

# Sunday Evening - English

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Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Familiar words of praise and adoration. 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.

How is it this evening any of us get it right with God? How do we get right before God? Well this passage you've read this evening, the Psalms we've been singing together, speak of the need for wholeheartedness.

119 where we've just been singing. Verse 10 is key to the whole Psalm where we would seek the Lord with my heart and soul. So wholeheartedness. And what I like about the Bible is that it makes clear that Christianity is not a Sunday thing.

It's not a weekend pursuit. The Christian life is a lifestyle. It's about a commitment of heart and soul, home and life, mind and will. Unreservedly being committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so when we turn to Colossians it's good just to remind ourselves this evening that this was a letter that was written to young Christians. Newly established churches who in Colossae for a few years together had been struggling to make themselves known to come to terms with their new faith.

[ 1 : 33 ] And how to live out this faith against a tremendous pressure of an intolerant culture all around them. That immediately on hearing they were Christians branded them as atheists.

Because they didn't worship the emperor. And they didn't engage in all the idolatry that was so rampant in the day and age. And so these people really were up against it. So it's no wonder to find Paul writing to them from a prison cell with concern in his heart for their well-being.

For their growth. For their stability. For their maturity. And that's why when we turn in this chapter and come to verse 21 what we have is a very short reminder.

It's a reminder to them of who they are and whose they are. And it's a reminder that flows from the very essence of this letter.

This letter that is given over completely to the preeminence of Jesus Christ. The Christ of the gospel. The Christ of the church. What a reminder then we have. You who once were alienated and hostile in mind.

[ 2 : 38 ] Doing evil deeds. He has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death. Why was Paul so keen to write to these young Christians?

Well not long after the gospel took root in Colossae. As in almost every town and city. There was a pattern that was followed. And it wasn't a good one. And the pattern that established itself here in Colossae.

Was what became known as false teachers. False teachers came in. And they began to spread their wares. And they began to talk about the gospel plus.

Or Paul. Did he really say that? Well who is he anyway? When was he in Jerusalem? He persecuted the church. And so what we find is a pincer movement. Attacking both the man and his message.

And why? Because the devil was at work. He wanted to sow discord and uncertainty. He wanted them to be taken up with half-truths.

[ 3 : 39 ] He wanted them to think. In chapter 2 and verse 8. Paul addresses this directly. He says. See to it. No one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit.

According to human tradition. According to the elemental spirits of the world. And not according to Christ. See what was happening? With these false teachers.

With their smoothness. With their professionalism. With their slipperiness. What they were coming in and saying was. Christ. Yeah. But you know what?

There is so much more to life. Than just Christ. And so these Christians were being battered. And they were under attack. They were being tempted. By these false teachers. And there was the pressure and stress. That came from an intolerant culture all around them. We can relate to this. Can we not? On many levels. Christian church in Scotland today. Faces very similar attacks.

[ 4 : 33 ] With the centrality of the cross. With the preeminence of Christ. With the amazingness and truth and vitality and reality of the gospel. Has been almost sidelined to just a sideshow and an afterthought.

Because churches are meant to be doing all so much other things. We're meant to be providing for homeless. And getting involved in social ministries. And being involved in healing movements. And everything else.

All these things that have their place. Of course they do. But centrality of Christ. And the finished work of Jesus. And how we get right with God.

Must never be undermined. And so Paul counters that. He counters this empty philosophy. And empty deceit. This human tradition. And elemental spirits. That's not according to Christ.

And he brings them back. To the one who is king and head of the church. He is the head of the body. The church. He is the beginning. The first born from the dead. That in everything he might be preeminent.

[ 5 : 31 ] Does this matter? Well of course it does. Because if we get it wrong at the cross. Everything else will be wrong. If we get it wrong at the start. We're going to be wrong at the end.

I will remember. If I could share with you. Years ago. As a young tankie in Canada. Scotland's own 4th Royal Tank Regiment. Was set on full attack mode.

56 chieftain tanks. Supported with artillery. Engineers. Medics. Signallers. And anything else you can think about. Were set to action. And we attacked this hill. And we took that hill. But you know what?

We had to do it all over again. Because we attacked the wrong hill. Didn't get off to a great start. The colonel was getting hauled over the coals. And you know why? Because someone didn't take down.

The right coordinates on the radio. So the whole battle group went flying up the wrong hill. If you get it wrong at the start. You're going to get it wrong at the end.

[ 6 : 28 ] And if we get it wrong at the cross. Everything else is going to be wrong. And Paul knew that. And sensed it. And fought for it. From a prison cell in Rome. And wrote these parchments to the church in Colossae.

And he said. See to it. No one takes you captive. Why? Because he knew. If they wandered from the centrality of the cross. All was lost. All was lost.

And so he sets out this wonderful dynamic short reminder here in verses 21, 22 and 23. A very succinct summary if you like of what the gospel is.

And he begins by showing us a dilemma that is real. A dilemma that is real. Paul doesn't dress it up. He doesn't dress it down. He talks about the centrality of Christ. And shows us why it matters so much. And he shows us a dilemma that is real. Here we are confronted with a stark description of how we stand before God.

[ 7 : 34 ] This is the reminder that Paul gave these young believers. This congregation. Maybe more than one congregation by this time. Maybe there had been another church plant. We think that Colossae was a plant from Ephesus.

So maybe things were moving in that direction. There was growth and encouragement. But there was also difficulty and opposition and danger. So Paul begins with a reminder.

Such an important reminder that we take it to heart this evening. But is this the gospel? Is this not why we get such opposition? Is this not why we're criticized so often? Ignored so often?

Rejected so often? Because we come along talking about sin. And judgment. And hell. And the wrath of God. When what Scotland wants to hear tonight is love. And mercy.

And tolerance. And acceptance. We want to talk about all these things. We want to talk about the truth as it is seen from God.

[ 8 : 32 ] We don't want to hide it. We don't want to deny it. We can't dilute it. But if we are to avoid how things really are in the sight of God. Who are we serving? Who are we helping?

Who are we honoring? We're not helping the people around us. We're not honoring God. If what we begin to say is something other than the truth of the gospel.

What language Paul uses here then to depict this dilemma that is real. He speaks of being alienated and hostile. This language here. Alienated and hostile in mind speaks of being estranged or being enemies.

It's language that combines to speak of being in opposition to God. In every level of your life. Opposition to God in your mindset. Action. Lifestyle.

Decision making. Choices. That can be summed up in this way. There's no room for God. No room for God. You who once were alienated and hostile in mind.

[ 9 : 33 ] Doing evil deeds. He's writing to Christians. He's reminding them of a dilemma that is real. Sin ensures this separation.

Sin it is that keeps us from God. The scripture is clear on this. The sinful mind in Romans 8 is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

James chapter 4. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Hebrews 11. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We can come to God tonight friends.

Every one of us. But we must do so on his terms. Not ours. And that's the problem. So many people today want to come to God on their terms.

One of the most disturbing conversations I've ever had. Was with a young soldier in Kenya on exercise. Who as we formed up for a remembrance parade.

[ 10 : 33 ] Began to behave really oddly. And everyone saw that he was shaking. And body popping. And doing all this crazy body language. It was just oozing discomfort.

And anger. And rage. And when I got on my side. I discovered I was speaking to a Satanist. A Satanist. He was raging. That he had to stand there.

With his fellow soldiers. In an act of remembrance. Led by a Christian padre. That led to a real discussion. One that remains with me to this day. From about three and a half years ago.

Because it was so sad. I saw nothing but emptiness in that young man's eyes. And I heard nothing but emptiness coming from his mouth. In rejection and rebellion towards God.

Speaking of the devil's Bible. Friends I'm sure you've had similar experiences. Of speaking to people. That leaves you so breathless. With the arrogance and rejection of people.

[ 11 : 29 ] Who cannot see this dilemma. And it's reality. This is it's outworking. This hostility and enmity toward God. Doing evil deeds. Saying I'm a Satanist.

Why should I listen to a word you say? Maybe that's extreme. But it's a simple expression. Of this inner reality. Of enmity and alienation with God. And what does Paul remind them of here?

This once was you. This once was us. And so we don't get on our high horse. There's no room for pride and arrogance. In the Christian church.

We just simply remind ourselves where we've come from. Saved by grace and through faith. What a message. What a saviour.

And Paul here places before us then this evening. A dilemma that is real. And he speaks of the separation. That is expressed in this kind of mindset. And lifestyle.

[ 12 : 27 ] Friends can I say to you this evening. That unless you come to Christ. This dilemma is a description of you. Because you are yet to come. From enmity to friendship.

From alienation to adoption. From being far off. To being made near. And what's the key? Faith in Jesus Christ. The Son of God. And that most important prayer you could ever pray.

Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Another time I remember in a conversation. A couple of young lads. And we're just talking about life. And always with young boys when you're away with them.

And it doesn't take long before they say. Padre why are you here? What are you all about? What's your game? That's the way they'll chat. I say well my game has been where you guys are. That's what chaplains do.

If you go we go. And we were again this one. One time I think we were in Afghanistan. And we were talking. And after a while. Almost very quickly we went to God. And what the boys thought.

[ 13 : 27 ] What they believed. What they didn't believe. And one young lad say. Oh you proddies. You talk about God. But we Catholics. We've got Jesus. What the level of confusion that's out there today.

It's incredible. But they know so little. But as a conversation was going back and forth. Another lad joined. Older. Higher in rank. So the boys immediately deferred to him. What are you talking about guys? What's happening Padre?

He said. We're just talking about God. I said. God. He said. I'll take my chances. Killed the conversation. Stone dead. I've always remembered it.

I've always remembered it. Because I've thought. How many people. Sit in churches. Week. After week. After week. Saying the same thing. God. I'll take my chances.

And friend. If you tonight are not a Christian. You're playing with your soul. You're taking a chance. You're saying. God. I'll get to you later. I've got so much to do.

[14:24] And in fact. What happens. As this hostility. And alienation. And enmity. Works itself out in you. You are determining. To keep God. As far from your heart.

As you possibly can. You're taking a chance. With your soul. And saying. God. Maybe another time. Maybe another communion. Maybe another Sunday.

Any time. But now. And if we know anything. About the devil tonight. We know this. He doesn't like the word now. He can't stand it.

When Christ is glorified. And the cross is proclaimed. As the only way of salvation. He can't deal with it. He can't deal with the Lord of glory. Being made manifest. When we speak of him. Being lifted up.

And drawing all men to him. And the way of salvation. Being made clear to sinners. He's terrified of seeing men. And women. And boys and girls. Responding to this invitation. And coming to Jesus in faith.

[15:18] Crying out for mercy. And forgiveness. And being saved. And taken from his. Clutches. And so he doesn't want you to think. About now. He wants you to think about tomorrow. Tonight.

Next week. Anything but now. To delay you from coming to Jesus. Friends. If you allow him that. If you give him that opportunity. You remain in this dilemma.

A dilemma. That is real. The summary goes on. The summary goes on. Secondly. To show us. A deliverance of the secure. A deliverance. A deliverance that is secure.

Yes. There is enmity. And he reminds these young Christians. They once were caught up. And given over to doing evil deeds. But now he has reconciled. In his body of flesh.

By his death. In order to present you. Holy and blameless. And above reproach. Before him. What a contrast. As real as the dilemma is.

[16:17] As awful as it is. To be under. The wrath and judgment of God. Now we see how it is. We can be right with God. We can be reconciled. In his body.

Of flesh. By his death. It's the cross. It's always the cross. It always comes down. To the cross. In the scripture. And Paul's reminder.

Doesn't stop there. He goes on and speaks. About what God does then. About this dilemma. He's already. Begun to build up. To chapter 1.

And verse 13. In language. Very similar. To chapter 1. And verse 7. Of Ephesians. He says. He has delivered us. From the domain of darkness. And transferred us. To the kingdom of his beloved son. In whom we have redemption. The forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins. If there's anything tonight. To rejoice about it.

[17:12] Is this deliverance. That is secure. Wonderful hymns. Have been written. To reflect this. And the Christian church. Over the years. Has expressed this. In wonder and awe.

For example. Praise my soul. The king of heaven. To his feet. Thy tribute bring. Ransomed. Healed. Restored. Forgiven. Evermore.

His praises sing. You see. Through Jesus. Everything changes. Everything changes. It's wonderful. That Paul could be so clear.

And concise. He speaks in chapter 1 again. Of the gospel. What they've heard before. In the word of the truth. Which has come to you. As indeed in the whole world. It is bearing fruit.

And growing. You heard it. You know what this message is. You know who it's about. It's about Jesus Christ. And so we find here. An altogether different word group being used.

[18:07] He speaks of being reconciled. And being without blemish. And being irreproachable. Wonderful language. It's so clear. And concise. And Paul has said. Remember who you are.

Remember whose you are. And what a good reminder. Because remember the culture of intolerance. And indifference. And unbelief. And idolatry. Is pressing in on every side.

You're a Christian. You're a what? You're. You're a. You're. Jesus. Are you for real? Pressing in on every side. And then they have the philosophy.

And the empty deceit. And the human tradition. And the emphasis on the elemental spirits. Talk new age. Here it is. Two thousand years ago. Saying yes. Let's talk about Jesus. But let's talk about other ways.

And other gods. Do you ever get that attitude? You come across it? I had a good friend once. Who. Who. Never lost an opportunity to tell me. He still is a good friend.

[19:06] He's just. He's in New Zealand. So I don't think I'm ever going to see him again. But. He never lost an opportunity to remind me. That he was an atheist. And one day. From a far.

In one of the camps out in Kabul. In one of our deployments. He shouted across to me. From the vehicle park. God bless you padre. And I said. Thought you were an atheist. He said.

Aye. But I didn't say which god. Did I? He kept that to himself. And I couldn't make head nor tail. Of where he was coming from. And that's the way he liked it. And I see in that something.

Of this human tradition. And elemental spirits. Not according to Christ. There's nothing new under the sun. It was going on in Colossae. Two thousand years ago. And so friends.

Tonight. It's important that we. Get it across. Somehow. When we have the opportunity. To do so. And maybe it is. Handing someone a tract. Maybe not.

[20:00] The best of all. Of course. Is face to face. With a coffee. Sitting down. And having a chat. As a friend. As a neighbour. As a colleague. A brother and sister. Parent. Uncle. Granny.

Grandad. And saying something. About the seriousness. And the wonder. And the beauty. And splendour. Of deliverance. That you know in your heart.

Through Jesus Christ. Your Lord and Saviour. For what happens at this moment. The moment of faith. Removes the offence of sin. The moment of faith.

Removes the offence of sin. Our confession of faith. Puts it this way. God justifies those he calls. Not by infusing righteousness. Into them.

But by pardoning their sins. For Christ's sake. Alone. We are back at the start. The finished work of Jesus Christ. The cross. Which is why Paul is so adamant.

[20:57] Never move away. And never be tempted. To move away. From the preeminence of Christ. It is in Ephesians. The church of Christ. But here in Colossae.

It is the Christ of the church. Keep fixed and rooted upon him. And don't let these people. Buffet you. And move you. And intimidate you. And bully you. Into saying and thinking and living.

In some other way. Don't let them do it. So the moment of faith. Removes the offence of sin. Jesus takes it from us. Our toxic debt.

Is removed. Psalm 32. We thought about on Friday. Jesus lifts our burden. Covers our condition. Cancels our debt.

What a gospel. What a saviour. This deliverance. That is secure. And why do we see it. So attacked. And so undermined. So often. Because the devil knows it.

[21:53] To be the truth. And he wants to keep it from us. And from our people. And our families. Our friends. Our workmates. Maybe you have seen another. Just shared another example.

With you. Of how it is. The culture around us today. Tries to undermine. And get away from this. There is the. The sugar coated pill. Of well we like you Christians.

You do lots of good things. In society. And we think. You have got a place. But don't talk to us. About heaven. And if you mention hell. I am walking out of here. You get that. You get that everywhere.

Don't you. And there is one column. I can share with you. A very popular columnist. In the daily media. They are never off the TV. And they are very often. In all the media. This is what they said. Of some.

Of a. There was a bit of a stushie. Down south. And there was. There was a council. Down south. Decided that the Christian cross. That had been in a crematorium.

[22:46] For over 50 years. That needed to be removed. And so that caused. A bit of storm. And one of our. Our celebrity. Media. Accommodators. Jumped on this. And they said this. When someone you love. Has died.

You face the prospect. Of mortality. More starkly. Than at any other time. In your life. In a Christian country. Our beliefs. Symbolized by the cross. Salvation. And redemption.

It comforts. And reminds you. Of the possibility. Of eternal life. In this. Even if you know. In your heart. That believing. In an afterlife.

Is clutching. At a straw. From a fairy tale. See how subtle. That is. How inclusive. That is. Oh we like you Christians.

Oh the Bible. Is a great book. But don't talk to me about. The suffering saviour. Don't talk to me about. The son of God. Dead on a cross. Because of sin. Don't talk to me.

[ 23 : 40 ] Of my need to trust in him. To save. From going to hell. For eternity. Don't talk to me. About the judgment of God. Talk to me. About that pink and fluffy God. Talk to me. About the inclusive.

Equal opportunities God. Give me that God. Don't give me the God of the Bible. Christian friends. There is such subtlety. And attacks today. That we need to stand fast.

And take this reminder to heart. And so we notice Paul's. Summary here. His reminder. He speaks to them. Of a deliverance. That is secure. And he speaks of being.

Closeness with God. Familiarity. Dependence. Trust. We are preserved. And we are presented. We are presented. Holy and blame us. And above reproach. Before him. It couldn't be more different.

To the enmity. And hostility. And alienation. Of the life. Of sin. This deliverance then. Is secure.

[ 24 : 36 ] This is deliverance. This language. And it's all about. Being right with God. The fundamental thing. Is how we look in God's sight.

How is it God sees us. How does God see you tonight friend. How does God see you in your heart. Where only God can see you. Where nobody else can see you. Does God see you.

In Christ. Remember that's. The New Testament's. Favorite description. Of what a Christian really is. A man. A woman. A boy. Or a girl. Who is in Christ.

God sees you in Christ. Then praise his name. And be strong. Reflect tonight. And remember. The deliverance. That you know through him. But friend. If you do not know Jesus.

Why would you wait anymore. Why would you take this chance. Why would you turn away. From a savior. Who in his grace. And providence. Again.

[ 25 : 33 ] Is saying. Come to me. And rest. This is a deliverance. That is secure. There's one final thing. Here this evening. In this reminder. That Paul goes on.

To speak. Not just of a dilemma. That is real. And a deliverance. That is secure. But flowing from this deliverance. There is a duty. That is clear. A duty.

That is clear. If indeed. You continue. In the faith. Stable and steadfast. Not shifting. From the hope. Of the gospel. That you heard. Which has been proclaimed.

In all creation. Under heaven. Which he's seen to us here. This evening. We're not saved. By continuing. In the faith. It's not our works. It's not our efforts. It's not our righteousness.

That secures heaven for us. We continue in the faith. And thus show we are saved. We continue in the faith. And show we are saved.

[ 26 : 27 ] If you continue in the faith. What does he say? Stable. Steadfast. Isn't that what Scotland needs tonight. More than ever. A Christian community. A Christian church.

That is stable. And steadfast. And honest. And open. And truthful. And merciful. And compassionate. Saying to people. There is a problem. The problem is sin.

And we can't do anything about it. But Christ can. Put your faith and trust in him. And go on to live for him. In other words.

I believe we could summarize this. In saying. As we go on. And as we are stable. And as we are secure. As he says. In chapter 2. And verse 6. As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord.

So walk in him. Rooted and built up in him. And established in the faith. Very similar language. Stable and steadfast. Rooted and built up in. Established in the faith.

[ 27 : 23 ] Abounding in thanksgiving. That's what Stornoway needs this evening. That's what Leith needs this evening. Christians who are strong. And stable. And steadfast. Rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Built up in him. Maturing in him. And developing what you may call a spiritual accent. In your life. How is a spiritual accent. Seen, observed and heard.

By simply being consistently. Quietly Christian. Come to church. Come to the prayer meeting. Be in fellowship with the Lord's people. Be grounded in this book.

Make this book your life. So that you know what God would have you think. And say and do. Don't make your decisions in isolation to the Lord Jesus. Live in a way that simply shows.

You long to be with his people. You long to be under the word. And you long others to know what you know. To know who you know. That's a spiritual accent. That's how things show.

[ 28 : 22 ] And are seen. And you know the thing about accents is that. They may not confirm where you're from. I'm sure maybe you've been asked if you're on your holidays. What part of Ireland you're from.

Maybe what part of Inverness you're from. But I wonder if you've ever been asked what part of Newcastle you're from. Or what part of Liverpool you belong to. Or if you're a Cockney. Or if indeed you're French.

Or Spanish. See your accent sometimes doesn't show exactly where you're from. But it does show where you're not from. See.

You might not be mistaken for a Scouser. Or a Geordie. Because it's quite obvious. That's not your accent. Christian friends. As you develop and grow and mature. Your spiritual accent will speak. And be prepared to let it speak for you. Think of Joseph's example in Genesis. It's his character that speaks. We don't hear from Joseph directly speaking in dialogue.

[ 29 : 23 ] In much of many large chunks of the story of his life. But what we do hear is his character. His integrity. His faithfulness. His spirituality speaks for him.

Let that work for you Christian friend. As you go about your business tomorrow. Tuesday, Wednesday. Let your spiritual accent loose. Let people see and hear that you love the Lord. Don't worry about them knowing. They'll know. They'll know. They'll see and hear something in you. That they don't see and hear in others. And light shines in the darkness.

So be prepared for questions. Maybe you'll be asked as I was once. I've been not long left home. 17 year old. Knees knocking. In basic training. Down in Catholic.

Not knowing what day of the week it was. Then one day this big Ouija. This big Glasgow boy. Who became a great friend of mine. Just turned to me and said one day. Hey wee man. How come you didn't swear?

[ 30 : 23 ] I hadn't even crossed my mind. And I had to there and then say to him. Just being a Christian. I probably didn't come out like that. Probably a wee squeaky voice at the time.

Because I was in terror. And intimidated. Christian friends on this. When your spiritual accent speaks. Remember. The devil will wreak havoc with your imagination.

He will use your imagination to intimidate you. To bully you. To silence you. He will have you in fear of your own shadow. Saying if people recognize you're a Christian. All sorts will happen to you.

You're going to get battered. You're going to get mocked. You're going to get laughed at. You're going to get abused. You're going to have stress and difficulty in your life. Just don't say anything to anyone. And he'll wreak havoc with you in your imagination.

It's happened to me. And he intimidated me into staying silent for so long. And then I realized. When all these guys started asking questions about faith. And the Bible. And what a Christian really was.

[ 31 : 20 ] That I'd been listening to lies. And nonsense. And deceit. So Christian friend. I want to encourage you tonight. Stand up. Stand up for Jesus.

You soldiers of the cross. Just stand up. Don't be too concerned about speaking up and speaking out. Remember you are the righteousness of God. In him.

You have all the righteousness God can require. Indeed. You are as righteous as Christ himself. That's what faith establishes. And with that establishment of righteousness.

Let your beliefs. Mold your behavior. Let your confession. Be what drives your conduct. Faith and lifestyle belong together.

Not apart. Warren Wearsby. The American Comandator said this. Unless doctrine leads us to duty. It is of no use to us.

[ 32 : 21 ] So let us then be. As Paul says here. Steadfast. Stable. And again in chapter 2. Rooted. Built up. Established in the faith.

That's what this town needs. That's what our capital city needs. People who are given over. To living for the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this evening.

I want to just close with this. Reminder and summary of what Paul has put here. An incredible reminder. Paul's words are an outstanding passage. And sometimes it's good to remind yourself. When you turn to his letters. That he was writing to young Christians. He wasn't writing to a theological school. He wasn't writing to pastors. And clergy. And elders. He was writing to young

Christian men and women.

And boys and girls. Families. New in the faith. Who were coming to terms with life. And Jesus Christ being at its centre. So that they could live in a way that would please and honour him.

[ 33 : 21 ] He was writing to people just like you and I. So we would know how to honour God. And how to get things right with him. And he outlines then.

A dilemma that's real. A deliverance that is secure. And a duty that is clear. Let our life speak. Show that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Lord.

Your saviour. And your friend. To whoever may want to come and ask. And be prepared for the questions. Be prepared for the challenges. Yes it will be hard.

Sometimes intimidating. And nearly always draining. Sometimes disappointing. But what a joy is ours. To be spokespeople.

For the Lord Jesus Christ. Where he places us. Let me finish with a story. It's not a story. It's an illustration. You may be aware that. In the battle of the Somme.

[ 34 : 18 ] In 1916. It was a tremendous conflict. An awful loss of life. Occurred over six to nine months. Of armed conflict. On the western front.

And in a village outside. Beaumont Hamill. 51st Highland Division. Went into action. And many many Scottish soldiers. Lost their lives. And there's many. If you visit that site.

Maybe you have. You can't help but be moved. To the being. To the very core of your being. And the thought of the suffering. And the loss of life. That took place here. But in one of the.

The battle fields. Outside that village. Is a stone cairn. And on the cairn. There's an inscription. In Gaelic. That is translated. In the day of battle. It is good to have friends.

And I thought. What a wonderful. Description. Of the soldier's life. His mates to the right. And his mates to the left. Looking out for one another. Trying to get through. Doing their duty.

[ 35 : 13 ] Taking on the enemy. Pressing forward. Trying to survive. Very often giving their lives. In the day of battle. It is good to have friends. We will get into a battle.

Christians. Maybe this week. Will be a battle. Maybe it will be hard. And difficult. And draining. You don't face it alone. You have friends.

To your left. And to your right. And above all. In your heart. For your saviour is with you. And never forget it. Let's bow in prayer together. Lord our God.

We pray for your blessing. Tonight. We pray for your guidance. We pray Lord. For insight. We thank you. For all you have given to us. Lord we thank you. For this opportunity. To consider this reminder.

Of Paul. To these young Christians. Which speaks to us. This evening. Of the need to be. Stable. And steadfast. Rooted and built up. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord we face a dilemma.

[ 36 : 09 ] That is real. And we pray this evening. For any here. With us this night. Who has yet remained. Remain in. Fixed in that dilemma. Lost and under the wrath.

And curse of God. We please. We pray by your grace. To draw them to Jesus. Show them. That the Lord is saying. Come to me. And I will give you rest.

Lord we ask that. This would be their portion. This night. And that we would help. In any way we can. In describing. And defining the gospel. In the days to come. We ask then Lord.

That you would accept us. For we come to you. And bend at knee. In the name of Christ. Giving thanks. For his saving work. Appealing to his blood. For the forgiveness.

Of our sins. And so be with us. As we pray in this. Grant us Lord the courage. To face the duty. That is ours. In days to come. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 37 : 03 ] We ask these things. Amen. We'll close our service this evening.

We'll sing to God's praise. From Sing Psalms. In Psalm 36. Psalm 36. Singing from verse 5. And we'll sing from verse 5.

To verse 9. To the praise of God. 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. We'll sing from verse 5. To 9.

To the praise of God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Your steadfast love is great.

[ 38 : 02 ] O Lord. It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful.

Extending to the sky. Extending to the sky.

Your faithfulness is wonderful. Extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is wonderful. Your righteousness is wonderful. Your righteousness is very great. Like mountains high and steep. Your righteousness is like ocean depths.

Both man and beast. Both man and beast you keep. Both man and beast you keep. Both man and beast you keep.

[ 39 : 07 ] Your justice is like ocean depths. Your righteousness is like ocean depths. Both man and beast you keep. O precious is your steadfast love.

How precious is your steadfast love. What confidence it brings. Is your God is animal in my centro? Whatuates are bloodoo? Your east and beach. What JACK For high and low find shelter in the shadow of pure wings.

A feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight. For with you is the source of light, in pure light we see light.

In pure light we see light, in pure light we see light. For with you is the source of light, in pure light we see light.

[ 40 : 45 ] As I said at the beginning, we'll now pray and seek God's blessing upon the whole communion thus far. After I've prayed, Mr. McLeod will pronounce the benediction, and then if you allow him to go to the main door, please, you can greet him on the way out.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, we have so many things to give you thanks for.

Even if we confine our thoughts to a communion time, we have so much, O Lord, contained in that, that gives us cause to give thanks and praise to the Lord.

We thank you for the gospel. We praise you, Lord, for the way that you have given us this gospel, so that our lives might be touched and changed, and we be made into your likeness.

We pray, Lord, that you would follow what has been done over these days, and what we anticipate yet to be done in thankfulness tomorrow, with your own blessing. We pray that we may be different people through your blessing, and that those of us who already know you will find, Lord, that we are more committed to you, that we walk more closely in your ways and in fellowship with you, and that if we have heard your gospel tonight or through these days, and have yet to reach out by faith and take you to ourselves, remember every soul, Lord, in that situation.

[ 42 : 10 ] We thank you for the Lord's Supper. We give thanks for all that is contained in it as a remembrance of your death, and we thank you for the way that you have blessed it so many times, for the instruction and for the further equipping of your people.

We thank you, Lord, for all who sat at your table at this time. We don't know what tomorrow may bring, Lord, let alone what the next communion will bring, but we pray that all who came and sat at your table and took communion in bread and in the cup will know your blessing in their lives ahead. We pray for those especially who are there for the first time. We thank you for the way that you led them to do this. We pray that that may be a further encouragement to us as a congregation, and that as they take their place among your people who profess you openly, use them, Lord, we pray, along with us in your service.

We pray for those who are observers of the table, some who have been in that situation many times. Lord, we pray that you would grant to them the grace by which they will find the strength to come and commit themselves to you and wait upon you and come to join your people in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Lord, we would not want any of them left out of what they witnessed today. And we pray that you would work in their hearts to that end as their life goes on.

[ 43 : 44 ] We pray, Lord, that you would bless us as a congregation through this time of communion. That you would bless all who have taken the gospel to us over these days.

We ask that you'd bless them in their own service, that you'd be pleased, O Lord, to use them mightily. For as you reminded us this evening through your servant, we live in days that require robust and committed Christians, your people to be well-founded, grounded in your truth, and shining for you as lights in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.

O Lord, our God, hear us as we pray for your blessing. We do so now as we seek your blessing too on the fellowship that is to follow. We give thanks for the food provided for us.

We pray that we may see your mercies in that. And help us, Lord, to always, daily, carry forth with conviction in our lives these great words that we have been singing, that others may see them

coming through in our testimony.

The steadfast love of the Lord is great, and his mercies are new to us each morning. We pray now that you would hear us in our prayer, and that you'd accept this our worship, and our praise and our thanks.

[ 45 : 03 ] For Jesus' sake. Amen. Let us pray. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest on you now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.