

What being 'in Christ' is worth

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Again, we welcome everybody to the service this evening, as well as those who are joining us online. We pray that together we'll know God's blessing of his word to us. One or two things just to pick out from the bulletin sheet today. Please remember the Youth Fellowship tonight at 7.45. That'll be in the MA Hall next door. And this Kirk session is due to me tomorrow evening.

That'll be in the upper hall next door tomorrow evening at 7pm. The Women for Mission Zoom meeting is on Tuesday. Any ladies who still need to have the Zoom details, please just contact Donna for that. The speaker is going to be Katrina MacDonald from Govan Free Church in Glasgow. And next week, there is a collection next week after each of the services, and that's in aid of Bethesda. We always have one for Bethesda around about this time of year.

So that'll be next week after each of the services next Lord's Day. And I just commend to you again the Binding Brokenness course that's run by Marianne and Joanna George. The course begins with an introductory welcome. That's on Thursday the 3rd of February. And then it runs weekly every Thursday after that until 17th of March. If you need details or if you know anybody else that might benefit from that course, if anybody that you know has experienced suffering and loss and may find it helpful, just please contact Marianne yourselves.

Well, let's begin our worship and singing firstly from Psalm 106. Psalm 106, and that's on page 140. Let's sing verses 1 to 10. Praise the Lord, extol his goodness, for his love endures always.

Who can tell his mighty actions or in full declare his praise? Blessed are those whose way is right, acting justly in his sight. Psalm 106, that's verses 1 to 10. Praise the Lord, extol his goodness.

[2 : 14] Praise the Lord, extol his goodness, for his love endures always.

Who can tell his mighty actions or in full declare his praise?

Blessed are those whose way is right, acting justly in his sight.

When you show your people's favor, then, O Lord, remember me.

Help me when you come to save them. Let me know prosperity.

[3 : 25] Joyful with your chosen grace, joining them in giving praise.

We have sinned just like our fathers. We have done what was not right.

When our fathers were in Egypt, they despised your deeds of mine.

All your mercies, they ignored. All your mercies, they ignored. At the red seats burned the Lord.

Yet for his name's sake he saved them and revealed his mighty hand.

[4 : 38] By his word the sea he parted. Led them through us on dry land.

From the hand of those set free, rescued from the enemy.

Let's once again call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. Almighty and gracious God.

We pray that we may truly be humble in your presence, coming before such a God as you are. God who is immense in every way in which you have revealed yourself to us in all your attributes.

God who is holy. God who is holy. God who cannot bear to look upon sin without burning against it.

Yet, Lord, you have made a way for us to approach you.

[5 : 46] We come tonight using that new and living way that has been opened up for us in the person of your Son. We thank you that we are assured of your welcome as we come claiming his name and in his merits.

And placing our trust in him and in his finished work. Oh Lord, we give thanks that as you invite us and call us into your presence, so you meet us with your truth.

You meet us with your truth as it has come to us in written form. We pray, Lord, that we may tonight from our gathering together here, be further assured and have further confidence that your word is truth.

We thank you for the way that you have brought your word to us, so that we in our generation might have your written word in its fullness. That we might have it in our own language, a way that we can follow in our intellect.

Though we know, Lord, that we need your blessing for your word to be savingly effective in our experience. And we come before you, Lord, tonight as we come to recognize your rule over us, your sovereignty, your right over us, your claim upon us.

[7 : 00] And we thank you that as we meet with these great truths in your word, we thank you for the provision that you have made for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is our refuge, he is our cover, he is the one in whom we find our ultimate security.

And we thank you, Lord, tonight that as we find ourselves in him, so we can be assured from your word that you find us acceptable to you.

Lord, we thank you for all that he has completed and for all that he continues to do at the right hand of the majesty on high. Your word assures us that he makes intercession for his people.

And we thank you, O Lord, for the way in which he presides over the world of human beings, the destiny and the further ends of the universe.

So that all things will come to the end that you have appointed. O Lord, our God, help us, we pray, to be thankful. Increase our thankfulness, we pray. Increase our dependence upon you.

[8 : 08] Increase our faith and our love. Increase our faith and our love. Increase us, Lord, in the exercise of our hope as we come to interact with your word. And as we find increasingly that our understanding of your word will grow, O Lord, as we would pray.

Help us, we pray, to keep a pace with that in our obedience and in our concern to live for you and for your glory. We pray for ourselves as a people, as a congregation.

Lord, we thank you for all that you are to us, for all that you have been to us down through the years. And we pray at this time, Lord, that you'd continue to look upon us in your mercy, with your grace to meet with us, Lord, in our need.

We pray that your grace tonight will come to bless this word to us as we come to receive it, as we come to speak from it.

Enable us, Lord, as speaker and hearers alike, to be united together in the bonds of your truth, in the bonds of your spirit, in the bonds of life. O Lord, we pray that you would bless all of us in our homes and families.

[9 : 21] We stand before you, O Lord, in our need. And we know that our need is only partially known to ourselves. Lord, we ask that as you see us, so you would continue to bless us from day to day, even beyond what we are able to ask or think.

We come before you too, Lord, tonight to confess our sins. And we know that your word shows us how important it is for us to include confession in our elements of worship.

And we do, Lord, come without confession. We confess before you that we have sinned against you this day already. We confess our sinful hearts before you.

We confess, O Lord, our need of your cleansing, of your sanctifying power. We pray that tonight we may know of the work of your Holy Spirit working in our hearts and bringing to us not only that confession of our sin, but the sincerity that we need, Lord, in confessing it so that we may be assured of your pardon.

For you testify in your word that you are the one who forgives the sin of your people. That you are pleased to do so. That you take delight in mercy and in pardon.

[10 : 37] That your delight is not in the death of the wicked. We give thanks, Lord, tonight for that assurance. Otherwise, we would have been swept away from your presence. We would have no place of standing before you at all if you were to mark our iniquities against us.

And we give thanks, O Lord, for the abundant pardon that is with you. That you multiply pardon in our experience from day to day and even from moment to moment.

And we give thanks for the way that you uphold your people within that forgiveness. Within the righteousness that you impute to them. The righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And, Lord, we ask tonight that this may be our great concern. That we may appear before you clothed in righteousness. That we may do so while we are in this life.

And that spiritually we may be concerned that this will be our status. So that we will come, Lord, whenever we leave this world. Whenever we come to appear in your very presence.

[11 : 39] That we may do so and be found among the righteous. Lord, our God, we pray that as your word brings such wonderful truth to us. We ask that we may prize it.

That we may come daily to study it for ourselves. And appreciate its worth and its value. Lord, we ask that you would grant to us these mercies. We pray your blessing for all who belong to us as a congregation.

And in our families and our wider family circles. We think of those tonight, Lord, who cannot gather with us. Who are not even able to attend online. We ask that you would bless them.

We pray especially for those who are ill. For those, Lord, who maybe cannot concentrate at this time due to pain. Or due to other aspects of illness. We pray for them and ask that you would bless them.

And we pray for those who are seriously ill. And we think of them tonight, O Lord, and commend them to you. We would pray for our elder, Duncan McLean especially, O Lord.

[12 : 42] As he continues to bear his illness at this time. We pray that the procedures and other medical treatments that have been given to him will be effective.

We pray for him, Lord, especially that you would continue to maintain him in peace of mind and soul. We ask the same, Lord, for Annabelle and for the family. And we pray, gracious one, that you would lay your good healing hand upon him if it pleases you.

So that he may be restored. But in any case, we commit him, Lord, to your care. Whatever the days to come may be. Remember, too, all those who mourn tonight over the passing of loved ones.

We think again of the passing of Mrs. McCritchie. And we think of her family at this time. We pray that you would grant your blessing to them, O Lord, as they mourn her passing.

We mourn ourselves, Lord, as a congregation. For we know that she was such a long-standing member of this congregation. And gave so much of her time and of her talents to it over the years.

[13 : 51] And we ask that you would bless them at this time. And bless us, we pray, as we think of the death of those who have gone now before us. And who even over these past months have been taken out of this world and gone to glory.

Gracious Lord, we pray that your own blessing will replace them with others. Who will take up the cross and who will follow in the footsteps of those who have given us such a good example of believing in Christ.

And Lord, we ask that you would continue to bless the gospel to that end. We thank you for every encouragement you give us. For the way that you have enabled us to support the gospel over the past difficult years.

And we pray that that will continue. That you would continue to furnish us, Lord, with the means by which your own kingdom will be advanced. And by which would take delight in seeing the growth of your church, of your people, of the congregation here and indeed elsewhere.

And we commend to you, Lord, tonight those who meet together in other places, in this town, throughout our presbytery, throughout our land, even throughout the world. And we do pray that we may carry and bear upon our hearts those of your people in other parts of the world who face adversity and difficulty and tragedy beyond what we can imagine.

[15 : 13] Oh, Lord God, remember them, Lord, we pray. In these countries where they are persecuted and where they are distressed on account of all that is done to them for their obedience to Christ.

We pray for those regimes that hate the gospel. Lord, we ask that your kingdom come, that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That you'd bless the missionary enterprises of your church and of your people throughout all the parts of the world where your people witness for you.

And we pray, gracious Lord, that that will continue to bear fruit increasingly to the glory of your great name. We pray that you'd bless the youth fellowship tonight.

We commend them to you, asking that Marianne and those who lead will know your blessing. We pray that you will continue to work amongst our young people and ask, oh, Lord, that they will be furthered in their relation with yourself.

Especially give them to know you, to follow you, to love you, and to commend you to their own age. And we ask that you would keep them from all that would seek to harm them.

[16 : 18] From all that would seek to attack them spiritually, especially. Grant them, Lord, that they be further established in your own ways to that end. Now, Lord, continue with us here, we pray.

May we know your presence once again. May we know that you are here to bless your word, to bless us under your word. And may we appreciate, Lord, again, the beauty of your presence. The wonder of your grace and the guidance of your spirit. We pray it all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Now, we're going to read God's word in the epistle to the Romans.

Paul's letter to the Romans in chapter 9. Reading on into chapter 10. Romans chapter 9 and from verse 30.

Paul has been dealing here with the sovereignty of God in the way that Israel, in comparison with the Gentiles, in the plan of God, how that has worked out with relation to the Gentiles being brought into the family of God.

[17:26] And as he wonders and marvels at the sovereignty of God and the wisdom of God, we can pick up the letter there at verse 30. What shall we say then?

That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it. That is a righteousness that is by faith. But that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith. But as if it were based on words. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone as it was written. Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. Rather, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

[18:37] For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who shall ascend into the abyss, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that is the word of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says, Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they be sent?

[19:55] As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. And so on. May God bless to us again that reading of his word.

We're going to sing now from Psalm 118, in the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 118, verse 22 to 29. That's on page 399.

That stone is made head corner, which builders did despise. This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes. This is the day God made, and it will joy triumphantly.

Save now, I pray thee, Lord. I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he in God's great name that cometh us to save. We from the house which to the Lord pertains, you blessed have.

[21:02] God is the Lord, who unto us has made light to arise. Bind ye unto the altar's horns, with cords the sacrifice. Thou art my God, I'll thee exalt.

My God, I will thee praise. Give thanks to God, for he is good. His mercy lasts. Always. These verses, that stone is made head cornerstone.

That stone is made head cornerstone. That stone is made head cornerstone, which builders did despise.

This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.

This is the day God made in it, will joy triumphantly.

[22 : 19] O time, I pray, one of them all may be blessed to bless. The day God in heaven, while we
ling on the mountains, may we s squared, In my world, I pray thee, Lord. Lord, I pray you,
Lord, I pray that.

Send now prosperity. prosperity. Blessed is he in God's great name that cometh us to save.

We from the hearts which to the Lord pertains to blessed God.

God is the Lord who unto us hath made light to arise.

Bind ye unto the altar's horns with courts the sacrifice.

[23 : 47] Thou art my God I'll be exalted my God I will be praised give thanks to God for he is good
his mercy in us always will you turn with me again please this evening to Philippians and chapter 3
and tonight we're looking at verses 8 to 11 Philippians chapter 3 and we can begin at verse 8
indeed this is Paul continuing with his what we can say is his testimony and he's saying here in
verse 8 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 well we saw last time in the previous verses how Paul is
setting out the matter of his experience in coming to know the Lord and how he sets it out here by
way as we saw of conversion and also that in terms of profit and loss he's quite clear that the things
that he once saw as gain the life that he lived as a Pharisee the life that he lived seeking to produce
righteousness that he could present to God a righteous life that God would accept of we saw how
that came to be seen by him as completely futile and that instead his gain was in coming to have
Christ himself and the righteousness that is in him so that's why he gladly gave up what he called
gain previously whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ and now he comes to to
set out how this is again to him we might say what being in Christ is worth he's talking here about
profit and loss he's saying I count the loss still count all things but loss

I count them as rubbish he says there very strong word so that I may gain Christ and be found in
him not having a righteousness of my own but the righteousness from God that is by faith and he
comes to really say to us why he's counting all these things that he once saw as gain why it is he's
counting them as worthless in this way why he's using such strong language why is it he's doing so
well it's really as we say that being in Christ is worth this much and it's maybe not the best title to
use but that's what we've used anyway what being in Christ is worth and he sets that out in these
verses up to verse 11 covering three fundamental areas of our salvation that is our salvation from
our personal point of view more so than from God's point of view and the three fundamental areas
are justification sanctification and glorification that would make sense to really take these separately
and just look at them individually in turn because there's so much built into each of these great
topics and themes and truths of our salvation these elements of salvation but we're going to just
take them together because

I want to try and keep the run of the verses as they fit so closely into each other and from that
there's a lot to be gained rather than going into every single detail of what they contain so in verse 8
you find him saying that he he considers all things as rubbish so that he might be found in Christ
that he might have the righteousness which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from
God so that's really essentially the kernel if you like of justification being accounted righteous by
God so that he finds us righteous in the righteousness that comes from him and is in Christ for us
then verses 9 sorry that's verses 8 verses 9 to 10 you find him dealing with what we can call
sanctification and be found in him he says he follows on from that that I may know him in verse 10
and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death now
the words justification and sanctification are not actually used in the passage but it's obvious from
what you have in the detail of it that that's what he's dealing with there in verse 10 especially that I
may know

Jesus I know I know the power of his resurrection that I may share his sufferings becoming like him
in his death so he's talking there about becoming like Jesus especially in relation to his death and
thirdly the matter of glorification verse 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection
from the dead the resurrection out from the dead as we'll see what's involved in that and to be

raised from the dead to actually come to that final resurrection from the dead that Paul is anticipating and looking forward to is really to come to be glorified with Christ to have that complete person that he is in Christ presented in glory with Christ so there's the three things we're looking at briefly this evening being in Christ our justification becoming like Christ our sanctification and being with Christ our glorification look at verses 8 and 9 first of all our being in Christ our justification indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ [30 : 44] Jesus my Lord for his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that 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 he's talking here about first of all my own righteousness and he's emphasizing that it's very emphatic in the text there not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law that's as we saw what he was dealing with when he was talking there about his blamelessness in relation to the law he was convinced that he was righteous because he was doing his utmost to keep the law of God as much as he could and as far as he was concerned that's all that God required and as he kept working at that he was concerned that he was convinced that that was the righteousness that God actually accepted that this was pleasing to God but he left that that became futile for him and instead of that he's now saying the righteousness that is from God because the previous righteousness it wasn't really righteousness at all when we try ourselves to produce acceptance with God and we think that that like Paul is righteousness it actually isn't righteousness at all in God's eyes in fact it attracts his displeasure it attracts his judgment because it is self-righteousness and self-righteousness is just the manufacture of sin that's pure and simple what it is remember Isaiah's great words in Isaiah chapter 64 and verse 6 is part of that great prayer of Isaiah in these two chapters but in that verse he's confessing to God on behalf of the people all our righteousnesses and he puts it in plural are as polluted rags a polluted garment a stained garment with the emissions of a human body that's what he says the grotesqueness of it the disgustingness of it and Isaiah's saying that's what our righteousnesses are as God sees them our manufactured self-righteousness that's what God thinks of it and that's now what Paul is saying he himself has come to realize since he came to know Christ and if we're wearing that garment that we come into the world with the garment of our self-righteousness it's very easy to persuade ourselves actually that we need some sort of contribution towards our acceptance with God it's very natural to our sinful hearts that there's some element of our own self-manufacture required to the pleasing of God well God is saying to you he's saying to me tonight that garment that you came into the world with the garment of your self-righteousness the garment of your fallenness and sinfulness you need to have it replaced it's not repairable you need to dispose of it just as Paul did it was futile for him to follow self-righteousness he knew from the moment

Christ convinced him that this was simply not going to be at all acceptable to God it attracted his condemnation instead he says that I may instead of that righteousness of my own that comes from the law comes from trying to keep the law myself instead of that that I will have the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God there is the big distinction Paul you see was seeking to manufacture a righteousness for God and what he came to realize is that what he really needs to be righteous before God is to receive the righteousness that is from God the righteousness that is in Christ that is why Christ died so that we might have in him the righteousness that God requires of us and it comes to us as a gift as it is emphasized in the gospel remember Romans chapter 3 verses 21 to 25 where Paul is dealing there with this righteousness now he says the righteousness of God through faith in Christ this is the righteousness that has been manifested not by the law but apart from the law the righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith this was to show God's righteousness so that he might become the just and the justifier might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus I want you to think of going back to the 1500s around about 1512 or so and now you see a monk in Germany desperately trying to fulfill the law of God by his own efforts and the more he tries the more he realizes that his conscience is still not pacified the more he tries to please God by his own efforts in keeping the law the commandments of God and doing penance and all the other things that in that time the medieval church required and thought was essential towards righteousness with God well here is this troubled monk and he's on his

knees and he's doing all sorts of things in order to try and meet the terms of God's righteousness God's law and all the time his conscience is troubling him he's trying desperately to be righteous to be a good person to be someone that God accepts of and he's perplexed because he knows he fails and he knows he keeps failing his name is Martin Luther and then he comes as he says himself to have a light shine into his soul because he said I came to realize the words of scripture that say the righteousness that is from God you see there he was busy trying to manufacture a righteousness like the apostle Paul like Saul of Tarsus manufacture a righteousness by trying to keep the law of God by trying to be good by trying to build up this store of merit before God so that God would respond and say that's fine

Martin that's fine Paul that's fine Saul you've made it you're righteous I accept you and both Saul of Tarsus and Martin Luther realized that's just futile that's just hopeless that just leads to despair and that's why Luther came to realize that the righteousness he needed was already available without any manufacturing effort on his part Jesus had done it for him and that's the righteousness offered in the gospel and that's what made the great difference to Martin Luther it's a righteousness that's received by faith as a gift of God and when your faith is placed in Christ as we read in Romans that righteousness then becomes yours that's what you have here Philippians 3 verse 9 be found in him and having a righteousness that comes from

[38 : 55] God I hope you're not here tonight trying to please God in order to have his acceptance by your own works by your own effort trying to keep the commandments of God trying to build up some store of merit that sometime God will accept of here is the gospel it's not by the works of the law it's by faith in Christ and by placing your faith in Christ so you come to receive from God that gift of righteousness he puts it onto your account remember Paul is dealing here with accountancy spiritual accountancy we might say his accountancy book is open there and he's saying to us this is what was once written on this page and I had all of that list of my achievements the things that I had my ancestry my achievements and I was looking at that and at the bottom of that I myself had written gain but now it's all being wiped away and instead of that there is

Christ and there is righteousness in Christ that's my gain being found in him that's our justification friends we need the righteousness that God approves of and God himself has brought it to us that's why Jesus died and rose again that we would have the free gift of God this righteousness that he offers to us is that your righteousness tonight you don't have to understand an awful lot about righteousness and what righteousness is really all that you have to understand in order to have it is that you need Christ and that you've received Christ because the righteousness is in him that's God's great gift our justification being in Christ that's why being in Christ is worth that's what it's worth it brings us righteousness acceptance with God secondly you find verse 10 that he's dealing with sanctification that I might know him and the power of his resurrection and may share in his sufferings becoming like him in his death now there's a lot of things involved in that we're just going to go through it fairly quickly and there are plenty of terms there that really merit further study as well but there are three things here that Paul talks about that he wants to know and he has come to know and he wants to know further and why he counts all things now as rubbish of his previous self righteousness so he says that I might know him that's the first thing that I might know him that I might know

Jesus himself he's not talking about something in the abstract he's not talking about righteousness detached from a person he's not talking about this righteousness as if it exists there and Jesus exists somewhere else it comes with him it's in him that I might know him it's the most vital thing for you and I to have in place in our lives that we know Jesus not that we know about him although that is good and even if you knew everything about him it still wouldn't save you if you don't know him himself for yourself because this is personal relationship language this is the language where you speak of being bonded to someone in love in faith in trust will you come to know him as your very best friend that I might know him and also the power of his resurrection knowing himself and knowing the power of his resurrection because you see Paul is united to Christ by faith and united to Jesus by faith so the power in Christ's resurrection is working in his life

Paul has huge pressures in his life he has huge challenges in his life think of all the burdens that he speaks about as you read through his letters think of the way that you read about him in the book of Acts and the tremendously difficult challenges that he faced where did he get his strength from he talks in his second letter to the Corinthians about him being as others are broken cistern broken vessels scarred and cracked vessels we have this treasure in earthen vessels why so that the

power might be seen to be of God and not of us why didn't Paul fall apart why didn't he just give up why didn't he come to the end of all of this work that he was doing for the Lord because the power of Christ's resurrection worked within him Ephesians chapter 1 and verses 19 to 20 puts it wonderfully you remember there where he writing to the Ephesians at verse 19 there he says and he says this is the content of his prayer what he's praying for the Ephesians and he moves on to saying that you will know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places now that's an amazing statement that's a wonderful emphasis what he's saying there is that the power that's working towards us who believe is nothing less than the power that raised Christ from the dead it's according to the great might of God the almightiness of God that was demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and in Philippians 3 he's saying that's now what my life is really generated by and around this resurrection power of [45 : 22] Christ the power that broke the bands of the grave the power that demolished death for God's people that he says is now he says that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and there's a wonderful emphasis 3 that follows on from that whatever it is in your life tonight that that you need whatever it is you're experiencing whatever difficulties you have and however much you may think they're so much bigger than yourself and of course they usually are bigger than our own strength can cope with or overcome here is a power that has already dealt effectively with death just think of that the power that has already dealt effectively with death that has defeated death if you like that has turned death in the person of Jesus himself in the sepulcher there that has turned that dead body in order to be raised to life that's the power in Christ's resurrection and when you look at it that way is there anything in your life that is greater than that or put it the other way about this power that has already dealt victoriously with death can overcome for you and for me every other type of opposition or force or power that you're going to meet with in your life there is assurance for you there is certainty for you there is something that will fill you with hope and with strength that the power of

Christ's resurrection is the power that works in the soul of every believer of everyone who has come to know Christ to know him and the power of his resurrection and he goes on that I may share in his suffering or the word really is fellowship having fellowship with his sufferings now what can that mean surely Paul is not saying that he has a role similar to Christ in the sufferings that were to do with the bearing of sin well of course not Paul is very well aware as we know elsewhere that only Jesus could bear the sin of his people and the suffering that was entailed in that is the suffering that Jesus himself certainly suffered but there is also the suffering if you think of Hebrews chapter 12 a verse I think which is very much in line with this Hebrews 12 and verse 3 which says consider him that's Jesus who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted in your struggle against sin you've not resisted to the point of shedding your blood so he's saying consider

Jesus consider him who endured such hostility against himself and that's essentially what Paul is dealing with here the hostility that comes our way because we are followers of Christ when you're united to Christ you're united to the power of his resurrection but you're also united to the same kinds of opposition and hostility from sinners that he faced that's why we need the power of his resurrection that's why we need to know him and to know him daily and to draw from him the strength the power of his resurrection but then he goes on becoming like him in his death how can that possibly be what does he mean becoming like Jesus in his death well it all hangs together it all flows together that's why we're taking it really just looking at the way the string of these truths like wonderful pearls or jewels on a necklace are put together that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings becoming like him in his death well let me just take you to

Luke chapter 9 for a moment Luke chapter 9 verses 23 and 24 this is Jesus himself speaking and speaking about the following of him and what's involved in following him in Luke chapter 9 at verse 23 he says if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it and then almost in a Pauline way who knows maybe Paul was actually thinking of these words when he wrote to the Philippians what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself but it's especially there where he's saying whoever would save his life will lose it

whoever loses his life for my sake will save it in other words something like what we mentioned last time the words of Jim

Elliot he is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose you give away your life in a sense you give away your life in trying to keep it and trying to look after it yourself trying to manufacture as it were the righteousness that God will approve of if you think of looking after your life in that sense well Jesus is saying you've got to give that away you've got to give that over and you've got to give your life over to me and when you give your life over to me then you'll find it you'll find life you'll find eternal life and I think that's what's behind Paul's phrase here becoming like him in his death there's a close connection between the way that Jesus faced hostility that led on to his death on the cross and the way that in God's people's experience there's a hostility in following Jesus from those who are hostile or opposed to your life for that reason so that in that sense you are conformable to him in his death you become like him in that whole process of being obedient and faithful to

[51 : 55] God until the end of your life in this world in other words to actually know Christ which is what Paul is dealing with here to know Christ and refuse to die to sin daily is a contradiction if I know Christ as my savior then I am bound to make it my daily business as Jesus put it there in that passage in Luke to die to self if anyone will follow me let him take up his cross what is that it's putting self to death and following him Paul is saying that's what I want to be to become like him and that's why I considered all things but loss of what I once thought was gain in order that I may be found in him to be righteous in that righteousness from God in order that I may be like him in following the path he followed right through this world bearing hostility against himself and that's so God through his spirit primarily but using all the experiences that we come across in this life hostility especially suffering affliction in order to work in us that sanctifying grace of God that comes through his spirit and makes us like

Jesus you know it's a great challenge we think about the word Christ likeness it's a great word it's a wonderful theme in scripture in Paul's writings especially because being like Christ is so important to him but is there anything more challenging than being like Christ or wanting to become like Christ to follow the path that he followed to be faithful to him in taking up our cross as Luke put it daily now that's not to put us off doing that but it's just to assure us that this is reality for the Christian a life of following Christ as Paul puts it that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share a fellowship in his sufferings becoming like him in his death so there's our justification righteous in Christ there's our sanctification being made more and more like Christ where God takes all the things that he builds into our experience and his plan for us in order to hone our life and ultimately to come forth as

Job put it after he has tried us to be like gold and then there's glorification look at verse 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection of the dead it doesn't mean by this if by any means possible that he's doubtful about whether he'll reach this or not what he's really saying is pretty much that he doesn't really know at this stage what's between him and Christ coming or the glorification the resurrection he's looking forward to but he says whatever means are at God's disposal in that he says I'm giving myself to that so that the outcome for me will be resurrection from the dead the outcome of my sanctification will be glorification and it's interesting the phrase that he's using there it's one that it looks as Paul himself might have coined it resurrection out from the dead literally is what it says not translated that way but that's what it says and it means that death is left behind emphatically and totally in the resurrection that Paul is looking forward to it's a resurrection out from among the dead and by the dead he means all the people who have ever lived they are the dead who will be raised from their graves and out from the dead

Paul is saying I'm looking forward to being raised out of them to being raised with God's people and to be set before God in glory as he put it in chapter 1 verse 21 for me to live is Christ and to die is gain and he's talking here about the gain the gain of being justified being in Christ the gain of becoming like Christ being made like him and the gain of final glory the resurrection from the dead out from the dead that awaits him now I didn't have a children's program a children's address tonight but I'm going to have one just to finish for a change and it's great to have you children present tonight I know that was a very theological sermon tonight very deep theology and in parts of it at least so but I hope you were able to follow it it's important to know the death of Jesus to know the resurrection of Jesus how important they are to us in order that we will ourselves be saved and I'm going to tell you a story it's a real story it's a true story about a young boy called

Philip Philip was eight years old and he had learning difficulties and because he had learning difficulties he was very often mocked by other children now that's as you know children something you must never ever do to mock anybody else is wrong for whatever reason however unlike they are to us however much they're different to us we must never mock them well Philip was very often mocked because he had these learning difficulties but he went to Sunday school and he went to Sunday school for quite a while and one day in Sunday school the Sunday school teacher said to him now it's a lovely spring day it was beginning just to have that lovely spring weather where you're looking forward to new growth and so on and the teacher said now I want you to go out into the church grounds today church at grounds rounded where stuff grew and I'm giving you a little box each of you she said and I want you to take this box with a lid on it and I want you to find something in the grounds that will actually remind us and make us think of new life when you found something put in the box put the lid on the box take it back inside and we'll put them all together and we'll see what you found and off they went and after a while they all came back including

[59 : 03] Philip and they all presented their boxes there and they began to open them one by one as the teacher asked them to open the first one they opened the little girl had a flower in her box because obviously that flower was a flower of the springtime when the winter was now past and flowers began to grow a reminder of new life next one had some leaves in it some new leaves from a tree and so that was for that child something that made her think of new life the next one came with a butterfly in the box managed to actually capture a butterfly and of course a butterfly grows from what begins as a caterpillar and then it's wound up in a kind of cocoon and then eventually it comes out of that and flies in the air but this child managed to get a butterfly put it in the box and when the box was opened the butterfly flew out and then it came to Philip's box and when they opened Philip's box there was nothing in it it was empty and one of the other boys again mocked him in saying he's just stupid he didn't do this exercise he just didn't bother and Philip said

I did I did and the teacher said well Philip tell us then how does your box make us think of new life and he said well it's empty because Jesus' tomb was empty it's empty because Jesus' tomb was empty that's the source isn't it of new life the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and that's where new life begins for us the fact that he has conquered death may God bless these words to us we're going to sing now in conclusion from Psalm 28 Psalm 28 and that's on page 33 verses 6 to 9 praise to the Lord for he has heard the plea for mercy which I made he is my strength he is my shield

I trust in him who sends me aid my heart uplifted leaps for joy my thanks to him I gladly sing the Lord God is his people's strength a saving fortress for his king Lord save your people your own flock be pleased your heritage to bless be their good shepherd carry them forever in your faithfulness these three stanzas in conclusion praise to the Lord for he has heard praise to the Lord for he has heard the plea for mercy which I made he is my strength he is my shield I trust in him who sends me aid my heart uplifted leaps for joy my thanks to him

I gladly sing the Lord God is his people's strength a saving fortress for his king Lord save your people your own flock be pleased be pleased your heritage to bless be their good shepherd carry them forever in your faithfulness now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore
Amen Amen