

From Persecutor to Preacher

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Once we ponder the majesty of God, we can turn to God in prayer. Let's pray. Lord, we come before you today and we humble ourselves before you.
- We acknowledge it's not just because of a children's talk that we try and keep things simple. No, we keep things simple because for all our own efforts over the thousands of years, we come to a simple conclusion that you've made yourself knowable.
- In relationship, you have made yourself knowable to us. But in terms of the dynamics, in terms of the layout and the makeup of who you are, it is beyond our understanding.
- You revealed yourself to us simply. Therefore, we are to believe in you simply. Our triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. Help our minds, then, to be turned upwards in worship, as we reminded us of the glory and the majesty of our triune God, who made us, who knows us, who sustain us.
- To every single thought of our minds, every single action, everywhere we go, mentally and physically and spiritually, all things are known to you.
- [1 : 2 2] Help us to come before you, then, this day with a mind and a heart ready for worship. We confess once more. We bring to this place so many distracting thoughts.
- We bring through these doors at times of worship so many things in our minds today, worries and concerns, issues of this past week, worries of the coming week, responsibilities which lay heavy on all of us here today.
- We ask for a short time together around your word. You would open up your word to us and help us to relax our minds. Relax our minds in the knowledge that we come before a holy God who deserves this time, who deserves our worship.
- We come just now especially asking you for this short time together. You would open your word to us. We thank you, Lord, for the gift of your word. But yes, there are parts of it we will perhaps never fully understand.
- But you have made known to us clearly all we must know for salvation. There is no excuse for any of us, those of us with less education, those of us with a full education, that there is no excuse for any of us not to understand the simple gospel, that we are sinners, lost and in darkness by ourselves.
- [2 : 4 2] And Christ came to save sinners, to draw them to himself, to take our unholiness and to give us his holiness, to take the punishment and wrath onto his own shoulders and to give us freedom and peace for all who would believe and all who would come.
- As we remind ourselves of a simple gospel, Lord, we ask that for the most mature of your people here today, the ones who have walked with you for many years, that they would never graduate past the simple gospel, the simple gospel hope, the simple gospel truth.

For those here who are newer in that walk, Lord, you would remind them that they are just as precious to you as those who have been longer in the walk. For any here today and for those here today, who are interested in the gospel, but who as of yet haven't made that firm commitment to follow, who as of yet haven't fully declared themselves on the side of Christ, we ask, Lord, you would convince them today once more through your word that you are true, your word is true, that the truth about Jesus is such that he cannot afford to be ignored, that all must come and all must worship.

I pray just now especially reminds towards this coming weekend, this coming week, pray, Lord, for services on Thursday and Friday and Saturday and Sunday, they ask that as your word goes out, that you would be glorified.

We pray just now especially for the gentlemen coming to assist in these services of worship. We pray for them, we thank you for them. Remember just now Reverend Colin McLeod, we pray for him today as he leads in worship.

[4 : 29] We thank you for him. Thank you, Lord, for his closeness. Thank you personally, Lord, for his closeness to me as a brother and as a friend in the ministering congregation. We pray for him and all his responsibilities and all his duties in that large congregation.

We also remember Reverend Colin McLeod, we thank you for him. As he's come to an end of a long ministry, we ask you to bless him and encourage him. We understand he is still fully involved in your service.

We pray for him, especially at this time of year as he looks ahead and prepares to undertake the role of moderator of a general assembly. Give him encouragement, give him peace and give him strength to undertake the various many tasks that that involves over the year.

We pray for ourselves as a church family, as brothers and sisters, as we come around the table once more, we'd find encouragement and find peace. We'd be enlivened once more as we look to one another side by side, as we see brothers and sisters, those we walk this journey with.

We thank you, Lord, for the privilege of that. Pray just now, especially once more, for brothers and sisters who are currently not sitting at the table.

[5 : 54] Lord, we ask, and we know that we can't convince, but Lord, we ask that you would gently and in your own way you'd bring them to a place to join us once again, join us perhaps for the first time, that together as one family we would sit in peace and enjoy, remembering the sacrifice, remembering the outpouring of love and the shed blood of our Saviour, remembering the fact that we worship a Saviour bruised, bleeding, broken for the sake of his people, reigning triumphant at your right hand, his enemies being placed under him, and we are evidence of that.

Once we hated him, once we had nothing to do with him, once we didn't care about him, but now he is all for us. Help us then to this week have a mindset looking forward and looking up.

Yes, remembering our own unworthiness, but at the same time with that remembering that in him we've been declared clean and perfected by his blood, not by our merit, but by his merit.

Remembering that simple gospel truth, that out of him we have nothing, that in him we have everything. Thank you once more for this gathering.

We pray just now for our brothers and sisters next door as they meet to worship you. I pray once more remembering their ongoing vacancy. We understand it's a difficult time and a time of vacancy.

[7 : 33] So remember them. We also remember vacant congregations have been their own denomination in the island. I pray again for Shobost. Pray for them as they begin we hope their journey to look for one who will lead them and guide them.

Pray the same for North Uist as they carry on that slow and at times painful process of looking for an under-shepherd. Lord. We also now remember South Uist and Bambecula.

Pray for them in their vacancy. Help us Lord as we see vacancies arise in our presbytery to remember that you have your work here and you have your people here and times of blessing and times it seems to be of drought to come and go but you are sovereign and you're in full control.

As we see perhaps days of struggle and days of famine ahead for ourselves we give you praise we see days of blessing and days of promise in other parts of this kingdom in other parts of your world.

Your gospel is growing your gospel is spreading. Remember just now the ongoing gospel work in Turkey especially Lord you know that the full detail of the complications and challenges of that work we give you praise that you have your people there those born and brought up in a different faith in a different gospel in a false gospel who have seen the light and have come to follow and serve Christ.

[9 : 10] We ask safety for them and peace for them as they share the good news especially Lord for our sisters in Christ in Turkey who often face such a difficult time when they come to faith with their husbands and their families often treating them so badly pray for them especially Lord give them peace and they would know that as they are persecuted and as they face horrifying situations they would know Lord that they are glorifying you to love to love the gospel pray for ourselves as we seek to engage in that mission here in North Tulsa remember just now we give thanks for the work of Gordon MacLeod we thank you especially for the work of last Thursday evening as he came and shared with us for a time that be a time blessed to us and as a congregation together we would use what we heard that night and put it into practice to look for these simple opportunities and to then be prepared to quite simply and quite honestly share the gospel we thank you for placing us here as salt and light as ambassadors for our saviour forgive us Lord for times our lifestyles and our words our very thoughts do not match up to the profession that we hold on to we profess a glorious risen saviour at times we live lives that are so different to that profession

Lord forgive us for that we ask that those who are our families and those who are friends our neighbours who look past us and look to the one we are pointing towards the Lord Jesus it's in his name and it's for his sake we ask these many things Amen let's turn to God's word we're carrying on of course our study in Galatians we come to an end of Galatians chapter 1 we can read the chapter together once more Galatians chapter 1 that's on page 913 page 913 page 913 Galatians chapter 1 let's hear the word of God Paul an apostle not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead and all the brothers who are with me to the churches of Galatia grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father to whom be the glory forever and ever

Amen I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel not that there is another one but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ but if even we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you let him be accursed as we have said before so now I say again if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received let him be accursed for am I now seeking the approval of man or of God or am I trying to please man if I were trying to please man I would not be a servant of Christ for I would have you know brothers that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel for I did not receive it from any man nor was I taught it but I received it through revelation of Jesus Christ for you have heard of my former life in Judaism how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my father for when he who had set me apart before I was born and who called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles

I did not immediately consult anyone nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who are apostles before me but I went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days but I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother and what I am writing to you before God I do not lie then I went into the regions of Syria and Sicilia and I was still unknown and person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ they only were hearing it said he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy and he glorified God because of me I'm going to give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word let's again sing this time from the Psalter and Psalm 37

Scottish Psalter Psalm 37 we can sing verses 1 down to verse 6 of the Psalms Psalm 37 verses 1 down to verse 6 it's on page 252 for evildoers fret thou not thyself unquietly nor do thou envy bear to those that work in equity for even like unto the grass soon be cut down shall they and like the green and tender herb they wither shall away Psalm 37 verses 1 to 6 to God's praise O give to her strength thou not thyself and quiet fear nor do thou let me bear to those that work iniquity and iniquity but even like unto the grass should be cut down shall they and like the name of candlest air they will and shall away set thou thy glass upon the

[16 : 46] Lord and be thou doing and so thou in the land shalt dwell and shall dwell and barely have food delight thyself in glory in thine last peace has beside to thee thy way to come from Egypt thus with thee to pass shall be and like unto the life he shall thy righteousness display and ye thy judgment shall bring forth like noontide of the day and shall bring forth like noontide of the day turn for a short time back to the chapter we had

Galatians chapter 1 and verses 11 down to verse 24 Galatians 1 verses 11 down to verse 24 we can take a whole section but just for the sake of our text to help us get to the root of this section we can take verse 23 and verse 24 the only verse hearing it said he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy and a glorified God because of me we said we said two weeks ago and now that every letter of Paul follows the same structure because Paul followed the letter writing structure of the day same as we ourselves would we're used to writing emails perhaps many of us and a certain structure you do that well the same for Paul introduction introduction a reminder as to who you are why you're writing the letter and the main body of the letter and then your goodbyes and your your your kind of practicalities at the end of the letter we said last time here in Galatians

Paul does the same thing but he has a very long introduction usually the introduction is the first three or four maybe first five verses here in Galatians the introduction really is the first chapter and a half really verse one chapter one verse one down to chapter two verse nine verse ten it's really Paul's reminder to the Galatians who he is and that's important for us today especially why he does this so he starts off verses one down to verse five for us just telling him who he is but he gets sidetracked in verse six and you can see him doing that I'm astonished I said this last time he he's he's has to say to them how how heartbroken how astonished he is that the Galatians have already started to believe other false gospels and he goes back now to remind them in verse 11 down to verse 24 remind them just who he is and why he is qualified to be writing this letter to them in other words our section today it's really the concluding part of Paul's we could say his his CV this is what is proving to the Galatians who he is and reminding them why he is speaking to them they know who he is he was there at their founding we said it before in week one

Paul is part of the Galatian church he's he's a center of it part in terms of he is he is essential to their founding and their starting and everything else they know Paul but these Judaizers these other so-called apostles have been doing the rounds and teaching that to be saved you must believe in Jesus but also x y and z be circumcised keep some of the Old Testament laws and so on and that's a detail for the rest of the letter God willing in a few weeks time quite simply Paul here is reminding them once more of the gospel truth he's reminding them that his word is the true word not the other so-called apostles who are making things up as they go along he reminds them just of a brief journey of his own salvation he reminds them quite simply the gospel is supernatural it's not man-made man didn't come up with it if nothing else for our short time together next 20 minutes half hour if nothing else friends please please take this away from our text today take away from our text the gospel work is supernatural take away please a reminder the gospel work is for those who are bad the gospel work is for those who think they are good the gospel work is for those who are uneducated and for those who like Paul are highly trained lawyers the gospel is for everyone helping us to understand this just three very simple headings first of all verses 11 and verse 12 where Paul reminds us of the supernatural source of the gospel the supernatural source of the gospel verse 11 for I would have you know brothers remember we said last time it's brothers and sisters it's the same thing the readers would have understood this

I would have you know brothers and sisters that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel if I did not receive it from any man nor was I taught it but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ I would have you know brothers and sisters that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel the gospel the gospel is not of human creation it is not man's gospel if you and I were to write a gospel it wouldn't sound like this would it it's one of the evidences for all the apologetics we can look into and all the arguments why scripture is true and why scripture is correct is correct there's whole degree programs around that there's centuries, thousands of years of study on that for me personally one of the evidences of why the gospel is true is that you wouldn't write it like it is what do I mean?

[24 : 08] well I mean the gospel it goes against everything naturally we want it to do we want it to say we if it was man made the gospel would say do this and do that and then God will love you the gospel would be work really hard to impress God because naturally we like that don't we we like to feel we are somehow involved we like to feel that somehow it is our involvement that gets us to glory and a man made gospel like the gospel of the Judaizers the Judaizers saying yes Jesus yeah believe in him fine but also circumcision follow the Old Testament laws do this keep these special holy days do that follow us and their gospel it sounded good it had bells and whistles and smoke and smells it looked good it looked attractive it wasn't the simple gospel Paul and the apostles were preaching it wasn't the simple gospel of believe in Jesus and be saved naturally we hate that our natural beings hate that gospel the gospel so we say well how does that make us feel good it doesn't because the natural gospel the natural man hates the gospel because the true gospel says you can do nothing you can do nothing to be saved apart from what come to Jesus the man made gospel says do this and do that self-righteousness self-promotion act the right way sound the right way attend enough services the right way and get yourself into heaven by your own efforts and Paul's saying it is not a gospel of man's creation it's not how we would do it if you've ever shared the gospel perhaps with friends and family the gospel is scandals the gospel is so hard to understand because it's so simple just over the years speaking to friends friends who are still not in the kingdom they just don't get how simple the gospel is now partly brothers and sisters that's our fault we as Christians and perhaps the wider church to our own shame and to our own sorrow we have over complicated the gospel we have added arms and legs perhaps we shouldn't have and we know that to be true and we repent of that but the simple gospel itself as scripture gives it to us is simple and that simplicity it just goes against the very natural man because it reminds us we are bad it tells us we can never be good outside of Jesus we can never be saved outside of Jesus it tells us our self-righteousness is what?

dirty rags and you know yourselves I'm sure you've heard yourselves that even that it's a toned down version of what the scripture says in the original blood soaked rags there's nothing you can do nothing I can do but come to Jesus and that is so scandalous it goes against us we're surely we're something I can do surely surely I am special surely God can let me in because I'm trying very hard and Paul says our gospel the gospel is not a man-made gospel not of human creating the gospel is so scandalous in Paul's day that these false preachers come in and add to the gospel and make it more appealing by saying do this and do that and appeals to the natural man's tendencies to want to do things to impress God somehow believing that we can do it and Paul says no the gospel is not the gospel of man so the gospel is not of human creating also we see that

Paul himself is appointed uniquely yes we believe the same gospel that Paul believed in we believe the same gospel the apostles believed in but Paul was appointed uniquely and his teaching was unique that much is clear again verse 11 verse 12 verse 12 especially I did not receive it from any man nor was I taught it but I received it through revelation of Jesus Christ of that there is no doubt Paul the other apostles they saw Jesus in time of Jesus of course Paul was saved after our saviour had gone to glory ascended again and we see of course when we know the story it's a different sermon in Acts where Paul is converted and Christ appears to Paul and it's clear for us that Paul had the unique vision Paul had the unique experience where Paul was uniquely empowered to share the gospel and he's telling them this because the false prophets of the day the Judaizers the false Christians the false teachers they were saying that through very great learning that they knew more about Jesus through very great study all about themselves again

Paul is saying I didn't learn it I didn't study it it was given to me it was given to me now brothers and sisters we receive a word every one of us we receive a word by preaching and by teaching not one of us has been divinely inspired I don't know how perhaps historically perhaps a funny boy maybe I think ministers got some kind of inspiration and that's how the sermons appeared well no ministers that do that often you'll find the sermons are wandering and they actually have no biblical basis there's reading studying writing prayer lots of prayer not one of us not a single minister not a single theologian we have some form of inspiration yes the Lord helps us spirit reveals and opens a word to us but it's through the word still through the word we all learn together not so for Paul

Paul is a unique position Paul is uniquely saved voice and vision Paul is uniquely taught by revelation and Paul is given a unique journey isn't he a unique mission to share the gospel to the Gentiles Paul is unique in many ways but also Paul is the exact same as you and I if we're here today as brothers and sisters if you know the Lord if you love the Lord Paul is the same as you and I in that Paul believed in the risen saviour Paul had his sins washed away by Jesus Paul spent his life seeking to serve and love the Lord Paul was a normal brother in Christ but yet he was uniquely called so Paul reminds us of a supernatural source of the gospel and Paul carries on giving his his CV verses 13 down to verse 14 we see we can summarize perhaps Paul's life as a scourger and a scholar so a scourger and a scholar verses 13 and 14 for you have heard of my former life in Judaism how I persecuted the church of God violently tried to destroy it he was a scourger he was active in his hatred for the church

[32 : 14] Paul hated Jesus Paul hated this fake Jewish Messiah Paul hated this man who had been called and called himself God Paul hated this new false religion that was destroying and a face to religion that he had always known he was expert in and Paul hated Jesus and his people so much he is actively and he actively and it seems quite passionately was involved in persecuting the church if I read a short section from Acts chapter 8 and Saul approved the execution and then into verse 2 this is Stephen's execution verse 2 devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him but Saul was ravaging the church and entering house after house he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison now those who were scattered went about preaching the word he was a scourger

I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it he was trying to stop the gospel being preached he was attacking and imprisoning men and women turning them in and seemingly doing it effectively and with great vigour and great joy almost in the wording of Paul's own history as Paul honestly tells the story of who he once was he seems to convey the fact that Paul was doing it quite passionately quite passionately perhaps not literally but almost doing it for free he was happily finding and rooting out and dragging away men and women Christians who love the Lord and committing them to prison who knows what happened to them after that the most unlikely of men to be saved a man who hated Jesus who hated the gospel and who was dedicated to destroying the teaching and the followers of this new religion he's also a scholar a scourger but also a scholar we see again verse 14

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers it's a sermon for a different day the education of Paul but it's just in summary we know he was a well educated man he knew the scriptures perfectly he had spent his whole life studying the Old Testament scriptures we know that from a man in Paul's position we know culturally that Paul himself doesn't say this but we know from the time by the age in that school of education by the age of 12-13 you had the whole the Torah memorized the whole Old Testament memorized by the ages of 15-18 you had the Talmud memorized the writings of the rabbis of the day the top commentaries in the Bible you memorized them too it's like us today perhaps memorizing the whole scripture then memorizing Matthew Henry you memorized all of it so Paul again a walking talking scriptural encyclopedia of a man who knew his stuff perfectly theologically and mentally he knew all about the promises of the coming

Messiah theologically and mentally he knew what to look out for as the Messiah was promised he knew all the promises all the all the tick lists of this coming Messiah what he would do what he would be like where he would be and yet for all his knowledge Paul did not see the saviour in front of him as he was persecuting man and woman boy and girl he didn't understand what he was doing he heard I'm sure plenty of Christians share the gospel to him again and again and for all his mental ability and he had plenty of it he didn't understand in summary he is of course most unlikely of believers an evil man a truly evil man who seemed to have spent took great joy in destroying the church who did all that he could to try and persecute and put an end to this so-called new religion that was growing and growing

Paul as he makes clear to the Galatians is a reminder here that none are beyond the gospel power none are beyond the eternal power of God now I know there's none here today who hate Jesus like Paul hated Jesus but scripture is quite simple we're either for him or we're against him we're for him or we're against him there is no middle ground scripturally speaking and Paul's example about all the head knowledge in the world you know there's some here and plenty in our community in our community who don't come near church and I can almost guarantee you brothers, sisters and friends they could find a Bible passage faster than me they could quote sections of who knows what theologian catechisms and confessions of faith better than I could and yet they don't know Jesus all the head knowledge in the world all the understanding in the world grew up in the church and all that but all for what all for what to know things great

[38 : 20] Paul knew things Paul knew lots of things but yet Paul before Jesus had nothing Paul was saved by a supernatural gospel Paul was once a scholar and a scourge of a church and finally we see support and surprise support and surprise verses 15 down to the end where Paul just summarises in a very short paragraph really what took place over a chunk of time and there's some who have great issue that verses 15 down to verse 24 don't quite track with the story we have in Acts of Paul's conversion people find problems in scripture in all ways but sometimes problems are just silly Paul in Acts is doing one thing to one audience and Paul in Galatians is doing another thing he's not talking about himself he's not wanting to give them the full history of his conversion but chances are they know anyway he's just reminding them what they already know they know the story they know who he is they've probably heard in detail the conversion story of Paul so he's not giving them a full history why would he?

paper is scarce expensive parchment Paul's not going to waste his time Paul with bad eyes and who often needed help to write he's not going to waste time giving a full history of his own life again he doesn't care to tell them he's reminding them quite simply just a potted history of what he did and here we see first of all verses 15 down to verse 17 we see the immediate situation of Paul after his conversion the journey of Paul and by reminding them what took place after conversion he's seeking to counteract the claims he was somehow taught all he knew all that he knew by someone else again the other so-called apostles the Judaizers they were saying presumably saying what Paul says Paul learned his way from this teacher and that teacher what we learned from this teacher and that teacher therefore we're better Paul says no I learned from nobody

I learned from nobody we see that here verse 15 down to verse 17 verse 16 especially at the end of verse 16 I did not immediately consult anyone he's years three years we found out basically on his own really he's not learning he's taught supernaturally in other words Paul is saying Paul is saying whatever else you've heard about me don't listen to it don't listen to it here's what took place in my life the Lord himself taught me all that I know and all that I know Paul is saying matches up to what the other apostles are teaching therefore it's true it's true carry on then we learn that here Paul took the time with himself he spent time in Arabia and then verse 18 onwards after three years he went up to Jerusalem even then he just visited

Hoseifas and remained with him 15 days Hoseifas and James he didn't meet the other apostles till after that all to say Paul was supernaturally gifted yes and Paul is here reminding the Galatian church that there's only one gospel only one truth whatever else is said to them or taught to them they have to abandon these other teachings because they do not match up or line up to scripture simple as that and the glorious end of Paul's CV it's not about himself he gives this very potted quick history but he's trying to get to the final verses here Paul is trying to rush things on because he wants to end with a glorious gospel truth verse 22 I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ they only were hearing it said he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy and I glorified

God because of me see the other preachers the Judaizers the false teachers were all about making themselves look good and sound good puffing themselves up showing off their teaching showing off their brains and their ability and Paul says you know how smart I am you know my history you know how successful I was all that's known to you but ultimately what I am known for is that I was once trying to destroy the gospel and now I share it and now I share it he who was used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy from persecutor to a reason for praise there's a quote that the early church that the shoots that the growth shoots of the early church were watered the blood of the martyrs watered the blood of the martyrs and the image is grim but it's true the early church springs up and grows and spreads because of persecution we see that don't we we see that that they're scattered we read in Acts chapter 8 that when

[44 : 24] Paul starts scourging and Paul starts attacking the church the believers in that area they scatter and they share the gospel even further behind the scenes God is using even the evil of Paul the evil of Paul to persecute the attack of the church he is using that to share his word even further that's the glory of our saviour who uses even his enemies ultimately for his glory again we don't understand the dynamics of that we never will but we believe it Paul is the evidence of it quite simply quite simply brothers and sisters we can never lose we can never lose as we go out sharing the gospel as we join in with the work of Paul and the apostles and the believers and share the gospel we can't lose those who we share the gospel with either hear it accept it and believe it or they don't but yet the Lord is using his word in that person's life one way or another it's not for us to know we must share it and we'll see that this evening we must be engaged in the sharing work quite simply as we begin the real body of the letter of

Galatians we've now finished the introduction from Paul we're going to see the reminder that it's all about Jesus the gospel is one we must again and again lay aside us lay aside ourselves our squabblings our preferences our ideas at times and promote Jesus and him alone who he is what he has done his truth not what we want to believe what is actually true and friends the letter of Galatians speaks to you too speaks to you and it reminds you again and again as Paul writes to this small church this young church as Paul writes to this small gathering of churches the reminder is that outside of Jesus there is nothing but with Jesus quite simply everything everything in Jesus no slave no free no division no separation in Jesus we are united together as one family forever that's how we carry on with the Lord's help next week it's a word of prayer thank you

Lord for the gift once more of your word reminder in your word today that you in the case of Paul you intervened in an extraordinary way in his story but also a reminder that his story was extraordinary and for many of us it was not voices and flashes from heaven that you used to save us that you used your word you used your people to bring us to Jesus thank you Lord and we ask you keep us safe from the dangers our Galatian brothers and sisters once fell into of seeking other gospels of following after our false teachers help us to find our peace and our joy in Christ and in him alone the only word of truth the only word of life pray once more you would lay on the hearts quite heavy today we ask and this week the burden of coming to your table for those as of yet have not done so whose place is prepared for them who know they should be there and to love you it would be a joyous thing for them and know they sit beside brothers and sisters do all that we do and we ask all that we ask we ask we pray once more for those who lead the praise week after week we thank you for them as they engage in that central part of public worship leading the sung praise we sing your words back to you ask all these things in and through and for Christ precious name sake amen we can conclude by singing the first psalm we had sing psalms psalm 77 sing psalms psalm 77 this time verses 7 down to verse 14 sing psalms psalm 77 verses 7 down to verse 14 it's on page 100 psalm 77 verse 7 forever will the lord reject and never show his grace he has withdrawn his steadfast love and turned from me his face for all time has his promise failed is god no longer kind has he in great wrath dismissed compassion from his mind then to my heart there came this thought on this i will rely the years of a right hand of power of him who is most high psalm 77 verses 7 to 14 to god's praise for heaven for heaven will the lord be dead and never show his face as he with love this death has had turned from me his face for long time has his promise still this thought no longer kind ak dik■ li arte not

On this I will rely. The years of the right hand of power, Of him who is most high.

I will rely on the Lord's paintings, Your works of long and cold.

[51 : 42] I never give faith on all new lights, Your mind can be sized shown.

O God, most holy and glorious, What God compares with you, You have a God of miracles, This time the day I'm due.

In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, In the love of God the Father, In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, For now and forevermore.

Amen.