

From Grace to Glory

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[0 : 00] So turn to the Word of God and turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians 2.

Reading the whole chapter together. Let's hear the Word of God. Amen.

And we're by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we are dead in sins, have quickened us together with Christ.

By grace ye are saved. And have raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are you saved through faith, and not that of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

[1 : 38] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

But at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who have made both one, and have broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

[3 : 24] Amen. We could praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's again sing to God's praise, this time singing from Psalm 63. Psalm 63, singing verses 1 down to verse 5 of the psalm.

Psalm 63, verses 1 to 5. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek. My soul doth first for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no waters be.

But I thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place. Psalm 63, verses 1 to 5.

To God's praise. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek.

- My soul doth last for thee. Thy flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no waters be.
- [4 : 41] The dark thy power may behold, and brightness of thy grace.
As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.
Since death is my God, my Lord, my mercy, grace shall be.
I am thy name, where there's my heart.
My heart and mercy, why thy name? In earth, my heart and mercy, why thy heart.
- [6 : 09] My soul shall be. Let's turn back to the chapter we had, Ephesians chapter 2.
Ephesians 2. Taking in the whole chapter, we're looking especially at verses 1 down to verse 10.
For the sake of a text, we could take verse 4 and verse 5. Ephesians 2, verses 4 and 5. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love were with, he loved us.
Even when we were dead in sins, have quickened us together with Christ. By grace, ye are saved. And all the way down to verse 10. Recently, when we start at office summer, we were doing some tidying in the loft upstairs, and we came across, as you do, an old camera.
Probably our first digital camera we had. And in the camera, of course, the SD card, the wee card was still inside it. So to the card output in the laptop, and sure enough, there was pictures on the card.
- [7 : 49] And we fired up the pictures, and we saw pictures probably now about 10 years ago. The village, people, houses, walks.
And that 10 or so years, of course, there's houses now that are gone. There's spaces of land which are now houses. There's plenty of people now who are gone.
Plenty of changes in my own family. Plenty of changes in the village. Plenty of changes in almost every one of the photos. There was something to note. Something had changed.
Something was different. In our section here, indeed in our chapter here, especially in verses 1 down to verse 10, we see Paul really making clear to the church in Ephesus, to this young church, that he's reminding them, he's taking them through a journey very briefly, and he's showing them changes taking place in their lives.
For a short time together this evening, as we look at these verses, I want us to look at them and to ask the question to ourselves, has my life changed?
- [9 : 02] Those of us here who know Jesus and who love Jesus, as we approach these verses, we should ask ourselves, how has he changed my life? To come to these verses, we should be encouraged as we see what we once were, as a reminder of what we were before him, but then we're reminded also of what took place in our lives, and then we see what we are now and also what we will be in the future.
For any who as of yet don't know Jesus as your saviour, as we look at these verses together tonight, we see what you are just now, how you're described just now, but then see what could take place in your life, what change could easily take place in your life, what could happen to you, and then see the future you could have, if only you would come to Christ.
He's writing, of course, as we said, to the young church in Ephesus, a church which, at least in this part of the letter, doesn't seem to be facing any huge issues as of yet.
It's quite a gentle letter, we could say, in speaking generally. Paul isn't as harsh as he is in other letters, he doesn't deal with any huge glaring sins, as much as he does in his other letters.

But here we see, in chapter 2, there is obviously a problem going on in the church, where Paul needs to remind them of what we've come from. He needs to remind them of who and of what they once were.

[10 : 34] We see that in our text here. A gentle letter, but it's a clear letter of the same. And here we join the section of the letter, what we call chapter 2, where Paul is reminding these young Christians, young in the faith at least, reminding them of where they've come from, of the goodness of God in their lives, of the goodness of God to change them, to take from what they once were to where they are now.

Dear friends, we need encouragement. We were saying over lunch just how important encouragement actually is to the Christian's walk. It's good for us to encourage one another, of course it is, that's instrumental to who we are.

If we're not encouraging one another as brothers and sisters, then we are failing at the simplest of our tasks that the Lord has given us, and we often do see ourselves as not doing well there. We all need encouragement, but also we all have to be reminded biblically, but we need encouragement.

We all need biblical encouragement, and here in this section we have some incredible encouragement for us this evening. Encouragement for us to remind ourselves of what we once were. Remind, yes, but we don't dwell there, we move on to what God has done.

As we spend time doing this, this should encourage us this evening. As you think yourself of the journey God has taken you on to where you are this very moment, to how he's led you and guided you in your own specific situations and circumstances, to how he's saved you.

[12 : 13] Take time this evening to find encouragement, to find joy in these verses. So looking very briefly, first of all in three sections, we're looking at verses 1, roughly down to verse 3, seeing what or who we once were.

Then verses 4, down to verse 5, seeing the change that took place in the lives of the Ephesians and also in our lives. And then seeing verses 6, down to the end of verse 10, what we are now and where our future is heading, what and who we will one day be, where we were, what happened, and where we're going.

to give some three very simple headings on this section. So first of all, looking verses 1, down to verse 3.

See, Paul gets straight to the point. He doesn't waste any paper, as it were, beating around the bush. He reminds these young Christians, he reminds this group of believers of what and of who they once were.

And sometimes we have to be reminded quite clearly, quite plainly, as to where we were taken from. Sometimes as Christians, we tend to forget just the position we were in before we were saved.

[13 : 32] Verse 1, Christians, you were dead in your trespasses and in your sins. There's no room here for uncertainty, there's no room for discussion.

Paul states it quite plainly, quite clearly, as it is. Before Christ, you were dead. Dead in your trespasses, dead in your sins.

I see he qualifies that in the fact that because we were sons and daughters of Adam because we followed our first parents, it means that we are truly born with sin, truly born with sin as our default position, we could say, with respect.

We're born inclined, yes, but more than that, we're born programmed. Sin is part of who we are as we're born.

Unfortunately, we take it into the world with us. That desire to rebel against God, and we all know that, in ourselves, we know this fine well, the reality of that. The reality that we're born despising God, we're born fighting against him.

[14 : 42] Now, many of us don't do that publicly, we don't do that openly, but naturally, we do it. And we see that, and we know that. We fill our minds, and fill our time, with anything other than God, to block out the reality that there is one, we must one day answer to.

We're born despising him, born hating him. That much we know, that much we all agree with.

Now, some would, and some do today, and many, to be honest, do today, deny the reality of original sin.

They'll say, that's not the case. You can't say, we're born in sin. Now, of course, scripturally, we would disagree with them, but supposing, they're right, and we know they're not, but supposing they're right, the reality is, the second you commit your first sin, you are already sinning against a holy God.

So supposing we are wrong, in terms of our views on original sin, it makes little difference, at the end of the day, because the second you commit your first sin, you still find yourself in the same position anyway. Accused in front of a holy God, with nothing to answer for, with nothing to give him, with nothing to say to him, nothing to plead, because a holy God, cannot look upon sin.

[16 : 03] We are born sinning. We're born under the curse. It leaves us dead, and in need of a great saviour.

We see that in the final verses, of verse 2. Children of disobedience, but we're born as sons, and as daughters of disobedience. Sin and disobedience, it is, as it were, in our genes.

We see that in verse 3, again, children of wrath, the end of verse 3, we were by nature, the children of wrath. Sometimes we, here, the illustration used, that, when someone is saved, it's like they're being saved, from drowning.

It's like, the image of someone sinking down, and, the gospel, or salvation, it's like a life ring, being put around them, and, perhaps a helpful illustration, but it's not quite, the truth is, it's not quite, what the gospel tells us.

We see in these verses, it's, actually, much worse news than that. Before we're saved, it's not as if we're just struggling, and slowly going under. The truth is, here we find these verses, before we're saved, weren't struggling, weren't treading water, we were dead, we were gone.

[17 : 23] Jesus didn't come, just to give us a helping hand, to pull us out of the water, no, he came, we were gone. He came to give us, life. We were dead.

No care, for God. In fact, as we said, we did everything, we could rebel against him, time, and time again. As it says here, we followed, as I were aware, the course of this world, in verse two.

And we can note, very quickly, that Paul uses the plural, for all of these verses. And that plural, is a universal plural, it takes in us, even all these, thousands of years later, thousands of miles away, and each one of us, knows that, that ye walked, use, to use bad grammar, quite literally, we could say, that ye's all walked, every one of you, you all walked, according to the course of this world, Paul and myself, very much included, wanting to do our own things, rebelling against God, every chance we had, following the course of this world, taken in by all its promises, all it offered to give us, following the prince, of the power of the air, searching for bigger things, for better things, for greater things, all the time, silencing, that niggling thought, in the back of our minds, of surely, there's more to life, than this, spending our whole lives, in verses 1, down to verse 3, just looking for something, anything, to find meaning, to find purpose, and finding, nothing, and the question is, why, why before we're saved, are we never truly satisfied, those of us, who are believers, we know that sense, that sense, of just searching, for something, for anything, any here, as of yet, do not yet believe, you know this so well, you might put, you might look good, you might put on a good, a good image, but in your mind, you know there's, something, something that you need, that you just don't have, the answer is quite simple, because as we said, we were created, to know God, created to love him, created to serve him, and until we, fulfill these purposes, we're not, doing, what we're made to do,

Romans 1, especially verse 18, the whole chapter really, but verse 18, it tells us, the wrath of God, is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness, suppress the truth, dear friends, we spend our lives, suppressing the truth, we see that, in our friends, and those perhaps, who we love, who are committed atheists, who spend their whole life, proving a point, that there is no God, and you see the vitriol, you see the anger, you see the determination, they have, to prove, the God, who they don't believe in, doesn't exist, and you see it, and it's so clear to us, that they're just, suppressing it, the truth, they're trying so hard, to fight against the God, they say, they don't believe in, we might look at them, we might shake our heads, but that was you, and that was me once too, perhaps we weren't atheists, but we were something else, we try to drown, this reality, stuff things of the world, entertainment, the usual, drink, drugs, whatever else, we're prone to, but even in smaller things, we perhaps try and drown out, the reality of things, by just scrolling, mindlessly, on our phone for hours, by watching hours, and hours of junk telly, whatever our thing is, only you know, dear friend, if I ask if, again,

I don't know where you stand, but if you're here, and as of yet, you're wasting your time, and as of yet, you don't know Jesus, you won't find out, what you're looking for, anywhere else, but in him, and don't believe me, that's fine, speak to any older Christian, and they'll tell you, the exact same thing, and any person here, who was saved, as an older, perhaps, in later years, they'll all say the same thing, they all wish, and desire, they were saved, or came to Christ, so much earlier, and wasted, so much less of their time first, we're made to know God, made to worship God, made to love God, you know this feeling, I know you're thinking, how can he stand up there, who is he, who's that student, that comes from Graver, to tell me, that my life isn't good, tell me I'm not happy, and say, I've got a good house, I guess, I've got an okay family, I'm pretty happy, I'm pretty sorted in life, everything's fine, really,

[22 : 06] I mean, I could have a bit more money, perhaps, to spend, perhaps, a few less worries, but in general, I'm fine, in general, life's okay, I'm trying my best, and you still, all that, you know in your mind, you just know, there's something missing, we're not here tonight, to sell you a product, we're here, to tell you that missing part, is the main part, that you're missing, it's Christ, the one who you're made to know, made to serve, and one who you're made, to love, as we heard, the last time together, we live, as it were, meaning as lives, if we're to, follow verses 1 to verse 3, if we're to follow, the way of the world, the world tells us, right now, the world tells us, that you were born, why, well you were born, just you were born, you live, and die, and spend your whole, short, meaningless life, on a rock, hurtling through space, just pure chance, for no reason, all means nothing, and that's it, now we compare that, to the gospel reality, that we have, the gospel reality, tells us, quite the opposite, you're made, with, and for, a purpose, as we heard this morning, made by a God, who knows his people, who cares, for his creation, who cares, for the ones, he carefully, made, they were quoted, in the morning, quote again, the first catechism, we have a first question, answer, what's the chief end, of man, what's the purpose, of man, why, do we exist, man's chief end, to glorify God, we're here, to glorify God, to know him, to love him, to enjoy him, forever, we're made, to worship, made to serve, to find our full commitment, and our full, contentment, in him, see people think, we're free without God, as we heard this morning, even, in Psalm 110, we all serve our masters, and there are many, outside these walls, who think that we, here this evening, are slaves, to this, made up book, we all seem to follow, slaves, to some, strange man, who lived a few thousand, years ago, some carpenter, and they think, we are slaves, they think we're so enthralled, in this nonsense, that we can't see, the reality of things, and the sad reality is, that we know, we are free, as we heard this morning, we've been set free, in Jesus, and it's those, who perhaps, take pity on us, that they themselves, as we see in these verses, are truly slaves, are slaves, to the spirit, that now work, of our children's obedience, the prince, of the power of the air,

Satan, Satan, and there's no joy, in reading these verses, there's no joy, trust me I know, in sitting here, and hearing these verses, and knowing that you, that you identify, with verses 1, down to verse 3, you know that, you are still in that place, where you, do not know Jesus, where you're still wondering, why you're here, you're still, trying to work things out, and these verses tell you, that whilst you're in that place, my friends, you are in danger, there's no sitting on the fence, you ever serve Christ, or you serve, as we see here, the prince, of the power of the air, the fact you're here, this evening, is not by chance, if you have any, gospel inkling, if you have any desire, to know more about Jesus, to search out, who he is, to test, the claims we're making, dear friends, we're not a cult, the cults tell you, don't ask, don't test, don't push, don't prod, don't question, we say something, completely different, we say ask us, see for yourselves, take it and read it, for yourselves, dig and dig and dig, and you will find Jesus, seek him, search for him, cry out to him, if this evening, you have any inkling, in your minds, any desire, in your hearts, to come to know him, that does not come from you, we see in these verses, that comes, from outside of yourself, naturally, that's not from you, coming from outside, jump on that chance, lay hold of it, ask, read, talk to any Christian, who you know, and for any Christian here, be glad, overjoyed, to share with you, the good news, to share with you, their story, so that's where the Ephesians, once were, that's where we all, once were, verses 1 to verse 3, dead, trapped, following Satan himself, children of disobedience, caught up in wrath, caught up in misery, in a constant cycle, of misery, and darkness, finding no reason, no point, no hope, the question is, what took place, in the life, of the Ephesian Christians, what changed for them, to escape, this constant cycle, what took place, in the life, of any Christian, here this evening, we have the answer here, in verse 4, down, the answer is, one of the most beautiful phrases, speaking personally,

I think, in all of scripture, verse 4, but, God, these two simple words, of course, contain, such incredible power, such wonderful truth, that we can't even begin, to process, the full reality, of that, all we've just seen, all we've just said, all that, deadness, all that sin, all that, misery, all that, churning, round, and round, and round, hating our creator, fighting against him, following Satan, carrying out the desires, of our mind, of our flesh, all of that, going on, and on, and on, and then, in verse 4, we stop, but, God, now, by all means, the rest of verse 4, could easily read, but God, because he is holy, and perfect, destroyed us, destroyed mankind, but God, because he is, full of righteousness, and cannot bear, to see, and look on sin, decided, to have nothing, to do with us, but God, because he is just, and because he is holy, offered no way, of salvation, that would be fine, we could not argue, for a second, against any of these things, because, they're true,

God is holy, he is just, but what does verse 4, tell us, what's the good news, we have in these verses, what's the good news, the Christians, you have believed, what's the good news, for any here, who as of yet, do not know Jesus, but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when, we are dead in sins, have quickened us, have given us life together, with Christ, by grace, you are saved, we come of course, to look, and to talk, about the love, of God for his people, we are just, scratching the surface, there is not enough words, in my mind, not enough words, in a thousand sermons, and I think, we'll soon find, one day, not enough words, an eternity of words, to begin to describe, the reality of the love, of God for his people, we touched on this, last time, we were together, but we see, the love of God, the mercy of God, in verse four, the love, wherewith he, loved us, the ESV has, the love, with which he loved us, and turn back, just a page, to Ephesians chapter one, to help us, understand, just a small, small glimmer more, as to the love, of our God, for his people,

Ephesians one, and verse three, blessed, to be the God, and father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who have blessed us, of all spiritual blessings, and heavenly places, in Christ, according as, he has chosen us, in him, before the foundation, of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him, in love, having predestined us, to unto, the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according, to the gospel, to good pleasure, of his will, to the praise, of the glory, of his grace, wherein he hath made us, accepted, in the beloved, the end of verse four, in chapter one, going on to verse five, here's where our, our own grammar, here's where our own, page, our verse numbers, distract us, verse four, and verse five, it's one, or verse one, down to verse ten, in this section, it's one big paragraph, one big sentence, in the Greek, one big thought, it's in love, we're predestined, in verse four, it's in love, verse five, takes place, it's in love, we're chosen, it's in love, all he has done for us, he has done, it all flows, from his mercy, it all flows, from his love, to friends, before we were born, before we even, first sinned against him, before time, and creation itself, we see in these verses, our God, had set his eyes, and set his plan, in motion, had set his love, on his people, in verse four, chapter one, according as he hath chosen us, in him, in Jesus, before the foundation, of the world, chosen in Jesus, loved in Jesus, found in Jesus, before time itself, sometimes we're guilty, of hearing predestination, and hearing election, election, and our brains, kind of turn off, every time,

[32 : 22] Paul mentions, anytime it's mentioned, at all in scripture, the idea of predestination, of God choosing his people, it's never mentioned, for the sake, of some theological argument, it's never there, for the, some kind of dry, learning process, it's there to remind us, and it's there for our assurance, that we, who love Jesus, have been loved, before time itself, there's a point, in your life, and in my life, where we first recognized, that we loved our saviour, it's a point, we were saved, some of us, early on in our lives, some of us, perhaps later on, there's a definite point, at least perhaps, a few years, where we can see, our heart changing, towards him, but that's not the case, with our Lord, it's not the case, we see here, in chapter one, the love, with which our God, loves us, it is before time itself, it doesn't have a start point, to put one on it, is to reword, the word of God, before time itself, he set his love, on his people, before we were even born, if we love him this evening, it's only because, he's first loved us, only because, he put that desire, in our hearts, stirred our hearts, to follow after him,

Christian, all that we have, all that we know, all that we have, from God, it's all his good gift, in verse four, in chapter two, in our text, reminds us of that, God who is rich, in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, the love that goes back, before time itself, whilst you, as we heard, last time together, look in the morning, of Jesus being, the good shepherd, as it were, whilst we were still, wandering outside, the croft, still wandering out, in the moors, getting lost, getting tangled up, in nonsense, and wandering, in darkness, he saw us, he knew us then, and he set his plan, and action to come, and to save us, and have us, for himself, such as the mercy, of our saviour, and the love, of our saviour, all a work, of his undeserved grace, see that, at the end of verse 5, in the brackets, we have here, even when you're dead, in sins, he's quickened us together, he's given us life, together with Christ, by grace, you are saved, that reminder, that quick reminder, it's all of him, it's not because, of your effort, not because, of your church attendance, not because, of your holiness, your family's holiness, not because of anything, you have possibly, ever managed to do, that is good, it's because of his, love for us, because of his grace, towards his people, that is why, we can see ourselves, and call ourselves, his, if we know and love Jesus, this evening, it's the power of God, and that power alone, that changes us, from life to death, the power of God alone, that takes us, from verses 1, down to verse 3, that transforms us, and that places us, in verses 4, down, to verse 6, we're here this evening, because of the love, of God, set on his people, as we, grasp that, and lean on that, again, that gives us assurance, because we're honest, we're being very honest, life is hard, but walk is hard, it's hard, it's a hard slog, and not for a second, does Christ, tell us otherwise, again and again,

Christ, told his disciples, again and again, he tells us, because he suffered, they too will suffer, because the world, hated him, the world will also hate, those who come after him, dear Christian, when life is hard, when things seem dark, or seem bleak, whatever your situation, might be now, or might be in the coming week, perhaps, God alone knows, but hold on, to these verses, hold on, to the fact, that the God, who has saved you, the God, who has known you, the God, who before time, itself, set his heart, and set his plan, and emotion, to save you, but he does not forget you, he's known you, from before time, itself, loved you, from before time, itself, set his plan, and emotion, to save you, he does not abandon you, he does not forget you, this is for, your encouragement, perhaps, you're lacking assurance, this evening, perhaps you're wondering, just how, how much he does care, perhaps you're seeing yourself, you've been, rubbish, last week, the last month, perhaps even the last year, you feel your service, so weak, your effort, so small, and perhaps, you're right, perhaps you are, does that change, the truth of verse four, no, does that change, that God, who's rich in mercy, before, you even had life, whilst you were still, dead in your sins, does that change, the fact he came, and he saved, you, no, to your friends, verses four, and verse five, this is our assurance, this evening, that we have a God, who knows, and who loves, his people, who took us from death, and who gave us life, and brings us very briefly, to our final few verses here, roughly verses five, or verse six down, to the end of the chapter, what, or where, we are now, and, just a small glimpse, into what the future holds for us, quite simply, as we said, that, a Christian, can be described, as one, who's been taken from death, and taken to life, one who was dead, and is now alive, that's quite simply, what we are in Christ, it's quite simply, who we are, in Christ, enemies, fighting against him, hating him, we're now, through the saving power, we see in verse four, called friends of God, serving him, loving him, of course, this is no small change, of course, we all know, the Christian, is not made perfect, each one of us, who are believers, we are, living testimony to that, that we will sin, and we will fail, and we will, at times, be very, very poor, witnesses, and very, very poor reflections, of our saviour, who we love, and who we seek to serve, but that doesn't diminish, the fact that, yes, we are saved, the process, is in complete, of course, until we enter, into eternity, but that being said, we see something beautiful, taking place, in verses six onwards, yes, we're not quite, the finished article yet, that we confess, and that we, we believe, and that we know, but read verse six, please with me, and I've raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, well, that doesn't make sense, does it, how can that be true, but we're still here, we're serving day to day, we're living day to day, in our own sin sick world, we're trying our best, to serve our saviour, and verse six tells us, that it's present tense, that right now, we are with him, but right now, raised up together with him, but right now, we are in, as it were, the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

here we have a wonderful, wonderful, reminder, wonderful reality, this very moment, dear brother, dear sister, this very moment, yes we are here, as pilgrims, yes we are here to serve, yes we are here, to the Lord, the Lord calls us home, but our place, is not here, our place, is with our saviour, he has gone, to prepare that place, for us, the wonderful reminder, of verse six, that as aware, and we say this, with respect, our places, are set, and waiting for us, of a great, table of the lamb, that great, banqueting table, and we have, we say this, with confidence, this is not just, some vague hope, we know, is because of Christ's words, to the disciples, he's gone, to prepare a place, for them, and if he goes, what, he will come back, to take them to himself, take us, to himself, it's not just, I say just, very carefully, not just that God, saves his people, as if that's not glorious enough, there's more than that, he saves us now, but also, he has a place for us, with him, for all time, verse 7 tells us, in verse 7, builds on verse 6, and tells us that, verse 7, that, or so that, connecting to verse 6, in the ages to come, he might show, the exceeding riches, of his grace, in his kindness, towards us, through Christ Jesus, now here again, we are treading water, and must be very careful, we can't assume, we can't seek, to say too much, about verse 6, and verse 7, but verse 7, is quite clear, but the reality, will be for his people, and in terms of the ages, to come, that means, in terms of eternity, and the, that, the wording there, is an unending sense, that in the unending, ages to come, he will show, the exceeding riches, of his grace, and his kindness, towards us, through Christ Jesus, it's not just, that he saves us, right now, it's not just, that he takes us, from death, to life, for that alone, he deserves, all praise, and all glory, but there's more than that, we have a glorious, beautiful reminder here, for as an eternity, ahead of his people, in that eternity, we'll only grow, more and more, in our love, towards our Saviour, towards our God, in that eternity, we'll only grow, more and more, as he showers, more and more, the riches of his grace, and his kindness, towards us, through Christ Jesus, and what that looks like, what that means, we can only speculate, it's a glorious thought, isn't it, the sense, as the ages of eternity, go on, we will only feel, and know his love, more and more, as the ages of eternity, go by, in a second, as if it was time, to count it by, as eternity, goes on, and on, more and more, our gracious God, our loving, kind Father, will show us, more and more, the riches of his grace, will treat us, more and more, in love, and in kindness, dear friends, that's the future, we have ahead of us, not just some vague, hope, a real, certain hope, present of our Saviour, for all time, without end, the final reminder, in verse 10, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God has ordained, beforehand, we shall walk in them, verse 10, brings us, as it were, back down to earth, yes, it's glorious, to think of verse 7, for one day, we're with him, for all time, one day, growing in our love, and growing, as it were, in his, in our appreciation, of who our, our Saviour is, for all eternity, but we're not quite, there yet, we're still here,

just now in Tulsa, we're still, in verse 10, and whilst we are here, we're here, for purpose, created, in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God, have before ordained, we should walk in them, we're here, we're now, this new week, is our chance again, to serve him, our chance again, to follow after him, our chance again, to be the salt, the light, the witnesses, the ambassadors, each one of us, as believers, is called to be, having the glorious reminder, of verse 4, downwards in our minds, that we have been saved, but we can know, and know for certain, it's a bad trait, we have to, to say, well yes, I hope, I have a hope of heaven, scriptures, allow you to have, a vague hope of heaven, to say that, you're under, underwhelming, the grace of God, towards you, no, we have a surety of heaven, because we know and love our saviour, because we trust God's word, as he tells us, if we know him, if we love him, our place is with our saviour, for all time, that should encourage us, and should infuse us, and should excel us this week, to serve him, to love him, to seek to do his work, to share the good news, so that those who we love, our friends, our family, our neighbours, those who as of yet, do not know him, will come to know him, and come to have the same joy, that we have, in our hearts, and our minds, the same glorious future, we share together, this evening, and for any indeed, those who are here this evening, indeed perhaps, in God's providence, those who may listen in, in the weeks indeed, perhaps even the years to come, the question has to be, or simple question, what are you waiting for?

[45 : 51] you've just heard, from God's word, the glorious reality, of our present state, that the Christians here, can know for certain, this very moment, we can know for certain, that when God, is aware, looks on us, he does so, in love, because of the finished work, of his saviour, Christians here, know for certain, that as difficult, and as complicated, and as at times, as dark, as life might be, that we have a glorious, unending, future ahead of us, where God, will only grow, and show his love, towards us, will only grow in ourselves, our love for him, the question is, why are you still, not taking this for yourself, what excuses, do you have left, again, only you know the answer, to that, set in the morning, set again, I can't save you, no one who stands here, can save you, I could spend, our two hours now, going on and on, quite happily, work my way, through all the sermons, I have my iPad, I can't save you, your friends, your family, they cannot save you, you must come to Jesus, come and see yourself, no longer, in verses one, to verse three, but come to verse four, come to the glorious gospel, and know that, what it is, to be now dead, not dead in your sins, but dead to your sin, and alive, in Christ, that's our hope, that's our prayer, this evening, let's, join together, in a short word of prayer,

Lord, I've got a big gain, come before you, we thank you, for your living, and your, perfect word, we thank you, the encouragement, we have even, in these short verses, this evening, that those, who are yours, this evening, those who know, and who love, our saviour, that we have, the sure hope, that we were loved, from before time itself, that for all eternity, you will continue, to show your love, and your greatness, and your kindness, and your mercy towards us, in increasing ways, again and again, Lord, until that time comes, until you take us home, to yourself, give us the endurance, and give us the wisdom, to serve you well, in the places you place us, in our own mission fields, our mission fields of home, our mission fields, in our villages, our mission fields, in our places of work, in our places of study, Lord, wherever it is, you place us, help us to serve you, faithfully there, and again, we pray for our dear friends, who as of yet, do not know Jesus, as their saviour, that's for any, who are questioning, and who are wondering, who are wanting to know more, we ask that even this day, even this evening,

Lord, through your word, or even, through one of your people, even here this evening, they would reach out, and they would find out, and ask their questions, and they would come, and taste and see, and know that, that you are good, help us now, as we come to sing, our final item of praise, to do so, of our hearts and minds, full of love, and full of understanding, as God always sings, in Christ's precious name, Amen.

We can conclude, by singing together, the words of Psalm 51, Psalm 51, verses 7, down to verse 12, of the Psalm, Psalm 51, verses 7, down to verse 12, of course, this Psalm of David, talking about, the wonder, and the joy, of being cleansed, and of knowing, you've been cleansed, from your sin, Psalm 51, verse 7, do thou with hyssop, sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so, ye wash thou me, and then I shall be, whiter than the snow, of gladness, and of joyfulness, make me to hear the voice, as so his very bones, which thou hast broken, may rejoice, Psalm 51, verses 7 to 12, to God's praise, mowring,

I shall be kingsed so, Ye wash of me, and then I shall be white and blessed know.

[50 : 20] Of gladness and of joyfulness, make me to hear the noise.

But so is the heavens which has broken, he rejoiced.

O my enemy, what is called as thy face I come, I stand.

Here, let the heart of him arise with me with him.

Cause we know from thy side, nor take my whole Israel away.

[51 : 55] Restore him, I have salvation's joy, where thy grace will be still.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Lord God, before us we ask the rest of this evening, help your word we say to be blessed to us. Help us not to leave this building, or indeed leave this day and start this new week without having grown in our love and also in our knowledge of you.

We thank you, Lord, for the good gifts you've given us today, this time together around your word. A time of praise, a time of fellowship. We ask you to be with us the rest of this week. Keep us serving you well. And keep our minds focused on the reality that we worship a God.

It's prepared for us things and a place beyond our understanding. It's prepared for us a great salvation. It's prepared for us a great resting place, a great final place, Lord.

Until we arrive there, until you take us home to be with yourself, help us to serve you faithfully day by day. In the spheres where you've placed us, in our homes, in our work.

[53 : 12] Help us to be bold, bold proclaimers of the gospel. Help us to be faithful in all we seek to do, and to put you first in all our endeavours. Let's go all these things in and through, and for Christ's precious name's sake.

Amen.