

# Looking Up

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Date: 09 June 2024

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're singing in Psalm 121 in the Scottish Psalter, page 416. Psalm 121, page 416. We'll sing the whole of this psalm, the tune is French.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come my need. My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made. We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come my need.

My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy fruit heal not lest thine nor will, thee slumber that thee keeps.

[ 1 : 14 ] Behold, thee that keeps Israel, thee slumber snort nor sleet.

The Lord, thee keep's, the Lord thy shape, on my right hand just day.

The moon by night, thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day.

The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall place heavenly from all hell.

And so forth thy going heart and end. God, he forever will.

[ 2 : 26 ] Let's join together in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we thank you for this, your day.

We thank you for being able to gather to worship and praise you, to sing praise to you, thankful for who you are and for all that you do for us. Thankful that we thank you for the Lord.

Thank you for who he is and all that he's done for us. We thank you that the more that we learn and experience of him, that we come to marvel at more and more at what has been done for us.

Even as we think back over this week and to the communion service last weekend and remembering his death, we thank you for his laying down his life. As we have been reminded even in this past week of so many who gave their lives in the D-Day landings and who gave their lives to protect us and give us freedom.

We thank you above all that Jesus came to lay down his life to give us the ultimate freedom and that hope of eternal life through him. And that we come today knowing that although he died, he rose again.

[ 4 : 10 ] And we come today in that resurrection power. We come thankful for all that Jesus is to so many in this world. I'm praying that he will become more and more precious to each and every one of us today.

So Lord, be with us, we pray, in all that we do in our service and in the Sunday School in Crescent Twinies. May you look after us all as we commit ourselves into your hands, asking all with the forgiveness of our sins.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, just a wee word to the young folks before you go out.

I've got something to show you. This morning I've got a number of medals. Different medals for different events.

There's running, mostly running I think it is, running short distance and running long distance. And you may be quite impressed by me having all these medals.

[ 5 : 11 ] You may be quite surprised by me having all these medals. But I've got to let you into a wee secret. These medals aren't actually mine. And I don't think they were left in the manse by the previous minister either.

But they belong to someone who's good at running, running different distances. And a couple of weeks ago, two weeks ago yesterday, there was a lot of running going on around the town of Stornoway.

There was the half marathon, there was the 10K, and there was the mini marathon. And I know a lot of people here were involved in some of these races.

Some of the younger ones involved in the mini marathon, some of the older ones involved in the 10K or the half marathon. I didn't get my entry in in time, but maybe next year, if I start training, we

might get into that one.

But at the end of the race, you have winners, you have people who come in in first place, and they get that prize for being first in the race.

[ 6 : 17 ] And many of us would maybe go into these kinds of races, whether it's the half or the 10K or the mini marathon, and you know yourself, I'm not going to win. There's better runners than me.

There's people who are faster and fitter. They're more likely to win. But does that stop us going into the race? No. You see, it's not about just getting first place.

It's so often in these kinds of races, especially you think of half marathons and marathons, people don't enter in it just to think, I'm going to win. It's the actual accomplishment of doing it, of running these distances, of being in the race and finishing that race, whether you're finishing it running in a sprint, or whether you're finishing it just walking absolutely shattered.

It's that finishing the race that counts. And today, we're going to be looking at the letter of Paul to the Philippians here in the church. And in this letter, Paul often describes our life in this way, of running a race, of being involved in a race, of being training for a race.

But he does so in different ways. He says sometimes we're in the race running, sometimes we're walking, sometimes we're resting. But it's all about preparing ourselves for it, being ready for this race and running this race.

[ 7 : 44 ] And it's not about gaining first prize. It's not about getting that medal for first place. It's about all of us just being in this race, being in this race in order that we might get that gift of God at the end of it, that he will crown us, that he will say, well done, you've run the race, you've finished the race, you didn't come first in it, you weren't the best in it, but you've done it, you've made it, and that's what counts.

And for all of us today, when we think of medals in first place, these can be good, and someone will win first place. But for many of us, it's just about being in the race.

I didn't get any of these medals because I wasn't in the race. Last two weeks ago, I wasn't in any of the races. I was standing there pointing people in the right direction, I had a nice, easy job.

But those who were in the race finished the race and did it well. And that's what counts. And so for all of us today as well, we think of the race that we're in, running for Jesus, running to him, looking to him, and thinking it's about being in the race and finishing the race, whether we're first or last, it doesn't matter, but that we are with him.

So may the Lord help us all to run that race and to look to Jesus. We're going to say the Lord's prayer together now. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

[ 9 : 25 ] 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. We're going to sing again to God's praise, this time in Psalm 15, again in the Scottish Psalter, page 215 of the psalm books.

And the tune is Evan. Psalm 15, on page 215, we'll sing the whole of this psalm together. Within thy tabernacle, Lord, who shall abide with thee, and in thy high and holy hill, who shall a dweller be, the man that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and as he thinketh in his heart, so doth he truth express.

We'll sing the whole of this psalm and we'll sing the whole of this psalm together. And let's pray now to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. Within thy tabernacle, Lord, who shall have fight with thee, And in thy high and holy hill, who shall have weller thee, The man that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, And as he thinketh in his heart, so doth the truth express,

Who doth not slander with his tongue, nor who his friend doth are, Nor yet against his neighbor, doth take up an ill report, And whose eyes bad men are despised, but those that God do fear, He honoreth and changeth not, though to his heart he swear, His coin puts not to you, sonny, nor take reward will he,

[ 12 : 43 ] Against the guiltless food of us, shall never move with me.

Amen. We're going to read together now in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

We're reading in chapter 3. We can take up our reading at verse 7.

Philippians chapter 3 and at verse 7. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, In order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, But that which comes through faith in Christ, The righteousness from God that depends on faith, That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, And may share his sufferings, Becoming like him in his death, That by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[ 14 : 15 ] Not that I have already obtained this, Or I'm already perfect, But I press on to make it my own, Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, But one thing I do, Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal For the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us who are mature think this way, And if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me, And keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many of whom I have often told you, And now tell you, Even with tears, Walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, Their God is their belly, And they glory in their shame, With minds set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven, And from it we await a Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body To be like his glorious body, By the power that enables him Even to subject all things to himself.

[ 15 : 42 ] Therefore, my brothers, Whom I love and long for, My joy and crown, Stand firm thus, In the Lord my beloved.

And so on. And may God bless that reading from his word. Let's again just engage in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, We do thank you for your word, And all instruction that it gives to us.

But above all, We thank you that it reminds us of All that you are to us, All that you have done for us, All that you are doing and will do In our lives, And the world in which you have made.

We know that from generation to generation, Your word has gone out, Not always received, So often shunned and turned away from, Even like in our own day.

But we thank you that still Your word accomplishes so much, That it is powerful, That it is mighty, That it is a word of salvation To a people who are perishing, That it reminds us of A wonderful saviour That you have given, Your own son, Christ Jesus.

[ 16 : 56 ] And as we think even of this letter, The letter to the Philippines, It is full of Christ, Full of all that he has done, How he came into the world, How he was humble, How he showed humility in every way, How he endured the cross, How he experienced death, How he rose again, How through his righteousness, We are cleansed, How through him, We have one to look to, Not just for today, But for eternity.

And we pray, Lord, That your word, As it goes out today, Will be blessed by you, That throughout your world, Throughout your people, Far and wide, That your word may be heard, And that people may be saved, From their sin.

We thank you, Lord, That it is a life-giving word, And yet, As we read here, There are those, Who have turned away from it, Those who are enemies, Of the cross of Christ, As described here.

And we see that, All around us, In so many ways. And yet, We pray, Lord, For mercy, We pray for grace, To be poured out in abundance, That we would see, Times of great conflict, And distress, And pain, And suffering, That we would see, These things turned, That we would see, A turning to you, A repentance, And a turning to you.

Lord, May you hear, The prayers of your people, Throughout this world, We do remember today, Lord, That so many of your people, Do not enjoy the freedoms, That we do, That so many, Live in countries, And places, Where there is so much, Persecution, Where there is fear, Put upon, What it means, To be a Christian, And yet, Just as when Paul, Was writing, With such joy, From a prison cell, That there is still joy, In our world, In Christ, Joy in the midst, Of suffering, Joy in the midst, Of persecution, Joy that, In Christ, We have something, That is not just temporary, Or for a moment, But for all eternity, That there is riches, Beyond any comparison, And so we pray today, Lord, That you will encourage us here, That you will build us up, In our faith, That you will bless us, By your presence, And through your word, That we will experience, Lord, That surety, And that certainty,

That you are with us,

[ 19 : 22 ] That you are near, And we thank you, For every encouragement, That you give, We thank you, As we look back, As we have said already, Of the communion weekend, We thank you, For all the blessings, We received, And enjoyed, From your hand there, We thank you, For new members, We thank you, For our fellowship, We thank you, For your word, That was proclaimed to us, The word of the cross, And we thank you, That that is central, To all things, That we lift our eyes, To Jesus, And help us, As we go on, In this race of life, As we go on, Walking through the experiences, That come our ways, That in all things, That our eyes, Will be fixed on him, That we will not despair, That we will not lose hope, That we will be able, To commit all things, To you in prayer, With that sure, And certain hope, That Christ is victorious, So help your people, And help those, In different needs today, As we know, Many around us, Have different experiences,

Of ill health, Of sad news, Of sorrow, And sadness, And loss in life, And we just pray, Lord, For your help, In the midst of them all, That you will surround us, With your grace, And with your peace, We think too, Even of the news, Of a young boy, Missing in our town, Overnight, And we pray, For his, Being found safe, We pray, For those who are concerned, For him, And looking for him, Lord, We pray, O Lord, Your blessing, And help, In the midst of these things, And we pray, For our young people, For each one, O Lord, In this world, In which we live, In which there is so much, That makes us fearful, Help us to, To remember, Lord, That you are able, To do so much more, Than we ask or imagine, And so Lord, Hear our prayers, And watch over us now, As we confess our sins, And you Lord, Hear us in all of these things, And pardon us, As we ask it all, In Jesus name, Amen.

We'll again sing, To God's praise, Before we turn back, To look at this passage, We're going to sing, In Psalm 146, In the Sing Psalms version, Page 191, We'll sing from verse 1, To verse 6, Psalm 146, At verse 1, Page 191, Praise the Lord, My soul, O praise him, I'll extol him, All my days, While I live to God, My Saviour, From my heart, I will sing praise, We'll sing from verse 1, To 6, To God's praise, Praise the Lord, My soul, O praise him, I'll extol him, I'll extol him, All my days, While I live to God, My Saviour, From my heart,

I will sing praise, Do not put your trust in princes, Mortal men who cannot save, All their plans will come to nothing, When they perish, When they perish in the grave, Blessed is the one who truly looks on hell to Jacob's God, Blessed is the one who places all his hope upon the Lord.

He who made the earth and heaven, And the seas with all their store, He who keeps us every promise, Who is faithful evermore.

[ 23 : 45 ] We can turn back to our reading in Philippians chapter 3, And we're going to look at the last part of this chapter, Verse 17, Down into verse 1 of chapter 4.

Philippians chapter 3, Reading at verse 17, Brothers, Brothers, Brothers, Join in imitating me, And keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

And so on. Well, Paul often uses the analogy of running a race, Or living our lives in that way, We were pressing on towards a goal, As we see in this passage, You see it in verse 12, To verse 16, But there's a subtle change, Between verses 12 to 16, And then 17, Down to the end of the chapter, And you ask, Well, what is that subtle change?

You see in verse 12 to 16, Paul describing the way he is living his life there, As pressing on to make it my own, Pressing on towards the prize, Towards the goal, The upward call of God, There's this image of he's in a race, He's running, He's pressing on, To receive that goal of the prize at the end of the race, So there's this race that he's in, But then in verse 17 to verse 1 of chapter 4, If you like, There's a change, And in verse 17 it says there, You're walking according to the example, So there's a slowing down in pace, If you like, But it's no less difficult, In running a race, There are times, You think especially of running a marathon, Which is what Paul probably had in mind, In the races that he was seeing around him at this time, Running great distances, There are times when some runners just have to slow down and walk,

Just to regain their strength, And their breath back, To carry on in this race, And Paul is often writing in this way, Where it's not just about the race alone, But all the training that goes into life, And running the race for Jesus, So there's a time to run, There's a time to walk, And there's also a time to rest, Just like with any athlete, You need all of these things, And Paul is describing the Christian life in this way as well, He's writing to the people here at Philippi, In order to build them up in the faith, To build them up in their stamina for running this race, And what it means to run this race, But when you come to verse 17 here, Paul says, Brothers, join in imitating me, And in some ways, It can come across as quite selfish,

[ 26 : 56 ] Self-promotion here, Paul is saying, Look at me, How good I am, But that would be to take it in the wrong way, He says, Join in imitating me, And keep your eyes on those, Who walk according to the example you have seen in us, It's more than just Paul, It's believers, In that sense of those who are in the race, And running for Christ, Look at them, And learn from them, And how you can go on in this race, But it's not just about them, As you read through this letter, And if you think it's all about Paul, Or just what others have done, You miss the point, His ultimate point, Is to look to Christ, To look to him, Because that's what's important, So the imitation of him, Is not just doing as he is doing, But doing as he is doing,

Through Christ, Who has saved him, And so in chapter 3 here, Paul uses different analogies, To speak to the people, And to help them understand, Just how precious Christ is, In chapter 3, Verse 1 to 11, He uses the analogy, Of an accountant, He's talking about, Gain and loss, And all of these, Accounting terms, And he's doing it, In a way that's showing, What he formerly had, And what he thought, He was rich in, What he thought, Was so precious for him, It's rubbish, He's saying, It's rubbish, Compared to the surpassing, Worth, Of knowing Christ Jesus, As my Lord, He cannot gain anything, By his own righteousness, It's all about, The righteousness, Of Christ, It's all about Christ, And then in verse 12, To verse 16, He's using the analogy, Of the athlete there, But again, It's rich in Christ, He's pressing on, Towards the goal, He's running the race, But he's saying, To make it my own, Because Christ Jesus, Made me, His own, And he's running this race, The upward call of God, In Christ Jesus, So he's, He's always focused, On Christ, So in these analogies, That he's used, Of, Of accountancy, Of trade, Commerce, If you like, And sports, He's using, Analogies of things, That people would have been, Very familiar with, In Philippi, A trading city, A city that was, Always had, These races being run, It was things, That people with, Were familiar with, But now in verse 17, To verse 1, Of chapter 4, He's using another, Analogy, And it's this, We're going to focus on, This morning, And it's, Not just to do with, Walking, But it's, Walking as citizens,

And he's talking here, About citizenship, He's talking about, Belonging, He's talking about, Whose we are, And this is something, That they would have known, Much about as well, Many who lived in Philippi, Were citizens, Of Rome, And yet many of them, Had not been, To Rome, They'd never seen, Rome, And yet they were, Living under Roman authority, By Roman rules, By Roman ways, Under Roman protection, So that they enjoyed, The good things, And the bad things, They experienced, In the midst of this, As well, But yet they were, Seen in this way, And they knew, What Roman citizenship, Citizenship meant, But Paul is reminding, Those who are in Christ, Of a different, Citizenship, They're describing it, As a different, Belonging, He says in verse 20, But our citizenship, Is in heaven, And from it, We await, A saviour,

The Lord Jesus Christ, So again, He's using an analogy, That's something, They're familiar with, Of Roman citizenship, And the Roman emperor, And governor, Who was over them, In these things, To remember, Of citizenship, In Christ, In heaven, And so, We want to think, About this, This morning, Of walking, In this way, A place we haven't been, And yet a place, We belong to, Or we should long, To belong to, To be citizenship, Our citizenship, To be, In heaven, And Paul is writing this, As a warning, He's writing it, As a warning, And he does it, As we see here, This morning, In three ways, He says, There's a way to walk, Right, A way to walk, Rightly in this life, There's a way to walk, Wrongly, But ultimately, That we are to walk, With a sense of, Direction, And so, We're going to look, At these three things,

[ 32 : 02 ] Walking rightly, Walking wrongly, And walking, With direction, So first of all, We see walking, Rightly, In order to walk, As citizens, Of heaven, We are to see, Well, What should our walk, Entail, And Paul begins there, In verse 17, By saying, Join in imitating me, And keep your eyes, On those who walk, According to the example, You have seen, In us, Now, Is this just a selfish, Way, Of looking at things, It's not, Paul isn't, Like I say, Promoting, Himself, He's always, Promoting, Christ, And what he is saying, Here is, Unless, You walk, In this way, You will be lost, Unless, You follow, As in the example, Of walking,

With Christ, And for Christ, You will be lost, And that's the warning, That he has given, And that's what we'll see, In our second point, As we come to it later, But he's saying, Unless you walk, In this way, So he's saying, You are to walk, Imitating, Us, And Paul is, Is not selfish, Paul is looking to those around him, And saying, We're not living for ourselves, We're living for Christ, In chapter 1, Verse 27, He says there, Earlier in this letter, Only let your manner of life, Be worthy of the gospel, Of Christ, Let your walk, Be worthy of the gospel, Of Christ, So Christ, Is the focus, He talks in this

letter too, About those who are preaching the gospel, For the wrong, With the wrong attitude, Or for selfish reasons, But what does he say, We want the gospel to advance, We want Christ to be preached, At whatever cost, He says too, That wonderful statement, That he makes, When he's talking about, Being home with the Lord, Or being with the people, He says, For me to live, Is Christ, And to die, Is gain, So, He's not being selfish, He's not saying, Imitate me, In that selfish way, He's always got Christ, In mind, He says, To live humbly, Is to look to the example, Of the humility of Christ, Who endured the cross, He has said, That there is nothing compared, To the surpassing worth, Of knowing Christ Jesus, As my Lord, He said, I am pressing on, Towards the goal, Of the upward call, Of God and Christ Jesus, It's all about Christ, So, He's not promoting self, He's not saying, Just imitate me,

In this way, But he's saying, Here am I, As an example, Of one, Who has been changed, By Christ, Who has known, The love of Christ, And we see other, Examples around us, Of so many, Who have been transformed, By Christ, Look to us, And see here, Is a life worth living, Here is something, Worth pressing on, Towards, We're not perfect, He is saying, We're not, Without fault, We have faults, But we are pressing on, There was a man, Called Pablo, Casals, And he was a famous, Cello player, He, Was one of the best, Apparently, Who played the cello, And he played the instrument, And he wrote music, Most of his life, But late in his life, He was apparently, Interviewed by a person, And this was either, Maybe in his 60s, Or 70s, And he was, World renowned, For one of the best, Players of the cello, And he was asked, Why do you still practice, Five or six hours a day, Surely you're, You're good enough, Now you're, You're one of the best, Or the best, But his response, Was this, I practice, Because I think, I'm making progress, There was humility there, You can't dwell, On just being good, At something, You kept practicing, You kept making, Progress, And that's, The Christian life, It's not about, Becoming a Christian, And you've made it, That's it, You've arrived, You've got it all, Sorted, It's about putting into practice, The disciplines, Of godly life, And practicing these things, Daily, In order that we, Maybe even just say, I think I'm making, Progress, Not in myself, But in knowing, Christ Jesus, Pablo Casals, Is a good example, For musicians, To follow, But when we look at Paul,

[ 37 : 09 ] And what he's saying here, And what he has, With others, Around me, Saying, We are to look to examples, Around us, And think, I want to press on, I want to imitate, Godly people, But ultimately, I want to imitate, Christ, It is good to surround, Ourselves with godly, Examples, To have godly examples, In our homes, In our workplaces, In our community, It's good to be, Godly examples, In all of these places, But we look at that, And think, Well I'm not perfect, And neither was Paul, When you look at verse, 12 to 16, He says, I do not consider, That I have made it my own, I'm still making progress, I'm not perfect, But I'm pressing on, He's in a fight, Just like we're in a fight, We have sin, All around us,

We have things, That will trouble us, All our days, We live in a world, That is always, A constant fight, Against becoming, Just part of this world, But Paul says, We press on, And where is he looking, He's looking up, He's looking, To Christ, And so we too, Should fix our eyes, On him, When you look at, Sports, Sporting events, And the end of a sporting event, Whether it's a, Football match, Or a race, You see those who have lost, Their eyes are just to the ground, Defeated, Dismayed, By the outcome, But those who have won, Their heads are lifted high, They're looking up, Victorious, Victorious, And that's how we want, To walk with God, Looking up, Because he, Is victorious, And he shows us, The way, So we are to walk rightly,

But the second warning here, Is that there is a way, Of walking wrongly, And we see that in verse 18, For many, Of whom I have often told you, And now, Tell you even with tears, Walk as enemies, Of the cross, Of Christ, Their end is destruction, Their God is their belly, And they glory in their shame, With minds set on earthly things, So there's the warning here, Of the opposite, Of walking with God, And looking to Christ, It's walking for ourselves, Walking as enemies, Of the cross, And what a serious warning, That is for us, And how easy it is, To slip, Into this way, Of living, And that's why, He warns so strongly here, He says, I even warn you, With tears in my eyes, It causes some pain, It causes some grief, To see people, Living without Christ, And that's a great pain, For any Christian too, To think of people, Living without Christ, Enemies of the cross, Their end, Is destruction, And that should grieve us, That should help us, To pray, All the more earnestly, For people to come, To Christ, And he says here, Enemies of the cross, They have their minds, Set on earthly things, The God of this world, As Paul describes, In this letter to the Corinthians, Has blinded their eyes, They cannot see past, This world, And the things of it, All their hearts, Desire us

for things, Down below, Down here on the world, And we think, We can be satisfied, And Paul is warning here, That there is a danger, For anyone, To fall back into this way, He's writing to the church, At Philippi, He's writing for those, Who have gone back into this, They are now, Walking as enemies, Of the cross, And so there's a warning, For all of us, Don't get caught up in this, Don't fall back into the ways, Of the world, Keep your spiritual training, Keep your spiritual growth going, Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, Because take your eyes off for a minute, And it can be fatal, What can seem harmless, Can kill you, And we're often given, Warnings about these kinds of things, For example, Think of this, What's more dangerous, Shark attacks, Or taking selfie photos, Well you say to yourself, [ 42 : 15 ] Shark attacks, Have to be more dangerous, There's more danger in a shark attack, Than a simplest, Harmless thing, Such as taking a selfie photo, And yet, Just a few years ago, In the space of one year, This was the statistics, Five people were killed, In shark attacks, In the world, 29 people died, Taking selfies, And you say to yourself, Well how can that possibly be, They're looking for the perfect selfie, They're looking for something, That's going to make people say, Wow, Whether it's hanging over a cliff edge, Or trying to get in front of a moving object, And it's been fatal for them, They've been unaware of the danger, That's around them, And it's costing their life, When you think of shark attacks, And you're warned, You're on your guard, You're looking out, And there's lifeguards posted, In places where it's dangerous, And so few people lose their life to that, But the simple things, Can catch us off guard, And that's the warning, That Paul is giving here, Their God is their belly, They glory in their shame, With minds set on earthly things, There is a danger in living this way, John Newton, The one who wrote Amazing Grace, He was one who experienced, Many dangers in this world, He lived for this world, For a time, He tried to satisfy his desires, With everything this world could offer, Legal and illegal, And he thought this was it, And yet, After his conversion, He wrote so many hymns, Powerful hymns, And one of them, He says this, Fading is the whirling's pleasure, All his boasted pomp and show, Solid joys and lasting treasure, None but Sion's children know, Solid joys and lasting treasure, None but Sion's children know, What is he saying there? He's saying, You know, I once had all the joy, All the joy this life, Of this life and world could offer, I was so satisfied, And so happy, I had everything, And I had to give it up, When I became a Christian, No, He's saying the opposite, He's saying everything, That I thought could give me joy, And satisfaction, Everything that could fill my heart, With pleasure, I thought I had it, It was nothing, It was nothing, Compared to the solid joys, And lasting treasure, Of knowing Christ, Because where did all of these worldly things, Leave John Newton? In the belly, Of a sinking slave ship, Knowing that his soul, Was lost and perishing, Until he cried out, To the Lord, And the Lord, Saved him, And that's just like what Paul says, As well, That compared to the surpassing worth, In verse 8, I count everything as lost, Because of the surpassing worth, Of knowing Christ Jesus, My Lord, That is what counts, That is what makes, The difference, The warning is clear, Don't live, For worldly treasure, And pleasure, Another Christian put it this way, For the worldling, Their gold is their God, For the believer, Their God, Is their gold, The difference, Is stark, And it's clear for us here, As living as enemies of the cross, [ 46 : 15 ] Walking in this way, Their end is destruction, Because their minds are set, On earthly things, That is not, That is not, How to walk, We are to walk, In a manner, Worthy, Of God, But the last thing, We see here is, That our walk, Should always have, A sense, Of direction, He warns about, Minds being set, On earthly things, But then in verse 20, He says, But, But our citizenship, Is in heaven, And from it, We await a saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ, So again, He's lifting us, To look not to him, But to Christ, We are to have our minds, Set on him, We are to look up, To Christ, We are citizens, Of heaven, As we put our trust, In Christ, Many in Philippi, As I said earlier, Were Roman citizens, They'd never been to Rome, They'd enjoyed, All the privileges, Of having their citizenship, But they'd never actually, Been there, And doesn't that remind us, Of what the believer, Has to, A citizenship, In heaven, We've not been there, But through, God's work in us, And his grace to us, Through his word to us, We experience, The blessings of heaven, We experience, The fellowship, And the grace, Of knowing, Christ Jesus, We see, That here, Is not our home, But we are on, A journey, How often, Have you been asked, Where are you from, When you meet someone, For the first time, Or when you're away, Visiting other places, Someone will ask, Where are you from, And you're able to answer, And tell them, Where you're from, Be it from the island here,

Somewhere, Or from somewhere else, But living here, You're able to say, Well this is where I'm from, And as islanders, We certainly have, That sense of, Belonging, To a place here, This is my home, But how often, Are you asked, Where are you going, Where's your life journey, Taking you, And how would you answer, That question, For those, Who trust, In Christ, Our life is, No longer determined, By where we're from, It's more about, Where, Where, Where we're going, Where we're looking, To, And who we're looking to, To be there,

If you've ever been homesick, You know, What a horrible experience, It is, Having to go away, And leave family, And friends, And maybe go and, Work in a different place, Or travel to a different place, And a feeling, Of homesick, It's a horrible experience, But, In the same way, It's a blessing, That there is, That deep sense, Of belonging, A deep sense, Of home, That there is, A special place, But how often, Are you homesick, For heaven, Here, Paul is, Is talking about it, In this way, But, Our citizenship, Is in heaven, And from it, We await, A saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ, And then you see, The hope that this gives, Who will transform, Our lowly body, To be like, His glorious body, By the power, That enables him, Even to subject, All things, To himself, The power, Of Christ, And the blessing, Of Christ, He will come, And when he comes, It is to take, His people, Home, And that is a place, That we can look forward, To, A place, That keeps us, Looking and longing, We enjoy this world, We enjoy, So much of it, And that is right, That is good, That we are to enjoy, So much that this world, Has to offer to us, But what Paul is saying here, Is don't let your minds, Be set, On earthly things, That's the warning, Because he says, Our citizenship, Is in heaven, Keep your minds, Set, On looking up, And looking to Jesus, Because if we don't, If we keep, Looking, To ourselves, And to this world, There is always, The danger, That we are vulnerable, To the things, Of this world, And we end up,

[ 51 : 21 ] Looking to things, That cannot last, That will perish, But our citizenship, Being in heaven, We look, To there, To Jesus, Who will come, From there, And that keeps us going, That gives us, A focus, You may have seen, In the news, This week, There was, The European athletics, Championships, Taking place, And there was, One of the races, It was a 20 kilometer, Walking race, And after, 20,000 kilometers, Nearly, At the end of the race, There was this Spanish woman, Who was just about, To cross the line, In third place, To get a bronze medal, About five or six meters, From the end, She thought she'd made it, She started celebrating, Putting her hands in the air, Lifting her head up, She was celebrating, This achievement, What she didn't realize, Was there was a Ukrainian athlete, That had come up beside her,

And pipped her, At the finish line, Two meters short, She'd started celebrating, Too early, She'd taken her eyes, Off the prize, And she was pipped, And as a warning to us, Don't let anything, In this world, Distract you, Keep your eyes, Fixed, On Jesus, That's the example, That Paul, Gives to us here, That's the example, He gives to us, Throughout this letter, He says in verse, 14 there, I press on, Towards the goal, For the prize, Of the upward call, Of God, In Christ Jesus, He has this one thing, He does, He says in verse 13, But then he says in verse 1, Of chapter 4, Therefore my brothers, Whom I love and long for,

My joy, And my crown, Stand firm thus, In the Lord, My beloved, That is how he finishes, This section, Stand firm, In the Lord, Look, Look, To him, Walk, With him, There's a right way, To walk, Looking to the example, Of Christ, There's a wrong way, To walk, As enemies of the cross, Which leads, To destruction, But there's a direction, To our walk as well, As citizens of heaven, We look there, We look to a savior, To come, The Lord Jesus Christ, We fix our eyes, On him, That we may receive, The prize, Of the upward calling, Of Christ Jesus, As our Lord, May God help us, Walk, Run, Rest, In him, That we might receive, That prize, Let us pray, Our father, In heaven, We do thank you, For every help, And instruction, You give to us, We thank you, For every moment, Of grace, And strength, That you give to us, We thank you, Lord, For your all sufficient, Grace to us, We pray to know it, All the more, That you will humble us, When we need, That sense of humility, That you will lift us up, Lord, When we feel downcast, That you will be, All things to us, And we ask that, Looking to Jesus, The only one, Who is able to help, And to satisfy, Help us to keep our eyes, On him, As we ask it all, The forgiveness of our sins, In Jesus name, Amen, Amen, We're going to conclude, By singing, To God's praise, In Psalm 23, It's the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 23, Page 28, 28, Of the Psalm books, We can sing, The whole of this Psalm, We know it well, This Psalm, We hear it often, And yet it reminds us, Of our journey, Through this world, And all the ups and downs, But that we would keep, The Lord, As our shepherd, That we would keep, Our eyes on him, And remember to, The citizenship, The place, That awaits, The Lord's people, So we'll

sing, The whole of this Psalm, To God's praise, The Lord is my shepherd, Oh, What shall I know, He makes me lie down, Where the green pastures grow, He leads me to rest, Where the calm waters flow,

[ 56 : 29 ] My wandering steps, He brings back to His way, In straight paths of righteousness, Making me stay, And as He has done, His great name to display, Though I walk in death's valley, Where darkness is near, Because you are with me, No evil I fear, Your rod and your sapping me, Comfort and cheer, In the sight of my enemies, At him will you spread, The oil of rejoicing,

You pour on my hand, My cup overflows, And I'm gracious, As she fed, So surely your offering, And mercy and grace, Will follow me closely, In all of my ways, I will dwell in the house, Of the Lord, Of my days, After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right, Here we'll close with 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.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.