

Conversion and its Results

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] Let's begin our worship now. We're singing firstly today from Psalm 105. Psalm 105, and that's on page 374, a tune is Glasgow. We're singing verses 1 to 7.

Give thanks to God, call on his name, to men his deeds make known. Sing ye to him, sing psalms, proclaim his wondrous works each one. See that ye in his holy name to glory, do accord. Let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord. Let's come before the Lord with these words and trusting that we will indeed be among those who rejoice today in seeking the Lord.

Give thanks to God, call on his name, we'll stand to sing. Give thanks to God, call on his name, to men his deeds make known. Sing ye to him, sing psalms, proclaim his wondrous works each one. See that ye in his holy name to glory do accord. And let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord. The Lord Almighty, the Lord Almighty, and his strength, with steadfast hearts, sing ye.

His blessed hand, his gracious face, sing ye continually. His blessed hand, his gracious face, sing ye continually.

Think on the words that he has done, which admiration breeds. His wonders and the judgment's all, which from his path, his wonders and the judgment's all, which from his path, his wonders and the judgment's all, which from his path, his glory and the glory of the Lord. Think on the words that he has done, which admiration breeds. Think on the words that he has done, which admiration breeds. His wonders and the judgment's all, which from his path proceeds.

[2 : 5 3] write■■■, ■■■orde and the God of man that■■■■etti organisations. THEMSEL approach came to God, that insights were filled■■INGHS cultured in the Lord and that he has done, which from his self and whether he has done, And ye that gave of children that whom ye chose for his own.

Because ye and ye only is the mighty Lord our God.

And his most righteous judgment's heart in all the earth abroad.

Let's unite together now in prayer briefly. Let's call upon the Lord. Amen.

Bless, we pray today, our young people and our children. Be with them, Lord, as they too engage in learning more about you and examining your word. We pray today that your blessing will be with them in the various classes and meetings that take place this morning.

[4 : 5 0] And we ask that your blessing will follow through into every aspect of their lives. Bless those who are leaders and teachers as well. Lord, we thank you again for them and for their willingness and for their dedication.

We pray that they may know your blessing. And ask that they come to once again give of themselves and of their time to the teaching of our young people. And so go before us now throughout this day.

And be with us in all that we do, whether in church or at home or elsewhere. We pray that we may do all things to your glory. And we ask it all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Amen. Okay, children, you probably won't be able to see this from there, but you maybe get an idea of what it is. It's a receipt.

It's a receipt from Home Improvement Center. Some stuff that I bought there last week. And it has the three items that I bought listed there.

[5 : 50] And you'll find the price for each of them, beside each of the ones that are listed there. And then at the bottom there, you've got the total of the three items that I bought. And then down below that, you've got further details about what happened on that occasion. You've got details about the card I used. Not the whole number, but enough to identify that it was my card. You've got the date. And then you've got something called Authorization Code.

With a number of numbers after it. Some seven or eight numbers after it. And then it says, please retain receipt. And please keep your receipt as proof of purchase.

Now, what uses that to us today when we're thinking about God? We're thinking about his salvation and about a relationship to him. Well, just like I bought these three items, this paper is proof that I actually bought them.

And proof that I paid for them. I didn't go into the shop and try and escape without paying. And this paper is the proof that I paid for these items.

[7 : 00] So actually, these items, because I paid for them, they've now become mine. They belong to me. I paid the right price for them. So I can say these are now mine.

They were belonging to the shop, but now they belong to me. I paid that price for them. And in the Bible, we're told about the price that God paid.

The cost of bringing us salvation. Of redeeming us. Of bringing us to himself. And it describes that cost for us very plainly. What did it cost to have our sins forgiven?

What did it cost for us to come to know and be friends with God? It cost Jesus his life. The Bible tells us we're redeemed not by corruptible things like silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ.

And that's proof that God has loved his people and continues to love them, that Jesus died on the cross for them. So if somebody were to come to me today and say, I don't think you paid for these items.

[8 : 12] You have to prove that you paid them. I can produce this receipt and say, here's the proof that I paid for them. And if somebody comes to you and says, you don't deserve to be a Christian.

You're not a very good person yourself. Why do you call yourself a Christian? I can produce in my heart evidence that Jesus loved me. And I can say, because Jesus loved me and because he died for me, that's all the proof I need between myself and God.

Now, as I said down, about halfway down there, you find an authorization or verification authorization code, which then has these numbers after it.

In other words, that code, as far as I'm aware, actually belongs to what I did there in the shop, and it doesn't apply to anyone else.

Nobody else can go into the shop and say, here's my verification code that I bought these items, because the shop could say, if they look up the records, no, you didn't actually buy them. James McKeever brought them. That's his verification code.

[9 : 20] And just the same as it is with our salvation as well, because Christ has died for us, God himself has a verification code for each one of us. Every time we come to the Lord to place our trust in him, God has, if you like, a spiritual verification code that says, that person has come to believe in Jesus, and he's acceptable to me.

She's acceptable to me. And if somebody suggests to you, you have no right to actually be a Christian, you can say, well, but God says, because of what Jesus has done, he can prove that I belong to him, because he paid the price of my redemption.

And I have a code between myself and God that nobody else can share, that cannot be given to anybody else, but is between me and God a proof that I am his, that he has bought me, that I belong to him.

And then as you go down, you'll find some other items there. It says, please keep receipt as proof of purchase. Sometimes, as Christians, we find it difficult, maybe at times, just to be sure about how things are between ourselves and God.

And then we look into our hearts, and we find it difficult then, because we start looking about our own faith, and about the strength of our faith, and how often we pray, and things like that.

[10 : 49] And God stops us and says, look, that's not the proof that you need. The proof you need is what Jesus has done for you. And the devil might say to you today, as young people or older people, what's the proof that God loves you?

What's the proof that you've got? Forgiveness of sins. And you don't look at yourself and say, well, I do this, and I do that, and I do this other thing. The proof is, I believe what Jesus did for me.

And I believe that because Jesus died for me, that's the proof, above everything else, that God loves me. And at the top, it's got the place that I bought this from, Home Improvement Center.

It's a shop that I like in town. I'm probably in it far too often, but anyway, it's there, and we buy some stuff from time to time. Home Improvement Center.

But you know, when you come to Jesus, you actually come to the Life Improvement Center. And whatever you actually take from that place, it's always going to be for your good.

[12 : 00] It's going to last forever. And the proof of purchase that God gives you for your salvation, it's never out of date. Nobody can turn to you and say, well, that's two or three years old.

We need some more proof. No, that's actually, supposing 20 years from now, somebody came to me and said, did you really buy these things? Are they still yours? Yes, that's the proof.

And whatever the devil tries to persuade you of, if Jesus has saved you, you will always be saved.

If Jesus is your Savior today, you'll be your Savior forever. That's the Life Improvement Center that Jesus is.

So may God bless these few thoughts to us. We're going to now say the Lord's Prayer together. You'll find it on your sheet if you want to read it through. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

[13 : 00] Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Let's sing again now to God's praise.

We're singing this time in Psalm 119, page 165. And that's from verse 129 to 136.

The tune is Finart. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful. So I obey them from the heart, from my heart. Your words as they unfold give light and truth to simple minds impart.

Psalm 119, verses 129 to 136. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful.

[14 : 14] So I obey them from my heart. Your words as they unfold give light and truth to simple minds impart.

With open mouth I hand and ear To know the laws that you proclaim.

Show me the mercy you extend To those who love and praise your name.

Direct my footsteps in your words Let stand or hold me in its sway From man's oppression set me free That your commands I may obey Upon your servant shine your face It's me the statutes you have made My eyes shed streams of bitter tears

Because your law is not obeyed Let's turn now to read God's Word as we find that in 1 Thessalonians The first letter to the Thessalonians And reading the first chapter Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy To the Church of the Thessalonians In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ Grace to you and peace We give thanks to God always for you all Constantly mentioning you in our prayers Remembering before our God and Father Your work of faith and labor of love And steadfastness of hope In our Lord Jesus Christ For we know, brothers loved by God That he has chosen you Because our gospel came to you

[17 : 16] Not in word only But also in power and in the Holy Spirit And with full conviction You know what kind of men We prove to be among you for your sake And you became imitators of us and of the Lord For you received the word in much affliction With the joy of the Holy Spirit So that you became an example To all the believers in Macedonia And in Nehemiah For not only has the word of the Lord Sounded forth from you In Macedonia and Nehemiah But your faith in God Has gone forth everywhere So that we need not say anything For they themselves report concerning us The kind of reception we had among you And how you turned to God from idols To serve the living and true God And to wait for his Son from heaven Whom he raised from the dead Jesus who delivers us From the wrath to come Amen May God follow with his blessing

That reading of his word We're now going to sing from Psalm 115 Psalm 115 That's on page 152 I'm singing this time to June Tiverton Verses 1 to 9 Lord not to us Lord not to us To your name be the praise Because your love and faithfulness endure O Lord always Why do the nations question us?

Where is their God they say? Our God inhabits heaven high And over all holds sway And so on Down through to verse 9 Psalm 115 Psalm 115 O Lord not to us O not to us Lord not to us O not to us To your name be the praise Because your love and faithfulness endure O Lord always Why do the nations question us?

Why do the nations question us? Where is their God they say? Our God inhabits heaven high And over all holds sway Their gold and silver images Are raftered cheerfully But they have mouths which cannot speak And minds which cannot see Their noses have no sense of smell Their ears can hear no sound

They have no feeling In their hands Nor can they walk around Although these idols Do have throats No words No words Have they proclaim Their makers And their worship words Will all become like them O house of Israel Place your trust Upon the Lord alone He is the mighty help and shield Of all who are his own

[21 : 57] Well let's turn now to the passage we read there In 1 Thessalonians 1 And today we're looking at the last couple of verses there From verse 9 Paul has been commending The Thessalonians for the clarity of their faith And for the way that they have made it so clear That they have come to trust in the Lord And that they themselves as apostles Are now in a position where they need not say very much about them Because it's become evident That these Thessalonians have embraced the gospel And come to trust in Christ And then from verse 9 For they themselves report concerning us The kind of reception we had among you And how you turned to God from idols To serve the living and through God And to wait for his son from heaven Whom he raised from the dead Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come You'll be aware I'm sure I hope

That there is a current government Scottish government consultation going on And it's with regard to so called conversion therapy And proposals that are going to be set before the government Before parliament to address what's called conversion therapy Though that doesn't seem to my mind to be any adequate definition Of what's meant by conversion therapy In any case it's important we engage with that Because there are serious implications If such proposals were to become law in our nation The deadline for it is 2nd April You can see details on the Free Church website On the Christian Institute website To give you guidance as to how to fill in the questions And it's important that we do that We mustn't just think Well it'll work out okay Or somebody else more qualified will do it We have to actually address these issues That are important to us all In the churches and as Christians in our nation

It has serious implications Because if this were to become law It would actually mean that it would be dangerous for you Dangerous in the sense of being liable to prosecution To actually have a conversation with somebody Where you are trying to deal with gender issues Dangerous because even individuals Praying with somebody Would fall into the category of trying to coerce somebody To change their gender And that became a topic In the matter of prayer or conversation It's also important for you as parents And grandparents Because a serious question arises As to who has the right To determine what is and isn't Acceptable or right for our children Who has the right to say About our children This is really what they should believe This is what we are putting before them This is the lifestyle we commend for them According to the scriptures And anyway Whatever our parental views may be

Parents ought to be the ones That have the right exclusively To actually teach their children And look after their children's moral And spiritual well-being These proposals would actually To some extent Take that out of parents hands And will place the powers In the hands of others Outside of that family home Or parental home So they become Those who determine what is and isn't right In terms of teaching our children Obviously it also Would have serious implications For preaching the gospel Because when we preach the gospel And the Bible's teaching about gender issues The so-called When we teach us We are going to look today At the matter of conversion It is well Spiritual conversion Then there is obviously If you look at the proposals A danger that the gospel itself Or at least an attempt would be made To curtail the gospel And to curtail the teaching of the Bible

With regard to what is human What is human life What is human relationship What human relationships What marriage is about And what gender Is actually about as well All of these areas Are really critically important for us As human beings In this day and age I am just saying that Because it fits in with What I am saying today With regard to our topic Which is conversion I want to look at conversion As it arises from verses 9 and 10 From the second part of verse 9 Verse 9 into verse 10 Where it talks about the conversion Of the Thessalonians From paganism To be servants of Christ And of God And I am going to use the three verbs That are used in these verses Pretty much as our headings today There are three main verbs Throughout these verses The first verb The first verb is To turn from

[27 : 13] How you turned to God From idols So turning from Idols to God That is the first verb Turning from And then there are two things As a result of that turning The second verb is the one Serving You turn to God from idols To serve the living and true God You will see that conversion Is very firmly attached to Serving God And thirdly There is the aspect of waiting For his son Jesus From heaven So that conversion Is inseparably tied To the mindset that waits For Jesus to return These three headings Conversion as a turning to God From idols And then two things as a result of that Conversion results In serving the living and true God And conversion results In waiting for Jesus to return Let's look at these quickly Just one after another

Notice how he says here This is what has been true Of these Thessalonians They themselves report Those who are reporting about the way The Thessalonians received the gospel How you turned to God From idols To serve the living and true God Now he mentions idols there And of course we associate that With paganism With the kind of paganism In Thessalonica Prior to the gospel arriving Paganism that reaches back in history In those times to Greek and Roman Paganism and even beyond that as well It's very similar in fact The emphasis in this passage To what you find in Acts chapter 17 In Acts chapter 17 I remember Acts chapter 17 Where Paul was for a while in Athens And he was just aghast at the sheer scale Of the idolatry in Athens And the number of idols That were actually part of the lifestyle

Of the Athenians And it was a very lucrative thing To actually provide for Paganism Because there were certain religious objects That you could say were used in devotion To the gods so called And people made a lucrative living out of that So every time the gospel challenged that And people turned from that way of life To God Obviously these things were then left behind Anyway, idolatry Idolatry Had a very strong hold Of people in Thessalonica And in Athens And these cities At the time of the apostles Because They could see from Athens They could see from Thessalonica They could see Mount Olympus And Mount Olympus Was thought in Paganism To be the home of the gods That's where the gods lived And the gods were looking out And looking down upon you And if you left their ways And if you tried to To abandon that And especially follow the way of Christ There was a great fear of

Revenge from these gods And you can imagine the hold That that actually had on people's lives And in some ways you can find that In different parts of the world today Even within certain world religions There's a great fear of What will happen if I change And become a Christian There are many Christians throughout the world today In various places in the world That are persecuted Because simply they've left Their idolatry If they've left their religion And come to know Christ And that's what it was like in Thessalonica Now of course you'd have to expand on this In terms of how we define gods In our society We mustn't just think that today We're thinking here of the gods The idols of the Thessalonians And that's really all that has to do with idolatry The Bible tells us That idolatry really involves Anything and everything That you place instead of God As a substitute for God To which you give your devotion Instead of giving it to God Our society is crammed with idols

There are at least as many If not more idols in our society today Than there ever were in Thessalonica All you've got to look at and see is What do people devote their lives to?

[31 : 35] Fame, celebrity, money, sport, sex, self You could add to that list And each one of these and all of them together Involve idolatry The Bible talks about covetousness Which is idolatry The love of self The envy of others So there's so many things You could expand on this text And expand on the whole definition of idolatry To embrace the idolatry That's currently so evident in our day as well And in fact, as John Calvin put it In one of his writings And it's true of you and it's true of me That we are naturally or natively As we are born as sinners As we follow the ways of sin Calvin said The heart of human beings Is a factory of idols A factory of idols We manufacture, we create idols for ourselves

And it is the power of Christ The power of grace The power of God That destroys and breaks That relationship with idolatry And here are the Thessalonians The Thessalonians being commended For the fact that they turned to God From idols And that word turned Is also an interesting word It actually means to actually have a complete turnaround A 360 or 180 degree turn If you like, you're going one direction You turn back in the very opposite direction And you're coming from one way of life And following one way of life To which you're devoted to be completely The opposite direction You turned to God From idols Now it's obvious as you read your Bible The following of idols Is the very opposite direction In lifestyle To following God And to worshipping God Whatever idol we might follow today Whatever occupies our heart In terms of giving it our devotion

Instead of giving it to God We're travelling in the wrong direction We're travelling in the opposite direction We're travelling in the opposite direction To what we know is pleasing to God And good for ourselves And the Thessalonians They turned to God From idols Now conversion Is always that Whether it's dramatic And sudden Or sometimes gradual Some people here would know The exact moment perhaps When they were converted When Jesus came into their life Powerfully When the Holy Spirit Convinced them of their sin Of their need to turn to God And seek His forgiveness Other people Myself included Could not put a finger on The exact moment Even the exact week Or day Or month even That that happened It was a process over time Where you came to know That something was wrong in your life You came to know the Gospel You came to work through The implications of not being right With God And you came to trust in Christ Whatever sudden or gradual

At the end of the day It amounts to the same thing You turn around From the life you live as a sinner And you turn back and face God And come to Him You turned from to From idols From sin From a life of self pleasing To God And that's what conversion really is To be converted Is to be turned around Of course there's things like Repentance And faith And other things associated with this Not going into that just now Today I'm just going to focus on Conversion itself And the meaning and definition of it From these verses So you're turning from one thing To the next It's a movement in your soul It's a movement in your whole life really Your whole life comes to a turnaround And as you turn around As you turn to God You come to a new Allegiance in your life A new devotion An allegiance to a new master

You no longer live to please yourself You no longer live to please your friends You no longer live to please The ideals of the society you live in You please God Your concern Your concern is to please Him Thomas Chalmers Was for quite a number of years Preaching the gospel Or preaching from the Bible At least he would say himself When he wasn't converted He was one of the moderates As they were called at that time Ministers in the church But weren't actually themselves Converted or believers And they generally preached as Chalmers did As Chalmers did A moralistic message A message to do with With morality In general Sometimes specific sense But there was little of Christ in it There was no emphasis in it On conversion Or the need to change your life But when Chalmers was converted And the Lord came into his life powerfully He described it as Coming under new ownership But it was he said

[36 : 51] The expulsive power The expulsive power Of a new affection The expulsive power Of a new affection Why did he put it that way? He didn't just say It was the power of a new affection A new affection for the Lord That he hadn't had before then No, he called it the expulsive power Of a new affection Because as the affection for the Lord Came into his life It expelled affection for idols Affection for sin Affection for self It was an expulsive power And wherever you and I To whatever degree Come to know the Lord Jesus Christ If we know him at all If we know him properly It will be an expulsive experience It will be something that deals with sin As something to be expelled Something no longer to be given A place of welcome in your life Something that you want to be without You turn from sin To God

And indeed that's part of the catechism's definition Of repentance Saving grace By which a sinner turns From sin unto God And there's the first thing they said That he said about The Thessalonians And their conversion How you turned to God From idols To serve the living And through God And obviously that would make an impact In that society Here were people whose life Was devoted to the idolatry Of society at the time Here were people who made it their business To actually gain from that idolatry Some of them Here were people whose lifestyle Corresponded to their belief in these idols These gods that lived on Mount Olympus As they thought All of a sudden That's come to an end All of a sudden People know them as They're now under a new ownership They're saying that they serve The Lord Jesus Christ It's a complete turnaround Completely different And obviously that would be Have a mighty impact

That's why Paul says They themselves report Concerning the kind of reception We had among you So today You have to look in your heart And I have to look in my heart And say Who has or what has My primary affection What do I love more than anything else Who do I love more than anyone else Who has the first claim on my attention Who has the first claim on my devotion Who has the first claim on my service On my time On my gifts In my relationships They turned To God from idols So conversion As a turning point to God From idols And there are two things that follow from that As we said That conversion firstly Results in Serving the living and through God They're turned to God from idols To serve the living and through God

That's life going In the opposite direction To what it was They were serving idols And here is something entirely different And it's very obvious that That Paul is describing God deliberately As the living and through God In contrast to the idols That they once served As we sang in Psalm 115 Very often idols were crafted Or shaped to have a human form Sometimes distorted Sometimes very often ugly But nevertheless A form that Was recognizable And not that every idol was like that But here is Paul saying And the psalmist was saying They have noses They have eyes They have faces They have ears They don't hear They don't smell They don't see They're dead They can do nothing for you They can do nothing for you And you turned He said To God from idols To serve The living And through God

We are here today Worshipping The living and through God And that includes Every alternative To Christ Every alternative To salvation in Christ Every alternative To that We can use the word religion If you like The religion that focuses On Christ The Christian faith Every alternative To that To some degree Or other Is following idols And being involved With idolatry It doesn't matter Which one you take Of even the major world religions Islam Hinduism Buddhism All of them together Or secularism Which itself Becomes idolatry Those who are devoted to it It doesn't matter Which of them you take And it's not hatred And it's not phobia To mention disagreement With these ideologies Otherwise we are being untrue To Jesus and to the Bible But we can say lovingly And tactfully That the Bible does not allow us

[42 : 01] To embrace any aspects Of what is idolatry And think we can just tack that On to Christianity That's what it tried down The years of the Old Testament Wasn't it? When the people of Israel So often imported The paganism And the idolatry From the nations around them God sent The prophets especially The likes of Isaiah Jeremiah All the way through These books of the prophets You'll see How frequently Idolatry is mentioned And how often Idols are described And a wonderful phrase Which the authorised version has I can't remember Exactly if it's like that In the ESV Lying vanities Lying vanities Vanities Which lie Futile objects Which take you away Into falsehood Lying vanities But he says To serve the living

And true God Instead of that The living God Well why does he call him The living God? Well for one thing Because He is the only life That's uncreated God does not have a created life The life of God is eternal Life of God is uncreated Nobody gave him life Nobody created life for him Unlike for you and for me And not only is he uncreated in himself But he's the one who creates life He created human beings He created animal life He created plant life He created life whatever it is outwith of himself And he created human life Especially human beings In his own image The life we have That we have from God Is a life that originates with God

Yes it's become corrupted by our sinfulness And fallenness And disobedience against God But he's the one who creates life for us And the wonderful thing is that this You could trace this into another avenue Which I'm not going to do just now But as the uncreated life that he is As God As the one who creates life Including our human life in the beginning So he's the one who has created life for us in Christ When you look at the way in which Jesus was buried And then rose from the dead And you can see in that itself That here is the one who creates life for us The fact that Jesus rose from the dead shows us This is God's concern that we might have life How did Jesus put it?

I have come in contrast to all who are thieves and robbers who came before me Who didn't care for the sheep I have come that they might have life And have it more abundantly And that care, that concern, that compassion, that love that Jesus has for his people, for his flock Led him to the cross Led him to the death of the cross So that life would be created for us Who deserved it not But who welcome it nevertheless And today Your greatest privilege Or one of your greatest privileges Is to know the gospel That tells you about the life That Jesus has brought about for you And your great privilege In terms of your own human experience Is to come to know this for yourself To have this living Christ This living God In your life

At the centre of your life Foundational to your life The living And the true God You see he mentions as well the true God Whether So called God or idol is false Lying vanities We mentioned the phrase earlier And so Now you're relating to the true God And that corresponds with having truth In our hearts Conversion results In serving the living and true God But notice this word serving as well You turn to God from idols To serve the living And through God To serve God You see the test The test of conversion Is not just being able to claim something As having happened in your life Any of us can really make that claim And say well I'm fine I go to church I'm a Christian And Paul is saying Well one of the great tests One of the great Not just a test Evidences of being converted

[46 : 56] Is that you've come to turn To serve the living God Serving God Honouring God Knowing that it's a privilege To be a servant of God Well that's something That actually marks you out As a Christian You know when you go to The likes of John chapter 13 That famous incident Where Jesus Took off his outer garments He girded himself with a towel Taking this form of a servant And began to wash the feet Of the disciples That was Jesus saying That's what makes a person great Not what they claim to be But what they show themselves To be in service The service of others And especially in the service of God And this is what The apostle is saying In Thessalonians To serve the living And through God Your aim As a Christian Is to please God I know you and I can say Every day we live pretty much

I'm sure I fail In meeting that standard You come to confess that Before God That you haven't made it today A hundred percent For the whole of the day To set out to please God But nevertheless You know that That's the bias of your heart The intent of your heart The desire of your heart And in Colossians Paul gave us a text Just in the previous letter Of Colossians He gave us a text That really should seek to Place in our minds Every morning we get up Because it's one of those texts That really should follow us Should follow us into every day Where he says In chapter 3 verse 17 Whatever you do In word or action Do everything In the name of the Lord Jesus Giving thanks to God the Father Through him See how comprehensive that is Whatever you do

In word or deed In word or action Do everything in the name Of the Lord Jesus In other words For the glory of Jesus For the praise of Jesus Set that As the benchmark As the direction of your life That every day You would like to Rise up with that conviction In your mind To follow it through For the rest of the day I must do all To the praise of my God I must endeavor to do everything For the honor of Jesus As the seven Why?

Because he has bought me He has made me his own He has paid the price Of my redemption And I owe it to him To live a life that pleases him Not myself So Conversion is a turning to God From idols And that results And that results firstly In serving the living and through God And results secondly In that conversion Results in waiting for Jesus To return And you notice how waiting Is coupled here with serving To serve the living and through God And to wait for his son From heaven Even Jesus And he makes it clear This is his identity He makes it clear who he means To wait for the son of God Well who is the son of God?

It is the same Jesus Who lived in this world As the son of God In our nature To wait for his son From heaven And waiting here It's not something that you just do passively And just wait for it to happen Waiting always In this sense of it In the New Testament Involves Waiting expectantly Waiting eagerly Waiting for something with anticipation That it's really of supreme importance to you And in fact As you actually go through Both of these letters to the Thessalonians It's interesting that In each chapter of both letters You have a reference To the return of Jesus In some way or other You can go through that yourself later Just read through the other very short letters You can read through them pretty quickly And in each of these chapters Somewhere or other A reference to the return of Jesus In other words For the apostle here In writing to the Thessalonians He obviously saw it as really important for them

[51 : 26] To take on board To take into mind The fact that Jesus was returning And the fact that they ought to wait for that Expectantly Knowing that it was going to be The crowning of the redemption As he came And revealed himself As the glorious Son of God Now in his exalted glory To take them back To be with himself in heaven That was so important Is it important To yourself to think of The return of Jesus How does the return of Jesus Fit into your thinking today Where do you place it Among the things that are important for you Not just to know and to know about But to actually have your heart set upon Because if you follow The thinking of the apostle His heart And he's wanting the Thessalonians heart To be absolutely set upon The return of Jesus Just as much as they ought to Still consider the death of Jesus The resurrection of Jesus

The resurrection of Jesus This Jesus whom God raised from the dead As he puts it here There's a reference to the resurrection Whom he raised from the dead Jesus So we have to actually eagerly anticipate His return And if we are his today It's going to be one of the great moments of our life To actually have the Lord's return In our experience To experience that for ourselves To welcome him It's such a huge feature Of these letters to the Thessalonians And it should be In my life and in your life as well Notice he says He raised him from the dead He doesn't just say Jesus the son of God Whom he raised from the dead I wonder why he's actually including These verses Well it's so that They will actually realise This is the same Jesus Who was raised from the dead That is going to return It's not a different person The same Jesus who died on the cross Is the Jesus who rose from the dead

Here is the emphasis on God the Father Raising him from the dead And by raising him on the dead Giving assurance That his work on the cross Was fully accepted That's another angle of theology Let's leave it there But to whom he raised from the dead It's the same person Who's going to return Though not in the same form If you like He's going to return in his glory He actually came the first time As a servant In his lowliness But it's an argument in favour of The return of Jesus That he has in fact Been raised from the dead You see some people constantly Will say to us What proof do you have that Jesus lives?

What proof do you have that Jesus is going to return? What proof do you have that the end of the world Is going to be at the return of Jesus Or associated with the return of Jesus And of course you've got to come back at that point And say well I can't do anything for you Unless you believe the Bible But if I believe the Bible As the word of God As the word of God that's been given to me From his own mouth Then I have to believe what he tells me in this word As being true and dependable And dependable And again in the book of Acts It's interesting how That same passage in Acts 17 Dealing with the idolatry of Athens That Paul as he was addressing these men of Athens In verses 30 and 31 He went on in his argument in presenting These things being then God's offspring 29 Think that divine beings like gold Or silver or stone An image formed by the art and imagination of man

The times of ignorance God overlooked But now he commands every people everywhere to repent Why? Because he has fixed a day On which he will judge the world in righteousness By a man or by the man whom he has appointed That's Jesus He has fixed a day God has fixed a day It's in his diary It's not going to go beyond it In which he will judge the world in righteousness In other words Every single one of us Will be judged in righteousness No bribes No excuses Nothing's going to be in our favor on that day Apart from the righteousness of Christ Apart from having Jesus as your savior But then he goes on to say He has appointed the day In which he will judge the world in righteousness By a man whom he has appointed And of this he has given assurance to all By raising him from the dead Isn't that interesting?

[56 : 18] The raising of Jesus from the dead Is giving assurance, Paul says, to all To all human beings who come to know and read the gospel Because the gospel is saying to us Here's your assurance that there is a day of judgment coming Because Christ has been raised from the dead And it's this Christ who has been raised from the dead Who will be at that day the judge of the living and the dead You know there's a day of judgment coming Because you read in your Bible that Jesus was raised from the dead And because Jesus was raised from the dead And God is giving us assurance That he has appointed a day In which he will judge the world By this man By this person And he finishes by saying In this text we have today To wait for the son from heaven Who he raised from the dead Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come The wrath to come is of course God's judgment

God's judgment on the wicked God's judgment on the ungodly God's judgment on the Christless It's the wrath to come The wrath of God The indescribable Awesome Wrath of God God's righteous Indignation Against sin That fell on Jesus So that it need not fall on you and me But fall on you and me it will If we haven't made Jesus our Saviour He will judge the world This Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come And why does he say Deliver us Why is it present tense Well there are different views of that But I think it's saying that He has delivered us There's a sense in which we're already delivered If we're saved If we're converted If Christ has rescued us

From sin From guilt That's going to remain the case But there's a process going on It's really associated if you like With our sanctification Or with being kept by God until that day And so in a sense there's that He is still delivering us He is still keeping us From that wrath coming to overwhelm us He delivers us From the wrath to come Experts Predict that A major earthquake will take place These are people who are experts in that field That a major earthquake That a major earthquake will take place In the vicinity of Tokyo in Japan In the vicinity of Tokyo in Japan Sometime within the next 20 to 30 years And they speak about it It's not something that's maybe possible But something that's almost certainly going to be the case It's not if It's a matter of when It's a matter of when There are, I don't know, 30 or 40 million people

Living in Tokyo or around these areas And these experts are saying We know that this is coming We have to prepare for it We have to do everything possible to try and mitigate This disaster We're sure it's going to take place Because we judge, we measure the various forces that are at play at the moment So it's not a matter of if it's going to happen We can't tell precisely when But it is going to happen And isn't that how it is with the day of judgment It's not a matter of if But when But you needn't worry about that today If your life is in Christ You are safe The earthquake of wrath Will not overwhelm you Jesus will be your protector then as he is now But you need to make sure

That you are found in him Not having a righteousness of your own But the righteousness That is of God By faith May God bless these thoughts to us Let's pray Almighty God We give thanks for the grace of conversion The grace of regeneration The grace that changes us inwardly From what we are by nature Into being servants of the living and through God Help us, we pray Lord To value your grace day by day Help us to measure ourselves Not by our own achievements But by what you have done for us Help us each day to be concerned To live out our faith And especially to be known as people who serve the living and through God Enable us to counter the various ways in which this age in which we live Seek to counter the gospel And remember every effort made Lord to uphold your cause And to uphold that gospel and to uphold your laws

[61 : 34] In that age in which we live Receive our thanks now And cleanse us from our sin For Christ's sake Amen We're going to conclude our service today singing in Psalm 27 Let's sing psalms again Psalm 27 On page 32 Singing this time to the tune Belmont We're singing from the middle of verse 9 Four verses to the end of the psalm O God my Saviour Leave me not, do not reject my plea My parents may forsake me Lord But you will welcome me Teach me O Lord how I should live And lead me in your way Make straight my path Because my foes oppress me Every day And yet I am sure that in this life God's goodness I will see Wait for the Lord Be strong Take heart For Him wait patiently

These verses O God my Saviour Leave me not O God my Saviour Leave me not O God my Saviour Leave me not Do not Do not Reject My plea My My My My My My My My My My My My My My My My O Lord, how I should live and lead me in your way.

Make straight my path because my foes oppress me every day.

Give me not over to the will of human enemies.

For liars rise to slander me and breathe out cruelties.

[64 : 26] Yet I am sure that in this life of goodness I will see.

Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart. For him wait patiently.

Forgive me, I won't go to the door today. I don't want to pass this cold on to anybody, so please excuse me for that. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Amen.