

The Duties and Benefits of the Christian

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- [0 : 0 0] Sisters and friends, a joy is always to worship the Lord once more. Same intimations as the morning, just to remind ourselves of the headline intimations. God willing, Tuesday at 7.30 in the hall, we have an open WFM with Andrew McKee.
- We're sharing with us about himself and Cassandra's recent trip to Greece and visiting the historic biblical churches. So please do open meeting. So men, no excuse not to come along to it.
- It's a good night. I hope to be with myself. It's good to spend time together. Any chance we get to 7.30 on Tuesday in the hall, and then on Thursday, prayer meeting as always.
- And just bear in mind that I'll be missing that evening. So please do pray for myself and for the elder, whoever's turn it is to take a prayer meeting. It's no small thing to do these acts of service.
- It's no small thing for any of these men to help lead the prayer meeting. And keep them in prayer. A week this evening, God willing, a popa swap with Reverend Ian Thompson in Point.
- [1 : 0 9] So please pray for him and myself as we cross over across the bride somewhere next Lord's Day evening. We're here to carry on our public worship of God. We can do so, first of all, singing in Sing Psalms and Psalm 1a.
- Sing Psalms, Psalm 1 on page 1. Very first Psalm in our book there. Psalm 1a. Psalm 1a. Psalm 1a. Psalm 1a.
- Psalm 1a. Psalm 1a. Blessed is the one who turns away from wear of a wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners' paths or sit with those who mock.
- Instead he finds God's holy law, his joy and great delight. He makes the precepts of the Lord his study day and night. Psalm 1a. Psalm 1a. Have a whole psalm.
- To God's praise. Amen. Amen. Psalm 1a. to God's son's form, this Father speaks for him.
- [2 : 1 1] From Ty's Music. This dot is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk, Let God'n, let God in His life Go into bur once we won Elliot get Closed on trial by passion, His joy and delight.
- He is the reason for the Lord. His glory, dear and high.
- He prospered, the light of the King. That's planted on the same.
- And the end of the season gives us truth. It's the inside of all the way.
- The King of the King. The King of the King.
- [3 : 5 0] The King of the King. The King.
- The King. The King.
- The King. The Greatain Lord comes.
- Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. We come again before you and we bring before you once more of the prayers and the petitions.

Even those who have been offered up today since our last gathering together, we are aware that even on this day, this day set aside for worship, this day set aside to think about you and your holiness and who you are and what you have done, we understand we live in a world where there is so much distress and so much pain.

[5 : 18] Even on this day of rest, there are many things which have entered into our experience this day. I pray just now once more for those here this evening who are burdened in their minds, those here this evening who have heavy responsibilities and heavy worries bearing down on them, who this week perhaps ahead of them lie, worrying and difficult situations they must work with and deal with.

Some here who this past week have had to work through a complicated perhaps family situation or personal situation, who are going through painful and worrying health situations.

We bring these things before you in general, but we know that you know them specifically. You know every one of us. You know our situations. You know it, the very words of our prayers before we even open our mouths.

And yet you tell us to come and to pray. You tell us to put out our hearts before you. You tell us to find our hope and our peace before you. Help us then to do that, to bring all these things before you.

We live lives that are so complicated, and to us lives which seem at times impossibly complicated. And to try and bring together all the bits and pieces of our stories, we come to you.

[6 : 41] You who sees the beginning from the end, and the end from the beginning. There is nothing hidden from you. All things are seen by you and understood by you.

There is no mystery to you. Help us, Lord, then to relax into that reality. That we come to a Lord and God who knows the whole story. That you hold eternity in your hands.

That you are a sovereign God with full control over not just every big event, but indeed every single event. Every twist and turn of our lives.

But more than that, every atom, every single atom of the whole world, the whole universe, we see and touch and taste and experience and exist, and it all belongs to you.

Not a single part of it is lost to you. Lord, help us then to come before you this evening, understanding that we come to a God who doesn't just see coldly from a distance, but a God who sees, who knows, and a God who cares.

[7 : 45] Come just now before you as your people, giving you praise, those of us this evening who know Jesus and who love Jesus, giving you praise for this chance to publicly worship your name together, to come alongside one another as brothers and sisters, raising up our voices in praise, glorifying and magnifying the glorious truth of our Lord.

Even as we sung just now that psalm, which gives us direction how we might live our lives, we are aware as we sing that psalm together, that that psalm fully speaks of one who is a perfect man.

Yes, we strive to live good lives and lives that glorify you, but our lives are not perfect. We'll never be perfect. That psalm reminds us that as one who is perfect, and one who has come and lived that perfect life, who committed no sin, who deviated not a single inch away from the very clear instruction of his life, who was subject fully to all the stipulations of what it is to be under the law, and yet he did not sin.

Tempted in all ways, our glorious Saviour, tempted in every conceivable, imaginable way, yet without sin, who was pushed and pulled, who was attacked by the evil one himself, yet he did not sin.

So that in him we have a perfect high priest, who knows us, who knows what it is to be human, who knows what it is to experience the full range of our human emotions, who can sympathize with us in all our sufferings, and all our pain, and all our miseries, one who became, who was made sin on that cross for us, that he knows what it is to be human.

[9 : 36] But yet, because he is sinless, because he is perfect, he can save us from our sins. He lifts us up from the darkness into his own marvellous light.

As to his name we give praise and honour and glory this evening. Our risen, glorious Saviour, who now stands triumphant at the right hand of the Father. Who is there with our names, as it were, on his lips, remembering us, guiding us, taking full, ongoing work, into the ongoing work of the Father, as all the plans are brought to our full completion.

We have a great High Priest, a great Saviour, and a great Friend, in our Lord and Jesus, Jesus Christ, who is there just now, guiding and leading. Not distant, but who is closely walking alongside us.

But not just that, who is before us, who is behind us, who carries us every step of the way. Help us then to find our peace this evening, knowing that despite the wind and the rain, and the storms of this life, that we do so, with him beside us, and him before us, him behind us, fully safe, in his love for us.

As we think of his love for us, Lord, we are conscious, we are here together as a family gathering, with duties, with duties to one another. Lord, help us then to love one another well, seeking to build one another up, to encourage one another.

[11 : 22] Help us, Lord, to come alongside one another, to be there, as your word tells us, to fulfil the law, by bearing one another's burdens. Help us to be in prayer, for one another, as family members, in the church.

Help us to show our love, spiritually and practically, to those of our brothers and sisters, who need it just now. Help us to be mindful. Help us to seek the growth, the discipleship, of those around us.

Help us to seek the good, of those around us, that together, as we've heard in previous weeks, as one body, we've built up together, with Christ as our head, and we as the members of our body, built up together, to serve, and to glorify, his name, in North Tulsa.

Pray once more, for this village, where you've placed us, some of us by birth, others of us, by relocating us here, for various reasons, and at various times, we gather together, this evening, and we bring before you, the whole, of North Tulsa.

As Lord, from the start of the Glen, then to, as far as Gary, that whole expanse, of this area, the many homes, and families, but also the many wider, family connections, with all the folks living, across the island, across Scotland, across the world, who have connections, and deep connections here.

[12 : 51] Lord, we bring them before you. Many of whom, perhaps we don't even know anymore, but you know them. But we ask, for the gospel transformation, of North Tulsa.

We ask, that your name, would be known, and glorified, and praised, in every home. Pray especially just now, for the homes, where there is no one, praying for them.

The homes, where there is no Christian witness. Lord, we ask that you would, provide one for them. Help us, to be salt, and light, in our communities. Help us, to be faithful witnesses, in this place.

To go out, with the gospel, understanding, that where your word, goes out, as we heard this morning, where your word, goes out, it never returns, without having accomplished, the purposes, with which, you have said it to accomplish.

That is our hope, and that is our trust. As the word, goes out this evening, as your word, goes out publicly, as your word, goes out privately, amongst the brothers, and sisters sharing it. Lord, you are achieving, your purposes.

[13 : 52] We pray, we would see, days of glory, and days of revival, and days of refreshing, and days of renewal, in North Tulsa. Days of the gospel, as known, and seen, and heard, proclaimed, from home to home.

Until these days, of glory come, give us wisdom, to serve you well, in this day of small things. For we know, that you first trust us, with small things, for you trust us, with the larger things.

Help us then, to serve you faithfully, just now, with the numbers, that we have, with the situation, that we have, with the hope, that we have, and perhaps the small faith, that we have, that one day, we'd see an increase, of all these things, as we see your name, glorified and magnified.

As we pray, for the revival, and the renewing, of this wider village, we pray the same, for ourselves, as your people. Those of us, perhaps, that have grown cold, in our love, towards our saviour, revive, and warm again, that love, that first love, of Jesus.

Those of us, perhaps, who are caught in sin, as your people, Lord, release us from that sin, provide, Lord, discipline if needed, and remove that sin, from us. Those of us, perhaps, caught up in disbelief, or lacking belief, lacking trust, lacking assurance, for various reasons, Lord, we ask you, would increase faith, increase assurance, increase hope.

[15 : 16] We find, all our answer, all our hope, all our peace, and all our joy, in Jesus, in who he is, and what he has done. It's all these things, in, and through, and for, his precious name's sake.

Amen. Let's turn to read, in God's word, the letter of Paul, to the Colossians. Colossians chapter 1.

We actually read part of this, on first evening, I think it was, but, Colossians chapter 1, is on page 924, of the church Bibles. It's, it's one of his books, it's very easy to flick past.

Colossians chapter 1, page 924. Colossians 1, page 924.

Let's again hear, the word, of God. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints, and faithful brothers, in Christ at Colossae, grace to you, and peace from God, our Father.

[16 : 27] We always thank God, the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we pray for you, since we heard of your faith, in Christ Jesus, and of the love, that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up, for you in heaven.

Of this you have heard before, in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed the whole world, it is bearing fruit, and increasing, as it also does among you, since the day you heard it, and understood the grace of God, in truth.

Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ, in your behalf, and has made known to us, your love in the spirit. And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled, with the knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom, and understanding, so as to walk in a manner, worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened of all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance, and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share, in the inheritance, of the saints in light.

He has delivered us, from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us, to the kingdom, of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image, of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities, all things were created, through him, and for him, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together, and he is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything, he might be preeminent, for in him, all the fullness of God, was pleased to dwell, and through him, to reconcile to himself, all things, whether on earth, or in heaven, making peace, by the blood of his cross, and you, who once were alienated, and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled, in his body of flesh, by his death, in order to present you, holy and blameless, and above reproach, before him, if indeed, you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting, from the hope of the gospel, that you heard, which has been proclaimed, in all creation, under heaven, and of which I,

Paul, became a minister, now I rejoice, in my sufferings, for your sake, and in my flesh, I am filling up, what is lacking, in Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, that is, the church, which I became a minister, according to the stewardship, from God, that was given to me, for you, to make the word of God, fully known, the mystery, hidden for ages, and generations, but now revealed, to his saints, to them, God chose, to make known, how great among the Gentiles, are the riches, of the glory, of this mystery, which is, Christ in you, the hope of glory, him we proclaim, warning everyone, and teaching everyone, of all wisdom, that we may present, everyone mature in Christ, for this I toil, struggling of all his energy, that he powerfully works, within me, amen, and the praise of God, for his holy, and his perfect word, again singing, this time from the Scottish Psalter,

[20 : 20] Psalm 84, yeah, a psalm we know so well, but a psalm, much like Psalm 1, which speaks, of the Christian's journey, Psalm 84, Scottish Psalter, it's on page 338, Psalm 84, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant Lord they be, my thirsty soul, longs vehemently, ye fainst thy courts to see, my very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee, Psalm 84, verses 1 to 6, to God's praise, to God's praise, O Lord of hosts to me, my CHO worth of thy grace,

My daily arm and dead child, O living God for me.

Behold the sorrow of my death, and others sweating to rest.

The sorrow of all, so for herself, hath purchased in the nest.

In thy blood, O church, when she stayed, her young once or nearly.

[22 : 45] O the Almighty, Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Bless God in thy arms and will, the air of the healthy place.

Bless is the one who spent the war, and who tar down thy wings.

Uppas in the long way, Gashin, let him do ye the wells.

O children in that fallen dance, the poor swim of the hills.

[24 : 03] Turn back to the chapter we had, Colossians chapter 1. Looking at verses 9 down to verse 14 this evening.

Remember, we've just finished off a month-long series looking at what is the church. And we ended that last week by seeing the church in glory.

Just for this evening, as we come to this week between both our series, I want us to look down at a case study, almost, in Scripture, at what a functioning church looks like.

And here we have the church in Colossae. And just for a short time this evening, just under three very simple headings, looking at these verses, and we see what it is to be a church.

And some of this, indeed, I'm sure most of this, but quite obvious to us, but often it's the obvious things we are liable to forget. And it's the obvious things that are so often lacking in my own walk and in our joint walk as a congregation.

[25 : 16] It's the obvious simple duties and privileges that we are so liable to forget. First of all, looking at our duties to one another.

Our duty to one another. And then seeing our service to the Lord. And then seeing our benefits in the Lord. Now, taking these verses as one chunk, we'll be going back and forward from verses 9 down to verse 14.

Our duties to one another, our service to the Lord, and our benefits in the Lord. First of all, then, what duties, and I'm using a word very carefully, what duties do we have as Christians, as brothers and sisters this evening, to one another?

What are the very basics we see taking place in this church of Colossae? The very basics we see as Paul writes to them, as Paul tries to teach this church what it is to be a serving Christian.

How does Paul model that simple reality of being a Christian, dealing with other Christians? First of all, we see there is clear gospel interest.

[26 : 26] Verse 9. And so, from the day we heard. From the day we heard. So Paul is there talking about himself, and when he first got this report from Epaphras, as we see it earlier on, in the reading, Epaphras has given him a report as to how the gospel work is going in Colossae.

And Paul and Timothy, and whoever else that is with him, when he got the report, that they're wanting to know. They care about what's taking place in Colossae.

And so, from the day we heard. In other words, they asked for a report from Epaphras, they then wanted to know what's going on, and they eagerly received the report that they were eagerly awaiting for.

Quite obvious here, but our first point is, we have to have a gospel interest in one another. That's pretty obvious.

I know it is. But it's something perhaps we see so often in Scripture, but we jump over it. Now, let me begin by saying what that doesn't look like, what that isn't.

[27 : 41] Again, I know this is clear to us, but just to help us. There's a difference between a gospel interest and nosiness. There's a difference between gospel interest and nosiness.

And sadly, to our own shame, perhaps individually, but also culturally, we have overstepped that barrier, overstepped that line, plenty of times as Christians. We should care what's going on in one another's lives, but never be nosy about it.

And indeed, we'll cover this later on in the year. We'll look at some of our pet sins, some of our forgivable sins that we commit so happily, and gossip.

Gossip is ranked alongside murder, you'll note in Scripture. James is quite clear about that. Gossip kills. The tongue kills. There is no place for gossip in the church, not at all.

So that's what it's not. It's not nosiness, it's not gossip, but it is gospel interest. We shouldn't be uncaring towards one another. We should care for what's taking place.

[28 : 49] Paul here is caring. And again, this is one example. In all of Paul's letters, you see Paul doing the same structure. He is waiting, and he is glad to receive news of how the church is getting on.

Well, we get Paul, of course, a prophet, yes, a smart man, yes, a beloved brother, yes, but he's still normal.

He had no, he was still one of us, and he's still waiting to hear death, but the good news, or the bad news, perhaps, of how these wee churches he planted, how they're getting on.

He cares for them. Now, we ourselves, it's why we do the morning weekly reminders. We're not doing them just to give a wee interest as to what's happening in the world.

No, we're doing these prayer points every Sunday. The free church publishes these prayer points to email every single week, not just for some interest, not just to fill a space in the morning, because we're supposed to have a gospel interest in the our brothers and sisters around our island, around our world.

[29 : 53] We'll see that more in a second. We are a Presbyterian church. We are there to care for one another, to support one another. It's why, going forward, you'll be seeing more pulpit swaps and things like that.

It's not to give us a scythe. I hope you don't think that. It's certainly not a scythe. There's often more work in a pulpit swap, because you have to then drive to the place you're doing a swap with and drive back. Next week, both Ian Thompson and myself are doing a swap.

Now, there's no less effort for either of us. There's more effort. There's more work. We're both having to go to a congregation. He is familiar to ourselves and he's very much looking forward to coming to yourselves. Again, I will say that.

But I'm having to go somewhere I'm not familiar with and drive there and do a sermon and come back home again. It's no hard work, but it's extra work. Why? Because we're Presbyterian. As ministers, as elders, we want to help one another out.

As members together we want to help one another out. Have a gospel interest, a gospel care, a gospel duty to one another. This is what we see in the interconnected church system.

[31 : 00] The church in Colossae, the church in Corinth, the church in Rome, different people, but they're sharing these letters. They're talking of one another. They have a gospel interest in one another.

Quite simply, as Christians, following the example of Paul here, we must have a real care, a real concern what is going on in a wider church. I'm not saying about yourselves here, but it's very easy for us as a congregation.

I haven't found this at all. I haven't found this, but it's very easy in the future. I've got to watch it. We don't become so isolated. But there's good work going on in the wider Presbytery.

There's good work going on in a wider free church. There's good work going on across some of the denominations in our nation. We hear the bad news so quickly. We often don't hear the good news, the encouraging news, and there's plenty of it.

Plenty of it, friends and brothers and sisters. So we need to foster together a gospel care, a gospel interest. So quite simply, we must first of all care locally.

[32 : 07] We must care for what's going on in each other's lives. Not in a nosy way, not in a gossip way, of course not, in a brotherly or sisterly way. I'll draw on alongside one of everyone and say, how are you doing?

I gave you the challenge last month. There'll be a new challenge for February. I'll share that more next week. The challenge was to offer to pray for one another.

Did you take up that challenge? Did you ask a brother or sister from the Lord to pray for them? If not, then this is the challenge again. You've got another week to do it.

We'll change the challenge for next week. One more week. In gospel care, ask a brother or sister of the Lord, how are you doing? How's your walk? How have you encouraged the gospel recently?

How can I pray for you? It's hard. But we should be doing it. We care locally. Also, we care across the whole presbytery.

[33 : 07] There's good work going on in congregations across the presbytery. We must be engaged with these congregations. That's why purpose, what's good for us and things like that helps us engage with other congregations. We must care nationally across the wider free church.

Again, there's much good work being done. Much encouragement. We also have to care locally and nationally and across the whole Scotland outside the free church.

There is glorious gospel giving and Christ-like congregations inside our own denomination who are striving to serve the Lord. We must try best to care for them, to have an interest in them.

Quite simply, we need to have a clear gospel interest. That then helps us inform the next thing we should have at our next duty, which is a duty of constant prayer.

So a duty of gospel interest, gospel care, than a duty of constant prayer. And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you.

[34 : 19] We have a duty, brothers and sisters, to be a people of constant prayer. Now, there's a balance here. On one hand, it should never feel like a duty.

We believe that, we know that. It shouldn't feel like a duty. Prayer should be free and easy. But is it always free and easy? Does the prayer always feel as if we're about to launch into prayer any second?

Do we always feel like we want to just pray constantly? Well, I certainly don't. Brothers and sisters, I don't think any of us do, do we? There are times when prayer is difficult.

Praying for ourselves is difficult. In our mind, praying for the wider cause in Tolstice, the wider cause of the free church and which now is a wider gospel cause across the whole of Scotland. It's hard, isn't it?

But we must be a people of prayer. And we must be praying locally for ourselves. We must be praying on an island-wide basis.

[35 : 19] We must be praying nationally. Also, we must be praying globally. That's where the previous point comes into it. We must be informed as to what's going on in the world and going on in the church so that it better informs our prayers for them.

Also, we must pray together. Just an appeal once more and this appeal I fear is lacking. It doesn't need to be done for yourselves. Our congregations are shocked when they hear the numbers we have in our prayer meetings.

It's very encouraging for me personally. I know not everyone can make it all the time and I would never push that or pressure you for that. But as you say prayer together in the words of Spurgeon that prayer is the boiler room.

Prayer is the furnace room, the engine room of the church. What a church is and prayer together that's what a church is in our community. That's the reality of it.

We must be praying together. Paul and Timothy and the church they are praying for the Colossians. They're joined together in prayer. It's a plural we see that we have not ceased to pray for you.

[36 : 32] In fact all of this is plural. As a church body, as Christians gather together they are a member of our churches. As Christians gather together they are praying widely and clearly.

We have a duty to prioritise prayer. And it requires discipline. And we know that ourselves. It doesn't take me to come and tell you that.

It requires discipline. We are not naturally inclined to do it. Why? Because naturally we are inclined to do everything that's unholy. Yes, we are new creatures, new creation. Yes, we love prayer.

We love God's word. We love fellowship together. We love being under the word. But there are times when our love for it doesn't make us do it. We love it and we do it out of love.

But also we must be disciplined. It doesn't happen naturally at times. Life is busy. Life is hard. I know for a second do I doubt that. But life for the early church was busy.

[37 : 33] Life for the early church was hard. Life for Paul was busy. In between being in prison, being beaten, being shipwrecked, being attacked, being starved, being in situations beyond whatever we understand, Paul found time to pray.

That's not to shame us but it's to state the obvious. If Paul can do it, if the early church can do it, in between being thrown to lions and set alight on Nero's front garden, then we can manage it to pray for ourselves and pray for one another to be disciplined in our times and lives or spiritual lives of prayer.

There's no point, there's no point to us going forward this year and speaking of it, the spiritual work we long to see in Tulsa. Seeing the gospel shared from the Glen to Gary.

All that sounds good and we pray for it but it doesn't take place, it means nothing if we're not on our knees before the Lord begging and praying and intercessing and seeing this work done.

We must be a people of prayer and not that we aren't already but just to encourage us in that. We must carry on being a people of prayer. If the gospel work is not soaked in prayer then nothing will prosper.

[38 : 51] That's clear historically and it's also clear biblically. We have a duty to care have a gospel and a duty to be a people of prayer.

Also a duty we see here desiring the growth of those around us. What are Paul and the brothers and sisters praying for the church in Colossae?

We have not ceased to pray for you asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This is the content, at least some of the contents of Paul's prayer.

Paul is desiring their growth. He is desiring the building up of these other Christians. And elsewhere in his letters Paul asks, indeed Paul in the grammar he really begs these other Christians to pray for him, to pray for his growth, to pray for his fervorance in the gospel.

We must desire the discipleship, in other words the growth of our brothers and sisters. We have a gospel interest, we pray for one another, we pray for the gospel work, we also desire to see one another grow in the Lord.

[40 : 04] I know we do this and I've seen us doing this and it gives us great encouragement but we should share in one another's joys as we learn something more about the Lord, as we grow in the Lord.

And we do that how? By asking one another how can I pray for you? How have you been encouraged by the word? How has the Lord encouraged you? How is life just now? How can I be with you in prayer?

How can I be with you as a brother or sister in the Lord? And by coming alongside one another we see one another's growth. And the truth is as Christians when you see another Christian growing in their love and service to the Lord more often than not that encourages your own service, your own growth.

It fills you with joy doesn't it? You see a Christian who perhaps has little understanding and a little assurance and a little faith and then a year later, three years later, ten years later, that same Christian is growing up more love, more assurance, more faith.

And that gives us so much hope, doesn't it? That warms our hearts. We have a duty to desire and to assist in and to be there for the growth of one another.

[41 : 19] A duty therefore then to have a gospel interest, a duty to pray, a duty to pray for one another's growth in the Lord. So that's our duties to one another.

What about then our service to the Lord? What does it look like to serve the Lord as Christians from these verses? First of all, we serve the Lord in our walk.

In our walk. Carry on the prayer in verse 10. So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him. As Christians, our walk should match our proclamation quite simply as that.

We have to live a life that is a good witness. Quite often, there was an elder in Graver many years ago and I've heard the same phrase said here with your own elders and with older folks here in fellowships over the years.

It's a common phrase, common expression. There are many Christians historically who are Christians in church and devils at the thank.

[42 : 29] Now that feels a wee bit perhaps wrong to say that. But we know what that means, don't we? We heard a question. Their life and their witness is one thing publicly but in public in the thank when there are things going wrong perhaps or at home in private requires something different and that destroys the gospel witness that they have.

We have to live lives like good witnesses. Now we're not saying for a second it's about looking good or sounding good. It's quite the opposite. But our home life, our private life, our normal interactions publicly that must be the same as our church life.

there's no point at all, no one whatsoever if we're one way with brothers and sisters in the Lord and another way in the world. Yes, we love one another in a different way and we have a different time for one another but our conduct must be the same.

In fact, our conduct in the world should be better and more honourable than those who as of yet don't know the Lord. And historically, we know ourselves, historically, that has done so much damage to the cause of Christ in our island and our nation when Christians are one way on a Sunday and Monday onwards they live a different life completely.

Now, brothers and sisters, we will fail. I with you, we will fail and falter and there are times we say things and do things but we'll make a mess of things, no doubt about it.

[43 : 59] We are sinners, saved by grace, we're still sinners. But I'm talking about here a consistent lifestyle where our walk is not matching our profession.

We are to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, shaping our lives to be more Christ-like, praying that we become more like our saviour day by day.

It's not about perfection. We want to achieve that. The gospel is not be perfect and follow me, no, the gospel is follow me, we know that. And we know also biblically we are being made more Christ-like day by day.

That work of sanctification is going on in the lives of believers. Day by day, minute by minute, we are being made more Christ-like. Whether we see it or not, that is a gospel truth. But with that, we ourselves must watch our walk.

As Paul says, that our walk is a manner worthy of the Lord. Striving to live a life that is pleasing to God. So we aren't saying one thing or acting one way as Christians and then publicly or privately behind closed doors living a whole different life.

[45 : 15] Again, the damage that is done to the gospel cause in our own culture is hard, I think, to define. Our walk. Also, we see our fruit as Paul carries on this prayer.

So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work. Bearing fruit in every good work. It takes us back to verse 6 where Paul says the gospel, does he know what to it, it's bearing fruit and increasing in the whole world, the whole place the gospel is being proclaimed.

The image here is as the gospel goes out and the whole world is proclaimed and it bears fruit, it grows and it grows and it grows. So should our lives be a life of growth.

Now this is not something, brothers and sisters, that impacts our salvation. That's very clear. We're not saying that you aren't a Christian and somehow your life isn't one of constant growth and constant improvement and constant...

That's nonsense. That's not biblical. We strive for that. That's not what happens, is it? If a Christian's journey is ups and downs and we plateau at times and we go right down and right up, we know that to bear experience.

[46 : 34] But again and again we strive to be those who bear good fruit. And Paul elsewhere, of course, has named that fruit for us. At least some of that fruit, Galatians 5, 22-23, that fruit, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We strive to bear that fruit. We pray that the Lord will make that fruit in our lives more apparent to ourselves, to those around us. That is the prayer of Paul for the Christians.

It's our duty that we bear the fruit. The fruit, what, of love, love for one another, of joy, joy in the Lord. Now, joy doesn't mean we're happy just all the time.

It's kind of fake happiness. No, no. Paul has joy as he's seeing his very life being taken away from him. Paul has joy when he's being shipwrecked and having his back torn to shreds by bits of metal and a whip.

Paul has joy. Our saviour had joy. What joy the joy set before him. He endured it all. He endured the cross. He endured the suffering and shame.

[47 : 53] Our saviour is being ripped to bits. His body, his back, his head, thorns pushed into his back, ripped to shreds. He's made unrecognisable bodily. He's been so torn to bits.

Yet there is joy. As Christians we must have joy. Why? Joy because we have already won. Our future is certain.

Our future is guaranteed. Our saviour has conquered it all. Therefore we have joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness.

Faithfulness. Gentleness. Gentleness is interesting. Gentleness is one of the qualities of an elder, of a church leader that is so often perhaps overlooked.

We want church leaders who are dynamic and have vision. Church leaders who are this, who are that and all good things. But gentleness is the most repeated. The most repeated quality to be found in the scripture of what an elder, what a minister, what a mature Christian should strive to be.

[48 : 57] Gentle. Interesting, isn't it? The Lord wants us to be a gentle people and self-controlled. Finally, we see in terms of our service to the Lord our discipleship.

Bearing good fruit in every work and increasing in the knowledge of God. We prayed earlier that we should be praying for the growth of one another but also as Christians we are responsible for our own discipleship.

Our own growth as Christians if we know the Lord here this evening. Yes, as a church we seek to disciple. Yes, as a church it's the duty of myself and the elders to make sure you're being discipled and to grow up in the Lord but ultimately it's you yourself who has to do as it were the leg work, the hard work.

We can run programs and run ideas and do this and do that and we certainly will but if individually you aren't engaging with that if you aren't wanting to grow there can't be growth.

Programs don't grow you. Studies don't grow you. You must engage yourself with the growth. You must desire as Paul says here to increase in the knowledge of God.

[50 : 18] Now, not for a second does this mean that to be a good Christian you must be somehow academic. Perhaps have that view that the best Christians are the academic ones the ones who write the books the rest of us try and read and the Christians who have a degree Christians who have done four years of free church college are somehow holier somehow better than the rest of you riffraff in the pews.

I hope that's not what any of us think because that is a wholly unbiblical and just wholly wrong view. those who are academically perhaps smarter but it does not necessarily translate into holiness.

There are plenty and there have been plenty of brothers and sisters who we know many of us who we love dearly who academically achieved nothing who left school early who have no qualifications and had no qualifications to put together whose eloquence perhaps wasn't great and so on and so on but they were giants in the faith brothers and sisters who loved the Lord who knew the Lord and were so close to the Lord growing in the faith and growing in discipleship it does not mean we have to somehow be academic.

At the same time there must be hard work. Even these brothers and sisters who weren't academic who were so close to the Lord they spent time with him they put in the work they took every situation to the Lord engaged in prayer all the time they spent time in his word hearing it or reading it engaging with it verse by verse chapter by chapter they spent time with the Lord they in other words engaged in their own discipleship and because of that they grew and they grew the other sin there is somehow we often equate that those who know more are therefore holier.

This is a problem I know that we've had culturally and you'll know this yourselves culturally it's a bad problem what we have it's going away thankfully but the more holy someone sounded and the more holy that they put themselves across the more they were somehow assumed to be better and closer to the Lord when in reality those who sounded holiest at times their private lives were full of sin and disobedience and mistreatment of family and awful Christian witness and so on and so on and so on so our discipleship isn't proved by our academic qualities how then do we see discipleship how then do we see growth a real discipleship is the thing we said before is growth in theology and growth in doxology it's a reminder our quick Greek lesson this evening real discipleship is growth in theology first of all we must grow in theology the knowledge of God theology the knowledge of God and we do that by reading scripture perhaps by listening to scripture perhaps reading isn't your thing you can go online if you have access online you can listen to scripture be read to you you can listen to the whole bible being read to you in a matter of days listening to bible reading to the bible reading the bible engaging with the bible engaging in discussion coming to the bible study discussing privately whatever it takes for you to grow in your understanding of the lord theology and the thing that scripture is scripture meets you at your level so if you're somehow academically able to understand the great depths of theology fine scripture meets you there if you know nothing else other than

[54 : 34] Jesus is lord and I love him then scripture meets you there because in reality you're both in the same place you're both growing in your knowledge of the lord and the lord doesn't see difference there you both and we all grow together theology then must lead to doxology so our learning about God however we do it must then lead to doxology which is the praising of God so learning about God must always lead us to praising God if we ever just learn for the sake of knowing more then what does it matter it's like a sermon being nothing but facts and figures and history and geography that's not a sermon it's a lecture it's not a sermon a sermon without application is a waste of time as charmers would always say a sermon without application is a picture of a steak a picture of meat it's there but it's not actually there if we are all about learning for the sake of learning but not turning that learning then to magnifying and praising and glorifying

God all the learning means nothing it means nothing at all our theology must then lead to doxology as we keep doing that learning about God and loving him more for what we learned about him learning about God and praising him more for how amazing he is learning about God and praising him learning and praising him we do that cycle we grow in our discipleship we grow in our love of our saviour and we grow as Christians individually as we grow as Christians and together as one body we grow together as Christians we have a duty of discipleship as Christians we have a duty to bear fruit a duty to walk in a way that glorifies God finally and briefly we see the benefits we have as Christians in the Lord and we covered this in the morning series last few weeks just to remind ourselves in the

Lord what benefits do we have power verse 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might brothers and sisters the power we serve the Lord with the power we learn about God the power we use to grow in our faith the power we use to serve the Lord to evangelise to share the gospel it's all his might yes we must strive and yes we must do this and do that and yes we are called to be salt and light and yes we are called to read scripture to hear scripture to attend the means of grace to grow up together but it's all done in his might it's all about him as we seek to serve him as we seek to love him seek to know him better he works in us with his wonderful mighty working power and he brings all things in his own time to a full fruition we're strengthened with all power according to his glorious might if it's our power and our might we would fall flat and feel empty so quickly it's his power and his might all our discipleship all our witnessing all our personal growth all our public work it's all done his power he also gives us the gift of endurance for all endurance and patience with joy sometimes the hardest part of a

Christian's life is just keeping on going keeping on going isn't it you've been praying for that one person for the last five years ten years twenty years fifty years praying for that one loved one seeking to be a good witness to them for years and decades still there is no change they haven't come to church they aren't touching our bibles they have no interest in the gospel you're seeing the church numbers decline year after year this church was much more full now it's half empty that's hard you're seeing the gospel cause in Scotland and the UK decline and massively decline we're seeing as we've seen recently there are now statutes coming against the church which will seek to curtail what we're saying in their sermons that's hard enduring is hard and all these things we must endure we must keep on praying keep on being faithful keep on praying for the good of our own families and friends the good of North

Tolstah the good of the nation it's hard to endure it was hard for Paul I'm sure to endure hard for the church in Colossae to endure the whole world was against him the Romans were after them the whole culture was after them yet they endured how with patience and joy giving thanks to the father how does God encourage us then in our endurance well he qualifies us to share the inheritance of the saints in light we are given an inheritance and we're given as a word illumination we're reminded here that for all our endurance all our hard work and there is hard work all the tears that Christians have shed all the tears we still shed all that hard sowing work going out in tears to sow there is an inheritance for believers at the end of the day there is a place beside our saviour set aside for us but one day we will close our eyes in this world open them in glory and we will hear one day the call of our saviour good and faithful servant enter into the rest prepared for you we have an inheritance purchased for us secure for us in glory it's guaranteed for us it's guaranteed for us the image isn't it we're on a long journey home a long journey home but it's the boys and girls this morning you've got your house keys in your pocket you know your house is waiting for you the heating is on the kettle is on the fridge is full the house is warm and cosy the weather and storm and rain and chaos but you're heading home you have a sure inheritance the keys in your pocket and one day you will turn the key in that door and you'll be in and join the saints the brothers and sisters before us join the saints in light and the final hope we have is this glorious verse 13 the reminder we've been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of his beloved son we've been redeemed set free set free in the forgiveness of sins quite simply the whole thing the whole benefit we have in Jesus summarised in verse 13 we've gone from the domain of darkness and been taken where to the kingdom of his son the kingdom of his son darkness to light brothers and sisters that is the benefit we have right now for all the attempts we have to serve him well and to serve one another well for all the times we perhaps make a mess of things and we do things wrong and we say things wrong and we just get mixed up the benefits of the believers are not dependent on our service we're not dependent on our duty and here's the gospel is so confusing to the world every other religion every other religion says do good and get good things at the end that's not what we have is it that's not our hope is it our hope is he is good and because he is good he guarantees us these good things through his finished work we must just strive on keep on working keep on doing our duties to one another keep on serving our

[63 : 45] Lord and know that before us lies all these benefits and many more there are I'm sure a thousand plus things that differentiates us and the church in Colossae culture language skin colour so on and so on and so on and so on nothing has changed the brothers and sisters who sought to serve the Lord in Colossae Paul was seeking to encourage were the exact same as them we all have family and friends and loved ones we long to see in the kingdom we're here placed in a community that needs to hear about Jesus we all see our own witness at times being so shocking and being so lacking and at the same time with the Christians in Colossae 2000 years ago and us here in North Tulsa we have a saviour who has purchased salvation for us who gives us endurance who has given us and purchased for us assured inheritance and brought us from darkness to light let's bow our heads to a word of prayer encourage us we ask from your word encourage us this new week to serve you faithfully to serve you well we confess

Lord as we think of these duties that we often worry that we have failed you so badly in them we give you praise that you are not there to mark down our in equity but you are there to encourage us again and again as those here this evening who know and love Jesus you are there to encourage us to keep on walking to keep on the path to keep on seeking to serve to grow in our love and knowledge and there after that to grow in our praise and there after that to grow in sharing the good news of our glorious saviour pray Lord for salvation of North Tulsa for salvation of every home represented here and the many not represented here pray Lord for the endurance of your people pray Lord for the patience of your people pray Lord that you give us the ongoing reality that we are here saved in this world to fulfill the glorious responsibilities of being salt and light on a dark and tasteless day forgive us Lord our sins let's call these things in and through and for

Christ his precious name sake Amen We're going to close with singing the final verses of Psalm 84 singing of the Christian's journey home Psalm 84 verses 7 down to verse 12 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 84 in the Scottish Psalter verses 7 to 12 So they from strength and weary go still forward unto strength till in Zion they appear before the Lord at length Psalm 84 verses 7 to 12 to God's praise to day from strength and weary do till forward long to strength until and Boh ha o m never may o fear bak ■■■■ of h is one oil combined may may mean and

Give it, Jesus, your shield. Look on the face of thy man haunted dear.

For in thy courts one day excels a frozen brother.

[68 : 06] My thoughts that will like thee adore.

Thou dwell in chance of sin. For God 12 ■■■■ings of the soul.

Thou dwell in chance of sin. and glorious and well come no good from them that I be good oh that that that that that that that man is true even who I assure it on the and on the rest with the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of Holy Spirit with you now and forever more. Amen. Thank you.

Now upon spirit will you come back?

[70 : 24] Shanghai