

Gospel Concern and Confidence

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: 11 August 2024

[0 : 00] our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 46 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 46, we'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7, the tune of Stroudwater.

And we're going to sing at the beginning there, God is our refuge and our strength and straightens a present deed. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. We'll sing from verse 1 to 7 and we stand to sing to God's praise.

What is the refuge and our strength, in states a present deed?

Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid.

The hills and lakes the seas because, O waters' roaring bay, and troubled, we gave all the hills by swearing seeds to shame.

[1 : 38] I've lived by the hills, who sins to man, the city of our God, the holy place.

When the Lord most dying is abode.

But in the place of earth doth dwell, the king shall now renew.

The Lord to have an help, a will, a love by the very blue.

The heart of heaven and give place. Therefore, if you watch the sea, the kingdom's rud naj■■■. In the stream we ■■■■ maiorianos'i, the king mysteries 6 ao Gene. If you Bros. one cum you and me are not be afraid. The one dic ai Carl, ror ten High-vez-z■■zffe■■■■, in verse 1.

[2 : 57] The guy best temps, in verse 1. The Lord of God, that in His voice, the earth did mend for fear.

The Lord of hosts upon our side, doth constantly lead.

The Lord of Jesus, that refuge has saved me to make Him.

We'll unite our hearts together in a short word of prayer. Let us pray. Amen. Lord our God, we thank You as we come to worship You this day, that we are reminded in the words that we sang, that You are a refuge and a strength to Your people, that You are one who is there to call upon.

And we just thank You that You have that promise to us, that as we gather here in Your name today, that You are with us. And may we know that in a real way. May we know You speaking in Your word to us, and may we know Your peace and presence with us, still as before You at this time, as we look to You as God and Lord of all.

[4 : 41] We do thank You for all who are here today and all who are tuning in online. We thank You for young and old alike, that together we come to worship Your name.

And we do pray for our holiday tweenies and the creche going on over this holiday time. We thank You for the young ones who have been so regular and so faithful attending over these summer months.

And we pray for our young people, Lord, that You will bless them and be with them. Thank You for all who help in the creche and tweenies over these weeks as well, and that together they would know Your blessing and Your presence with them.

And we think of schools going back in this coming week. We pray for the teachers, the staff, and all the children, Lord, that Your blessing and peace would be on the day schools as well, as they begin a new session, a new term of teaching, and especially as children move up classes, maybe beginning primary school for the first time or secondary school for the first time.

And we pray for Your help and Your protection over each one. And that as a church family, they would be in our prayers at all times, that You would look down upon us and bless us.

[5 : 53] So hear our prayers and continue with us now as we continue to worship You and as we continue to seek to hear from You. We ask all these things in our prayers in Jesus' name for His sake and glory.

Amen. Amen. It's good to see young ones here today. We do remember you in prayer. As you go back to school this week, I know you won't want to be reminded of going back to school.

And maybe you're thinking already that come Thursday morning, you'll be thinking, maybe what excuse could I make not to go to school? Maybe you're starting to think of that. Maybe the teachers are starting to think of what excuse they could make not to go to school. And we always think about times when we make excuses. Excuses for different things. So maybe you're thinking, well, on Thursday morning, I could make an excuse not to go to school because I'm not feeling well. Or maybe it's an excuse, oh, the weather's too bad for going to school. Or all these kinds of things.

[6 : 52] But even as adults, as we grow up, we make excuses for different things as well. We make excuses if we lose a football match or any sports game.

We maybe blame it was the referee's fault. That's our excuse. That goal was offside. That's the excuse for losing. Or maybe you like to go fishing.

I like to go fishing. And I've got a big, big book of excuses for not catching fish. And I just delve into it from time to time. And most times when I go out fishing, I need an excuse so it's either too bright or too dark.

It's too warm or it's too cold. There's not enough water or there's too much water. There's always an excuse for not catching a fish. But we're always making excuses.

But in the Bible, we read about a time when people made excuses. And it was an excuse for not coming to a great banquet, to a feast. And there was three different people who made excuses.

[7 : 56] We read of it in Luke chapter 14 at verse 17 through to verse 20. It was a time of a great banquet. And the master sent out a servant to invite people to come.

And it says, but they all alike began to make excuses. They all had excuses. One said, I've bought a field. I must go and see it. Please excuse me.

Another said, I've bought a yoke of oxen. I've bought cattle. I'm going to examine them. Please excuse me. Another said, I've just got married.

And therefore, I cannot come, making an excuse not to come to a great banquet. When we think of the Bible and what it's saying to us, it's inviting us.

It's inviting us to come to this banquet, to come to this feast, this feast of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of invitations to church as we think of inviting people along back to church Sunday.

[8 : 56] It's an invitation to come and hear the word of God, to come and hear about this wonderful Savior. And so often we make excuses. I'm too tired to go to church.

I'm too busy to go to church. I'm too young to go to church. I'm too old to go to church. We all make excuses. But it's reminding us here that we are to come.

There's no excuse not to come to Jesus. We all make excuses for different things. Trying to cover up where we fall short at times.

But with Jesus, there's no excuse. He's inviting us all to come. Let's not make an excuse. But let's come and find in him one who is so precious, so wonderful, a Savior for us.

So there's no excuses for us. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

[10 : 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, the power and the glory forever. Amen. Well, let's sing again to God's praise.

And during this singing, if the young ones are going out to 20s, they can do so then. We're going to sing in Psalm 52. Sing Psalms Version, page 69. We're singing from verse 5 down to verse 9.

And the tune is St. Andrew. Psalm 52 at verse 5. But God will surely bring you down to ruin and disgrace.

He will uproot you from your tent and from your dwelling place. The psalmist here is speaking about those who are not trusting in God. But then in verse 8, you see this change.

[11 : 03] But I am like an olive plant in God's house growing free. I trust in God's unfailing love to all eternity. We'll sing from verse 5 to verse 9 to God's praise.

But God will surely bring you down to ruin and disgrace.

He will have fruit you from your chains and from your dwelling place.

He will snatch you from the land of life. The psalmist here is speaking about those who are not trusting in God. The psalmist here is speaking about those who are not trusting in God.

He will not trusting in God. And the psalmist here is speaking about those who are not trusting in God. He will not trusting in God. The psalmist here is speaking about those who are not trusting in God. The righteous keep in this world dear, then they will laugh and sing.

[12 : 24] It is the man who for this reign of God did not rely.

He trusted in his wealth and power to raise himself on high.

But I am like a royal man in course us growing free.

I just ignores the giving love to all eternity.

I'll praise you ever for your peace. My hope is in your name.

[13 : 43] And in the mansions of your sins, I will rest all your things.

Amen. We'll turn together now to read God's word. We're going to read in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2.

1 Thessalonians chapter 2, taking up our reading at verse 17. And then we read into chapter 3 down to the end there. You find this around page 1188 or thereabouts.

1 Thessalonians chapter 2 at verse 17. Paul writing here from prison. They're writing to the church in Thessalonica where he had been for a time, set up a church, and now he's writing to them.

And we see in verse 17 how he describes that he was torn away from them. But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person, not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you.

[15 : 08] I, Paul, again and again. But Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming?

Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy. Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone.

And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's co-worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith that no one be moved by these afflictions.

For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

[16 : 06] But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported, that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you.

For this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live if you are standing fast in the Lord.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face, and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

and so on. And may God bless that reading from his word. I will again just unite our hearts in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, as we read these words, we are reminded not of Paul's concern for a church in Thessalonica alone, but for your great concern for your church, your church down through every generation and through every place in this world.

[17 : 42] We thank you that you are a God who remembers your people near and far, that you are one who has a desire for your people to grow in faith and knowledge of you and the wonder of your grace and salvation that there is in Christ Jesus, and that you would see others being drawn to you as well.

And we thank you for the church in the world that is the light of hope. We thank you that the gospel is there to lead and to guide and to show us in all our needs that there is a Savior, that there is one who we can come to, one who is able to bring us from darkness into your wonderful light.

And so we pray for your gospel as it goes out today, as it goes out here and far and wide, that it will be a word blessed by you, that you would be pleased to accompany it by the power of your Spirit, that you would minister to our hearts, that you would minister to our very soul and being, that the excuses that we so often make in our hearts, that you would help us to see that they are so

meaningless before you, but that the way is prepared, the banquet is set, and that we are to accept that wonderful invitation to come and find our rest and find peace with our Lord Jesus Christ.

So bless us today, Lord, as we worship you. Bless us as we offer up our prayers to you, prayers for one another, prayers for our communities and our nation and the world in which we live.

when we see, O Lord, the distress around us, when we see our own nation and all the different places that have been affected by riots in this week, turmoil near and far, we do pray, Lord, for you to come in your power.

[19 : 34] When we have turned away from you, we see the serious consequences of rejecting God as our Lord and as our God, of not having you rule over us.

We do pray, Lord, that you will bring us to that place. We would say that God is our refuge and our strength, that we would hear that echoed throughout our nation once again, that you would draw us to see our great need and yet a great saviour that you are.

We pray, Lord, for your peace and your help in the midst of all of these things. We pray that for our world, O Lord, in so many different parts of it and yet we thank you that the gospel is a truth that still goes out in power, that you are indeed building your church, that there are so many people near and far being drawn to you in the midst of affliction.

Even as we have read of in this wonderful letter to the Thessalonians, we thank you that in their affliction that they were still trusting and growing in faith. We thank you that as true for people near and far today, that in times of great need, in times of great uncertainty, that there are people who are fully trusting and growing in their faith and knowledge of you.

May you continue to hear the prayers of your church, that you would do us good, O Lord, that you would send your spirit upon us to bless us. We do thank you as a congregation here that we can look to you in all things, that you are one who is with us in all our different needs.

[21 : 13] You are with us as a people collectively and also in our homes and in our families. In all our different needs, Lord, they are known to you. We thank you that in prayer we have that access to the one who is able, the one who is able to do abundantly more than all that we ask or imagine.

And so, Lord, give us that faith to approach you and to commit ourselves, our loved ones, and our church and community as a whole into your hands. We do pray for blessing over your church here and throughout our islands.

We pray your blessing on all our endeavors to reach out with the gospel. We think of our communion season coming up, not just here, but throughout our island. We pray much blessing upon the preaching of your word and the fellowship of your people.

We thank you, too, for opportunities to invite people, whether it's to the church day out or to the back to church Sunday. We do pray for your leading and your guiding in that.

We ask, O Lord, that you will guide us in these things by your Spirit. And we do pray, O Lord, for all the different aspects of our congregation.

[22 : 24] We think of families in need of times of ill health, of sorrow and grief, but also times of joy and gladness. As we think of a wedding in this coming week connected to our congregation, we pray for Mark Morrison and Leah Duncan and their families.

We ask your blessing to be over them, O Lord, as they unite together in this way. We pray that you will lead them and guide them and watch over them each day, and that you would bless them abundantly.

We do pray for our nation as well, as we have mentioned, the assisted suicide bill and the dangers it brings. Lord, we commit that to you, O Lord, that there will be a good response against it, that we will be able to represent not just ourselves, but your word and your truth, that life is precious, and that we are to see that in every way, that you are the giver of life.

And we pray, Lord, that we would realize that our lives are in your hands and help us and help those who need you in particular ways in this sense, O Lord, to know your presence and your help. So we pray for our government as they make decisions over it, Lord. Give wisdom, give help, give your spirit to them to know what is right and what is good.

[23 : 43] Lord, we ask all these things dependent upon you and thankful for your grace that is always sufficient. So may you hear our prayers. May you go before us. May you do us good in all things as we ask all with the forgiveness of our sins.

In Jesus' name, amen. We'll again sing to God's praise this time in Psalm 106 in the Scottish Psalter, page 378.

Psalm 106. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 5, the tune is Huddersfield. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, for bountiful is he.

His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity. We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise. Amen.

Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, for bountiful is he.

His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity.

[25 : 06] God's mighty words to God express, God's mighty words to God express, God's holy word of his praise, blessed are they that judgment keep, and just be pure, O praise.

Remember me, Lord, with the love, which thou divine just may, with thy salvation, O my God, to listen to me, Lord, hear.

And thy thy chosen's will be see, and in their joy rejoice, and in their joy rejoice, triumph with cheerful voice.

Amen. We can turn back to our reading in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. We're going to look at these last verses of chapter 2, verse 17 to verse 20, although they're all connected with what we're reading.

In the whole of chapter 3 as well, where Paul is showing us his great concern for the people of Thessalonica and what's happening with them, concern for their faith, and he has this encouraging report that comes from Timothy, as you see in chapter 3, verse 6, to the end. But we want to think about where that concern comes from and the confidence it brings to him as well. And we're going to do that this morning and then connect it with this evening as well. We're going to think about a theme. Have you ever been speaking to someone, maybe about a book you've read or a film or a TV series you've watched and you've thought that book was excellent, was just so good, or that TV show was just brilliant, and they're asking you, well, what reason would you give me? What it's about and why I should watch it or why I should read it? And you start maybe just trying in a few words to explain to the people, this is why you should read it. Maybe you're describing the kind of theme that there is, maybe a romantic novel or a movie, maybe it's a comedy or an action thriller or a real life story. And you try and describe maybe a few of the characters in it and just the outline of the storyline or if there's an evil villain, as it were, in it as well. You're trying to just in a few words sum up a reason why they should engage, why they should read, or why they should watch. But what about if you were asked about the Bible? We think about maybe our back to church Sunday, an invitation to come to church, and someone asks you, well, why? Why should I engage with the Bible? What's it about? How would you sum it up as to why someone should take it seriously?

[28 : 56] Why someone should seriously consider an invitation to come and hear the Word of God? What's it telling us? What's the story? What's it about? And so today I want us to consider this in two different ways.

This morning as we're looking at Thessalonians here, we're going to think about it in summary as it is, sinners in need of salvation. That's what this book is about, sinners in need of salvation, and that salvation is found in Christ. And then this evening we're going to be looking at Isaiah chapter 40. I'm thinking of another way of summarizing what the Word of God is saying and the weary given strength. It's the way that we're looking at it this evening, the weary given strength in the Lord.

But this morning we're thinking of sinners in need of salvation. And what we see as Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica is just that. He's writing to sinners in need of salvation.

They've been saved, you could say. The church has been established there, but still they are sinners, just as we all are. Sinners in need of salvation. But that that salvation is in Christ.

And that is what keeps us going. And so what we see with Paul here as he's writing to them is this gospel concern. He has this concern for them. But he's also got this confidence. This confidence.

[30 : 35] Now put yourself in this situation. You have to go away from home. Maybe for different reasons, but you have to go away from home for a time. What would you miss most? What would fill your mind and your thoughts most as you're thinking back to home? It could be maybe a certain food you enjoy that you can't get where you are. It could be something that you wish you had. Maybe you're missing something that you had at home that you no longer have. Maybe it's the weather, although it's unlikely here.

Hopefully you'd have better weather somewhere else. But there's always things that if we have to go away from home that we would miss. But the most likely thing that we would miss when we're away from a place is people. People. So whether it's moving away, whether it's working away for a time, whether it's studying away, we're going to miss people. And here as Paul is writing to the Thessalonians, it's because of that very fact. It's the exact situation that Paul finds himself in. He is

missing the people of Thessalonica. He's had to leave them behind. It says here he's been torn away from them. There's a sudden removal from them. He's been torn away and he's missing these people.

He's concerned for these people. And so that's where this letter comes from, a letter to encourage them, to strengthen them, to find out how they are, to find out how they are going on. He's remembering these sinners in need of salvation. A people he loves and a people he's concerned for. There were some who were saying in Paul's day that he was writing to them or there with them to make a name for himself or for praise that he might get. But as you read through this letter, you see there's a genuine love for the people that he's writing to. A people that he's missing, that he's longing for.

And when we think of ourselves as a church and as a people, is this something that we have as well? This longing for one another, this longing for those around us, this gospel concern for those around us, maybe even sitting beside us, a gospel concern for people as we all are sinners in need of salvation.

Paul here gives us the realities of what life is like in the faith. As he's writing this letter, he's writing encouragement, he's writing motivations to them, he's writing about the afflictions that they will suffer. There's all of these things and that they are to have a vision of God in the midst of it all. They are truths that we can rely on. But in these verses, in verse 17 to 20, we see what's at the heart of it all is a gospel concern. And we see three things in these verses. There's a gospel concern, there's a gospel challenger, but there's a gospel confidence. We just want to look at these three things for a short time. The gospel concern that we see first of all. There's a great hope in the gospel. If you've come to believe in Christ, you realize how empty life was before and how much difference that the Lord Jesus makes in our lives day by day, not just when we come to worship, not just as we join together on the Lord's day, but every day of life, the difference it makes to know Christ

[34 : 24] Jesus as our Lord. And we realize this hope, this hope as Paul has, and has seen many in Thessalonica come to know this hope in Christ, and how this hope goes on and works in our lives. And we realize it works in our emotions and in our experience as well, how the Lord changes our whole outlook, our whole being. And as we see this, we realize too that our concerns for other things, they don't just vanish. They don't just go. As Paul said here that there were afflictions that he had told them about, that they would be real. And yet he's still showing them that there is this hope. But he's concerned for them. He's concerned for them. And you see that in verse 17. We've been torn away from you, brothers, for a short time. In person, not in heart. We endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face. What a wonderful love there was for Paul to these people.

Torn away in person, but not in heart. They were still very much in his heart, even though there was a distance. And there's this longing to see them because of this gospel concern. To see how they are going, to see how they are growing, to see how they are going on in the midst of their afflictions. He's got this concern for them. They're not forgotten. They are constantly in his thoughts and in his prayers.

How are they? How are they getting on? Just think back a few months to lambing season. And if you love your sheep, it's an emotional time. It's a time when you're anxious about the sheep and the lambs as they are about to be born. And if the weather's poor or if it's wet and windy, you can't just forget about them. And maybe there's a time when you maybe have to go to work or you have to go away somewhere else. You have to leave them for a time. And it can be hard, especially if you think that sheep is about to lamb. And you can't be there for them. It's on your mind. And you're wondering how they are and how they'll be when you get back. A shepherd and a relationship with their sheep, when they love them in that way, there's a real concern. And that's so often the image that we have in the Scriptures.

With Paul, we see it here. He's concerned as a shepherd of the sheep. He's concerned for his people. He's wondering how they are, how they're getting on, how they're going on in the faith. He's been torn away from them. But yet there's still this gospel concern. Now perhaps we haven't felt that kind of separation, that sense of being aware ourselves in the way that Paul was here. But should we not have that concern for one another? Concern for those around us? The concern that we are reminded that God has for his people. When we see the sin and the separation it brings from God, how we see sheep who have gone astray, when we see a people who are lost in this world, does that not lead us to concern?

Well, God is concerned. And God was so concerned about this that he made every provision. And that's what Paul is reminding the church at Thessalonica, as he does the churches throughout the New Testament, that in Christ they have a shepherd. In Christ they have one who loves them and who has given his life for them. But do we have that gospel concern? Do you have it in your heart today if you're not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ? Does it concern you? Are you just making your excuses to turn away? I've got to do this, I've got to do that. I've got to be, sort this out in my life first. Or I'm getting past it now, I can't come. There's all kinds of excuses that will come to our minds. But the Lord puts a concern in your heart for your soul. And praise God he does, that the Lord disturbs us in this way. Paul couldn't just sit there and have no thought of these people. He was concerned and he was praying for them. And our prayer is today as well, that all of us together would be stirred up in this gospel concern. What does Paul do in his concern and his absence from them?

[39 : 37] Well you see it in chapter 1 verse 2. He says, we give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Constantly mentioning you in our prayers.

Prayers. Praying to God. Sinners in need of salvation. And salvation is from God. And here Paul is endeavouring to see them face to face with great desire so that he can share in that fellowship once more. And to share the gospel with them. So there's gospel concern at the heart of this.

But the second thing we see here is there's a gospel challenger. And when you think of reading a book or watching a movie or a TV series, there's often, as we see, there's the good ones and there's the evil villain. But this is not just a story that we want to engage with. This is reality that we see here with Paul. He's got his love for the people at Thessalonica. And his love is only increased when he thinks of the one who is challenging the gospel. And you see this in verse 18. We wanted to come to you, I, Paul, again and again. But Satan hindered us. Satan hindered us. Satan is real. Satan tries to intervene. Satan tries to spoil. That is what he wants. In every aspect of our lives, he wants to spoil things.

But you ask, well, why is Satan here? Why is he interested in this? Well, it's because good things were happening. The church in Thessalonica had grown. There was people coming to faith. There was this joy in their midst. The joy of salvation. And Satan doesn't want it. He doesn't want people believing. He doesn't want unity. He doesn't want the gospel spreading. And so he's active. And we see that here with Paul. Satan hindered us. Whatever way it was, he managed to get a way that stopped, that prevented Paul coming. One person put it like this. There's a being in this world that is older than humanity that has a design to destroy you forever. That's the seriousness of Satan. Satan, the destroyer. Satan, the enemy. And Paul knows this with all his heart. He knows that Satan is an enemy. Satan is an adversary that's to be taken seriously. And that's something, as well as we believe in God, that we believe in Christ Jesus, that we believe that there is a devil, that there is Satan too, that there is an adversary. And that when things are going well, he wants to come in and spoil. And so we need to be on our guard. Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus in the last chapter of Ephesians, speaks about the whole armor of God that we need to put on because we are dealing with principalities and powers in this world, enemies of God. But we have the word of God. We have the Holy Spirit. We have prayer. We have all this equipment that we can use and to be on our guard at all times.

[43 : 17] Even just look back to last weekend and the week leading up to it with the holiday club. We had a blessed time. We had a time of real encouragement, a time of real joy. But how many of you have faced a hard week this week? After that high point, after that joyous time, Satan comes in. The adversary's there.

He's hindering. He's prowling all the time. He's always there to try and take our joy away. When the gospel is active. When the gospel is working, Satan is trying to hinder.

As Charles Spurgeon once said, consider how precious a soul must be when God and the devil are both after it.

How precious a soul is when God and the devil are both after it. But greater is he who is with us.

But when we look to the Lord, he is greater. He is more powerful.

He has conquered this enemy. Martin Luther, in his hymn, A Mighty Fortress is the Lord, he reminds us in that of the reality of Satan. He says in one verse, for still our ancient foe doth seek to work his woe.

[44 : 43] His craft and power are great and armed with cruel hate. He's reminding us there the cruel foe who is active. But he goes on in that hymn to speak of the one who is able to help. That

God the Lord is a mighty fortress.

And that we can be victorious with the right man on our side, as he describes. And who is that? Christ Jesus. It is he. That he is on our side.

Christ died to free us from our sin. And so there is this gospel challenger. There is this one who seeks to hinder. How do we fight him? Well, we are too weak ourselves to do it.

But the right man is on our side when we trust in Jesus. And that's the reality, the gospel challenger. Sinners in need of salvation, we have Christ Jesus on our side.

But the reality is that there is that challenger. There is that active one who is trying to take us away. But then as we conclude here, we see, as well as this challenger, there is this gospel confidence.

[46 : 05] In verse 19 and 20, For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and our joy.

He has this confidence that Christ is able to keep them. Sinners in need of salvation have a saviour who is Christ the Lord.

Satan tried to hinder, but instead of seeing that as a problem that could not be overcome, it was an opportunity to present the glory of God and the assurance of God with them.

And that they press on in hope. That they go on in hope. There are so many things that take our joy away or seek to take our joy away.

But we are to stay focused on Christ. I remember sitting at Glasgow Airport one time. It was a Friday and on the Wednesday evening, I think it must have been, there was a game at Hamden Park where Scotland were playing against someone.

[47 : 13] And they'd been beaten heavily. It hadn't been a good night for Scottish football. And yet here on Friday afternoon, I was sitting in Glasgow Airport watching people going past.

And every second person was wearing a Scotland top or a kilt. Big groups just going past. They were going to the next game. They were going to, must have been playing away somewhere.

They were flying out to watch Scotland play the next game. Even after a heavy defeat, there were all these thousands of fans following the team, thinking it can only get better.

Still with that hope of better results ahead. But as Christians, when we have our days of these results, when things don't seem to be going our way, we still have hope and a greater hope.

And we can be confident in this hope because we are pressing on in Christ. And that's the hope that Paul has here for the believers of Thessalonica.

[48 : 17] These sinners in need of salvation. The hope that he has is that they will receive the joy, the crown, the boasting on the day of the Lord's return.

He's encouraging to press on, to press forward. Despite these afflictions that they suffer. And you could look at Paul's own life and see, well, how could you explain this, Paul?

How could you explain this gospel, this affliction? I mean, how are you going to encourage people to come and hear about Jesus when there's so much that's going to be challenging and hard and difficult?

Well, Paul could look at his own life and say, well, I've gone through this. You read in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 23, and he's talking there about the false apostles, false teachers.

And he says, are they servants of Christ? He says, I am a better one. I'm talking like a madman with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, often near death.

[49 : 25] Five times I received the hand of the Jews, forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day adrift at sea.

Unfrequent journeys and dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers.

You think to yourself, all that is is danger and challenges. And you ask Paul, well, Paul, what are you saying to us? You suffered in all of these things.

What's in it for you? Why do you do this? Why does he do it? Well, he tells us here in verse 19 and verse 20.

He says, I do it for you. And I do it for the Lord, the Lord who has suffered for me. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming?

[50 : 36] Is it not you? For you are our glory and our joy. People in Thessalonica were saying, Paul's in it for money.

Paul's in it for ambition. Paul's in it in praise for himself. Paul says, you want to know why I'm in it? I'm in it for you. You sinners in need of salvation.

And to put it like this, he says, this is what we are looking ahead to. This is what the hope is for the Christian. This is what the scripture says to us from our need of a sinner from the very beginning in Genesis to the end of Revelation where we see the day of the Lord and the crown of appearing before our Lord Jesus Christ.

The one in that wonderful image who receives his people, who welcomes them in, who wipes away the tears. When the sinners see their salvation, they see their Savior.

And that is Paul's joy. That is what makes me do this. That is the confidence I have as you see him echoing throughout his letters.

[51 : 51] That he who has begun a good work will keep you until that day. The Lord is coming. And you know in Paul's day, when people would come, important people, emperors or important figures would come into cities such as Thessalonica, the city would put a crown onto these people because they were important.

They were showing their respect, their honor to that person. But when you look at this and what Paul is saying, it's almost like the reversal. The one who deserves the crown wore the crown of thorns on the cross.

But what does he give to his people? What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming?

It is you. It is the fact that the Lord's people will be presented to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive that crown. Sinners need salvation.

But the gospel tells us that there is a saviour. We need a gospel concern for ourselves and for others.

[53 : 14] We need to know the reality of a gospel challenger, one who seeks to hinder. But above all, we need that gospel confidence that there is a saviour for all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the offer is there to us all to come. We make our excuses. But let's not have any more excuses. Let us come, for the banquet is ready. We are sinners in need of salvation. And in Christ, we have a wonderful, wonderful and precious saviour.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we do rejoice in your goodness to us that in the midst of all of this world's afflictions that we have a wonderful saviour in Christ, one who has borne our sins, one who came to save sinners such as we are.

And we pray, Lord, that you will help us to lean upon and look to him as the one, the only one who is able to save. Hear our prayers, Lord, and continue with us.

[54 : 26] That's all we ask. We ask in his precious name. Amen. Amen. We'll conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 43.

This is the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 43, page 54 of the psalm books. We'll sing from verse 3 to verse 5 to the end of the psalm.

The tune is rocking him. O send your light forth and your truth. Let them direct me in your grace and bring me to your holy hill and to your sacred dwelling place.

We'll sing from verse 3 to 5 to God's praise. Amen. O send your light forth and your truth.

Let them die in your grace and bring me and bring me and bring me to your holy hills and to your sacred dwelling place.

[55 : 48] And to God's altar I will move to God my joy and my delight and I will face you with the hand O God you are my God of might What are you about Christ sua ■■■ For Why are you ■■ lest spiritutaniska Declaration■■■■j inshen

With name drained andücken Savior and thy God is King.

Close to the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. As I was saying, if you would just remain in your seats for a few minutes, I'm going to invite Scott to come forward. I thought Fiona's disappeared as well.

I'll just come down. And you come.

[58 : 02] Do you want to sit down?

All right, folks. Well, many of you are aware that Scott and Fiona have practically moved.