. I deserve nothing but hell for all of my sins. But you said, those who put their faith in Christ will not be ashamed. I put my faith in him. He is my only hope.

[51 : 30] The perfect life he lived, the word says he lives it for all those who put their faith in him. And the death that he died, he died for all those who put their trust in him.

And God, I've done that. So on the basis of what Jesus has done in his life and in his death, that's my only plea. You should let me into heaven. Brothers and sisters, while law keeping and trying to please God in our own ability and in our own goodness sounds like a good thing, it is a bad thing because it cannot remove the curse that the entire human race is under, separate from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only faith in Christ and his work on the cross can do that. Let's pray. We're going to have communion in a short while.

So those of you who are going to serve us this morning, please prepare for that.