

Thessalonians 1

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[0 : 00] Let us turn to the chapter we read in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter 1, reading the last two verses.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye 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, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

Amen. Now it is my practice during the winter months to try and study with you a particular portion of the Word of God.

And I would like for the next few months, God willing, to study these two letters with you, the first and second letters of Paul to the Thessalonians.

I think it is true to say that they are not too often studied, and nor do we tend to take too many of our texts from these epistles.

[1 : 49] Let me try and set the letter in its context, historically. During Paul's second missionary journey, you remember the vision that he received, recorded for us in Acts, chapter 16, of the man who cried to him to come over to Macedonia to help them.

It was not Paul's intention to go in that direction. He wanted to strike inwards into the regions round about Galatia.

But the Lord had another purpose for him, another plan. And the Lord's plan for Paul was that he should bring the gospel to Europe.

And chapter 16 of the book of Acts is an account of the gospel arriving in Europe through Paul and Silas and Timothy. When they reached Macedonia, they went first of all to Philippi.

And you know that the two converts who founded, who formed the foundation of the church in Philippi, were Lydia, a sort of commercial traveler, we would probably call her a wreck nowadays, and the Philippian jailer.

[3 : 14] It was as a result of the commotion that the opposers of the gospel caused that Paul and Silas were thrust into prison.

And it was there that they met the jailer. And it was there that the jailer was converted. After their release from prison, we write that account here tonight, they went then to Thessalonica, which was the capital city of Macedonia.

And for three weeks at least, Paul and Silas and Timothy were in Thessalonica, worshipping in the synagogue every Lord's Day.

And as they were given the opportunity, preaching and teaching in the synagogue. And not without results. There were people converted as a result of the preaching.

Some of them Jews were rich, some women. But above all, Greeks, proselytes to Judaism, people who had left the heathen worship, in which they were brought up, people who had expressed dissatisfaction with it, were looking for something better, and found it in the Christ of the gospel that Paul preached.

[4 : 47] While they were there, and they weren't there all that long, when the enemies of the gospel again stirred up the people against them, and they were secretly led out of Thessalonica for their own safety.

And from there, they went to Berea. And you know that the opposers that they had in Thessalonica, the enemies, followed them to Berea, and Paul had to leave Berea as well, and ultimately arrived at Athens.

It was while at Athens that he decided to send Timothy back to Thessalonica to find out how things were going there. While Timothy was at Thessalonica, Paul went on to Parenth.

It was there that Timothy came back to him. We read that account in chapter 3 of this letter with the account that things were going very well in Thessalonica. The converts were remaining steadfast. They were very enthusiastic. They were holding on to the faith, and things were really progressing and developing there.

[6 : 08] Paul was greatly encouraged, and it's almost with a spirit of relief that he writes this one of the very first letters he ever wrote.

Maybe the letter to the Galatians was the first. This was one of the very first that he wrote. He writes this letter in a sense of great relief to the new converts, most of whom were converted heathens in Thessalonica.

And as we read this letter, we discover that Paul needed the encouragement that he got from Timothy concerning the state of affairs in Thessalonica because he was really bowed down in his spirit.

He was beginning to feel the piss. You know that people don't suffer persecution without feeling it. And he had endured much persecution already, and he wasn't all that long a missionary of the gospel.

He had discovered sheer indifference to the gospel at Athens, and maybe that is more taxing than persecution, the indifference of the masses.

[7 : 23] He was preaching and speaking, and no one seeming to believe a word that you say, and caring less. And then when he arrived at Corinth, we read that things there weren't all that great.

He was meeting discouragements at Corinth. And we are not to run away with the idea that Paul was a type of missionary or the type of minister who, whenever he spoke at results, who was always rejoicing in his spirit and never invaded with doubts and never invaded with thoughts of the futility of the work because people were always believing what he was saying.

That is not the case. He had his own discouragements in this great work. And so he writes this letter to a newly emerging Christian church from heathenism and from idolatry.

And it's interesting, I'm just going to rush over the first chapter here tonight and come into the last two verses. It's interesting the picture you get of real Christian commitment, no matter where it is, whether it is in a heart that has been converted from heathenism or in a heart which has been brought up in the Christian faith.

You have, it is always the hallmark of conversion that there is a commitment to the Christian faith, a commitment to the doctrines of the grace of God.

[8 : 57] This is always the picture that you get in the word of God. And if you, for example, were to study the letter to Hebrews, and that's a letter that I would love to study at length, if you were to study the letter to the Hebrews, you will find out that the writer there writes to the Christian people there and encourages them to hold on, hold on to the things that you believe.

It isn't easy to hold on to the things that you believe, especially when few people seem to believe these things. And together with that, when you may be persecuted for what you believe and ridiculed for what you believe.

It isn't easy to be a minority group, and the Christian church is. Make no mistake about that. And therefore, one's heart goes out tonight to the Christian, and maybe the young Christian, who is finding it very difficult to hold on.

And one of the things that gratified Paul concerning the Thessalonian Christians was this. We give thanks, he says, to God for you, remembering without ceasing your works of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father.

The thing that delighted his heart was this, that their faith worked, that they proved by their works that they were believers, and that their love was industrious as well.

[10 : 38] They were up and doing within the Christian community, and in the name of the Christian community, in the society in which they lived.

And it wasn't easy for them to do that, and that's why he mentions here your patience, or rather your endurance, in the hope of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is something that keeps a Christian going. And this is something that the non-Christian finds extremely difficult, if not impossible, to understand that there is a hope set before the Christian, that he lives by faith, that his life is a spiritual one, that he's a member of a spiritual kingdom.

He hasn't got a badge to display to all on Sunday that he is a Christian. He doesn't wear a crown, or a cloak, or a robe, or a uniform by which he is identified by the world around him as being a

Christian.

You see, what he has is inward, spiritual. The gospel brings a hope before him. It is the hope, the Bible speaks of it as the hope of the gospel, or the hope that he has in Christ.

[11 : 57] He knows that there is a realm beyond the present, a world beyond the seen, the world that is unseen and spiritual and eternal.

And the conviction that he has that the best is yet to be sustains him often in the fierce conflict in which he is engaged in this world.

And Paul heard that these Christians at Thessalonica were like that. They lived like that. And every Christian in every age has to live like that.

His faith is in Christ. He is constrained by the love of Christ to work in his name. And he is sustained by the hope of Christ in the world to come.

And he lives in that way, in the sight of God his Father. And there's something else that Paul says. I rejoice he says because I know brothers, brethren, here is the real brotherhood of man rooted in man's faith in Christ and his love for Christ and his hope in Christ.

[13 : 25] And this is what he says. Brothers he says, I know that you are elect. That's a strange thing to say. Rather a strong claim to make for anybody that he or she is elect.

so the question arises. How did Paul know that these people to whom he wrote were elect?

He tells us. Knowing this he says, our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.

And ye became followers of us having received the word with much affliction and with joy of the Holy Ghost. You ask me, is it possible for me to know tonight that I am elect or that anyone here may be elect?

Well the only evidence that I have for that is the evidence that Paul had for the Thessalonians. And one can say it with full assurance and with every conviction that whoever hears the gospel of Jesus Christ receives it to the saving of a soul is elect.

[14 : 51] And that's the only one that I know of in the world tonight who is elect. The person in other words who is a genuine believer. The person to whom the word has come with power.

The word that is used here is dynamite. This is where we get our word dynamite from. Dunamis. The word was dynamic. It transformed their lives.

It changed their whole outlook. It changed their personality. It changed them in their priorities. This is what the word of God did when it came to them in power.

And this is always what it does in the life of the convert. It is spiritual dynamite in the life of an individual. you know yourselves. And there are many here who can testify to this.

You can sit, listen to the word of God, you can be brought up to come to church, you can hear it, you can understand it at least in a measure, you can know so much of it. And yet it hasn't brought any change into your life.

[15 : 56] but when it is accompanied by the power of God either suddenly or over a period of time, a whole person's life is revolutionized, reformed, revived, changed.

And this is what he says, when our gospel came to you, he preached there for three weeks, the power of God's spirit accompanied with truth with dynamic influence in their lives, they had the assurance even as they preached that the word was being blessed.

You know that is possible. I think after winning of this in verse five, the word came to you in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. It wasn't just that there was assurance born in the heart of the believer, but the people who preached had assurance that the word being preached was blessed to those who heard it.

It was one of the great thrills of the Christian minister to be able to see from time to time people whose lives are being changed by the word that is preached and people drinking in the gospel that comes to them.

There is nothing more rewarding. If the preaching of the gospel is daunting and it is, it is also the most rewarding of all occupations.

[17 : 28] And that's the assurance that Paul had. And he became followers of us and of the Lord. You and Lewis probably know the meaning of this word better than most people.

This is what we say of people who are converted. They begin to follow. How do you think? We say in Gaelic. The convert is a follower of other converts because they are followers of the Lord themselves.

And here is something very interesting. And he says, this is another way that he knew that they were elect because they had received the word in much affliction and with joy of the Holy Ghost. Isn't it strange that these two things can be together? As they received the gospel, they were full of joy.

But they also had problems. They had afflictions or persecutions. It wasn't easy for them to be Christians. And you know that very often we mention this.

[18 : 34] I mention it anyway. because I think it's right that people should be reminded of this and especially the unconverted. Those of you who are not believers, who think that the Christian is having it easy.

Maybe they had a rough ride and so then they turn to the gospel. There is an idea current and I noticed some time ago even a report.

I'm not going to mention who it was or where it appeared because I don't want someone to think that I'm finding fault with a person who wrote the report far from it. I own too much to find fault with them.

But I noticed that some people even in writing reports seem to think that it is only in middle age that people turn to the gospel in this part of the world and they turn to it because they have had a particularly trying period in life to them as well try religion.

And they get these convictions and it's sort of an easy way out. And I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of people had that idea of converts believers in this part of the world.

[19 : 41] You see my friend that's a wrong idea and a wrong impression. A believer whether he be young or old boy or girl or father or mother is a person who has much rejoicing but who also has many difficulties because of their commitment to Christ.

It isn't easy not even in Stornoway to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to go through you have to run the gauntlet even in this part of the world.

You will be ridiculed here. You will be laughed at here in school and college at work in the office wherever. You will be laughed at. So were these people.

This is how the gospel came to them. They received it. They rejoiced but they had problems as well. And who better to comfort these people than Paul and Silas?

Who knew better the combination of these two things in their lives? Affliction and joy. Even a few weeks previously they had languished there in a prison and at midnight they were singing psalms with joy to the Lord.

[20 : 54] Even as they were bound in chains. And no doubt suffering as a result of the rough handling that they had received. But look together with the affliction there was the joy.

And so it is in conversion and Christian faith. Difficulties yes and problems oh yes. But there is also the compensation from a merciful God of the joy that he gives us in himself.

And without that could you survive? Remember what is said of Jesus himself who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame.

And then Paul here tells us that what had happened in Thessalonica the revival the reformation the revolution the dynamic effect of the word upon the lives of so many people became common knowledge in the area.

From you he says sounded the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia but also in every place your faith to God will spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had done to you.

[22 : 09] You see in other words as you and I would say today colloquially this was really part of the crack of the day. Religiously it was what had happened in Thessalonica when people met.

Did you hear the story? Have you heard the news in Thessalonica? Did you hear that so many people converted? And then someone would ask maybe in the quarter conversation what do you mean by conversion?

And so Paul goes on to define it and that's what we look at for the concluding part of this address tonight. This is how he defines conversion. They turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God and to wait for a son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivered them from the wrath to come.

Now notice these three things that they always lie at the heart of true conversion. There is a turning to the living God.

There is the living of a life of expectancy in a coming son of God. And the son of God is identified as the one who lives and the one who saves from wrath.

[23 : 34] Notice these three things very briefly tonight. There is a turning from idols to serve the living and the true God. Now what he is speaking about here is this. The inner change that takes place in the life with its outward manifestation.

You see the point to notice is this and please note this. Conversion first and foremost is inner. It is in the heart, in the mind, in the will, and in the understanding, in the affections, and in the conscience. It deals with what the New Testament calls the inner man. There is an inner change which shows itself in an outward way of life.

And there are two things here. There is the rejection or the ejection of what was there before, and the acceptance of what was not there before.

God. In their case, it was the rejection and the ejection of idols or idolatry. And it was the acceptance of the living and the true God.

[24 : 49] Now, this is always the New Testament emphasis. Forgive me. Forgive me for emphasizing it again and again and again.

but we have to recognize the true nature of conversion. It is not an interest in religion. It is not a loud word reformation.

It is an inner change, an inner renovation, and an inner reformation. And the inwardness of it is expressed in our attitude and relationship to God.

We begin then to serve the living and the true God. And the emphasis of these qualifications is God identified as being living and true as this.

This is the emphasis Paul is making. That the convert has discovered that what he had before was a sham. that what he had before was unreal.

[26 : 04] It was shadowy. It was dead. No matter how much he was steeped in it and no matter how much his life was in the grip of it, it was still unreal.

And there was something missing in his life and what was missing was reality. Reality. What was missing was what was true.

What was to give meaning to the whole of life. This is what he was looking for. But he was looking for it in the wrong direction and in the wrong channels. You know that this is the whole thrust of the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, which we studied two years ago.

There was a man who went out on that very quest looking for the life that had meaning and value and substance and he tried every conceivable thing because he had so many things at his disposal. Everything failed. And he realized this, there is only one life worth living. It's a life which has God at its heart. And that's the point that Paul is making here about these converts in Thessalonica and notice what I said, it's the same with converts wherever they are, wherever they've been, be it a hundred years ago, five hundred years ago, tonight, or a hundred years from now if the world of the Lord tarries, it is always the case in conversion men and women, boys and girls, are turned in the to serve the living and the true God.

[27 : 42] Here is something now that is real. And they begin to serve, and that is their wills are caught up in him.

There is a wholehearted devotion in their lives to the one God, to the only God. And let's make no apology for this. This again is the New Testament thrust, and this again is the thrust, it's the Christianity that is preached.

There is only one God, the living and the true. And again that's a point that Paul makes. He is distinguishing God not only from the idol that is dead, but he's distinguishing God from anyone else who may establish himself and set himself up as God.

And there is one other thing. When he speaks of God as living and true, he speaks of him as the God who can act, the God who can move in the direction of those who come to him, in the direction of those who need his help.

And this is again the difference between God and the idol. This God can hear. This is a psalm we sung tonight, Psalm 115. That's the point the psalmist was making.

[29 : 05] He's contrasting the idol with God. They may be fashioned to have noses and ears and mouths, but they don't smell and they don't hear and they don't speak. But God does.

God acts. God has power. And he's operating in the interest of the convert. He is a real, active God who lives to hear his cry and to come to his help and to save him.

And it's a delight for the convert to serve. that God. His only regret is this, that he didn't turn to serve him long ago, that he didn't give his life in whole hearted devotion to this one object who is worthy of his life, the living and the true God.

And the second thing he mentioned about conversion is this, that these people turn to serve the living to God and to wait for a son from heaven.

Now I think that this may tell us how a person serves God. You see, you may ask me, and I know that I use these words, thinking that you may understand what I understand by them, and perhaps you don't.

[30 : 33] You may ask me, how can I serve God? Tell me, what is it to serve God? Together with it being wholehearted devotion in my life to him, yes, but break it down for me.

Be more specific. Try and pigeonhole it for me, so that I can grasp something of the meaning. Well, here is one aspect of it. They wait for a son from heaven.

Now, interestingly enough, this word wait doesn't convey the idea at all of a person standing in his neat corner with his hands in his pockets and someone comes along, perhaps he's gone down for the newspaper, and someone comes along and asks him, what are you doing there?

Oh, I'm waiting for the newspaper. But the newspaper's available only in a particular shop. It would not be better for you to go for the newspaper. You see, that fellow there at the corner, he's got the wrong attitude.

to going and looking for the thing that he wants. And the idea in the word wait is exactly that. Here are people who are looking for something particular, and they are preparing themselves for something in particular.

[31 : 52] Or in other words, they are living with a particular event in view. A particular event in view. And you know, this was something at the very heart of Jesus' own teaching.

It wasn't Paul that dreamed this up. Now the converts in Thessalonica, Jesus spoke often about this. Matthew 25, for example, he speaks about the way in which the Christian is to prepare himself for this great coming of the Lord.

And this is one of the reasons why we should study Thessalonians, because it is of all the epistles, these two particularly speak of the coming of the Lord.

It is the main burden of the epistle. And someone may ask, why is this constant allusion to this coming of the Lord in this epistle?

Why this emphasis? And there are various answers that you could give to that. Because the thought of the second coming would encourage these Christians to endure affliction, put up with it, in other words, sort of adopting this attitude, oh well, I might as well accept the buffeting, because one of these days I'm going to be released, and the Lord is going to come for me.

[33 : 15] Or it may have been that there was this early enthusiasm in a church newly converted from heathenism to Christ, and seeing they didn't have the experience and the wisdom which is tempered by experience, perhaps they would give an undue weight to the second coming of the Lord.

And in a sense, they did give an undue importance to it, because it affected other things, as we shall see later on in their studies in their lives. And the third reason may be that this was a newly converted community emerging from heathenism, and therefore it was great that they would have this idea of the second coming of the Lord was so new to them, so they would wait for it almost every day.

But what you and I have to remember is this, that when Paul preached to this kind of community, he preached with an emphasis, as Jassi and as the letters tell us, on the being of God, and of God coming in judgment to judge the sins of people, even the sins that were committed in ignorance. It was an appeal, in other words, when he preached, he appealed to their conscience, and he reminded them that Christ was coming in judgment.

And therefore, it was natural that the thought of a coming Christ would form much of their Christian belief.

[35 : 00] They believed that he was going to come, and they looked forward to his coming, and they lived believing that he was going to come.

They lived in a life, a life of holiness, looking for the second coming of the Lord, and there is no doubt whatsoever that this is an element which we have lost today from our Christian consciousness, even in evangelical circles.

The thought, the imminence, the reality of the second coming of our Lord. And I think we've lost it to our detriment. And there is something else.

Have you heard this being said? Well, I've heard it often. And I think there's a lot to be said for it.

Why is it that we hear so little today about God's judgment on the sins of man?

We don't. By and large, we don't. And yet was very much a part of the apostolic ministry, ministry, especially when they preached to people who were not brought up in the Jewish faith.

[36 : 12] They appealed to the conscience of the unbeliever and they presented to him a God who would judge sin and a God who was going to come again to judge sin.

Therefore, when a person was converted to Christ, it was wonderful to think that they could look forward to the coming of Christ and not be afraid of it, not be filled with fear at the thought of it.

And therefore, they lived as though he were going to come. It wasn't just a belief that was at the heart of their creed. It was at the very heart of their life.

It had a profound effect upon them, a profound effect upon the way that they lived. And if you and I, believe that Jesus is going to come again, our belief in the second coming will have a profound effect upon the way that we live.

It will prepare us. It will keep us active. It will keep us motivated in our living so that we live to the glory of his name, so that we try to please him in all that we do.

[37 : 29] That's the meaning of waiting for his son. from heaven. And then he goes on thoroughly and finally to speak of this person who's going to come.

He's coming from heaven, delivering us from the wrath to come. And there are two thoughts here, and I deal with them very briefly.

He speaks of our living Lord, and he speaks of our saving Lord. He speaks of the historical Jesus who's living. He's going to come, his son Jesus, waiting for his son, even Jesus, from heaven, or rather from the heavens.

And immediately, immediately, Paul establishes this point, that he believes in the historical Jesus, who is alive tonight in the heavens.

The word that is used for the word for heaven here, is a word that speaks of the extensiveness, the vastness of heaven above, which Jesus says, in my Father's house are many mansions.

[38 : 45] The word the New Testament, you said, is the word that speaks of a building a sort of building tier after tier after tier, speaking of the vastness of this place.

speaking of the wonder of its blessedness, as though there were so many blessings associated with it, they couldn't really be housed in a building big enough for our mind to grasp the vastness and the extensiveness, the expansiveness of heaven.

Now, Paul says, Jesus is going to come from there. Of course, some smart aleck will say, where is heaven? Well, all I know, as I've said often enough to you, is this, that Jesus, when he left this earth, was seen by the disciples going up.

Beyond that, we don't know, except that we know that there is a heaven. We have the evidence of it from the word of God, and the evidence of it from the witness of the Holy Spirit in our own hearts.

And we would be the biggest fools on earth if we had given ourselves wholeheartedly to the service of a God who doesn't live in a realm beyond where you and I are tonight.

[40 : 02] What fools we would be. He is coming, he says, from that place. And he is coming, therefore, as the one who lives in that place, and the one who reigns in that place.

Do you believe that tonight? In a world which seems so chaotic, so many things going on, and you wonder what on earth is going on. Do you ever wonder if there's a God in control of all things?

Well, I tell you that there is. This is the great New Testament emphasis that Jesus lives in heaven reigning, not only in heaven, but from heaven.

Why did he ascend to heaven? He ascended to heaven to take his seat upon the throne, to govern this world, and you may think, and you may live day by day without any thought of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I tell you this, he governs you.

He governs you. You are in his hand. You may not believe it, and you may not think it, and you may not act it, but I tell you that you are.

[41 : 15] There is only one king of kings, and only one Lord of lords, and that is a reigning Lord, Jesus Christ. He is going to come, he who reigns, he who governs this world, he who is in heaven in the city for his people, he who is in heaven bearing that interest before the throne.

There is nothing that happens in the life of the Christian unknown to our Lord. There is nothing out with his plan. There is nothing that you need that he doesn't intercede for.

He goes before you. He is in heaven preparing heaven for you with his own presence as the forerunner, and it is from heaven that he's going to come.

He who sympathizes with his people tonight in heaven above is going to come from heaven.

you see, Paul believed in the historical Jesus who lived. He didn't believe in the spirit of Jesus living on. As though Jesus were in the grave, but the spirit lived on.

[42 : 23] That is not the New Testament thrust. It is a belief and a presentation of the living, risen, resurrected Savior who lives.

And that is again at the heart of conversion. It lays hold, the believing heart lays hold of a living, reigning Savior. Paul's argument to the Corinthian church was that is not the case, he says.

Our faith is futile. It is non-existent. And we're the most miserable of all men. And the second thing he says about him, and the final thing is this, that this Jesus, not only our living and our reigning Savior, but also a saving Savior.

Who shall deliver us, or rather, who is delivering us, and who will deliver us from the wrath to come.

The word that is used here is rescuing or delivering. From what? from the wrath to come.

[43 : 36] Now this is not a very popular conception of God. I know that the wrath of God is real.

And in the last, in the few minutes before I close the service, I would like if I could to explain to you what this means.

what is the wrath of God? Well, it is this. It is God in his judgment and in his justice acting against sin.

That's wrath. God's judgment against sin. or the holy displeasure of God being exercised against sin.

Now I said that that is not a popular conception of God because we are told that God is love. And the idea there you see is that to speak of the wrath of God and the love of God, you would think that we are speaking of contradictions in God as though one part of God were opposed to another part of God.

But let me explain something to you. That is not the case. Sin, your sin and my sin, is sin because it is action against God.

[45 : 14] That is sin. Against these at the psalmist, the only have I sinned. That's how we recognize himself as a sinner. Not something you have done against the state or against society but against God.

That is sin in its nature. It is God word. So that God must act against sin. He must. Ah, you see, his love will keep him from acting against sin.

Well, let me tell you what the love of God did. The love of God so acted that he punished sin.

Where? In Christ. Ah, you say, what does that mean? It means this. Jesus came into this world as the sin bearer.

He is the savior of sinners, remember. And the only way he could save sinners was by taking their sins upon himself. And remember what I said about wrath?

[46 : 26] That is God acting against sin wherever he finds it. And God found sin on Christ. And so God's wrath fell upon Christ.

Ah, you say that's immoral. That's immoral. someone taking another sin so that God could act against him. Oh, there's nothing you monitor my friend because Christ was God.

So you see what the love of God did? The love of God provided a remedy for you and for me by acting, by his wrath, acting against himself in your interests.

No wonder the Bible says this here in his love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and that he gave Christ to be the propitiation for our sins.

You know the meaning of that big word? Christ appeased the wrath of God or Christ bore the wrath of God away from us.

[47 : 37] And here you are now at the heart of the gospel and what Paul is saying here is this you he says are waiting for a son from heaven who is delivering us from the wrath to come.

In other words the only place in which I am not exposed to the wrath of God is if my faith is in Christ the rock of ages.

Rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee. So you see the person who is safe from wrath is the person who is in Christ covered by Christ and by his finished work.

And when the wrath comes as it will come in its fullness at the second coming those who are not in Christ will be consumed away by the wrath of God.

And there are two things here. Christ is going to come for the full and final and complete deliverance of his people from the wrath of God.

[49 : 00] And therefore for those who are not in Christ nothing will come to them on that day but the judgment of God exercised against uncovered unforgiven sin.

And therefore my friend there's a simple question that the gospel leaves with you tonight and it is this are your sins covered by the Christ who died for sinners or put it another way is your faith as a sinner tonight in Christ the Savior or are you in the presence of God exposed in all your sins unforgiven to his wrath.

And I say this to you if you are you can never look forward to the coming of a son. But if you are a believer you can look forward then with confidence to that day and what a day that will be when he comes without sin unto salvation to all them that look for him.

Let us pray. Oh bless to us thy truth accept of us and help us to honour thee thou give us grace that we may live by faith in Christ so that we might look forward with confidence to the day of the Lord undertake for us we pray thee and guide us with thine own counsel bless them in the various fellowships this evening for Jesus sake Amen