

The Believer's Walk

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[0 : 00] How many of you like emotional surges? Do you like emotional surges?

How many of you know what I'm talking about? Now there's some of you that were born flatline. You don't crash and burn.

You kind of just putt, putt, putt right along. It's 55 and the highway is straight in front of you. I am not one of those people.

I got to tell you, I walk up this morning and the hair on the back of my neck stands up. I didn't put my hand back there to check, but it was like, wow.

I get to open this book and rely upon the power of the Spirit of God and depend upon the prayers of God's people.

[1 : 09] And since we've opened the book, we are in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1. Let us pray.

Precious God and Father, this morning for us, prayer is not a habit. But it is the sensible outpouring of our heart to you, in which we gladly, first of all, confess that you are worthy of all adoration and praise.

That you are holy, majestic. Your glory fills the earth. And we are humbled and awed when we stop to consider that you are mindful of us.

Our hearts are thankful that you have given to us the joy of salvation and you've given to us this day and you've given us this time when we can open your word.

And humbly ask that the Spirit of God would help the truths that are here to affect us and change us that we might grow to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 32] Christ, we ask that not because we are looking for personal credit or power, but so that your power would display itself in us and reflect glory to your name.

And we ask because of Jesus. Amen. One of the men that has deeply affected my preaching over the years is Alistair Begg.

I have to tell you that going to the Basics Conference and listening to him from year to year has made a difference in thinking of the importance of the exposition of Scripture along with the exegesis of Scripture.

Two fancy words that I'm not here to bore you with the details on, but exegesis is dealing with, okay, what does it actually say? And the next position kind of opening it up so that we can understand the passage together.

And Martin Lloyd-Jones was one of the names that I came to be more familiar with as I went to listen to Alistair Begg. And subsequently, several years ago when I began praying about what I was going to preach, and I think you know that that's generally a process that happens out in front, right?

[4 : 04] How many of you have any idea what I may preach on, Lord willing, and He tarries, and I'm alive? What am I going to next? John. That's probably true. Yes.

And one of the things that goes along with that is several years of studying and praying and thinking about it, but I remember when I began settling in my heart that I was going to preach on Ephesians, I began thinking and praying about different books to add to the library and began using for study.

And Martin Lloyd-Jones was one of the ones that I chose. I looked for it online and actually found that I could get a used copy of Martin Lloyd-Jones' six-volume series on the book of Ephesians.

How many chapters are there? There are six. And he wrote six volumes on Ephesians. You can go into my... Hey, Emily. Good to have you.

I'm glad you're here. Don't you sneak up on me again. Yeah, you can... Okay. I'm sorry. It's good.

But, you know, you can kind of track along where I am because I take the jacket cover off when I reach that book.

[5 : 15] And so there are now four volumes that have their jacket cover stacked over on the side. And I'm into chapter...I'm into volume four. And one of the things I learned about Martin Lloyd-Jones is that actually when he first began to preach in the book of Ephesians, he didn't start in chapter 1, verse 1.

He actually started his first lessons on Ephesians dealing with some of the classic passages that most of us know quite well.

Guess what passages those are? What husband here doesn't know Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22, 23?

You know, husbands, right? Love your wives. No, that's not the one husbands usually remember. The one husbands remember is, you know, what is it? Wives.

Yeah. And he started dealing with those chapters and those subjects. And in his study and prayer, it dawned on him that he was out of order.

[6 : 21] He was out of order. And so he backed up, went to the congregation, asked their forgiveness, and said, I have done you a disservice, in a sense.

He was explaining to them, I've come at this wrong. Because for me to teach on the how-to's of Christian living without giving you the foundation that we have in the work of God in salvation is to have things out of place and the structure inappropriate.

And that plays out in counseling, in biblical counseling, whether it is Pastor Saul or myself or any other biblical counselor. When we engage in ministry and are looking to be of help to an individual who comes into our offices, man, I've got a problem and I'm dealing with blah, blah, blah.

You know what the very first thing that we're interested in discovering is? What is it? Does this person know Christ as their Savior?

Why is that important? Because to give to an individual practical, ethical instruction on how to behave as a Christian, to an individual who has no knowledge of Christ and no enabling of the Spirit of Christ is, in some senses, to only complicate the situation further.

[7 : 52] And so early in the process of ministry, whether you let the other individual know it or not, what you are always doing is you're putting your finger on the pulse and you're trying to discern, does this person know Christ as their Savior?

Because at the heart of Christian behavior is the matter of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And when I think about what our faith is, I'd have to say that our faith really is not, first and foremost, a system of conduct.

So how do I become a Christian? Well, here are the nine rules that you have to obey. And once you have... I'm right. Nine fingers. Okay? I was just double-checking.

I saw some of you smile. I put the thumb down. Keep it down. See, faith is not a matter of certain behavioral issues. Do you follow me? It is a matter, first of all, of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, having a personal relationship with Him, and then having Him work in you, as it says in Philippians, both to will and to do His good pleasure.

And so this morning we are at a pivot point in our teaching in the book of Ephesians. Look at chapter 4, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1.

[9 : 11] I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. I want you to think with me now of the doctrinal foundation for Christian living.

Our study in the book of Ephesians has taken a dramatic turn in this chapter, and Paul, in the previous three chapters, has laid out for us in a broad fashion the glory of the doctrine of conversion.

He has given us a wide-ranging discussion of what God has done in calling us to be His own and working in us for His glory. And as we stop and think together on this subject, let me kind of touch on a couple of the different things that we find in the early chapters of Ephesians.

For one, it tells us in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3, it says that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

Then over in 1.6, it says that we are accepted in the beloved. I love that passage. And if you're thinking about another passage to memorize out of the book of Ephesians, I would have 1.3 right on the very cusp and first.

[10:26] But right after that, I would have Ephesians 1.6 where it says we have been accepted in the beloved. It goes on and in verse 7 of chapter 1, it says that we have been forgiven of all of our sins.

It tells us in chapter 2 that we've been made alive in Christ. It says later in chapter 2 that we have been brought near and we've been made fellow citizens and saints and members of the household of God.

It tells us then in chapter 2, verse 22, that we are made into the habitation of the Spirit of God. On top of that, as it kind of comes towards its absolute climax of that doctrinal presentation that we find in chapter 1 through 3.

In chapter 3, verse 21, it says this, Unto Him be glory in the church. In the last several weeks, Judith and I have been going to various open houses.

And she writes the check. I don't write checks. It would be a bad thing. Bank wouldn't see what they were. So, she writes the checks, but I always sign the cards. And at the bottom of the card, it's always, guess what?

[11:31] I put Ephesians chapter 3, verse 21, Unto Him be glory in the church. It's a passage that resonates with my heart. It's an expression of my view of what my existence and all of our existences together really boils down to, glory of Christ.

And so, here in the flow of Ephesians chapter 1 through 3, we see this building sense of the glory of God in salvation. And it is important for us to kind of have that broad view in mind.

We then come to chapter 4, and I want you to recognize that Paul makes a turn. He uses the phrase, I therefore. And you've heard it said many, many times that therefore is a word that is there for a reason.

It tells us something. And as we look at that little word, there are several things that I want you to recognize Paul is referencing here that we need to pay attention to. For one, Christian behavior, and that's what we're going to be studying, is understood as the outflow of God's power to save and change sinners.

Christian behavior is seen as the outflow of God's power and His ability to change sinners.

Furthermore, we understand that Christian living is as expected and as reasonable in a genuine Christian as walking or seeing is for someone who's no longer lame or blind.

[12:58] It's reasonable for you. It's reasonable for me as a believer to behave in a fashion that displays the evidence and the power of grace. And that is a reason why every lesson on godly living begins with a careful explanation of God's character and what He has done in saving us and changing us so that the matter of our behavior is not seen as something we engage in in order to earn our salvation, but it's really seen as a way of showing His ability to save and the power that He has available in our lives.

I just want you to imagine just for a moment that you were born with a very severe speech impediment. In addition to that, you had a horrible physical deformity that caused everyone who looked at you to kind of look away and then take another glance and look away again.

And there was this horrible deformity and speech impediment, both which were tremendously embarrassing and tremendously compromising to the life that you lived. I want you to imagine that a wonderful surgeon suddenly arrived on the scene and said, I can take care of that. And you went ahead and trusted him. And in one surgery, he was able to return to you absolutely normal speech. He transformed your physical appearance so that people looked at you and said, man, you are an attractive case of human existence.

It's nice to look at you. And I want you to imagine after this wonderful healing that you had received, the doctor came to you and said, hey, would you mind walking out in the waiting room?

I have a whole lot of broken, unhappy, discouraged people who are sitting out there. I want you to walk out there and just let them know I can take care of them. Now, should the doctor ask you that, do you think you'd say, well, I don't feel up to it today?

[14:50] No. Yeah, sure. I'd love to do it. I've lived long enough to see a lot of different fads come and go and different health aids and benefits, etc.

And one of the things I notice is that right now there's a lot of interest in certain, I would use the word oils that you can put on your body that would, you know, kind of transform your life in moments, right?

And one of the things that I notice goes along with all these essential things is that people who are enjoying their benefits, they don't have to be prodded and prompted to talk about them. Do you follow what I'm saying? I mean, it's, hey, do they work? Yeah.

How do you know they work? Well, I went to sleep because I rubbed this on my left earlobe or whatever else, you know? Now, just in case you're wondering, I am a participant, okay?

Thanks to my wife. She's never seen any one of these things that she didn't think I needed. And so, if I go to sleep right now, it's because she's anointed me.

[15:55] But here's my point. If it's working, we talk about it. Am I right? If it's working, we talk about it.

And behind the working of the grace of God is the power of God. And as we think about the issue of what we are going to be studying in Ephesians chapter 4 on through 6, what we're really looking at is what does a believer do to display or evidence his conversion?

And I want you to recognize that what a believer does that evidences or shows his conversion is really just shows what the power of God does in his life.

I want you to turn just for a moment to another passage. Keep your finger there in Ephesians because we will come back to it very soon. But I want you to go back to John chapter 5. In John chapter 5, we find a little incident.

By the way, I'm trusting that when I do get to the book of John, you've forgotten that I used this passage. John chapter 5. Jesus shows up at the sheep gate and he heals somebody.

[17:13] You'll remember that this man had been there, an invalid, for 38 years. And we find that Jesus gives him a commandment. You look there in the chapter.

In verse 8, Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed, and walk. And what does he do? He does exactly that. And John chapter 5 verse 8 is nothing more than a practical instruction following his healing.

Jesus' command did not precede the healing but came after it. And the man's obedience was nothing more than the logical outflow of what Christ had done in saving him.

I want you to follow that. Jesus healed the man, and then he gave him practical instruction. Now do something. Go ahead. Get up. Pick up your bed. Get out of here. Why was he at that place?

Previously, it was to be healed. He no longer needed to be there. And Jesus said, it's time to leave. Get. Go. Go. So I want you to understand this morning that our instruction to walk worthy of our calling is not a call to superhuman behavior, but the practical consequence of conversion and grace.

[18:30] I want you to fix that in your mind. Our instruction to walk worthy, and that's what we're going to be looking at in the remaining chapters, is simply a call to the practical behavior that demonstrates the power of his salvation in our life.

Well, let's take a little more careful look at chapter 4, verse 1, and mark the apostolic encouragement that we find here. Mark, first of all, that we have a very personal appeal that is given by the apostle.

He says, I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord. Paul opens his encouragement on the way that a believer is to walk by referring to himself as a prisoner.

Now, if I were to ask you this morning, were there other ways that Paul referred to himself? You'd probably say, yes, absolutely. He talked of himself as being the least of the apostles. He talked of himself as being chief among sinners.

He talked of himself as being a servant of the Lord Jesus. He talked about himself as being a deacon. He used a number of different titles, but in this case, when he uses the word prisoner, he is saying something very interesting about his relationship with the Lord.

[19:42] The word prisoner, actually, in a more careful translation, would be the idea of someone who is bound or is chained. And the idea is that he was actually linked together and inseparably connected to the Lord, and he was under the Lord's dominion, under the Lord's control.

A prisoner in those days was someone who wasn't just put in a holding cell for the most part. They were also chained into that place. Remember Paul and Silas when they were in jail. What along with being in jail did they endure?

They were in chains. Many times individuals were chained up, and being a prisoner was so synonymously connected with this being linked and chained that often the word kind of connected together.

And so here it says, I am a prisoner of the Lord. The idea that we find of this is that he was controlled a certain amount of length or distance that he could travel, and no further because of the rope that he had or the chain that he had.

I want you to turn to another passage to help you understand the same idea playing out in your life in particular. Turn over to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

[20 : 56] Verse 14. It says this, For the love of Christ, what's the next word? Constrains or controls.

It says, For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised.

What's the idea that the Scripture communicates here? Paul is saying that the love of Christ sets a boundary or limits what I do and who I am, where I go, what I'm involved in.

I no longer belong to myself. I am formally obligated in this relationship with Christ, and I am bound to Him. Paul refers to himself elsewhere as being a slave.

He says that he is Christ's slave, and the idea there is that he does not have his own will or purposes to discharge. He's really actively engaged in doing the things that Christ wants him to do.

[22 : 06] And he recognizes at the very beginning, listen, I want you to know that when I talk to you about Christian behavior, I am not speaking to you in a voice of command, but I'm speaking to you as one who is under this formal obligation to Christ as a result of all that he has done.

And the word, therefore, brings it all together and heaps it up and helps us understand why do we behave the way we are? It's not because we earn our way into heaven by doing these things.

It is because of what he has done. I wonder as you think about what Paul says about himself here, I wonder, do you ever think about yourself as being a slave or his prisoner?

When you wake up Monday morning and you think about going to work, I wonder whether or not you think, oh, man, I've got to go to work this morning. I know it's what's obligated. I've got to make that house payment or I've got to pay the car off.

I've got to see that my family's fed. Or do you wake up in the morning and say, hey, today's the day that belongs to Jesus and I am going off to serve him. I am his slave and I am interested in making him look good.

[23 : 15] Paul says, writing to the believers there in Ephesus, he says, listen, I am making an appeal to you and I myself am a slave bound, fettered to Jesus Christ.

I want you to think with me as well of another passage in relationship to this issue. Turn back in your Bible. You're in 2 Corinthians. Let's go back to chapter 6, verse 20. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 20. It says, so you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

You have been purchased with a price. What did it cost Christ to secure your freedom? What did it cost? It cost his own blood. He died in your place.

He died to deliver you from the curse and bondage of sin. And he delivered you from the slavery that you at one time were under to Satan.

[24 : 19] But he now owns you and he is your master and your Lord. I want you to recognize that in this passage what Paul is really talking about or the context is talking about the matter of purity.

He's talking about immoral behavior and he says, hey, listen, you have no business being involved in immorality. Why? Because Christ purchased you with his own blood. And if it makes sense that we owe this obligation to him in the area of moral purity, I want to assure you that we owe this obligation to him in every other aspect of our life.

So the practical question is this. Do other people that see you on a daily basis connect your behavior and your attitude to your relationship to Christ? As they watch you go through your day, as they watch you respond to the pressures and disappointments that you're enduring.

It was interesting in our Sunday school hour, I was asking different individuals to explain how their relationship with Christ has an effect on the way they live and what happens in work situations around them.

One individual commented on the fact that in his work environment, most everybody thinks that everybody else is guilty for underperforming and not doing their job. And I thought to myself, wow, that must be a common affliction.

[25 : 42] I remember years ago working at International Harvester, and every department thought that they were the only place that was doing anything reasonable. In fact, if you really got down to it, it was just a small group of people, us four no more, that were of the idea that the whole company

rested on our behavior.

No. Everybody had the attitude that, well, other people are underperforming and they're not doing their job and everything. And the individual spoke of working in that kind of environment and having the responsibility of not being overwhelmed by it and being a light and an example in that environment.

So when other people see you Monday morning, are they going to say, wow, why are you a joyful person? Why are you someone who speaks positively to other people when most everybody else has something negative to say?

Why are you a person who is thankful that you have work rather than complaining about it? Well, the reason that those things characterize me, characterize you, is because you and I belong to Christ and we are bound to Him by His grace.

I want you to go back, if you will, now to Ephesians chapter 4 and pick up on a second little point that we want to recognize in the text. Ephesians chapter 4, it says, listen. He says, I urge you, and in that statement, urge or I appeal to you, He is making a gentle appeal rather than a sharp command.

[27 : 11] The idea behind that word urge is a word that communicates the idea of coming alongside of another person and encouraging that individual or actually making a bold exhortation.

It was a word that was often used by commanders when they were giving their little last-minute speech to their warriors before they would go into battle. If you watched the NCAA playoffs, the last game or so, remember when the camera went into the locker room and you got to hear the coach giving his little speech?

And those exhortations are the kind of thing that this word that Paul had in mind communicates. The idea of coming alongside and saying, hey, listen, we need to go for broke out there, and don't hold back, really push, do your job.

I think about Eric Liddell. How many of you know Eric Liddell, the one who won 1924 Olympics in 400? And as he was getting ready to go back to China to be a missionary, and he had had a tremendous impact.

He could have served in any place in England and served with distinction, and yet he chose to go back to be a missionary in China. And when people gathered to see him off, he took advantage of that.

[28 : 33] He stepped outside, and he gave them an exhortation to serve Christ. Do you know how Eric Liddell died? He died in a prisoner of war camp in 1944 in China as a captive of the Japanese occupational force in China.

And his imprisonment was of such international significance that Winston Churchill himself personally pled for Eric Liddell's deliverance from prison where he was suffering.

When the command came through the emperor and the Japanese army to get Eric Liddell out of prison, he turned and said, there is a young pregnant lady that I want to go in my place.

Take her instead of me. His heart for service, his heart to honor Christ, was always wrapped up in a gentle encouragement, instruction to others to serve Christ alongside with him, and to do so because of what Christ had done for him.

And so as you sit here today and listen to the teaching of the Word of God and think of all that God has done in saving you, do you hear what Paul says when he says, I beseech you as a prisoner of the Lord, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called.

[30 : 01] Third thing that I want you to recognize here is that Paul, as he speaks, he makes a principled appeal for living up to our calling. Salvation is a calling, and that's one of the things that we've seen as we've worked our way through the book of Ephesians, chapter 1, 2, and 3.

We recognize that salvation was not something that we just arbitrarily, one morning kind of woke up and thought, you know, gee, I think I'm going to be a Christian today. The fact of the matter is the Scripture makes it clear that we were dead in our trespasses and sin, and because of the grace of God, he brought us to sense the hopelessness of our predicament, and he led us to realize that we stood convicted before a holy God, and we were called by his grace to trust in him.

We responded in faith. We believed on his name. And following that, Christ comes to us and says, listen, I want you to serve me.

I want you to live your life for me. I want you to honor me. And so I want you to recognize that salvation is also a calling or appointment to live a life that is worthy.

Listen to what we read in a couple different companion passages about this business of living a life that is worthy of our calling. Turn forward a little bit to Colossians chapter 1, verse 10.

[31 : 24] Colossians 1, verse 10. Paul, in verse 1, introduced himself as the apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and then in verse 10 he says, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Now let's think about that carefully. If you are his child, you have been called, appointed for a particular duty.

And look at what it says. You're to walk worthy in a manner worthy of the Lord. What's that saying? It's saying that my behavior, whether it is in the office or at work or when you're involved in intramural sports or your kids are playing in rec league or whatever else, the way in which you conduct yourself is in a manner that brings credit and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You ought to be able to walk around with the title, Christian, watch me, on your chest. Now am I suggesting you do that? No. But how many of you realize everybody knows by now whether you're a professing believer or not?

Would you agree with that? By the way, if they don't, if they don't, there's something seriously wrong with your walk. People should have figured out by now that you are a believer.

[32 : 51] Here's a couple of giveaways. When a dirty joke goes off, does everybody pay attention to who's laughing and who's not laughing, and what's the answer? Oh, yeah. When someone is being highly sarcastic and critical about the boss and you don't join in, does everybody else know?

Yes. When people are grumbling, which is a normal sport, and you're not participating, people wonder, what's the deal with you? People know whether or not we are a Christian.

And I want you to recognize that our calling, as it says here, is to walk worthy of a manner that is pleasing to the Lord. Let's look at another passage, if you will. Go to 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 12. 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 12. We exhort each one of you and encouraged you and charge you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.

You are to walk in a manner worthy of God. Now, what's that saying? It's saying that the way in which I conduct my life is to be an example and a testimony to Christ.

[34 : 00] A very interesting situation came about not too long ago. I was in a situation where I'd been invited by family, not anybody in this church. You'd never met the people. I was invited to go into a hospital room and share the gospel.

I love those opportunities. They're wonderful. I came in and introduced myself as a pastor and I began having small conversation.

Within about a minute or two of being in the room, several members of the family had let loose with a couple swear words. I mean, you know, we're just...

It was their normal vocabulary. How many of you work in environments where people have a very colorful vocabulary? Follow me? Well, they were bringing their work environment vocabulary right into the hospital room and there I was, the pastor, in their presence and every time they said something off color, they'd say, Oh, I'm sorry.

Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, I'm sorry. It went on for about three or four times and I said, Hey, listen. Listen, I appreciate your sensitivity. I really do.

[35 : 04] But my reason for coming in here was not to get after you about how you express yourself. I'm here because I want to talk about a wonderful relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Does that make sense? You start at the beginning. You don't start at the end. And the point is is that people are sensitive and they pick up on how you are as a believer and they sense that and they pay attention.

And so we are called, as it says here in this passage, that we're called to walk in a manner worthy of God. And if we are doing that, people pay attention and notice it. It does have an effect on their lives.

So walking worthy really means making God look good. It means living a life where other people say, You know, that's the way to be and that's how I should be.

It means also living a life that is marked by thankfulness and a spirit of joy and satisfaction with life. How many of you realize that most everybody that you're around, most of the time, is not all that happy with life?

[36 : 10] Agreed? Huh? And all you have to do is be reasonably happy and they are really curious about what's going on.

Are you taking some new medicines? You know? No, no, no. I just... You know what? When the story ends, I'm going up. That is really unnerving to people.

You're what? Yeah. When my story ends, I'm going up. They're all little... Hey, listen. Listen, I have the joy of my salvation and people should know about it.

And here in this passage, Paul says, I plead with you, I urge you that you walk in a manner that is worthy of the high calling to which you've been called.

So, as we work our way through the remainder of the chapters of Ephesians, I want you to understand that what we are going to be doing is we're going to be paying attention to the practical ways in which believers are to be different from unbelievers.

[37 : 17] I want you to recognize as you enjoy the practical counsel that we're going to find in the remaining chapters that we have these joys and these blessings of being different.

First of all, because He has chosen us before the foundation of the world. Because He's forgiven us for all of our sins. Because He's accepted us in the Beloved. Because He has filled us with all spiritual blessings and given to us the power of the Spirit of God as it says in Philippians chapter 2 that we would will and do His good pleasure.

And so let me encourage you this morning as you look at this passage in Ephesians chapter 4. It says, listen, I beseech you, I urge you, a prisoner, I'm urging you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called.

And I want you to walk out of here this morning saying, listen, I know Christ as my personal Savior. He has delivered me from the misery of my sin. He has given me complete forgiveness and His plea and His encouragement that I walk in a manner worthy is a righteous expectation and I humble myself and say, I need your help to do this.

I want to be the man. I want to be the woman. I want to be the young person that you have called me to be. You've blessed me with salvation. You have taken away the shame and the stigma of my sin.

[38 : 41] You have given me life and my life belongs to you. I wonder this morning as you sit where you do, do you honestly think about yourself in the same terminology that Paul does?

A slave? A prisoner? A servant? Can I tell you that if those terms are not just vocabulary words but they are governing and operating principles, it will make a difference on the life you live and the things you do.

I have to tell you, I'm a little embarrassed to name them. I won't name them but I have been so blessed by watching our Sunday school teachers.

I've been going to all the open houses, right? And I show up at these open houses and I see our Sunday school teachers who had these little boys and girls in their classes when they were 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and they are there at the open house just whooping it up and blessing those young people as they graduate from high school.

And I tell you, that makes my hair stand on end when I see that kind of service. That's blessing. Why do they do that? It's because they see their lives as being marked by their salvation and they gladly refer to themselves.

[40 : 08] How? As a slave, as a servant, as a prisoner and their agenda and their lives are colored by their sacrifice.

Is that what Christ wants all of us to be and what's the answer? Yes. So let me ask you practically speaking this morning, when you think about your ministry and how you're serving Christ, can you consciously say, I am doing that here, here, here, and these different areas where I'm doing that are just a reflection of what I know Christ has done for me and how I see that all playing out.

Or are there vast voids and gaps in your life and you are distantly removed from serving Christ and yet you're walking around saying, oh yes, well I'm a prisoner, I'm a servant, I am one who is bound to Christ, but there's no practical illustration of how you're serving.

Paul is going to spend three chapters walking us through that and I want to challenge you this morning, are you living in the light of what he has done in saving you?

Let's close in prayer. Our gracious Father, this morning as we consider the blessing of your calling we recognize that salvation is of the Lord. You're the one who takes the blind and opens their eyes.

[41 : 32] You're the one who takes the deaf ear and opens it so they can hear the sweetness of the gospel. And Father, my prayer would be this, that if there are those here today that do not know Christ as their Savior, that even this morning as we sing this closing song, that you would touch their heart with a recognition that they stand condemned before a holy God, but that Christ came

into the world to save sinners.

And as the scriptures say, whosoever believes upon the Lord shall be saved. We pray also, Lord, for those who know Christ that their heart would be touched by the joy of their salvation and serving you would be a willing expression of their thanksgiving.

We ask this in your precious name as we close. Amen. Thank you.