

Beholding the New

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Preacher: Rev Murdo Campbell

- [0 : 0 0] Well, good evening, and welcome to our service this evening. It's lovely to be with you again. It's always nice to come back to, I won't say sunny Tolstair, it's not sunny just now, but it's lovely to be with you.
- And I just want to, before I forget, I just want to take the opportunity to wish you every blessing for 2024 and a happy new year. And we do pray that as we go into another year, that we would know the Lord leading us and the Lord guiding us.
- And that's where we're going to begin this evening in singing in Psalm 23. We're going to sing in Psalm 23, a well-known psalm, the Shepherd Psalm.
- And, you know, the beginning of a new year, who better to lead us into this year than the Shepherd? Who better to follow into 2024 than the Lord?
- And wherever he will lead us in 2024, it is a great comfort to us that his goodness and his mercy will follow behind us every day of 2024.
- [1 : 0 7] And, you know, as I often say to the people in Barvis, it's one thing knowing Psalm 23 and singing Psalm 23, but we all need to know the Shepherd of Psalm 23.
- We all need to be able to confess, to believe in our heart and confess with our mouth, the Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me, the quiet waters by.
- To have that great assurance that goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me. And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.
- So we'll sing the whole psalm of Psalm 23. And if I remember rightly, you stand to sing to God's praise. Amen. The Lord, my shepherd, I not want.
- He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me.
- [2 : 1 8] The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again.
- And me to walk to be within the paths of righteousness.
- In fall is soon in sake. Though I walk in death's dark veil, Yet will I fear none else.
- For thou art with me on thy road, And stop me comfort still.
- My deeper fire has burnished. In presence of my foes, My head thou dost with oil anoint, And my cup overflows.
- [4 : 0 6] Dearness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me.
- And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.
- Well, let us come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray together. Amen. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, We give thanks to thee this evening for this great privilege.
- That we are able to gather this evening in the Lord's house, On the Lord's day. And to begin our worship with that wonderful confession, That the Lord is my shepherd.

And what better shepherd to have in life, Than the Lord who looks after his sheep. And to know that this good shepherd is not only one who lays down his life for the sheep, But a good shepherd who leads his sheep.

[5 : 29] He leads them into green pastures, And besides still waters. And that even, Lord, we confess, That thou art the one who still leads us, Even when we are confronted with the painful reality of the valley of the shadow of death.

We bless thee, O Lord, That the shepherd remains with us. That he walks beside us. That his rod and his staff are there to comfort us. And that we have that wonderful assurance.

That his goodness and his mercy, They will follow us all the days of our life. And Lord, we thank thee tonight, That that is how we have begun a new year. Confessing that the Lord is our shepherd.

And that all the days of 2024, That he will be our shepherd. That whatever is before us, And Lord, we confess so often, That we do not know what a day, Nor an hour, Or even a year will bring in our lives.

And even as we look back at the year that has just gone by, And all the changes that took place, All the experiences that we went through, All the encounters that came our way.

[6 : 33] But Lord, we thank thee that despite all the changes, And all the heartache, And all even the sorrows, That thou art the God who has never changed. The one who has remained our constant.

The one who is our rock, And our fortress. Our shield and our high tower. One in whom we are able to trust. One in whom we are able to shelter in.

And we thank thee, O Lord, Tonight that we have been reminded of our good shepherd. That our good shepherd says to us, That my sheep hear my voice, And I know them and they follow me, And I give to them eternal life, And they will never perish, Neither shall they be plucked out of my hand.

And Lord, help us to know, Even at the beginning of another year, To know that we are safe in the hands of Jesus. To know that we are in the hands of a good shepherd. A shepherd who knows his sheep.

A shepherd who loves his sheep. A shepherd who takes care of his sheep. And that like a good shepherd, He is one who will protect his flock, And provide for them day by day.

[7 : 39] And so, Lord, that thou wouldst provide for this flock here. Provide for thy people, Day in and day out. That thou wouldst keep their going in, And their going out. Day by day throughout this year.

That whatever providence comes their way, Whatever pain breaks into their experience, Or Lord, whatever is in their cup, That they would know that the shepherd is leading, The shepherd is guiding, And the shepherd is still saying to his flock, That this is the way.

Walk ye in it. Oh Lord, keep us, we pray. Because we know that we cannot keep ourselves. But we need to be those who are kept. Kept by the power of God.

Through faith unto salvation. Ready to be revealed in the last time. And so, Lord, bless us, we pray. Remember us as homes and as families. In our different circumstances.

Our different situations. And even the things, Lord, That go on behind closed doors. That people in our own community don't know about. But yet, Lord, all these things are seen and known by thee.

[8 : 44] By the God who is omnipotent, And omniscient, and omnipresent. By the God who knows all, And sees all, and is in all. And Lord, we pray that Thou wouldst enable us to cast every care upon thee.

Being assured that thou art the God who does care for us. Remember us, we pray this evening. Remember our families, Lord. We pray for families where there is a separation, And even segregation, Because of Jesus Christ.

We pray for husbands that are strangers to grace and to God. We pray for wives that are still outside of Christ. We plead, Lord, for our children, And even our grandchildren, And our great-grandchildren.

That they too would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. That thy righteousness would extend to these generations. Oh, Lord, we plead that the promises that are to us and to our children, That they would come to fruition.

That they would be realized in their experience. That these young lives that are growing up in our homes, our families, and in our communities. Oh, Lord, we pray that they would hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.

[9 : 53] In the young years of their life. That they would give the best years of their life to Jesus. That they would see him as one who is fairest among ten thousand. And one who is altogether lovely.

And, Lord, our prayer is for them that they would hear his voice. Because we know that there are so many voices calling out for their soul. So many distractions to divert their attention.

To draw them away from Jesus. So many ploys and plans that the devil puts before them. But, Lord, we pray. And we plead with thee that they would seek first the kingdom of God.

And his righteousness. Knowing then that all other things will be added unto us. Lord, remember us then, we pray. Remember the pastor of this congregation. That we thank thee for him.

For our brother Donald and we. We bless thee for the gifts that thou hast given to him. For the compassion and the care that he shows towards people. For the love that he has for this congregation.

[10 : 54] And this community. We pray that thou wouldst bless him as he sows in tears. That he might reap in joy. That even as thy words say is that Paul may plant. And Apollos may water.

But God alone gives the increase. And so, Lord, that thou wouldst increase their number. Increase their faith. Increase their knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

That they would grow in grace. That they would grow and be built up as a spiritual house. Holy and acceptable unto thee. And what we pray for Donald.

We pray also for Emma. Bless them together as a couple. Encourage them, Lord. And use them for thine own glory. Help them to serve alongside the people in this community.

And Lord, that they would know that the Lord is with them. That the Lord of hosts upon their side doth constantly remain. That the God of Jacob is their refuge. Us safely to maintain.

[11 : 52] Oh, Lord, encourage them as they reach out. As they seek to witness in this community. As they seek to work among those who are still strangers to grace and to God.

And Lord, that thou wouldst give to us all a burden. A burden for our neighbours. Our work colleagues. Our friends and our family. To plead for them. That they too would taste and see that thou art good.

And trust in thee and be blessed. Oh, Lord, we confess how little we do. And how poor we are at praying before thy throne.

But Lord, help us, we plead. Help us to see that salvation is of the Lord. That thou art the God who will show mercy to whom thou wilt show mercy. And thou wilt be gracious to whom thou wilt be gracious.

Help us then, we pray. And help us to plead that the God of all grace. The God who is gracious and merciful. That he would draw sinners to thyself. That he would pluck them as brands from the burning.

[12 : 54] That he would bring them from darkness. And to thine own marvellous light. And Lord, what we pray for the congregation here. Lord, we pray for other congregations in our presbytery.

We think tonight even of the vacancies, Lord, in our presbytery. We pray for Shabbos, Lord. And for North Uis. That thou wouldst continue to uphold them and support them.

And provide for them an under-shepherd in due season. And Lord, we wait upon thee. Realising that thou art the God who is in control. And the one who is working all things together for good.

To those who are the called. According to thine own purpose. As we're encouraged this evening to pray for Carloway. We remember our brothers and sisters there.

Remember the minister, Lord, there. We pray for Thomas and his wife and family. Encourage them in the ministry in Carloway. That thou wouldst use them for thine own glory.

[13 : 50] And as we think of our presbytery, Lord. We think of ministers who are under call. We think, Lord, of those who may retire this coming year. And Lord, we see so much change.

We see so many things happening. But Lord, we help us, we pray. Not to look inward. Or even to look outward. But always to look upward. To set our affection on things above.

Where Christ is seated. That he has put all his enemies under his feet. He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. And he alone is the one who will build his church.

And the gates of hell will not prevail against it. So, Lord, remember thy church, we pray. Even throughout our nation, we remember our denomination, Lord. And the many vacancies in it.

We pray, Lord, for places like Aran, Lord. And Livingston. And we pray also for Nockbane and Greyfriars. Other places, Lord, without ministers. Those who are struggling as small congregations.

[14 : 52] But, Lord, we give thanks to thee. That we are called not to look to ourselves. But to look to the Lord of the harvest. That he would thrust out laborers into this great harvest field.

And that they too would sow in tears. That they might reap in joy. Lord, bless us, we pray. Pity us and shine thy face upon us. Remember us to the ends of the earth.

Remember our Queen and King, Lord. We pray for them. We ask that thou wouldst bless them. Bless the royal family. We pray that they too would know Jesus as the King of kings.

And the Lord of lords. Remember our governments, Lord. Oh, we plead. That our government would see the error of their ways. And that they would seek first the kingdom of God.

That they would know that righteousness alone will exalt our nation. And, Lord, we plead. We pray for our Prime Minister and our First Minister. That they would see that all the other gods, they are but idols dumb.

[15 : 52] Which blinded nations fear. But our God is the Lord by whom the heavens created were. Remember also, Lord, the troubled parts of our world. As we put on the news day by day.

All we see is chaos and carnage and confusion. And, Lord, we look at Ukraine and the war that rages on. And Gaza and the heartache and the sorrow. And the rumours of war even in the West Bank.

And, oh, Lord, we look at it all. And we wonder when is the Lord going to come. But even Jesus said that the earthquakes and the fires and the famines.

And even the wars and the rumours of war. They are but only the birth pains. Because the end is not yet. Help us, Lord, we pray, to be ready.

For the day when he comes. Oh, as Jesus said, therefore, at an hour when you think not. The Son of Man will come. Help us, we pray, to be wise.

[16 : 50] To be wise, like the wise virgins who had oil in their lamp. Who were waiting for the bridegroom. Who were ready at his coming. When he called them. And, Lord, that we would all be ready.

For that great day when he calls us. When the roll is called up yonder. That, oh, Lord, that we would all be there. We would all be there in Emmanuel's land. Oh, Lord, that we would all be on the side of Christ.

For to be in Christ is life eternal. To have Christ is the greatest hope. And, Lord, we plead even tonight. That as we gather around thy word.

And as we open thy word. And read it and meditate upon it. That thy word would speak to us. About the importance of being in Christ. Of following Jesus. Of giving the best years of our life to this Savior.

To know that he is the one who promises to us. Eternal life. Abundant life. New life. In him and in him alone. Lord, bless us then, we pray this evening.

[17 : 52] Bless thy truth to us. And, Lord, may thy word be an arrow from the King. That we would not hear the voice of man. But truly hear the voice of God. And that we would say with the psalmist.

That I'll hear what God the Lord will speak. For as thy word says to his folk. He'll speak peace. Speak peace to us, Lord, we pray.

Peace in our hearts. And even peace with God. Through Jesus Christ. Bless us, Lord, together then we ask. Go before us in everything. That thou wouldst have all the glory.

That Christ would have the preeminence. And that we as thy people this evening. That as we meet together around thy word. In the name of thy precious Son. That we, O Lord, would know blessing.

Bless us then, we pray. With every spiritual blessing. In heavenly places in Christ. For we ask it in his name. And for his sake. Amen.

[18 : 51] We're now going to read the word of God. As we find it in 2 Corinthians. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. And chapter 5. 2 Corinthians.

Chapter 5. We're going to read the whole chapter. 2 Corinthians 5.

Reading from the beginning. Let us hear the word of God. For we know that if the tent. That is our earthly home.

Is destroyed. We have a building from God. A house not made with hands. Eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan. Longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.

If indeed by putting it on. We may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent. We groan being burdened. Not that we would be unclothed. But that we would be further clothed.

[19 : 59] So that what is mortal. May be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us. For this very thing is God. Who has given us the spirit. As a guarantee. So we are always of good courage.

We know that while we are at home in the body. We are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith. Not by sight. Yes we are of good courage. And we would rather be away from the body.

And at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away. We make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear. Before the judgment seat of Christ.

So that each one may receive. What is what is due. For what he has done in the body. Whether good or evil. Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord.

We persuade others. But what we are is known to God. And I hope it is also known to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again. But giving you cause to boast about us.

[20 : 56] So that you may be able to answer those. Who boast about outward appearance. And not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves. It is for God. If we are in our right mind.

It is for you. 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 sake died. And was raised. From now on therefore. We regard no one according to the flesh.

Even though we once regarded Christ. According to the flesh. We regard him thus no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away.

Behold the new has come. All this is from God. Who through Christ. Reconciled us to himself. And gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is in Christ.

[21 : 54] God was reconciling the world to himself. Not counting their trespasses against them. And entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ.

God making his appeal through us. We implore you. On behalf of Christ. Be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin.

Who knew no sin. So that in him. We might become. The righteousness. Of God. And so on. May the Lord bless. That reading.

Of his own. Holy. Word. Well before we. Consider a few verses from that chapter. We're going to sing again. We're going to sing this time in Psalm 40.

Psalm 40. In the Scottish Psalter. Page 259. In the blue psalm book. Psalm 40.

[22 : 56] We're singing from the beginning. Down to the verse marked 4. Amen. And this psalm. A very familiar psalm.

Like Psalm 23. It is in many ways. The confession of the Christian. And I was once asked. At Christianity Explored. A number of years ago. About a woman.

From a woman. Who. She asked the question. Should I sing Psalm 40? And I said. Why not? Well I'm not a Christian. Should I sing Psalm 40? And I said.

Of course you should sing Psalm 40. Just make sure you're a Christian. It's so important. It's important to be able to say. And I want everybody to be able to say this.

He took me from a fearful pit. And from the miry clay. And on a rock he set my feet. Establishing my way. If you can't say that wholeheartedly.

[23 : 55] Why not? Why not? Why can't you say. He put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify. Many shall see it.

And shall fear. And on the Lord rely. There's no reason why. You just need to trust. In this Lord. Whom we are singing of. The one who saves us.

The one who puts a new song in our mouth. The one who blesses us. So I'd encourage you to sing it. Not just from your lips. But from your heart. That this is your psalm.

That you sing Psalm 40. I waited for the Lord my God. And patiently did bear. So we'll sing verses 1 to 4. And we'll stand to sing if you're able. To God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God.

[24 : 50] And patiently did bear. But hang to me.

He did inquire. He took me from a fearful pit.

And from the mighty clay. And on a rock.

He set my feet. Establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth. Are called to magnify.

[25 : 59] And he shall see. And he shall see. And time shall fear. How on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose proud.

The Lord relies. Respecting nor the proud.

Nor such. As turn aside to lies.

But if we could. This evening with the Lord's help. And the Lord's enabling. If we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read.

[27 : 01] 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians 5. And if we take us our text this evening. The words of verse 17. 2 Corinthians 5.

And verse 17. Where Paul writes. Therefore if anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away.

Behold the new has come. If anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away.

Behold the new has come. Now as you know. At the beginning of a new year. Many people. They often like to make new year's resolutions.

Where they resolve to improve upon last year. Either by losing weight. Or if you're a smoker. To give up smoking. Or reducing your alcohol intake. Or even taking up exercise.

[28 : 03] Whatever it is. We often make new year's resolutions. In order to resolve to improving upon the year. That has just passed. And since Monday.

Apart from wanting to lose some weight. I haven't really come up with a new year's resolution. But I was reading some of the resolutions of another minister.

Because there was an American minister called Jonathan Edwards. And Jonathan Edwards. He was a powerhouse of a preacher. He was used mightily by the Lord in the great awakening. During the 18th century.

And Jonathan Edwards. He was this amazing man when you read about him. But it was when Jonathan Edwards was a young Christian. In his teens. When he was a teenager.

He wrote down a series of resolutions. And these resolutions. He sought to live by them. In order to help him grow as a Christian. And the thing about Jonathan Edwards resolutions.

[29 : 01] Is that there weren't just one or two of them. There were 70 of them. There were 70 resolutions. Jonathan Edwards wrote 70 resolutions.

Which he read and re-read. At least once a week. In order to keep his mind focused. Upon Jesus. In fact at the top of his list.

He would have the list sitting on his study desk. The desk in his study. And at the top of the list of these 70 resolutions. This is what Jonathan Edwards wrote.

He said. I am aware that I am unable to do anything without God's help. I do pray that by his grace. He will enable me to keep these resolutions. So far as they are in line with his will.

And honor Jesus Christ. And just to give you a flavor of Jonathan Edwards resolutions. I want to read some of them to you. I won't read all 70 to you.

- [30 : 00] But I will read just a few of them. Number one. This is what he writes. Resolved. I will do whatever I think will be most to God's glory.
- And my own good, profit and pleasure. For as long as I live. Number five. Resolved. Never lose one moment of time. But seize the time to use it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
- Number 14. Resolved. Never to do anything out of revenge. Number 16. Resolved. Never to speak evil of anyone.
- Except if it is necessary for some real good. Number 19. Resolved. Never to do anything which I would be afraid to do.
- If I expected to hear the last trumpet sound. And Jesus return. And this one I found very, very challenging. Number 37.
- [31 : 02] Resolved. To inquire every night as I am going to bed. Where I may have been negligent. What sin I have committed. And how I have denied self.
- I will also do this at the end of every week. Every month. And every year. Very challenging. Resolutions. And you know I'd encourage you to read through Jonathan Edwards resolutions.
- You can look them up online. They're very easy to find. His 70 resolutions. But this evening I'm not going to give you 70 resolutions to follow. I only want to give you one.
- One New Year's resolution. For 2024. And it's there in verse 17. And what you'll see there in verse 17.
- Is that this is a resolution that will give you a new position. It will make you a new person. And it will set before you a new purpose. This resolution in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 17.
- [32 : 03] Is a resolution that will. It will give you a new position. It will make you a new person. And it will set before you a new purpose. And there are three headings this evening.
- A new position. A new person. And a new purpose. A new position. A new person. And a new purpose. So first of all we see a new position.
- A new position. Paul writes there in verse 17. Therefore if anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold the new.
- Has come. Now as a pastor and preacher. Paul probably had a soft spot for the church in Corinth. And he probably had that soft spot. Because the church in Corinth.
- Was one of the first churches. That Paul planted. During his many missionary journeys. But sadly the thing about the church in Corinth. Was that the church in Corinth.
- [33 : 00] Was the most carnal church. That Paul ever had to deal with. Because the Corinthians. They were a worldly church. They were a worldly church. That was obsessed with worldly experiences.
- Worldly enjoyments. And worldly endeavors. But of course what didn't help the church in Corinth. Was that they were swamped. And they were surrounded by. What you could call the carnal capital.
- Of the Greek world. Because the thing about Corinth. Was that Corinth was this. Wealthy seaport city. Which made its fortune. As a key trade route. Between the east and west.
- Of the Mediterranean. And as a key trade route. The city of Corinth. You could say it was a hive of hustle and bustle. There was people from all over the world. Passing through this great.
- Cosmopolitan city. Of Corinth. And as you'd expect. Corinth was a carnal capital. Of the Greek world. The city of Corinth. It sought to attract and appeal.

- [34 : 00] To every itch that needed to be scratched. Because Corinth. You know. Corinth was a city that was overrun. By sexual immorality.
- Homosexuality. Drunkenness. Pride. And idolatry. There was even a divide. Between the classes. In the city of Corinth. There was a divide. Between the rich. And the educated.
- And the poor. And the uneducated. And sadly. The Christians in Corinth. Those who were part of the church. In Corinth. They had forgotten. Or they had completely. Failed to learn.
- That separation. Is not isolation. It's contact. Without contamination. That's what we should always remember. As a Christian. As a Christian church. Separation.
- Is not isolation. It's contact. Without contamination. But the thing about the church in Corinth. Is that it had become contaminated.
- [34 : 56] The church in Corinth. Had become just like the city of Corinth. They had been overrun. With sexual immorality. Homosexuality. Drunkenness. Pride. Idolatry. Division.
- And also deception. There was deception. In the church in Corinth. But the deception. Wasn't from outside. The church in Corinth. The deception.
- Was from inside. The church in Corinth. The deception. Was from false teachers. And their false teaching. And their deception. Was dangerous. Because.
- They claimed. And they confessed. That Paul. The apostle. Was a fraud. And a phony. And a false teacher. That's what they were saying about Paul. That's what the second letter of Corinthians.
- Is all about this deception. That was being made against Paul. And claiming and confessing. That Paul was a fraud. And a phony. And a false teacher.
- [35 : 53] And then you come to this chapter. And you see that it's into that context. And that background. That Paul sets before the Corinthians. And us. He sets before us the truth of the matter.
- He reminds us. What it is to be a Christian. What it is to follow Jesus. What it is to have this resolution. And regardless of all the accusations.
- And all the insinuations. That are made against Paul. Paul issues this resolution. A resolution he says. That will give them a new position. Make them a new person.
- And set before them a new purpose. And we can see that it's a new position. Because Paul says there. At the beginning of verse 17. He says. If anyone.
- If anyone. If anyone. Is in Christ. If anyone. Is in Christ. It's a new position. Because being in Christ.
- [36 : 49] Is a new position. Being in Christ. Is a new position. Now as you know. There are only two types of people. Who ever come to church.
- There are only two types of people. In the whole world. And these two types of people. Are in only one of two positions. Because they're either in Christ.
- Or they're out of Christ. So you are in one of two positions tonight. You're either in Christ. Or you're out of Christ. And the question I think you should really be concerning yourself with.
- At the beginning of a new year. Is what position am I in? What position am I in? Am I in Christ? Or am I still out of Christ?
- And my friend. If you're out of Christ. You're not saved. You're lost. If you're out of Christ. You're not walking in the light. You're walking in darkness.
- [37 : 49] If you're out of Christ. You are as our Bible teaches us. You're still in Adam. You're in union with Adam. You are united to Adam. The first man Adam.

And the bad news is. Your position in Adam. As it was for Adam. It leads to death. Not just physical death. But spiritual death.

And eternal death. In hell. That's the position. If you're out of Christ. And my friend. That's all our starting position. We all start in this position. Because we're all born in Adam.

We're all born in the sin. Of the first man. Adam. Where all that was through of Adam. Is through of you. And through of me. Because when Adam sinned. We sinned.

When Adam fell. We fell. When Adam was condemned. We were condemned. When Adam was cursed. We were cursed. Our catechism teaches us. That all mankind.

[38 : 46] Descending from Adam. Sinned in him. And fell with him. In his first transgression. And you know. The misery. And the mess. Of the fall. Is that all mankind.

We have all lost communion. With God. We are all under his wrath. And curse. We're all made liable. To the miseries of this life. To death itself. And to the pains of hell.

Forever. That's our starting position. That's our starting point. And the Bible says. It's bad news. It's really bad news.

We're born. In Adam. But of course. As a pastor. As a preacher. As someone who loves. Lost sinners. Paul doesn't want us. To remain in Adam.

Paul doesn't want you. To stay where you are. Paul wants us. To acquire. And adopt. This new resolution. This new position. In Christ.

[39 : 42] And what he does here. He sets before us. The good news of the gospel. And he says to us. So simply. If anyone. Is in Christ. If anyone.

Is in Christ. And notice Paul says. If anyone. And when Paul says. Anyone. He means anyone. He doesn't say.

If the elect are in Christ. He says. If anyone. Is in Christ. He's saying. If anyone. And everyone. Whosoever. And whomsoever. He says. No one is exempt. From this free offer.

This is a full and free offer. Of the gospel. If anyone. Is in Christ. And notice. The amazing thing is. Paul says.

If anyone. Is in Christ. He doesn't say. If anyone. Comes to church. Or if anyone. Prays. And reads their bible. Or if anyone. Goes to Sunday school. Or is a church member.

[40 : 37] Or if anyone. Is good enough. And worthy enough. And knows enough. To be a Christian. No. Paul doesn't say anything. About that. Paul says. If anyone.

Is in Christ. If anyone. Is a Christian. If anyone. Looks to Jesus. If anyone. Lifts their eyes. To Jesus. If anyone. Lives for Jesus.

And loves Jesus. And leans upon Jesus. If anyone. Confesses their sins. To Jesus. And commits their life. To Jesus. They're no longer. In Adam. No.

No. They have a new position. They're in Christ. They're given a new position. In Christ. You know my friend. You need this new position. You need to be.

In Christ. To be in Christ. Because that new position. Makes you a new person. It's that new position. That makes you a new.

[41 : 33] Person. And that's what we see. Secondly. So there's a new position. And a new person. A new person. He says there in verse 17.

If anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold. The new. Has come.

And you know. You read this. And you see that this. New Year's resolution. Which has been set before us here. It's life changing. Because you know. It not only guarantees.

That it will give you. A new position. Paul also assures us. That you will become. A new person. And you know. That's what we all want. At the beginning of a new year.

Isn't it? We all want to be. A new person. We want to be made new. We want a new beginning. We want a fresh start. We want a clean slate. We want to. Start over.

[42 : 29] It's not what we often say. I was in the barber yesterday. And there was a woman. Cutting hair beside me. That's what you kept saying. New Year. New you. New Year. New you.

Every client that sat in the chair. New Year. New you. But you can only really have a new year. And a new you. When you're in Christ. That's. You can only have a new position.

And become a new person. When you're in Christ. And that's what Paul is saying. If anyone is in Christ. He or she. Is a new creation.

You are a new creation. And that word new. I love it. It's new of a totally different kind. It means new of a totally different quality.

New of a totally different value. You're a new creation. You're not what you once were. You are completely new. And you're this life changing work that takes place to make you a new person.

[43 : 30] It's not a superficial renovation. It's a spiritual transformation. It's not a superficial renovation where it's just the outside that changes and you look a bit better.

No. This is a spiritual transformation. Where you're made entirely new on the inside. You're made entirely new.

A new person. You are a new creation. You know my friend. Paul is teaching us here. About one of the greatest doctrines in our Bible.

He's teaching us about the new birth. He's teaching us what it means to be born again. And as you know there wasn't a better teacher on the subject of the new birth.

Than Jesus himself. He was the teacher of Israel. And you remember in John chapter 3 when Jesus had that night time meeting with Nicodemus. Nicodemus he came to Jesus by night.

[44 : 29] And he came to Jesus to ask him all his questions. And Jesus says to Nicodemus. Nicodemus. You must. There is no negotiation here.

You must be born again. Because unless you're born again. You cannot. You will not. It is impossible for you. To enter the kingdom of God.

But of course Nicodemus. He struggled with this concept. How can a man be born when he is old? Does he need to enter his mother's womb for the second time and be born? But Nicodemus.

As you know. He was only thinking in terms of a superficial transformation. This superficial renovation. Being made better. Nicodemus thought he could be a better person.

Or a good person. Or a more moral person. And so many people think like that. Don't they? This superficial renovation. Where they think that being a Christian is all about being a good person.

[45 : 29] And a better person. And a more moralistic person. But Jesus was never talking about a superficial renovation. Jesus was always talking about a spiritual transformation.

Where you need to be born again. You need a new birth. And a new beginning. You need a new head to see Jesus. You need a new heart to seek Jesus.

You need new hands to serve Jesus. It's not a superficial renovation. No. This is a spiritual transformation. It's a work of God. The Holy Spirit.

Where you're made a new person. On the inside. Where the old has passed away. That's what Paul says. The old has passed away.

Behold the new has come. The new has come. And don't you find it amazing? Paul uses the word behold. Every time the Bible says the word behold.

[46 : 32] We are to stop and think about this. Stop and meditate on it. Stop and realize what is being actually said. It's basically saying to you.

Don't run ahead to the next verse. Stop here. The old has passed away. Behold. The new has come. And as we said that word new.

It means new of a totally different kind. New of a totally different quality. New of a totally different value. And Paul is setting this newness. Of your new person. And your new position.

He's setting it in contrast. To the old passing away. The old passion. And the old position. And that word old.

That he uses there. The old has passed away. It's the word. The Greek word archaea. It's where we get the word archaeology from.

[47 : 30] And as you know an archaeologist. I don't know if you watch any of those digging programs. Where they dig up fragments of history. Where they dig up old bones.

Or they're looking for animals of the past. Where there's all these fossils. And that's what Paul is stressing. That's what Paul is saying here. That when you're a new person in Christ.

When you're a new. When you have that new position in Christ. When you're a new creation. When you're made brand new. Your old life. It's ancient history.

Your old life is fossilized. You could say. Your old life is in the past. It's gone. It's dead. It's buried. The old has passed away.

Behold says Paul. The new has come. And Paul is saying. This is what happens when you become a Christian. Your old self. Your old life.

[48 : 26] Your old lifestyle. It dies. It passes away. That's the phrase he uses. The phrase we often use to describe someone. Who has died.

They pass away. That's what he's saying here. Your old self. Your old life. Your old lifestyle. It dies. It passes away. It perishes. Because when you experience. And when you enjoy.

This new birth. And this new beginning. In Christ. Christ. Your old values. Are no longer. As valuable. Your old loves.

Are no longer as lovely. And your old beliefs. Are no longer. As beautiful. And you know. You might be questioning.

Well how do I know. That I'm a Christian. How do I know the Lord is working in my heart. How do I know that. Any of what you're saying. Murder tonight. It applies to me.

[49 : 23] Well you have to ask yourself. Are the old values. That you had. Still as valuable. To you. Are your old loves. The things that you put first.

In your life. Are they still as lovely to you. Or do you want Jesus more. Are your old beliefs. Where you thought things. And taught things. Are they still as important to you.

Are they still as beautiful to you. Are your old passions. And your old priorities. And your old pursuits. And your old practices. And your old principles. And your old plans.

Are they still your priority. Or have they all perished. Are they a thing of the past. Of course that doesn't mean you're perfect.

When you become a Christian. All the people in Barbas know I'm not perfect. I'm sure the people in Tulsa know I'm not perfect either. Because the thing about being a Christian.

- [50 : 21] Is that there will be many trials. Many temptations to take your focus off Jesus. You will never be perfect. As a Christian. And you know.
- I was reading. The apologist. Apologist C.S. Lewis. In relation to this. And. Your old self being buried. Dead and buried.
- C.S. Lewis said. The devil. He's a grave digger. The devil is a grave digger. And the devil will dig up your past. He will dig up what you once were.
- But you must remember that God has buried what you once were. In Adam. And that's so true. I don't know any Christian who.
- Who hasn't realized that the devil is a grave digger. And he digs up the past. He reminds us of the sins of our past. Or sins and faults of youth. And he'll dig them up and remind them of what we did.
- [51 : 16] And what we were. But as C.S. Lewis said. You must remember that God has buried what you once were. In Adam. It's your old self. The old man is dead.
- Because when you're born again. When you're given that new beginning. And that new life. You become a new creation in Christ.
- You're a new person. With a new position. And that new birth. And that new beginning. It affects every area. Or it should affect every area and avenue of your life.
- Do I really struggle with Christians? And they have their religion box. They have their little religion box. Where they take it. And they read their Bible.
- And they regularly pray. And they reschedule their timetable. To include church twice on the Lord's Day. And sometimes midweek. Of course that should affect every area of our life.
- [52 : 12] But you know the Christian life is much, much more than that. Because when you experience and enjoy this spiritual transformation as a new person. When you are a new creation in Christ.
- It should affect every area and avenue of your life. It should affect your life. It should affect your relationships. Your relationships with your spouse. And your siblings. Your family.
- And your friends. It should affect your work. And your witness. And your worship. It should affect your character. And your conduct. And your conversation. And your commitment.
- To the church. It should affect your time. And your tithing. And your talents. It should affect your devotion. And your discipleship. And your discipline. My friend. When you become a new creation in Christ.
- It should affect every area. Every avenue. Every aspect of your life. Because when you are in Christ. Everything should be about Christ.
- [53 : 12] When you are in Christ. Everything should be about Christ. He is as our Bible teaches us. He is to be first and foremost.
- We are to be least and last. He must increase. We must decrease. He must have the supremacy. We must own submission.
- Before him as Lord. Lord over all. And you know it's often said. If he's not Lord over all. Then you have to question.
- Is he Lord at all? He must be Lord over all. And you know Paul. He makes. What Paul makes absolutely clear here. Is that when you're a new person.
- With a new position in Christ. When you're a new creation. When you're a Christian. The old has to go. And the new has to come.
- [54 : 08] The old has to go. And the new has to come. And that's a lifetime. That's a battle of a life. A lifetime. But you know the new.

If the new comes. But the old doesn't go. Then that's not only a concern. That's a contradiction. If the new comes.

If you're a new creation. A new position. A new person in Christ. If that's what you are. And then the old doesn't go. The old doesn't die. Then that's not only a concern. It's a contradiction. In fact that's hypocrisy.

Is it not? And that's one thing the Christian isn't to be. They're not to be a hypocrite. And I hear it so often. Christians being called hypocrites.

Because the old doesn't go. When the new comes. My friend. The Christian is not to love God. And then live as they please.

[55 : 10] No. Paul teaches us here. He gives to us this resolution. If anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away.

The new. Behold. The new has come. My friend. This new year's resolution. It's life changing. Because when you resolve to follow it.

This new year's resolution. Will give you a new position. It will make you a new person. And set before you. A new purpose. This new year's resolution. Will give you a new position.

You're in Christ. It'll make you a new person. You're a new creation. And it will set before you. As we see lastly. And briefly. A new purpose. A new purpose.

A new purpose. So Paul says. A new purpose. Look at verse 18. All this he says. Is from God. Who through Christ.

[56 : 06] Reconciled us to himself. And gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is in Christ. God was reconciling the world to himself. Not counting their trespasses against them.

And entrusting to us. The message. Of reconciliation. You know. I love what Paul writes there. Because. As an experienced preacher.

And pastor. Paul. He now moves in verse 17. From information. To verses 18 and 19. Where there's application. Paul is a preacher.

He's a pastor. He moves from information. To application. He wants to apply this. To our lives. Because Paul. He's already explained. That this new year's resolution. It's life changing.

It makes you a new person. It gives you a new position. In Christ. And it's all because Jesus. Has worked in your life. He has reconciled you. He has redeemed you.

[57 : 02] He has restored you. To himself. And now Paul emphasizes. That this life changing resolution. Has given you a new purpose. A new purpose.

And that purpose he says. Is a ministry. And message. Of reconciliation. Reconciliation. That's your new purpose. A ministry and message. Of reconciliation.

He says there. In verse 18. That God has given us. A ministry. Of reconciliation. And then in verse 19. He says that God has entrusted. To us. The message.

Of reconciliation. And so as a new person. With a new position. In Christ. This life changing resolution. Has given you a new purpose. You have a ministry.

And a message. Of reconciliation. A ministry and message. Of reconciliation. Which means that as a Christian. You're a minister.

[58 : 00] That's what Paul says. As a Christian. You're a minister. You don't have to stand in a pulpit. To be a minister. I'm sure your minister would happily.

Step aside if you wanted. To have a go on Sunday morning. But you're a minister. Paul explains. You're a minister. In your own sphere. And your own circle of life.

And as a Christian. You have your own ministry. Because as a Christian. You have a ministry. To your family. And a ministry. To your friends. As a Christian parent. You have a ministry.

To your children. As a Christian neighbour. You have a ministry. To your own community. And to your own village. As a Christian colleague. You have a ministry. To those in your workplace.

As a Christian. You have a ministry. And a message. Of reconciliation. That's what Paul teaches us here. As a Christian. You have a ministry. And a message.

[58 : 58] Of reconciliation. Therefore. Verse 20. Follow what Paul is saying. Therefore. We are ambassadors. For Christ. God making his appeal. Through us.

We implore you. On behalf of Christ. Be reconciled. To God. Paul is teaching us here. That as a Christian. You have a ministry. That's your role.

That's your responsibility. And you have a message. A message of reconciliation. So that wherever you go. And whatever you do. You are an ambassador. For Christ.

You are a representative. For Christ. You are a witness. For Christ. That's your new purpose. For Christ. So wherever you are. In the workplace. You are an ambassador.

For Christ. When you are. In your home. Or in your family. You are a representative. For Christ. When you are in your community. And at your committee meetings. And your crafting committee meetings.

[59 : 52] Remember. You are a witness. For Christ. That's your new purpose. That's your ministry. And your message. Says Paul. Your message. Which God is making. His appeal.

Through you. He is using you. Through your Christian character. Your conduct. Your conversations. Your commitment to Christ. In your congregation. And in your community.

Your message. To those who are still in Adam. Still out of Christ. Your message. As Paul says there in verse 20. I implore you.

I beg you. I urge you. I plead with you. And I pray. For you. That you will be reconciled.

To God. That's your ministry. That's your message. That wherever you go. Whatever you do. Your longing.

[60 : 51] Is that those who are out of Christ. Will be in Christ. That those who are not new. Will be made new. Creations. Christians. That they will become.

A Christian. That they will confess their sin. And commit their life. To the Savior. That they too. Will look to Jesus. And live for Jesus. And love Jesus. And lean upon Jesus.

That's your ministry. That's your message. That's your longing. Why? Verse 21. Follow the flow of Paul's thought. For our sake.

Why has he done all this? Why do we have a ministry? Why do we have a message? For our sake. God the Father. Made him. Jesus Christ. To be sin.

He made him to be. Our last Adam. Even though he knew. No sin. So that in him. In Christ.

[61 : 50] We might become. The righteousness. Of God. God. It's wonderful. To follow. To follow. Paul's thought. As he gives to us. A new year's resolution.

And what a new year's resolution. It is. It's life changing. Life changing. Because when we resolve. To follow it.

When we resolve. To follow this new year's resolution. It'll be a resolution. That gives you a new position. In Christ. Makes you a new person.

You're a new creation. And will set before you. A new purpose. Your purpose. Is a ministry. And message. Of reconciliation. What a resolution.

A new position. A new person. And a new purpose. Surely this is a resolution. Worth committing to.

[62 : 47] As we go into 2024. I will never follow. Jonathan Edwards. 70 resolutions. But you know. Paul reminds us.

Of this one. And this is one. We can commit to. If anyone. Is in Christ. He. Or she. Is a new creation.

The old. Has passed away. Behold. The new. Has come. What a resolution. Well may the Lord.

Bless these thoughts. To us. Let us pray. O Lord. Our gracious God. We. Give thanks to thee. For thy word. And.

To remind us. Even this evening. That. As we begin. Another year. Help us Lord. To see that in Christ. We have a new position. Help us Lord. To know that.

[63 : 45] When we are born again. We are made a new passion. And because of Jesus. We have this ministry. And message of reconciliation. We have a new purpose. And Lord.

Even as we go into a new week. Help us to see in our workplaces. In our workspaces. In our homes. And in our families. That we have a purpose. We are there.

We are there to be a witness. We are there to be ambassadors. For Christ. We are there to be representatives. Of the King. We are there. To speak a word. And season. If need be.

And if the occasion arises. And Lord. Help us then. To be ready. To give an answer. For the reason. For the hope. That is within us. Because Lord.

We know. That we have a great hope. A hope. That is sure. And steadfast. A hope. That remains. The anchor of our soul. Keep us then. We pray. By thy grace.

[64 : 38] Help us Lord. To keep looking. To Jesus. And to know. That he is the one. Who leads us. That his goodness. And his mercy. Follows us. And that he is one. Who will walk beside us.

Never leaving us. And never forsaking us. Go before us. Then we pray. Part us with thy blessing. For we ask it in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen.

We're going to bring our time. To a conclusion this evening. And we're going to sing the words of Psalm 119. Psalm 119. Again in the Scottish Psalter.

It's on page 404. Psalm 119. As you know.

Psalm 119. It's the longest psalm in the Psalter. It's also the longest chapter in the Bible. And I suppose there's a reason why it's the longest. Because it emphasizes the importance of God's word in our life.

[65 : 44] But in this section that we're going to sing. Especially verse 57. The psalmist. He makes his own resolution. And his resolution in this psalm.

Or these verses. Is that he seeks to keep God's holy word. It's a great resolution to have. To keep God's holy word.

He says. Thou my sure portion art alone. Which I did choose O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep. Thy holy word. With my whole heart I did entreat.

Thy face and favour free. According to thy gracious word. Be merciful to me. So we'll sing Psalm 119. From verse 57.

Down to the verse from art 60. And we'll stand to sing if you're able. To God's praise. Amen. Thou my sure portion art alone.

[66 : 48] Which I did choose O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep.

Thy holy word. With my whole heart I did read me.
Thy face and favour free. According to thy gracious word.
Be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways.
And did my life well try. And to thy testimonies pure.
[68 : 13] My feet then turned and died. I did not stay nor linger long.
As those the slothful are. That hastily thy laws to keep.
Myself I did prepare. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father.
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen. Now as
us. B