

# Convinced!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 27 August 2022

Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] James, thank you for your warm welcome. It's good to be with you, a privilege to share in worship and praise this evening. Before singing to God's praise, let me read just these few verses from the scriptures, where in Psalm 30 we're told, sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. Let us worship him together. Singing from the Psalter in Psalm 111, Psalm 111 from the Psalter, and we'll sing from the beginning to the tune Amazing Grace to verse 4.

Praise ye the Lord, with my whole heart I will God's praise declare, where the assemblies of the just and congregations are. The whole works of the Lord our God are great above all measure, sought out they are of everyone that doth therein take pleasure. Psalm 111, and we'll sing from the beginning to verse 4, to God's praise.

Praise ye the Lord, with my whole heart I will God's praise declare, where the assemblies of the just and congregations are. The whole works of the Lord our God is.

Our God is. The whole works of the Lord our God. Our great above all measure, our great above all measure, sought out they are of everyone that doth therein take pleasure.

In this work most honor, our great above all measure, In this work most honor, our great above all measure, most glorious and pure, and this untinted righteousness, and this untinted righteousness forever doth endure.

[ 2 : 58 ] His works most wonderful we have, may to be thought upon, The Lord is gracious and he is, full of compassion, The Lord is gracious and he is, full of compassion.

Let us pray together.

Let us pray together. Praise ye the Lord, with my whole heart I will God's praise declare. Lord, these words resonate within our very souls.

They speak of what it is to gather together, brother and sister in Christ, Before the throne of grace in worship and in praise. Lord, we would draw near to you with a spirit that would please and honor you.

We would long to know your presence and seek your face. And may it please you, Lord, to come in among us and do us good this evening. As we seek your presence and study together the glorious gospel of God, May it please you to draw near to us, to bless us, to edify us and to nourish us.

[ 4 : 33 ] Lord, we ask these things for you are a God of wonderful provision. You are a God of who is compassionate and full of grace toward us. And we bless you that this is the case and it has been declared as such through Jesus Christ, your son, our savior, the one who came into this world to seek and to save the lost.

And so we gather together this evening in the name of Jesus. We lift up his name, we glorify his name, we acknowledge him to be our king, our shepherd. We profess our faith and hope to be in him, the one who is altogether lovely, the one who came into this world and gave himself.

And so we, Lord, join with our brothers and sisters across our island and nation and world. And we see that the life we now live, we live by faith in the son of God, God loved us and gave himself for us.

What testimony, what profession, what hope. And we pray, Lord, tonight that that hope would burn brightly as we spend time this evening in worship and in fellowship over these days.

And that as we go into the week ahead, fortified by word and sacrament, may it please you, Lord, to bless our witness and our service of the gospel to those around us.

[ 5 : 50 ] For we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus would shine brightly through each one of our lives. That in our hearts, in our conversations, in our conduct, and how we hold ourselves in what we do and what we don't do, and how, Lord, we conduct our business and make our

decisions, and how we behave at home, at the workplace, in private and in public.

Lord, we pray that you would take the glory to yourself. And we thank you, Lord, that we would ask this to be the case. And we do humbly in dependence upon you, for the scripture tells us we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people special to God, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you from darkness into his marvellous light.

Lord, may each one of us, according to opportunity and your gifts and grace, in our own way, in our own homes, in our own circumstance, be as a city on a hill that cannot be hid.

And so, Lord, we thank you tonight for this opportunity to study the scripture together in anticipation of meeting at the Lord's table tomorrow on the beginning of a new week.

Lord, we gather this evening humbled at the teaching of the Bible that reveals to us that place known as Golgotha, the place where Jesus Christ gave himself to death, even death on a cross, where there he breathed his last, where there he suffered the agony of separation and judgment as the sin bearer of the world.

[ 7 : 36 ] We can scarce take in that scene. How can we begin to comprehend in our hearts when we come to the foot of the cross? But Lord, as we do so, we do so in faith and trust.

We look there in awe and wonder. We look there at times, Lord, broken, conscious of our own sin, conscious of our weakness, conscious of our need.

Lord, in Jesus, these things are met to their fullest. And so we say in our hearts, too, that when we survey that wondrous cross in which the Prince of Glory died, that we do so, Lord, through a sense of wonder, a sense of thankfulness, a sense, Lord, that there is the hope of the world.

It was not that someone died on the cross that amazes us. It's who died. It's not that blood was shed on the cross, but whose blood?

And there he became a curse for us. A lifetime of theological study and reflection and worship is not long enough to plumb the depths of that reality.

[ 8 : 49 ] The Son of God, the very Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world by becoming a curse for us. And so, Lord, we gather this evening humbled, dependent, grateful.

We meet, Lord, in anticipation also. For you tell us that where two or three gather in your name, you are there in the midst and there to bless. And so, Lord, we ask that the Holy Spirit would be amongst us here, ministering to us and amongst us in our hearts, shining his light of understanding and insight onto the person and work of Jesus, your Son.

That there we would glorify him and worship him and lift up his name and praise him and give thanks for his saving work upon the cross, where there he gave himself in perfection and took upon himself our sin.

And we bless you, Lord, that at the heart of the gospel there is a transaction, and that that transaction continues to happen around the world. That when sinners come to Jesus in repentance and faith, he takes our guilt and gives us his goodness.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so help us, Lord, this evening to further understand and appreciate and glory in this good news.

[ 10 : 13 ] And that we would go from here, Lord, encouraged and nourished, built up in our faith and deepened in our understanding of the deep things of God. That we would say, day by day, I am not ashamed of the testimony of my Saviour.

And I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. What a wondrous declaration that is, that all who believe are saved.

Bless, Lord, that message this evening amongst ourselves. As we study this evening your word in preparation to share together at the table of the Lord tomorrow, we ask that you would draw near to us, Lord, and that we would have a teachable spirit and a listening ear.

That our souls, Lord, would be edified. That we would know something of the fullness of God in our time of worship together this evening. Lord, we pray that you would bless your cause here on our island, across our communities and across our nation.

We long for the day when we will see the gospel taking root in hearts and lives around us. We long for the day where men and women and boys and girls will come to know Jesus Christ for themselves, professing their faith in him and acknowledging him as Saviour, living for him day by day.

[ 11 : 32 ] Remember us, Lord, in Scotland at this time. And may it please you to raise up men and women who will take their place in the public square and be unashamed of their testimony,

unashamed of their Saviour, and clear in their conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So, Lord, this evening we pray that you would come in among us, that we would know your word to be all the more precious to us, for it is the word of life. And here we have the promise of life in Christ Jesus.

And may it please you, Lord, that as together we worship, we would do so in humility and dependence, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

And so we pray for ourselves this evening. We pray for your cause across our land. We remember our nation. And we pray, Lord God, that you would remember us at this time, where it seems that secularism and atheism and humanism are running rampant.

And it seems that at times our nation, Lord, is hurtling full speed away from the cross, away from Christ and away from any concept of our nation being a nation that has a Christian heritage.

[12:47] And so, Lord, there is a great task, for the darkness seems to be extending and deepening. But we know, we know that that darkness is presided over by a defeated prince, who rages and is in terror of Christ at the same time.

And so he takes out his rage on the church of Christ and the people of Christ and the cause of Christ. And we pray, Lord God, tonight that we would be conscious of this roaring lion, seeking to be in amongst us, seeking to devour and scatter, seeking to inhibit and terrorise the Lord's people. May we resist him. May we resist him in the name of Christ. And may we, Lord, resist him in reliance on the grace and peace that you promise as we wait upon you.

And we bless you, Lord, for that great promise, that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. So be with us this evening. Draw near to us.

Cleanse us and renew us. Forgive our sin, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we'll sing again to God's praise from Sing Psalms in Psalm 119, verse 9.

[14:01] Psalm 119, singing from verse 9, page 157 in our Blue Psalm books. And we'll sing this section to the tune, Herringgate. Psalm 119 from Sing Psalms, page 157.

The second section. How can the young keep their life pure? By doing what your word demands. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands.

Your word I've hidden in my heart to keep me from offending you. Praise be to you, O Lord my God. Teach me your statutes, firm and true. And true.

We'll sing this whole section to God's praise. Praise. Praise be to you, O Lord. O come the young keep their life pure. I take what your word demands. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands. I seek you with my heart and soul.

Let me not stray from your commands. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands. You are my faith in my heart. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands.

[15:03] You are my faith in my heart. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands. You are my faith in my heart. To keep me from offending you. I seek you with my heart. I seek you with my heart. I seek you with my heart. I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands.

You are my faith in my heart. You are my faith in my heart. You are my faith in my heart.

You are my faith in my heart. To keep me from offending you. Praise be to you, O Lord my God.

Teach me your statutes firm and truth. Each law proceeding from your mouth.

I O Lord my heart. I grant you with my heart and soul. I plan thee with my lips. I attend your heart. I bend you with my lips and soul.

[16:16] I love to follow your commands. You are my faith in my heart. I love to follow your commands. A salvage love to kind their gold.

and their gold. I meditate upon your ways, and on your peace and timey flag.

I take delight in your decrease. Your word I never will neglect.

Wonderful words that speak of a tenacity and a determination to live wholeheartedly for the Lord.

Verse 10 there says, I seek you with my heart and soul.

Let me not stray from your commands. Words of commitment that come from deep-seated conviction. And we're going to be thinking about that this evening as we turn to the second letter of Paul to Timothy and chapter 1.

[17:43] 2 Timothy and chapter 1, where the apostle writes to his young brother in the Lord, indeed his son in the Lord. He was someone who Paul was deeply affectionate towards, who had

served as a right-hand man for many a long year in the work of the gospel.

And from what we can tell, this is Paul's final word and testimony. It is, in many ways, his will, his last will and testimony written to the church from a prison cell, incarcerated because of his gospel service and his love for Christ.

And so he writes to encourage Timothy and prepare him for leadership in his time. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelled first in your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, and now I am sure dwells in you as well. For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

[ 19 : 15 ] For God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and of love and self-control. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do.

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

Guard the good deposit entrusted to you. You are aware that all who were in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

But when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus. Amen. May God bless his word to our hearts. To his name be the praise. Well, before we spend some time together looking at that chapter, we'll sing again to the praise of God from the Psalter, Psalm 89.

[ 21 : 10 ] Psalm 89, singing from verse 13 in the Psalter. Page 3, 4, 5 in our Blue Psalm books. Page 3, 4, 5.

Singing Psalm 89 from verse 13. We'll sing to verse 16 to the tune Newington. Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might.

Thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. Justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place. Mercy, accompanied with truth, shall go before thy face.

We'll sing from verse 13 to 16 to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thy hand is great in might.

On thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

[ 22 : 22 ] justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place.

Mercy, accompanied with truth, shall go before thy face.

O greatly blessed O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful Son that know.

In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall grow, of glory, shall she have the editor Let's all take me on high.

Let's bow in prayer for a moment together. Lord, may it please you this evening to draw near to us. We seek above all, Lord, that everything done and said here would be pleasing and acceptable before you.

[ 24 : 14 ] We acknowledge you to be holy, holy, holy, almighty God, wondrous in power, glorious in might, amazing in grace.

And so, Lord, as we would hear you speak through your word this evening, we ask that you would lead and you would teach and you would mold and you would guide, that we might heed the scriptures and take these, your precious truths, into our hearts and from here into our lives and into

our homes.

We ask, Lord, that we would be effective witnesses and go on by your grace and peace to be the good soldiers of Christ Jesus that we are urged to become. We remain, Lord, works in progress, set apart, but ongoing in our sanctification.

And may it please you, Lord, tonight to help us along that path by teaching us in you something of the conviction of heart that you call men and women to exhibit through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Hear us, we pray in his name. In these things we ask as we turn together to your word. Amen. Well, in 2 Timothy and chapter 1 we have deeply personal words, words that are full of teaching and the deep things of God are here.

[ 25 : 50 ] There is real depth in the theology while at the same time there is a personal feel and touch from the very beginning of this letter to the very end. We remember well the circumstance.

Paul is in prison. He is now under the sentence of death. It seems the Roman judicial system is working its way towards its final conclusion which will be a summary execution having been found guilty of insurrection and atheism and all sorts of charges that were brought against the Christian church at this time.

Paul knows his time is short and so he writes this letter and gets right to the heart of things as quickly as he can and as we pick up on things in chapter 4 I am already being poured out as a drink offering.

The time of my departure has come and that urgency is here from beginning to end in 2 Timothy and chapter 1 and through that urgency we see conviction.

Conviction of heart and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's where we're going to go this evening and particularly taking note of the words in verse 12 where Paul utters words that have become so famous down through the generations in the Christian church.

[ 27 : 09 ] I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

I know whom I have believed. I want to read to you first of all an interview that caught my eye some time ago a Hollywood A-lister who was being interviewed and was asked this question do you believe in God?

Here is the A-lister's answer. I believe there are forces at work in the universe that science can't explain and I think there's an end to human knowledge.

let's call it the unknown the higher power. Let's just agree there is something beyond what we know. There are things like karma.

There are things beyond what we understand. So yes I believe there's an energy and I try to use it and be in the good graces of that energy so things in my life go the way I want them to.

[ 28 : 19 ] I want you to compare that to the words of verse 12 I know whom I have believed.

Paul the apostle is writing from a prison cell and he writes with a whole hearted focus on the gospel and on his saviour Jesus Christ.

Verse 8 in chapter 1 therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord not of me as prisoner but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God who saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

You see the Roman judicial system his sufferings the persecution and agonies he'd gone through personally in his life the heartache the bitter letdowns the disappointments the abandonment it's all caught up in this letter none of these things took from Paul what he held to be most precious a close relationship and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord. So I want us to think about this this evening bearing in mind the setting and examine this conviction which leads to commitment and what it means for you and I this evening as we prepare our hearts to meet together at the Lord's table God willing tomorrow.

[ 29 : 55 ] This focus this conviction remains steadfastly cross-centered. Look at the very first sentence where he begins before we get to the wonderful words of verse 12 Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

He's under the sentence of death. It seems time is short he knows that soon he will be taken from his cell out with the city limits as was his right afforded to a Roman citizen and rather than being

crucified he would be beheaded and that was coming to him and yet here we find him in the very first sentence of his final letter exulting in the promise of life while being under the sentence of death.

This is conviction this is commitment this is the reality of certainty in the gospel of Jesus this is grace which leads to these wonderful words I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

It's a wonderful example and encouragement to us to wait on the Lord and to maintain our closeness and communion with him despite circumstances and despite what we go through we must stay close to Jesus.

There's a story told of Martin Luther who at only 38 years of age was summoned to one of these great synods where he was being called to give an account for the teachings that had become public knowledge in his name and it seemed that he was taking a great risk in going there he could face arrest and being burnt at the stake as a heretic and that was known and they discussed should he go should he not and eventually he was given a guarantee of safe passage but he wrote this letter to a fellow leader and wrote these words before going to that synod my dear brother if I do not come back you will go on teaching and standing fast in the truth I know and am certain that our Lord Jesus Christ lives and rules upon this knowledge and assurance I rely he who is with me is greater than he who is in the world it's the exact sentiment we find here in 2nd Timothy and chapter 1 a wonderful conviction of heart a tenacity a strength of faith a clarity and purpose a desire not to let the Lord down and not to abandon the cause and not to turn tail and not to cower before the world because he knew whom he had believed so we find first of all then a burning conviction a burning conviction

[ 33 : 06 ] I know whom I have believed in this sentiment in these words in this letter in his life in his teaching and in all his writings Paul's commitment to Jesus was absolute in him we see a clear example of what John Stott would write when he was asked what is a Christian John Stott would summarize it in this way a Christian is someone who must commit themselves heart and mind soul and will home and life personally and unreservedly to Jesus Christ that's a Christian that's clarity that's an expression and summary of the gospel of what the Bible teaches of what God wants us to know tonight here and what God wants us to share out there every opportunity we get to tell people when they ask us well what's it all about let's tell them it's about committing ourselves heart and mind soul and will home and life personally and unreservedly to Jesus Christ that's what Paul did he believed in the saviour who lived a perfect sinless life and gave himself for lost sinners 15 years or so before he wrote this letter he wrote the letter to the Galatian Christians and in there he said

I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me and perhaps that's where people around us just don't get it so many people in our community on our island in our country tonight think that the Bible is a book about religion they think the free church is a denomination it's just all about religion that our message is about religion how wrong are they they couldn't be more wrong this is not a book about religion it's a book about salvation that's why we find the apostle so fool hearted and whole hearted despite being in a prison cell despite being under the sentence of death he would say I know whom I have believed and twice already before he even gets there

I am not ashamed and that Christian friend as you know is a constant source of attack by the devil against us that we would feel ashamed that we would feel awkward that we would feel embarrassed and that we would be conscious of our sin and our weakness and our failings and our faults and he uses it he uses it against the Lord's people he uses it against Christian men women boys and girls to keep us from the table to make us think and feel I can't go there I'm a sinner and he trips us up with false theology and empty lies and deceit because you and I know tonight that we go to the table because we're sinners we don't go to the table to be saved we go there because we have been saved we go there to say in our hearts I know whom I have believed that's why it's wonderful to remember that the table is a place of profession and proclamation we proclaim our Lord's death till he come again

Christian friend in Christ we go together to his table Paul then has this burning conviction despite the prison the imprisonment despite the setbacks despite the abandonments despite his pressure read 2nd Corinthians I think it's chapter 11 or is it 13 where he lists the persecution the hardship the nakedness the hunger the thirst the beatings the imprisonment being stoned half to death and he

went through all that because of his love for Jesus and he didn't count it something that he shouldn't go through because Christ lived and died for him I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me and what about this death what about this Lord and our saviour what was it that was at the heart of this burning conviction that the apostle shows here you see of all humanity Christ the son of God was without sin that he took our place and paid our price that's the gospel declaration that he was declared the sin bearer of the world behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and how did he do that by dying on that cross at that time the bible tells us the wages of sin is death and so we dig in a little bit further we say but he was without sin so in the death of Christ we have an anomaly he did not deserve to die and so the question we raised is why why did Christ die why is there a table to anticipate tomorrow why do we look at the bread and the wine and remember his broken body and shed blood why did Jesus die he died because that's what he came to do to seek and to save the lost Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners you may know that as Spurgeon lay on his deathbed he was asked about his theology and he answered this my theology is very simple

[ 38 : 53 ] I can express it in a few words they are enough to die by Jesus died for me Christian friend if you're struggling with the concept of coming to the table here tomorrow take these words and repeat them in your heart again and again Jesus died for me and so we come to the table in faith looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith we come to the table with this burning conviction that we too know whom we have believed Christians we don't believe in a concept or an idea we're not defined by a strand of theology or a specific historical denomination we are defined with a burning conviction in the substitutionary death of the son of God that's what defined Paul and it's what has gone on to define every Christian man and woman since there's a burning conviction in these words

I know whom I have believed it's the opposite of that A-lister quote I mentioned to you earlier there was all what ifs butts maybes and a great big giant question mark there might be something out there there's an energy or something I'm sure there might well be if maybe it's the opposite of the Christian gospel behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world a burning conviction secondly there's this there's from this a crucial confidence because look what he goes on to say he's not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced I am convinced here then is a crucial confidence who's railed against him the state all the power and might of the Roman Empire the Roman judicial system the Jewish legal system all the legalists all the Pharisees and the scribes they've had their day with Paul they've had their pound of flesh they've got him right where they want him he's crushed and broken and incarcerated under the sentence of death as far as they're concerned they've won the day the battle and the war is over Paul saw things very differently he saw around him a culture a city an empire a people drowning in atheism lost and floundering about in polytheism worshipping the emperor lining up in their droves to sprinkle incense on the altar and say Caesar is Lord Caesar is Lord Caesar is Lord it's still going on today men and women around us worship the world they're enthralled to the world they're dancing to the tune of the world engrossed with the culture of the world and we are called to say there's a different path to take there's a different model to build your life upon and the model is not what the world holds up as glorious and pure and true it's what the gospel holds out to be the truth and that is Christ I am the way the truth and the life remember see how personal these words are I know whom I have believed it reflects his burning conviction and his close communion with a living saviour in whom he had come to know and one he had come to trust unreservedly the Lord who he loved that's who he has trusted in the one who the scripture describes as the Lord of creation the Lord of all the Lord of glory the Lord of lords that's our Jesus Christian friends this evening and in that Paul's crucial confidence is unshakable I am convinced he's convinced Psalm 2 tells us that the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed saying that has burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us the world exalts and glories over the church all too often the church assumes you see that the world assumes that the world is one the world tonight around us thinks that the church is marginalized and an insignificant blip in the history and story of Scotland maybe all too often they're right but it's up to us to challenge that thinking and mindset to take on that darkness and that worldliness and that lawlessness and to expose it as false and we can only do that by coming to the gospel and speaking of the Lord

Jesus chapter 2 and verse 8 puts it this way remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead the offspring of David is preached in my gospel for which I am suffering bound with chains as a criminal but the word of God is not bound there's something else the world just doesn't get the world thinks if it can dominate and control a denomination as we see quite often happening at national levels they think they've got us they've got that Christian church right where they want them on the side they let us in at Easter they let us in at Christmas they let us in at baptism they let us in at weddings and we can have our seat at funerals that's it that's it away you go don't want to hear you anymore the world is happy with the babe in the manger the world cannot bear to hear about the babe who grew up to be a man and died in a cross that's what drives Paul here and what's wonderful about this crucial confidence is that he knew the gospel and the church was not dependent on his efforts or on him as Paul the apostle things weren't going to fall apart because he had come to the end of his course no

[ 45 : 09 ] Jesus Christ who was made the sin bearer for his people and had abolished death was building his church do not be ashamed of me or the testimony about our Lord the end of verse 8 he uses that wonderful phrase share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God isn't that amazing share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God so we have this crucial confidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is building his church and that brings us to a third thing we have a burning conviction and we have a crucial confidence and that confidence flourishes and displays a humble awareness see he goes on to say here I am convinced that he is able he is able it's not all about Paul it's not all about the apostle it's not about his missionary journeys and his wonderful oration and his preaching and his writing and his teaching all of these things which were amazing but he knew that in these things he was just what he goes on to describe in chapter 2 he was just being the good soldier he was just being an honest athlete he was just being the hard working farmer pictures he uses to illustrate Christian life and Christian service Christian ministry things we are all called to through our Lord and through our Saviour so there's a humble awareness he says here he is able this word here able in the Greek is dunatos it's from the word group for power and Paul knew that he was able because of who he is and who is he the son of God the Lord of glory the Lord of creation the Lord of all the Lord of lords he is able and so friends prior to a communion service what do we do we look up we look to him we put our faith and our trust in him we too seek to nourish and nurture and develop this humble awareness here am I

Lord send me but what is it the devil wants us to do and what is the world trying to make us do not look up but look down and be conscious of our weakness and our sins and our failings and our faults I remember often to share a story with you a number of years ago in my chaplaincy days of going into a headquarter building which was very unusual for me I tended to stay away from places like that it was full of brass and red tabs and that meant colonels and above which was brigadiers generals and the like they just made me nervous but they were people to be spoken to and they were very often supportive and welcoming to chaplaincy and I was told by this general one day come and see me and as I made my way to the front door of the headquarters about to go in I glanced down and noticed my boots were dirty and I stopped at my tracks I thought I can't I can't go into the headquarters to see the general I've got muddy boots and I had to find a spot somewhere off to the side and get a rag and just try and get rid of the mud because the last thing I wanted to do was go into the headquarters with muddy boots on because where there are generals there are regimental that aren't majors and these are guys who live to spot people turning up in dress order that's less than perfect and I didn't want to hand them the opportunity so I had to get out of there and clean my boots but I've thought about it time and again since and I've thought sometimes when it comes to the communion table particularly in our denominational mindset and the way we do things the devil succeeds in getting Christians to look down and be conscious of their own muddy boots and to think I can't go there I can't go to that table I've got muddy boots but friends we all had muddy boots what is it that the gospel tells us Christ does look Isaiah chapter 1 he makes us whiter than the snow he takes away the stains of sin he makes us as white as wool as fresh fallen snow do we achieve that?

no Christ does so don't look down at your muddy boots look up look up to your saviour because that's what we find Paul doing here that's where his burning conviction leads us this evening and that's where we see now thirdly this humble awareness he is able Paul knew that the progress of the gospel the security of the church lay not on him or on Peter or on James or on John but in Christ I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it and how does Christ do that by

his spirit through his people it is ordained from eternity that God fulfills his purposes through our prayers and by our witnessing isn't that amazing that tonight we can think of a conversation we may have had recently or are about to have that we know nothing about and through that conversation [ 50 : 46 ] God may lead a sinner to salvation from darkness to light from alienation and being far off right up to Jesus to be turned from being an enemy of God to being a child of God that's grace that's amazing grace that's why Paul speaks here in verse 9 he saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works that's muddy boots you see but because of his own purpose and grace which takes away the mud and says come all things are now ready and so we go to his table in a humble awareness of our forgiveness of our salvation of our dependence when totally and utterly reliant on Christ Jesus expressed this ultimate reality here in chapter 10 of John's gospel in verses 17 and 18 where he spoke of what he was about to do for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord

I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again this charge I have received from my father there's power divine power and in his power he holds the church in his hand he says to us follow me he says to us come for all things are now ready do this in remembrance of me death itself has been abolished God willing we'll think about that tomorrow morning and so let's just deflect on this tonight that his burning conviction and his crucial confidence that combined and flourished into this humble awareness it was not diminished because of what he went through the providence of imprisonment again and hardship and suffering and difficult circumstances it did not diminish his trust in Jesus it seemed to in some way feed and nourish his trust in Jesus the gospel had been entrusted to him but under the care of the Lord he says to Timothy

I am convinced he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me it's a very technical Greek phrase used here commentators are split to what he's actually referring to it's either his soul or the gospel I understand that the ESV has got it absolutely right in making the emphasis here upon the gospel that had been entrusted to him to work toward as an apostle because he goes on there in verse 14 to say exactly the same thing by the Holy Spirit it dwells within us guard the good deposit entrusted to you Timothy and remember these letters are addressed in the first instance to Timothy but to you and I this evening and what's interesting here is that he says that we are to guard until he speaks in verse 12 there of that the Lord is able to guard and then down there in 14 he's saying Timothy guard the good deposit entrusted to you it's the same word it's the same word reflecting the same activity of constant vigilance and so we need to be aware and savvy when it comes to the gospel and false teachers and false hope and false religion and we must assert maintain and defend what we know to be true of the gospel that has been revealed to us in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour we need to like Paul and Timothy and everyone else has come before us exhibit a humble awareness as we stick to our guns Martin Luther put it this way as he formulated and clarified what the Protestant church is beginning to adhere to faith alone makes you good and righteous faith alone makes you a member of Christ an inheritor of heaven and a servant of God behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we are children of God and so we are by grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began that's the focus for when times get tough when providence deals us with a difficult blow and we're knocked sideways when the phone rings and a text comes and a door and our world turns upside down and we're buffeted by shocks and setbacks and bereavement and ill health and unemployment and financial stress and pressure and we can be consumed with worry and eat ourselves alive remember these words we have been saved by grace which has been given us in

Christ Jesus before the ages began verse 9 God knows what he's doing if you ever visit St.

Andrew's I'm sure many of you have and if you go to the top end of the town to where St.

[ 56 : 08 ] Salvatore's College used to stand you'll find in the cobbled streets there the letters P. H which marks the spot or near enough where Patrick Hamilton at the age of 24 was burnt at the stake in 1528 19 years later if you go down you'll find if you go down toward where the castle of St.

Andrew's stands around half a mile away you'll find the letters GW on the pavement opposite where the castle stood which marks the spot where George Wishart was also burned at the stake for his adherence to the gospel of Jesus Christ Patrick Hamilton George Wishart they are part of the DNA of who we are and what we believe we give thanks to God that we don't face the circumstance providence and providence that face them to deny Christ or be burnt alive and let their records their initials PH and GW stand as a monument to their faithfulness of what God called them to do and in

their humble awareness they in their way never give up their belief that he is able so let's just think of one last thing one last thing this evening that comes through this verse Paul has said I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed

I am convinced he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me just think in closing about that phrase that day because here fourthly finally there is great anticipation great anticipation but he's in chains he's facing death what's he got to anticipate a new beginning the time of his departure has come I have fought the good fight I have finished the race there is henceforth laid up for me a crown of righteousness as he goes on to say three times you find him in verses 12 18 and then again chapter 4 in verse 8 he refers to that day what day the day when time will come to an end the day when time will cease and eternity is ushered in that's where his focus is he's looking forward he's anticipating that day

Paul had played an exceptional role in the work of the gospel he had been a foundation stone in the spread of the gospel into the non-jewish nations he had planted churches all around south-west turkey into Macedonia and southern Greece he had preached the gospel in Cyprus he had gone round the then known world from Antioch to Jerusalem and declared the good news of Jesus Christ but he knew eventually inexorably time will be no more he knew that none of us have forever none of us the God of wonders through whom the world came into being at one point will announce the end of time as we know it and that will be on that day so Paul turns to that day speaks in other letters of the day of judgment and an account being taken he speaks of books being opened and all being held to account that's the truth of the gospel and it's wonderful that the gospel doesn't hide from these things and neither must we we must gently and persuasively and often as we can with patience and love speak the truth in righteousness we must speak the truth there was an incident back in the 80s when

Brezhnev the Russian president I guess he was at the time of the old USSR he died and in a state controlled effort to keep the news from getting out the moment he died he switched every TV station in the USSR to the same program every channel available was playing Swan Lake so in an instant everyone in Russia knew something was up something was going on something was going down and the state was trying to keep it in and hidden and to themselves and years since then a commentator on Russian affairs said in the Soviet Union the relationship with the truth was complicated complicated sometimes if we're honest we would be guilty as charged of something similar if we are not sharing the whole counsel of

[ 61 : 04 ] God and the truth of the gospel with those around us which is why we have twice in chapter 1 this phrase do not be ashamed don't be ashamed and don't allow your relationship with the truth to become complicated don't avoid telling people what they need to know most of all to be ready for that day four qualities then stand out in this incredible letter and in these verses we have a burning conviction a crucial confidence a humble awareness and a great anticipation and I think Christian friends we should find all these qualities in our hearts as we gather tomorrow at the Lord's table we gather with a burning conviction I know whom I have believed and that burning conviction draws us with a crucial confidence to his table and we sit there in humble awareness that he is able and we eat and we drink together the great anticipation of receiving his grace in a special measure the same grace but in a special way we remember the body and blood we remember the cost of our salvation we remember our saviour we do so humbly and obediently do this in remembrance of me let me finish with the words of Daniel

Whittle's hymn I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he has made known nor why unworthy Christ in love redeemed me for his own but I know whom I have believed let's pray for a moment together Lord our God we bless and praise you for the wonder of the gospel for the invitation and summons that comes from Christ to sinners come to me Lord part us with your blessing this evening and may we go from here conscious of these qualities in our hearts that tomorrow we would come in simple obedience and gather there in anticipation with conviction and clarity of thought in confidence and humble awareness that we remember the death of our Lord till he come again bless Lord your gospel to our hearts we pray in Jesus name

Amen we'll close our service this evening and we'll turn to Psalm 36 and sing Psalms Psalm 36 singing from verse 5 page 44 in our blue psalm books Psalm 36 singing from verse 5 your steadfast love is great O Lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is wonderful extending to the sky your righteousness is very great like mountains high and steep your justice is like ocean depths both man and beast you keep Psalm 36 we'll sing from verse 5 to 9 to the tune Land of Rest your

steadfast love is great

O Lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is wonderful your righteousness is wonderful and standing to the sky your righteousness is very big like mountains high on sea your righteousness is like ocean that's O Father and peace to be I precious is your steadfast love what confidence it brings

O thy aloof and shelter in the shadow of your wings the peace within your hearts and drink from streams of your delight for when you is the source of life in your might we see light if you give me a moment to reach the door before leaving peace this evening let us pray together the blessing of God almighty father son and holy spirit rest on you and be with you now and those whom you love forever and ever amen een men■■■ you