

Cursed or Redeemed

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Date: 18 June 2023

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 19, the Scottish Psalter version, page 223. We can sing from verse 7 down to verse 11. Psalm 19, page 223, God's law is perfect and converts. The soul in sin that lies, God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. We'll sing from verse 7 to 11 and the tune is Evan.

God's law is perfect and converts. The soul in sin that lies, God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the law are right and do rejoice the heart.

The Lord commanded pure and applied to the eyes in power.

Unspotted is the fear of God and of danger forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

[2 : 09] they more than gold gave our kind gold to be decided our.

And hold thee, hold thee from the tomb that troppeth sweeter far.

Moreover, may thy servant born have ye his life should bring.

A great reward provided is for them that keep the same.

We'll come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Amen.

[3 : 56] Lord, it's no matter the weather that we can have something to complain about. We complain about the cold and the wet so often. Maybe just now we complain about the heat.

But we thank you that whatever our circumstances, Lord, that we have reason to rejoice and give thanks in you. That you are the God of creation. That you are the God of heaven and earth.

That you are the God who has made us in your image. You are the God who has formed us and formed us with a particular purpose. And our purpose to be a people who would worship you.

Who would praise your name. And we thank you for every reason we have to give thanks to you.

We thank you for all that we have in life. We thank you for our homes and our communities.

We thank you for our congregation here and the people we have around us. We thank you for our fellowship in Christ. And we pray, Lord, that you will strengthen us and uphold us in all of these things.

[4 : 53] That you will build us up as a people. Those who come and attend regularly. Those who come from time to time. Those who visit us, Lord, especially over these months of summer.

We find so many people traveling through our islands. And who come to services from time to time. We thank you that we can still come and join together as one in Christ.

And we pray that even this evening that you will unite us in these bonds of fellowship in Christ. And that you will bless your word to us all. Remembering those not here with us but who are tuning in online.

Whether it's live stream or at another point in the days ahead. We do pray, Lord, that as your word goes out to us. That you will bless it to us. We thank you that your word has reminded us as we've sung together.

That your word, your law is perfect. And converts the soul and sin that lies. And we pray for that power to be evident in our midst. For we are all sinners who fall short.

[5 : 55] And we can do nothing in and of ourselves for our own salvation. We cannot convert ourselves or anyone else. But we thank you for your word and your spirit. And the power that is behind them.

That you are able to do so much more than we ask or imagine. And so we pray, Lord, for both your presence with us this evening. And your power upon us.

That we will know you are God. Help us to be still and to know that. We give you thanks, Lord, for our families and our communities. And recognize the many different needs that are around us.

Remember those who are mourning and grieving in our midst. In this past week alone and in these last number of months. And even down over the years, Lord.

We know the sense of grief that we experience in life can and does stay with us all our days. Old wounds can be reopened.

[6 : 51] Wounds that never healed can still hurt day after day. And we pray, Lord, that in our grief and in those who are grieving around us. That we would know your comfort.

We pray that for all who need it at this time. We pray for mourning families. We pray for mourning communities. For friends. Neighbors who have lost loved ones even in these days.

We pray, Lord, for your spirit to be near as the great comforter. To be near to those who are broken hearted. That you would bind them up. We pray, too, for those who are unwell.

Both at home and in hospital. We pray for those who are in the homes around the town as well. And further afield, too. Those who are in old age. We pray for them, Lord.

For you to surround them and to be with them. Each one, Lord, with their own different needs. But thankful that their needs are known unto you. And that you are able to help.

[7 : 50] You are able to help in ways that we cannot. We pray for comfort. For grace. For your peace to surround. Pray that for us all, O Lord. In our days as they go on.

In our homes. In our families. In our workplaces. In our community. In all that we do for the Lord. Lord, may we know your protection over us. And your grace and peace with us. We do thank you for your word.

And for the good news that is the gospel. And we pray that as it's proclaimed today. And in all the days ahead. That it will bear so much fruit in our midst.

That you will bring people to know the wonder of Jesus Christ. The wonder of all so much in life that we try and do. In and for ourselves. And the futility of so much of it.

But yet the wonder of your grace. The wonder of faith in the Lord Jesus. The gift of God. We pray, Lord, that we will marvel more and more in that. So may your message go out with power to all ends of our islands today.

[8 : 52] We give you thanks for the work of the faith mission over these last couple of weeks in point. For the many people who have attended from different parts of the island. On each evening occasion.

And we pray for fruit from that. We pray your blessing on all who have been involved in organizing and leading it. And this evening as they gather on this, the last day of it.

Lord, we pray for your spirit to be with them. We pray, Lord, for the words of the psalm that we have sung. That your word would bring people to life.

To convert the souls that lie in sin. We pray, Lord, your blessing. And to follow all that is done in your name. We pray for our nation and the nations of the world.

We pray your blessing on us in these days. That you will turn us from the ways of the world. Turn us towards you. From the top leadership in our land.

[9 : 48] Down through all areas of life. We pray, Lord, for your blessing and your peace. To be restored upon us. We know there are so many anxieties and fears and concerns throughout our world.

But we thank you that you are our God. The one who made the world. The one who cares for it. The one who is able to turn darkness into light. And so we pray, Lord, that even as your light goes forth. That you will send it out with power. We continue to lean upon you. Asking your blessing on all that we do in your name. Asking your blessing on the youth fellowship as they meet this night. May you be with them in that.

And asking your blessing in the week ahead. In all the different activities of it, Lord. In our homes and our families. In community and church life. That we will do all as unto the Lord.

We ask now, Lord, that you will bless us as we continue to wait upon you. To hear your word. And to offer up our praise. Lead us in the singing, Lord. And uphold him as he leads us in it.

[10 : 50] And may we sing with joy in our hearts. To you as our Lord. And as our God. So continue with us. Bless us. Guide us through your word. And forgive us for all our sins.

As we ask all things. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For his sake. And for his glory. Amen. Amen. We'll again sing to God's praise.

This time in Psalm 77. In the Sing Psalms version. Page 100 of the psalm book. Psalm 77.

We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 9. The tune for this verse singing from the psalmist Glen Cairn. I cried aloud to God for help.

I prayed that God would hear. When I was plunged in deep distress. I sought the Lord in prayer. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 9. To God's praise.

[11:48] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. which have gone by.

Throughout the watches of the night, my songs I call to mind.

I ponder deeply while my heart and answer try to find.

[14:01] Forever will the Lord reject and never show His grace as He withdrawn His steadfast love and turned from me His way.

For all time has His promise failed, is God no longer kind.

Has He in His great wrath dismissed compassion from His mind.

Amen. We can turn to read in God's Word now. We're going to read in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

The chapters on the notice sheet are the wrong chapters. I sent the wrong information. It's from chapter 2, verse 15, into chapter 3, verse 14. So we're sticking up by reading in chapter 2, and at verse 15, reading down into chapter 3, verse 14.

[15:37] Let us hear the Word of God. We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

But if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ we too are found to be sinners in Christ, then a servant of sin? Certainly not.

For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.

It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

[16:39] I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?

It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain?

Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, In you shall the nations be blessed.

[17:49] So then those who are of faith are blessed, along with Abraham, the man of faith. For all who rely on works of the law are under their curse. For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith.

But the law is not of faith, rather, the one who does them shall live by them.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree, so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

And so on and may God bless that reading from his word. I will again turn to Psalm 77 as we continue to sing to God's praise.

We are going to take up our singing at verse A10 and down to verse 15. The tune this time is Spore. Now in the first part we were singing verse 1 to 9, you notice that the psalmist has many questions, difficult questions that the Lord is being asked by him.

[19:13] In verse 7, Forever will the Lord reject and never show his grace. Has he withdrawn his steadfast love and turned from me his face? There's this questioning going on in the psalmist's heart.

Where is God in all that's going on in my life and all around us? But then in verse 10 to verse 15, we're reminded that God is there. Then to my heart there came this thought.

On this I will rely the years of the right hand of power of him who is most high. I will recall the Lord's great deeds, your works of long ago.

I'll meditate on all your acts, your mighty deeds I'll show. Verse 15 reminds us that God has, as it says, you have redeemed your people, Lord, with your almighty arm.

So we'll sing from verse 10 down to verse 15 to God's praise. Amen. Then to my heart there came this thought.

[20 : 21] On this I will rely. The years of the right hand of power of him who is most high.

I will recall the Lord's great deeds, your words of love and hope.

I'll meditate on all your acts, your mighty deeds I'll show.

O God most holy and pure ways, what God compare with you.

You are the God of miracles, whose heart the nation knew.

[21 : 54] You have redeemed your people, Lord, with your almighty arm.

Jacob's and Joseph's children, you delivered them all harm.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And we can turn back to our reading in Galatians, in particular chapter 3 and verse 10 down to verse 14.

Galatians chapter 3 verse 10 to 14 is going to be our focus together this evening. A section that speaks about being cursed or redeemed.

Verse 13 reminds us, though, that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

[23 : 10] For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. Paul was writing to the church in Galatia, which is modern-day Turkey, a number of congregations in that area, churches that had been blessed by the work of God in their midst and seeing many people coming to faith.

But yet he is writing to them because of a problem that was in their midst, a problem that was becoming more and more serious. The people were being led astray, led away from the faith that they had come to and instead being focused more and more upon the works of the law by the teachers who were coming into their midst.

So Paul writes to them with this powerful reminder. One of the most powerful ones is at the end of chapter 2 where it says in verse 21, I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

And that's a powerful reminder to the people then and to ourselves this evening as well as we think of how we're living our lives. Are we relying fully on faith in Christ?

Or are we thinking to ourselves, well I can justify myself through God by keeping the law? There is a powerful reminder to us if we are living by the law and justifying ourselves and we're saying Christ died for no purpose.

[24 : 43] But we see as we go on that Paul is reminding them and us that Christ died for a purpose to redeem his people. Now the question for ourselves tonight is are we a people who are easily led astray?

Just as the people were in the churches around Galatia, they were being led astray by false teachers all around them. How are we when it comes to being led astray?

Someone encourages us to do something we know it may be not right, we know it may be bad for us, but do we feel our pressure? Are we led astray and do we go ahead and do it anyway?

Perhaps it's happened in your life, it's happened in my own life, I know that. We're led astray in different ways. But what about when it comes to faith?

Are we being led astray when it comes to our faith? Are we hearing one thing that makes us think well it's all about faith? But then we're listening to someone else who says no but it's about what you do yourself as well, how you can add to your faith through works of the law.

[25 : 49] Well that's the kind of challenge that Paul was writing to address and a challenge to ourselves as well. They are being led astray and he's showing them this problem at the beginning of chapter 3 by asking them questions, again powerful questions, who has bewitched you he says at the very beginning of chapter 3.

There's a number of other questions he says in verse 2, let me ask you only this, did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Again, they're challenging questions to ourselves.

What is our faith? What is our foundation of our faith, self or Christ? He brings them back to look at Abraham in the Old Testament, the father of the faith, one who they would all be looking to as so

important when it comes to faith and yet he reminds them that it was through faith he believed in God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

It was all about faith. And then in the section we're looking at this evening, verse 10 to 14, he continues to illustrate this for them that they're being led astray by law-based salvation and that they need instead to rely fully on Christ who is able to redeem.

Coastal erosion is a term we hear so often these days. A term we see the effects of around us in the islands and different places. We see the effect of what happens.

[27 : 25] But how quickly does coastal erosion happen? How quickly do we see the damage that it brings? So often it's not just an instant event.

It's something that happens over a long period of time. The effects of wind and waves, the effects of tides and storms on our coast. The wearing down over many, many years and yet the effects can sometimes be devastating.

You see it perhaps more clearly down in the south coast of England. A place that has been in the news the last number of years where houses that were built near the shore, near cliff edges but in the people's eyes far enough away not to be impacted by any erosion.

You're seeing now that during a process over a long period of time the cliffs has been worn away and now we're finding that houses are slipping into the sea.

Disaster strikes when erosion takes place. And that's the way it is with faith. Faith is to be based in Christ but over a period of time erosion can come in and we maybe it's when we are already in faith or when we're considering our faith and the faith that we need in Christ we can allow other things to come in that over a period of time just erode away at us and the foundation it starts to crumble and eventually a slide takes place.

[29 : 05] That's what's happening here in Galatia and for that reason it's something we have to guard against ourselves as well to make sure that we are always living our life looking to the foundation of our faith the Lord Jesus Christ.

So Paul teaches how to be grounded in faith and not the works of the law is what counts. And so we want to just look through these verses in 10 to 14 and think of it under this idea of erosion and how erosion can come in and how we guard ourselves against it.

So first we think of erosion how it starts and how this can happen over a long period of time and the real cause of the erosion here in the Galatians faith is a misunderstanding of the law.

Paul has taken the people back to the Old Testament to the father of the faith Abram and following that he continues to look at the Old Testament and to show how they've misunderstood the importance and the place of the law.

Not saying the law isn't important it is but their understanding of it is what has gone wrong. the false teachers who believe that the law was the only way to avoid the curse of God they have been teaching that in the churches in Galatia and through this erosion is coming in.

[30 : 42] And Paul shows that if they are going to rely on this they're not avoiding the curse but they're bringing themselves even more under the curse.

why is that? Well because when we think of the law and the law that the false teachers had was not just the moral law of the Old Testament it had been added to by themselves so many other laws that people had to keep circumcision being one of the main things and without keeping every law then they couldn't please God they couldn't satisfy God they couldn't turn this curse that they were away because of sin they couldn't get rid of it.

Paul is saying if you could possibly do this and you could save yourself as we go back to the end of chapter 2 you're saying Christ died for no purpose.

And he's saying to them you cannot rely on the works of the law to save you from the curse. because the foundation of faith on being justified before God is not as the Jews would teach completing and fulfilling all of the law because it just cannot be done.

And so therefore for them and for us if we believe that we can please God through our law keeping and doing everything right as it were according to all the law of God we're never going to achieve it.

[32 : 25] You're never going to do it. And to try and do it is only to allow the erosion of faith in your life. And the way of salvation instead of being through faith is through yourself and through completing every aspect of the law.

So there's this erosion that comes in. And the danger with as Paul highlights so often with this idea of being able to keep the law fully is that in realizing we can never do it we start to feel discouraged.

We start to feel despair and despondency coming in. And we look at others thinking oh but they're managing it they're managing to keep all the laws so perfectly but nobody can. There's nobody in here you could look to and say but that person has managed it because none of us can keep every law perfectly. And so if we feel we could do it and we can't we become despondent.

And that's the danger for the people in Galatia. And the erosion we would call today is backsliding. We start to fall away.

[33 : 39] from God. And it's always a dangerous place to be. To start to backslide. To start to fall away from God. And just like then and so it is now one of the main reasons is that we can be led astray.

We can be led into this idea that we can add to our salvation. We can achieve our salvation. We can keep the law when we can't. backsliding so often starts in a subtle way.

And most of the time we're not even aware of it. And many of us may be backslidden and we don't even realize it. It happens so often.

When you think of coastal erosion and just how gradually that comes in, unless you're maybe recording images of it over a period of years, you maybe don't even realize just how much of the coastline has disappeared.

And one of the causes of our backsliding in faith is just over time all of these things just eroding our faith, making us feel discouragement and despair, then we start to neglect things.

[34 : 51] We start to turn away things that are so important. If you neglect a relationship, that relationship is going to deteriorate. And that's what Paul is getting at here.

When you start to rely on the law, your relationship with God, your faith in Him, your trust in Him is being neglected. And over time, that's just going to get worse.

And we see it ourselves today with the danger of backsliding and erosion in our faith. Neglect is such a key thing that we have to guard against.

The neglect of reading God's Word, of listening to what God's Word is saying to us. The neglect of prayer. Stopping to pray because we feel discouraged.

Maybe our prayers are not being heard or answered. We feel discouraged and that's what we neglect it. Neglecting the fellowship of the church, of being together with God's people.

[35 : 52] It starts in subtle ways, but neglect neglect always ends up in backsliding and turning away from God. And it's something we always have to be on our guard against.

Whatever way the erosion starts to come in, we have to be aware of the different ways it can and to be on our guard against it. So we see first of all how Paul is warning here how erosion comes in.

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse. There's this burden that we're under. Then we see the effects of erosion.

The curse of the law is what is mentioned here. When we see erosion setting in, there's consequences to it.

It happens as we think of coastal erosion. As it starts to take place more and more, there's always consequences to it. It leads to destruction at some point along the way.

[37 : 03] And so it is with our faith. When the erosion sets in, there's always consequences to it. But the most serious consequence is this, that we end up cursed under this curse.

curse. Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law and do them. Again, we see Paul here quoting the Old Testament there in verse 10.

And so there's this realization, Paul is saying, that if you want to follow this way of the law and keeping it all, you're cursed if you cannot keep it all.

every single part of it. There are consequences to it. The law of God is perfect.

We sang that in Psalm 19. God's law is perfect. It converts. But what does conversion mean? It doesn't mean ourselves keeping the law in its entirety, but about looking to the one, the only one who is able to fulfill the law in its entirety, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[38 : 21] The law cannot be wholly kept by anyone. And so everyone who comes under the law is cursed. If we cannot keep it, we are cursed.

And we saw what a curse from the Lord means this morning when Jesus cursed the fig tree. It withered, it died, it bore no fruit.

And that's the danger of the curse, the consequences that we're under. If we seek to keep the law in its entirety, in its fullness, we cannot do it and we end up cursed. And that leads us to this point

where we can do nothing for ourselves.

We are cursed under the law. We are just, as Jesus makes clear for us, we would be cursed, we would be damned.

That is what we are. So everybody, it says here, who is everybody, it is just that. It is everyone.

[39 : 26] There's no one who can avoid this. We all come under the law of God, but none of us, no one, can keep it perfectly. And so as Paul is quoting here in the Old Testament, he's showing the seriousness of it.

This affects every one of us. Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law.

This is how serious it was for the Galatians. This is how serious it is for ourselves. We are all sinners. There is no escape.

Now the law is important. It reminds us that we cannot fulfill the law of God. A preacher once used two images to describe the purpose of the law.

The first was this. He said he likened it to the dentist's little mirror which he sticks into the patient's mouth. The mirror is able to help the dentist detect where there's something wrong with a tooth, where there's a cavity that needs filled.

[40 : 38] But he doesn't drill with the mirror. He doesn't use the mirror to pull out teeth. It can't provide the solution. The second way was this.

He said he likened the law to a plumb line that a builder uses. When a builder is building and he wants to check that everything is on the level, on the straight, he uses a plumb line.

And if the plumb line highlights that there's a fault, it's not going to help correct it because he has to get other tools out. He has to get the hammer and the saw out to correct it.

And he's saying this is what the law is like. The law points out the problem of sin, but it doesn't provide a solution because we cannot fully keep the law.

If we are only under the law, we are slaves and bound to that and all the consequences of it. So if we fail in one aspect of the law, we are cursed, we are doomed.

[41 : 45] And so Paul is highlighting that for us. We cannot possibly do it. What a message to bring to the people, to try and bring them back to their senses.

It's a bit like Private Fraser and Dad's Army as Paul is saying all of this to them. People are thinking, well, we're doomed. There's nothing that we can do here.

And if Paul's message ended there, we too would feel that sense of doom. There's nothing that we can do ourselves. So what hope do we have?

Well, the great thing is that there is a cure. That there is a cure here. You see, Paul doesn't stop there. The whole purpose he is writing to the church at Galatia is this, to show them the answer, to show them the way.

Because it doesn't end there. Paul goes on to show the way back. The consequences of erosion is destruction. But thanks be to God that he has made a provision.

[42 : 59] As he goes on here, he's speaking about it's evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith. And here is the foundation.

Here is the guard against the erosion that can so easily set in. Just like we see in the coastal barriers being put in, defenses being set against the effects of erosion.

So we have the greatest defense of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. The righteous shall live by faith. And he goes on then to say in verse 12, but the law is not of faith, rather the one who does them shall live by them, which we cannot do, but then this Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

The wonder of the grace of God that Christ redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse for us.

How? Well it says, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hanged on a tree. And that is just what Christ has done. We are not justified by our works.

[44 : 20] We are not saved by our works. We are saved by faith in Christ who redeems us from the curse of the law. We use this word redeem.

So often in life now when we redeem something, a voucher, we get money off something. A price is covered for us. But here is the greatest price of all.

And what a price has been paid for us. So how could we ever think that we could do anything to satisfy or guard ourselves against this curse that we are under.

Just again going back to the end of chapter 2, we are saying if we could, Christ died for no purpose. But that is not true. His purpose was to redeem his people, to purchase his people at the greatest price of all.

Redemption is through Christ, our redeemer who gave his life as a ransom for many. Redemption is spoken of through the scriptures, all the way through.

[45 : 35] The idea of a price being paid is there all through. And the price ultimately is this, that Christ died for sinners.

He went to the cross. we were reminded of it last Sunday morning when the Reverend Bill Ferguson was with us. He was preaching from Isaiah 43, that wonderful passage that says at the beginning, fear not, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name, you are mine. We were reminded how the Lord never leaves his people, no matter what they're going through.

A price is paid for them, the greatest price of all. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

A young boy, he once built himself a little boat, many used to do it when you were young, making little boats and then putting them out in a river and on a loch.

[46 : 43] This young boy, he'd made himself a little boat and he took it along to the river one day and set it into the river and was letting it out on a string. And he sat back and just watched the little boat go out as he was letting his string out and he was admiring it as it was going out but then all of a sudden there was a strong current in the river that took hold and the boat got caught up in the current and as the little boy tried to pull it in on the string, the string snapped.

And the boy was devastated. He started chasing after this boat going down the river after it but the boat was going too fast. It was being taken away. And he just kept going, kept going, trying to catch up with it but it slipped out of sight, carried on searching until it started to get dark.

And to his dismay, he just couldn't find it. He'd lost his boat. A few days later on his way home from school, he was passing by a shop and in the shop he noticed this little boat.

And he said to himself, that boat looks just like mine. And as he went closer and closer he said to himself, it is mine. And so he ran into the shop and he said to the man at the counter, he says, that's my boat in your window.

I made it, can I have it back? And the man in the shop said, no, I'm sorry, someone else brought that in. If you want it, you're going to have to buy it back.

[48 : 19] And the man told him how much it was going to cost. Now the little boy didn't have any money with him at the time, but he ran home and saw how much money he could get together.

And he was delighted when he found he had enough money. And he ran back to the shop, he gave the man the money, he got his boat back. And as he was going out of the shop, he said, now you're mine twice.

I made you and now I've bought you. And that's a reminder to us of the cost of all that Christ has done for us.

He made us in the first place. We belong to him and yet in our ignorance of him we've gone away. we've gone our own way.

In our sin we've gone astray from him. And he had to come and purchase us, redeem us with a price. And so if you think you're not worth much to God, if you think you're not important to God, or God doesn't see you as important in his eyes, just like the psalmist as we're singing in Psalm 77, has God forgotten us?

[49 : 39] Will he neglect us? Do you feel that tonight? Do you feel this distance with God that perhaps he's not concerned for you? Or that you have to make it up to God in some way by fully keeping the law and pleasing God in that way?

Well, you don't. You see, we're precious to God. He made us and he has redeemed us. He has paid a price.

You don't have to earn his favor through works, through any works of the law. That's not the way to please God, but to come by faith and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The redeemed of God depend on him. Because the erosion that can so easily come in is God doesn't love me.

And we turn away from God and we let the things of this world just eat away at us. But the greatest barrier, the greatest defense against sliding away from God of being cursed in this world and for all

eternity is to know the barrier.

[50 : 58] The erosion barrier that is faith, in Christ. Paul, as he's speaking to the church of Galatia and to the people there, he's saying the law will not help.

You're cursed. Even if you fail on one point, you're cursed. But he says, thanks be to God, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

He has done it. He has paid the price. And what he wants of us now is not to say, I can do the law myself, because in that we're saying, Christ died for no purpose at all.

but to see Christ died for me as sinner, that I might through faith in him live and know his blessing as one of his redeemed and rejoice in him.

So the question is, how are you living your life tonight? Are you living as one who feels the only way to please God is by what we do, forget it.

[52 : 17] You'll never please him. Or are we living as Christ's redeemed, realizing that he has paid the price, he hung on the tree, he was cursed, he bore it all that our sins deserved, that we might be set free through him.

How are we living? Surely it is to be redeemed by faith in Christ Jesus. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we do thank you for all that you have done for us.

We know there is nothing we can do of ourselves, although we seek to please you in so many ways. We seek to do good for you, and that is right for us, for you have been good to us, and you ask us to be your servants in this world.

You have prepared us for works in many ways, but help us to realize that all of our works are not to please you in any way that would gain our salvation in any way, but to realize that we do it because you have loved us and given yourself for us, and that the way to salvation is not through our own endeavors, but through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lord, and so we pray that you will encourage us in our faith, that you will help us to see the price that has been paid and how precious we are to you, that cursed is the one who hangs on the tree, and we thank you that Christ redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse for us.

[53 : 57] So we encourage us Lord we pray and build us up in our faith, we ask it all in Jesus name, Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 61, the Scottish Psalter version.

Realize we had it this morning as well, it was to sing Psalms version this morning, but we'll sing again in the Scottish Psalter, verse 1 to verse 3, the tune of Salzburg, O God give ear unto my cry, and to my prayer attend, in the utmost corner of the land, my cry, to thee I'll send.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 3, to God's praise. Amen. O God give ear sorry, O God give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend, from the earth most corner of the land, my cry to thee I'll send.

what time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity do thou me lead unto the rock that that higher is than I for thou hast for I refuse me a shelter by thy blood and forgiven against my foes thou hast been a strong turn after the benediction

I'll go to the door to my right 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 forever more Amen from