

Children of God By Right

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship now, and we're singing firstly in Psalm 24. Psalm 24, this is in the Scottish Psalter on page 230, and we're singing to Tune Winchester.

The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains, the world that is inhabited, and all that there remains. For the foundations thereof he on the seas did lay, and he hath it established upon the floods to stay. Singing verses 1 to 5, Psalm 24, the earth belongs unto the Lord, and we stand to sing.

The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains, the world that is inhabited, and all that there remains. For the foundations thereof he on the seas did lay, and he hath it established upon the floods to stay. Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God? For who within his holy place shall have a firm at home? Whose hands are clean, whose heart heart is pure and done to vanity? Who hath not lifted up his soul, nor scorned deceitfully?

He from the eternal shall receive a blessing upon, and righteousness came from the God of his salvation.

Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. O Lord, O Lord, O gracious God, you have once again revealed to us in these words aspects of your own greatness, your sovereignty as creator over all that you have created and brought into being.

[3 : 21] We thank you that you have also revealed to us, even in these words, the grace that you have shown toward your people, a grace that you have shown in your presence with a clean heart through Jesus Christ.

And we thank you, Lord, for the way in which he will always be, the means by which we are made acceptable to you. And we give thanks for the certainty of these things, for they are revealed to us in your own word, and they have your own truthfulness behind them. And therefore, Lord, help us never to doubt them.

Help us to come before you with a due acknowledgement of the reality of our standing before God when our faith is in Christ Jesus, O Lord.

We thank you once again for this day, and we thank you for the privilege of knowing how important this day is to your people, and how it is a day that you have set apart from all other days of the week.

And we thank you, Lord, that this remains with us a precious fact, even though we know that there is much mistreatment of your day, and that it is so much in our generation, despised and not kept in a way that is holy to the Lord.

[4 : 38] We know that we ourselves, O Lord, fail in some ways to keep this day holy as you require. And so we look to you, Lord, for your forgiveness tonight.

There are many ways in which we fail to measure up to the standard, not only here, but in other aspects of your word and of your commands, that we fail to measure up to the terms and to the standard that you set before us.

And so we are all the more grateful and thankful, O Lord, for our perfect Savior, in whom we are presented to you as if we had been and are perfect ourselves.

We thank you tonight, Lord, for his merit. We thank you for his achievements. We thank you for the success of his time in this world, in coming to be born into this world as a human being, in coming to give himself to the service of the Father, in coming to give perfect obedience to the will of the Father, in coming to fulfill that death of the cross, by which he provided an atonement for the sin of his people.

We thank you for the way that he has now risen from the dead, and for his exaltation and session at the right hand of God. We thank you, O Lord, as we anticipate remembering the Lord and his death

in this coming Lord's Day.

[6 : 02] We thank you that the reality of his death is held out before us, not only on this kind of occasion, but also every time we come to your Word.

And we do thank you, O Lord, for the reality of all that has been achieved by the cross, that it is the way in which we have come to be represented and set before God in his person, so that all that he has achieved comes to his people to be as real as if they had achieved it themselves.

We thank you for that great union that your people have with you, for the way that you enable us, Lord, by the power of your Spirit to know of new life, of life as those who are born again and brought into your kingdom and into the possession of the privileges of your children.

We pray, Lord, tonight as we anticipate gathering our minds together to focus briefly on what it is to be children of God and how it has come about that we are so.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to do so thankfully and dependently, and to do so especially in a way that is grateful for the grace that comes to be revealed to us in this.

[7 : 18] We ask, Lord, that you would help us to fulfill all that it means to belong to your children.

And we pray that for any of us tonight who are not yet born again, those who have not yet come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ trustingly and savingly, those who have not come to trust in his name, Lord, we pray for them and we pray that you would tonight work in their souls, that you would give them to know that power of your Spirit, the power that has brought our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, the power that brings us to life spiritually.

We ask that that power may be in our midst and in the midst of all your people's gathering tonight.

We pray, Lord, for ourselves as a congregation. Again, we commit ourselves to you as a people.

Lord, there are so many things that we can and do bring before you, and as we do so privately, so we do so as we gather here at this occasion.

And we pray that all that we seek to do in your name will be guided by your Spirit. Help us, Lord, we pray, to set before adults and children alike the claims of God, the claims of Christ, the claims that come to us as we know the reality of your rule and of your saviorship over us.

Oh, Lord, our God, we pray that as we do so, we may know your blessing accompanying all that is done. Bless the children who belong to us. Bless them in our families.

[8 : 54] Bless them in schoolwork. Bless them at the Sunday school and creche, Bible class and tweenies. We thank you for all occasions and all activities associated, Lord, with their well-being.

We do pray again for your blessing to accompany all these efforts. Bless the leaders who had looked to head up the various groups of young people.

We thank you for them, and we give thanks for their willingness to serve. We give thanks, oh Lord, for their readiness to give of their time and of the gifts you have given them in the service of the Lord.

We pray that they may know your blessing, and that they may know gladness and joy of heart to see these young lives develop morally and spiritually as they receive your Word.

And Lord, we ask too that you bless tonight those we know are unable to be with us. We thank you for the technology that enables those who cannot leave their homes yet to be part virtually of our services of worship.

[9 : 57] Bless all such tonight, we pray, and all even through other parts of the world who come to log in to our services. Lord, we pray that the gospel, as it goes forth in that way too, will be blessed by you, and that many will come to have their lives touched even from listening to the message of the gospel proclaimed.

We ask, oh Lord, too, for those tonight who are ill, especially those who are seriously ill and those who are critically ill. Remember them, Lord, we pray.

We belong to various families in the congregation. Again, we ask your blessing to rest upon them.

We ask for their loved ones that you would calm and pacify their hearts and give them to know, Lord, your surrounding care and your own compassion directed towards them.

We pray that your healing hand will be upon such, if it be your will that they recover, and if it be, Lord, that it is your choice, your will that they should leave this world and enter into eternity.

Our prayer for them is that you would enable them to take that step in the grace and in the salvation that has been procured in the Lord Jesus Christ for us.

[11 : 11] We ask, Lord, your blessing for our community, for all who serve you in different ways in our community, in different kinds of services and emergency services, in the police force, in our

hospitals and care homes, medical practices, and all who help to, Lord, meet our needs at different times, the various groups and charities, and like, say, families and Crossroads and others.

Oh, Lord, who give such good service to us in our community, in our family and personal experiences. So bless us, we pray, and continue to bless us in these ways.

And in all of these things, as we confess our sins anew, receive us graciously, cleanse us from our sins, for we ask all of these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Well, let's praise God once again. This time we're praising him from Psalm 130. Again, it's in the Singed Psalms, sorry, it's in the Scottish Psalter. Sorry, it's in the Singed Psalms version, yes, page 173.

And we're singing to the tune, Martyrdom. Psalm 173, a psalm that so many people down through many generations have found of such use and comfort and assurance, as we find the psalmist calling from the depths to the Lord to hear him from his place on high.

[12:43] And here, like quite a number of the psalms, they begin in the depths, they begin with complaint to God of their situation, complaint in the sense of reaching out to him.

And yet, by the time you reach the end of the psalm, you come to expressions of comfort and trust and reliance upon God, and even us here calling upon others to put their hope in the Lord.

So Psalm 130, Lord, from the depths I call to you. Lord, from the depths I call to you.

Lord, dearly come on high, and give attention to my voice, Lord, dearly come on high, and give attention to my■ls.

Lord, in your presence, who thou stand? If you are sentry, Lord, But yet forgiveness is with you, That we may hear you, Lord.

[14:33] I wait, my soul, wait for the Lord, My hope is in His word.

More than the watch and reach for God, My soul, wait for the Lord.

O Israel, birth, your old in rock, For mercy is with Him, And full redemption from their sins As He will be redeemed.

Amen. Now let's turn to read God's word. Tonight we're reading from the Gospel of John, And chapter 1, verses 1 to 18.

Gospel of John, reading from the beginning, The first 18 verses. In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with God, And the Word was God.

[16:18] He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, And without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, And the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, And the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, Whose name was John. He came as a witness, To bear witness about the light, That all might believe through Him.

He was not the light, But came to bear witness about the light. The true light, Which enlightens everyone, Was coming into the world. He was in the world, And the world was made through Him, Yet the world did not know Him.

He came to His own, And His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, Who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, Who were born not of blood, Nor of the will of the flesh, Nor of the will of man, But of God.

And the word became flesh, And dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, Glory as of the only Son, From the Father, Full of grace and truth.

[17:36] John bore witness about Him, And cried out, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me, Ranks before me, Because He was before me. And from His fullness, Have we all received, Grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses, Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, The only God who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

And so on, And may God follow with His blessing, Again as we read His Word. Once again, let's praise the Lord, This time we're praising Him from Psalm 119, Psalm 119, Page 404, In Scottish Psalter, And at verse 57.

Singing to a tune, Belmont, And we'll sing that section down to verse 64. Thou my sure portion art alone, Which I did choose, O Lord.

I have resolved and said, That I would keep Thy holy word. With my whole heart, I did entreat Thy face and favor free. According to Thy gracious word, Be merciful to me.

[18 : 53] I thought upon my former ways, And did my life well try, And to Thy testimonies pure, My feet then turned I.

And so on, To the end of the section, To the tune, Belmont, Thou my sure portion art alone. Am I sure portion art alone, Which I did choose, O Lord.

I have resolved and said, That I would keep Thy holy word.

With my whole heart, I didn't treat, I placed the favor free.

According to Thy gracious word, Inheritable to me.

[20 : 26] I thought upon my former ways, And did my life well try, And to Thy testimonies pure, My feet then turned it high.

I did not stay, Nor linger long, As those that slothful are, But hastily I lost to Thee, Myself I did repay. Bands of hell, And hereof yet high, Thy peace that stayed was my, Thy light, Thy light that made, Thy feet to raise, In for Thy touchless pride.

I am companion to all those, Who hear and lay, O they.

O Lord, Thy mercy fills me, The earth, O Lord, Thy mercy fills me, The earth, O Lord, And hereof, Each day in Thy laws, I pray.

[22 : 53] Please turn with me now to John chapter 1, And tonight we are going to briefly consider Verses 11 to 13.

He came to His own, He came to His own, And His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, Who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, Who were born not of blood, Nor of the will of the flesh, Nor of the will of man, But of God.

Surely this is the most profound prologue to any book that has ever been written. Because as you go here from verse 1 through to verse 18, which forms the prologue, You can see how profound the teaching is, And the amazing thing, or one of the amazing things is, That John here, and indeed throughout his gospel, Put so much profound teaching into such very simple concepts, With which we are all familiar.

Darkness, light, and so on. And what he is doing really, Through the rest of the gospel, Is unpacking, as it is commonly called, The meaning of what he is saying here in regard to the word, Which you'll see as a capital W.

The word, as you reach verse 18, And then follow on from that, It becomes obvious to you reading it then, That the one who is meant by the word, Is in fact Jesus Christ.

[24 : 31] He is the one who, as the word, Just as we use words to communicate what's on our minds, In order that others may understand us, As we use words to communicate, In that whatever language we're using, Words communicate from the mind, Towards the person you're speaking to.

And what John is doing is saying that, Jesus is the communication from the mind, From the will, from the heart of God, In order that we should understand something, Of the will of God for our salvation.

So he is the word, And the word which was with God, And then it says, The word was God. So what you find here, And throughout John's gospel, Is the unpacking of that great concept, That Jesus Christ, as the word, Is the one who has come to reveal to us, And you can see it down in verse 18 especially, No one has ever seen God, The only God, Or the only begotten, You could translate that as well, Who is at the Father's side.

The old translation has, Who is in the Father's bosom. He has made him known. And if you think of what it means to clasp something to your bosom, To your heart, with affection, What you find really in Jesus Christ, Is that God has taken what was on his heart, The salvation of his people, And he has actually communicated that through Jesus Christ.

In Christ you find the heart of God, Actually brought to us so that we can see something of it, And that in the way in which that's revealed to us in Christ, And in the written word, We then come to find this is God speaking to us, And here is what he's saying to us, And it's summed up in the person of Christ, And all that he has done and continues to do for his people.

[26 : 36] So that's what's presented to us, And we're just confining ourselves tonight to these verses 11 to 13, He came to his own, And his own people did not receive him, But to all who did receive him, Who believed in his name, He gave the right to become children of God.

And three things emerge from these verses That we can briefly look at in turn. First of all, it speaks about Jesus rejected. And secondly, it speaks about Jesus received.

And thirdly, it speaks about the children of God, As a consequence of what it mentions there about believing in his name, And receiving him.

And consequence of that, He gave them the right to become the children of God. These are the three things that these few verses bring out for us.

Jesus rejected, Jesus received, And the children of God. That connects with Jesus being received and believed in. Well, Jesus first of all rejected, As you see in verse 11, He came to his own, And his own people did not receive him.

[27 : 48] Now in the original language of the New Testament, The text really is literally, He came to his own, And his own did not receive him. And there's a slight difference in nuance between the first his own, And the second his own.

He came to his own, And the second reference to it, And the second reference to it, Which is rightly, Here translated, His own people. His own people, That is, the Jewish people, The people that he came from, By virtue of his birth into the world.

And what we see is that, First of all, As he's rejected, He came to his own in the wider sense. And you'll know that this is set in the context of God's creation.

This passage, I mean, It's talking about the creation. It talks about that all things were made through him, Through this word, This person. Without him was not anything that was made that was made.

And so, It goes into verse 10, He was in the world, The world was made through him, Yet the world did not know him. In other words, He's telling us here, This is teaching us something really precious, That Jesus, the Son of God, Came into this world, And became human, By taking our nature, As you find in verse 14, The word was made or became flesh, And he dwelt among us.

[29 : 12] But as he came to the creation, He came, if you like, To, He entered into the created order, That he himself created. He became part of that created order, Without in any way losing what he had from the beginning, From all eternity, In the nature of God.

He came to his own, He came to the world that he had created. He came into this world, And the world rejected him, Which is the next point as well, His own did not receive him. But it's reminding us that there's more here, Than that Jesus just came to a certain people, From which he was born naturally, And saying to us, He came into the world he created.

He became part of that world, amazingly. God himself came in the person of his Son, To take part of this to himself, To become human.

To have something created for him, That he then took to himself, In our human nature. He came to his own, But then secondly, His own people, Did not receive him.

And by that, It's narrowing the focus down to certain people. He came into the world, Born through Jewish, Into the Jewish people.

[30 : 33] Born of a Jewish mother, Begotten by the Holy Spirit. But he came, And took to himself, Human nature, By becoming a Jew.

By coming to be raised, As a Jewish boy and man, And developed in that way as humans do. And he came to his own people.

But his own, Did not receive him. He was rejected, By and large, By these people of his day.

That he walked amongst, That saw his miracles, That heard him preach, That he called so often to come to him. And in John's Gospel, You find that so frequently set out.

Isaiah 53, for example, As you know, Is a passage that deals with This wonderful person, In such a detailed way.

[31 : 30] It's virtually equivalent to Many New Testament passages. Although it happened many hundreds of years before Jesus came. And you remember yourselves how, As Isaiah 53 puts it, He was despised and rejected by men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He was despised and we esteemed him. He was rejected by the people he came to be part of.

And you can see the climax to that really in John's Gospel itself. If you go forward to chapter 19 for a moment, And look at verses 14 to 16.

Chapter 19 and at verse 14. Now it was the day of the preparation of the Passover.

It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, This is Pontius Pilate speaking, The Roman governor. The chief priests, These are the religious leaders.

[32 : 51] They answered, We have no king but Caesar. We have no king but the Roman emperor. So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

You see, he came to his own people. And as all did not receive him, Not only did they not receive him, They rejected him. They said, We don't have any king but Caesar. Our only king is the emperor.

What darkness had come to envelop their minds. These people who had the Old Testament. These chief priests, These scribes who knew the Old Testament scriptures.

Who actually knew them so well. And yet they could not fit together the prophecies of the Old Testament With their fulfillment in the person of Jesus. Even though Jesus clearly himself indicated that that's who he was.

His own did not receive him. What about yourself? He's come to you too in the gospel.

[33 : 51] He's coming to you tonight in the gospel. The gospel is always about Jesus presenting himself. And if we're not focusing on that as a core element of the gospel, We're not doing our job properly.

Because this is not about us. This is not about anything to do with us as preachers. Nothing to do with ability or inability or anything like that. Because that will vary so much anyway. This is about him.

This is about the one who came to his own people. And his own people did not receive him. This is about the Jesus who's coming to you and to me tonight. And saying, Have you received me? Have you taken me?

Have you welcomed me into your heart? Because that's what the gospel is really about. And that's why we want to bring this gospel to those people around us.

As much as every opportunity we have to do that. We hope we'll take all of these opportunities as God gives them. As God enables us. Because the burden of our hearts tonight as a Christian congregation Is that we communicate this great message of the gospel to those around us.

[34 : 54] That Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners. That this man receives sinners and eats with them. That he is pleased to bring us into fellowship with himself. That that's the purpose.

Why he came into the world. Why he came to his created order and became part of that. And why he came to his own though they did not welcome or receive him.

So here's for me and here's for you a very important question tonight. Have I? Have I personally received him? Have I personally come to take him to myself?

That really takes us to Jesus received our second point. But to as many as received him. Or to all who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave the right to become children of God.

All who did receive him. Who believed in his name. And you can see there's an equivalence there. The same thing is meant by receiving him. And believing in his name.

[35 : 57] I mean they're different. In a sense they're different of course in the type of activity that it is. But they're so closely bound together that it comes pretty much to the same thing. If you've received Jesus then you come to believe in him.

If you come to believe in Jesus then you've come to receive him. You can't separate the two things apart. But you know when it says here. He to all who did receive him.

That presupposes. I mentioned this previously a few minutes ago. It presupposes that he has come to offer himself. Or be offered to us in the gospel. You receive something that's offered to you.

You receive something that's made over to you as a gift. And you receive it. Sometimes you just receive it matter of fact. Sometimes you receive it with much thankfulness.

But this is the gift of God. The gift of a savior. The gift of salvation. In his son that has come to us in the word that was made flesh. In the person of Jesus.

[36 : 58] Have you opened that gift? In other words. Have you said to the Lord.

Lord this is exactly what I needed. This is what I need every day on an ongoing basis. This gift of eternal life. This gift of your son. This gift of a savior.

So that as you open that gift. By receiving Jesus. By taking him to yourself. You then come into the possession. Of what he came to achieve for you.

As many as received him. Not just to an elite group of people. From amongst the whole mass of humanity. These disciples. Including John. Were not an elite type of people.

They were mostly very ordinary lifestyles. Mostly ordinary occupations. Fishermen. Doctors. People like that. Who are just going about their business in this world. They weren't kings or princes.

[37 : 58] Not that they're excluded. But this is what the gospel really is saying to us. And the word. The word really. This word received.

Has an additional element to it. I think that. That's important for us also to realize. It's not just that you receive him. In the sense of a formal reception given to him.

The word actually carries with it. You take it to yourself. Personally. You make it personal. And actually. When you think about a gift.

It becomes a gift to you. In the full sense of the word. Only when you have received it. And brought it to yourself. If somebody gifts you something for your birthday.

Or at Christmas. Or any other time. And you actually open that gift. It then becomes a gift when you receive it. And say thank you. It's a gift to you.

[38 : 58] It's a gift that you've received. If we don't receive it. It remains a gift from God's side. It's still offered to us. But it's lying there unopened.

Or certainly unaccepted. As many as received him. To take to oneself. As a friend or companion. You could say. Is the meaning built into. That aspect of the word. As many as received him. You receive him. Welcome him.

Say thank you to God for him. You receive him. You take him to yourself. Take him to be your friend. Your companion. Your savior.

Your Lord. That's how you respond. Or ought to respond. And I with you. To the gift of God. In the person of his son.

[39 : 55] So he came. To his own. They did not receive him. But he. Those who did receive him. They took him. To themselves. They came to trust in him.

And that's where. This next phrase. Tied on to that. Who believed. In his name. All who did receive him. Who believed in his name. Now that's another angle on it.

It's very closely connected to. Receiving him. But believing in his name. Is something that just gives you. Another angle. As to what it means. To be related properly.

Savingly to Jesus Christ. And. The name. That's mentioned here. Who believed. In his name. What does that mean?

Why is that set there. As well. As the other details. Well you go back. To the Old Testament. Especially. And you reflect on the fact. That. God revealed himself.

[40 : 50] In so many ways. To them. And so often. You find in the Old Testament. That the name. Of God. Is just. The name. Believing.

In the name of God. What does the name mean? Well it means briefly. It's. The sum total. Of all his attributes. The sum total. Of all the attributes.

All the characteristics. That are revealed. That belong to God. That is revealed to us. The name represents. Or stands for. The whole sum. Of those attributes. And that's applied to Jesus.

And of course. That carries with it. Another point. Which. Is. By the way. Just now. But it's important. And that is. That he. Obviously.

Is God. As well as human. Otherwise. He would not have this. Said about him. That the name. Belongs to him. The name. Of God. They believed. In his name.

[41 : 47] So they trusted. They recognized him. Who he was. They trusted in him. And they hoped. And placed their hope. And placed their hope. In him. Now.

John. Actually. Tells us. In chapter 20. Why he actually. Wrote this gospel. This book. And it's interesting. How he. How he. Puts that.

In the summary. You have there. In chapter 20. And verses 30. And 31. That's dynamic. In its message. In its. In its. Power. In its.

In its importance. Because it says this. Now. Jesus. Did many. In the presence. In the disciples. Which are not written. In this book. You may believe. That Jesus.

Is the Christ. The son of God. And that believe. By believing. You may have life. In his name. You may have life. In his name. Because.

[42 : 42] His name. Is. All that. Is true of God. In terms of his attributes. As God. That's what's come into the world. These are the properties of the word. These are the properties that remain the properties of the word.

Made flesh. And as many as received him. Those who believed. In his name. I came across this. In one of these books that we find useful in preparing sermons.

It's called. Vines Word Studies. Which is. A study really of different words throughout the Bible. And bringing out some of the meanings of the word. Some of the meanings of these words.

And this is what it says. With regard to believing in. Or believing on. Jesus. Which is what you have here. Those who believed in his name. Sometimes it's believing on.

This is what it says. To believe in. Or on. Is more than mere acceptance. Of a statement. It is so to accept a statement.

[43 : 41] Or a person. As to rest upon them. To trust them practically. To draw upon. And avail oneself. Of all that is offered.

In him to them. Hence. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Is not merely to believe. The facts of his historic life. Or of his saving energy.

As facts. But to accept him. As savior. Teacher. Sympathizer. Judge. To rest the soul upon him. For present and future salvation.

And to accept. And adopt his precepts. And example. As binding upon the life. That's a fairly longish paragraph. But I thought it was. A really excellent summary.

Of what it means. To believe in. Or to believe on Christ. That's not just a formality. Of believing certain things. To have been true about him. Or to be true about him.

[44 : 38] Now. You do have that. But to believe on him. Means. To rest your very soul upon him. To trust in such a way. As sees him as your refuge.

And you leave yourself. Trustingly in his care. You come to him. So that. He as he's presented in the Bible. Becomes your savior.

And therefore. He is the one. In whom. You are acceptable before God. Totally acceptable before God. Because everything that he has done.

Is to that end. To that purpose. For his people. But there's something else. About the word believing as well. To all who did receive him. Who believed in his name. Although it seems like a past tense.

It's actually. In a continuing sense. That it's used. To all who continue. To believe. In Jesus. And that too. Is a crucial distinction. Because.

[45 : 37] When it's an issue of trust. An issue of. Believing in the sense of. Laying out your life. And your soul upon him. It's not just. A once for all thing. That then.

You leave behind you. It's something that goes on. Day by day. Hour by hour. Week by week. Month by month. Year by year. You go on.

Believing. In him. You go on. Trusting and resting. Upon him. That's what's meant. That's what's required.

That's what it means. To be a believer. Be a believer. Be a believer. In this sense. In which John is using it. To all who received him. Who believed. To continue to believe.

In his name. These are the people. That are in contrast. With those who rejected him. Where is the ground. Of my own trust.

[46 : 33] Tonight. As I think about my relationship to God. To eternity. Where is the ground of my trust.

What is foundational. As I look forwards. As far as possible. To the future. And certainly to the future judgment. Which I know will come. What is the ground of my trust.

On what am I resting. Is it my own ability. Is it any gifts that God has given me. Is it the achievements that I've had in life.

All through life. No. It's none of these things. Because however good and necessary. These may be. They cannot be foundational.

To my acceptance with God. Or yours. But he is. To as many as believed. In him. Or on him. You see that's.

[47 : 31] Laying yourself on a foundation. And when Jesus is your foundation. It's never going to move. And when God comes. In his final judgment. As he will. When all of us must appear.

As 2nd Corinthians 5 puts it. To appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That we may receive the things done. In this body. In this life. Whether these be good. Or evil. We will receive them accordingly.

Our judgment will be accordingly. What am I carrying towards. That judgment seat of Christ tonight. As I find it. If I were to go through these doors tonight.

And all of a sudden. There in front of me. Is the judgment seat of Christ. And Jesus sitting on the throne. For his judgment. What am I carrying towards that. To try and ensure. That he will accept me.

Well himself. Surely. Because he alone is the ground. Of my acceptance. And yours. To as many as received him.

[48 : 29] To as many as believed. In or on his name. These are the ones to whom. Now it's speaking of them being. He gave the right to become.

The children of God. Jesus rejected. Jesus received. And now briefly. The children of God. Not sons of God. In John's writings.

That's. The angle that Paul gives us. In his writings. Because Paul is dealing with. Children of God. Or sons of God. Is the word he uses. Which means. Of course.

Females as well. Incorporated into that. But it means. How we come by virtue. Of God's act of adoption. Which itself. Is actually. A benefit that Christ. Has achieved.

By his death on the cross. But Paul is looking at it. More from. The so-called. Legal side. If you like. We come to be. Formally adopted. Into the number of. God's family.

[49 : 25] God's children. Omn. Very first. But he is approaching. In the beginning. No. From it from a different. It. Not from. A formal. Legal adoption side.

But from the time. From. From the. Whole idea of. Being born. Into that. Privilege. You know. That John's gospel. And John's writings.

Especially. Are the writings. That speak. About being. Born again. And becoming. Children of God. By virtue. adoption side that Paul uses and the birth privilege that John gives, they really, again, are so intimately connected and belong together. They're just different aspects, if you like, of the same thing, to be children of God, to be the family of God. But here is John saying, to as many as received him who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

And that's what he wants to emphasize. He doesn't just say he gave them to be children of God. He brought them to be children of God. That's true, but it doesn't go far enough for John. He gave the right to be and to become the children of God. As they are children of God, as they are born again of the Holy Spirit of God, as they bear the likeness in that rebirth of their father, so they come to have these privileges. And this is the privilege John is focusing on.

They have been given the right to become children of God. And you know, that's one of the things that the devil will attack you on.

[51 : 12] What right have you to see yourself as a child of God? What right have you to think that you actually properly belong to the children of God? Who are you to think that that really should ever be your status and your privilege? How do you respond to that as a Christian? How do you say in response to the devil's temptation and his attempt to shake you and discomfort you and remove your assurance from you, how do you respond to that? You say, I read in God's Word that not only am I as born again, made a child of God and belong to the children of God, I have the right to it.

And the devil will say to you, but how can you have the right to it when you say also in your prayers that you really actually, by virtue of what you are naturally, you don't have a right to any of the privileges or the blessings of God? How can you claim to have a right when you know that you're a miserable sinner who deserves the wrath of God and the condemnation of God for what you are in yourself naturally? What do you say then into that in response to that? Well, you say, that's absolutely true as I am in myself naturally. I have no right in myself to any of the privileges that belong to God's children. But I have every right to them if I'm in Christ. I have every right to them if I'm born again. I have every right to them if the Lord has taken me and taken my life and changed me and given me new life and brought me from my spiritual death and set me right with himself and being born again.

I have every right to them. I have every right, I have every right, a Christ-given right, a right given by this word that became flesh to become children of God. That's as a result of what we are as newborn, as brought to know the reality of new birth by the power and the blessing of God's Spirit. So it's a result of receiving and believing and believing. It's not because of that. It's by virtue or because of the rebirth that God himself has brought about. We are born into this privilege, spiritually born, into this privilege of having the right to be the children of God. You know, just like in a sense you could illustrate it, I'm sure, by thinking of the royal family. How do you come to belong to the royal family? Well, of course, if you marry into the royal family, you are made a member of the family by virtue of that marriage.

But apart from that, and in the strictest sense, you're a member of the royal family when you're born into it. When you're born of one existing as a member of the royal family, then you become royal by virtue of that. You belong to that family. And here is God's royal family. Here are God's children.

Here is the family of God. How do I come to have a part in that? How do I come to be a member of that? How do I come to be one of this royal family of God? By being born again. By coming to be born, as it says here, not of blood or of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

It's by virtue of your connection to Jesus, especially, that you have this conferred upon you. As you are born again, you are born into this family of God, and you're related to Christ Himself in such a way that everything that He has achieved becomes yours. That's why He died and rose again.

[55 : 15] And it's interesting that we have to emphasize here that He gave them the right to become children of God. And that's in the plural. It's children of God in that sense of being grouped together as a family. There is no way in which you can think of being a child of God if you're detached from the rest of the family. You're a child of God, then you belong to this family who are children of God.

And He gave them the right to become children of God, plural. And you cannot separate the worthiness of Jesus Himself from that reality. And you come before God and say, Lord, I am not worthy that I should receive any gift or any blessing from You. But you can say, nevertheless, as someone who is born again and trusting in Jesus, Lord, I am not worthy of anything from You, but I know my Savior is worthy of everything You can give me as the fruit of His sufferings. That's why You receive them. That's why He gives us the right to become the children of God. And you know, in a sense, that's why, and we're just finishing with this, in John's writings, you find in his first epistle that he writes in chapter 3 of his first letter. And it's almost certainly, and it is certainly with a sense of wonder that John wrote it, where there he began by saying, Beloved, see what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God. See what he's saying? He's got a sense of wonder as he writes this. Look at this, he says, the caliber of love, the kind of love that God the Father has shown to us, has given to us, that we should be called children of God. And then what he says, and so we are.

We are indeed, when we are born into the family of God. Beloved, we are God's children. Now is what he's saying. And it fits in with what we see there in chapter 1 as we've looked at it briefly tonight.

So, there is what you take, those of you who are intending going to the Lord's table, either having been before or even as the first time, and I know there are some here who know the Lord, who are members of God's family, as far as we can tell, but who have not yet come to take communion.

Well, bring this teaching with you. Think about it between now and the next Lord's Day, or between now and tomorrow even. We don't know what a day may bring forth, but think about it.

Think about what it's saying about who God's children are, how they've come to be God's children, how it's not about your own achievement, it's not about your own qualities of life, it's not about what you do or don't do, it's primarily about your relationship to Jesus, and how he has come to be for you, the one in whom God has said, I am bound to accept you when you have received him and come to believe in him or upon him. That's the promise. And if that's the case with you, then you take that with you to the Lord's table. Because remember, who is the Lord's table for? Who is the communion for? Which people does God invite to come to take and eat of the bread and drink of the cup? The children of God. The children of God.

[59 : 32] It is their supper. It is their meal. It is their privilege as God's children. May God bless these thoughts to us tonight. Let's conclude now. And we're going to conclude tonight by singing to God's praise in Psalm 25. Psalm 25, and this is from the Sing Psalms, on page 29.

Singing from verse 8 down as far as verse 15, the tune is Finart. Because the Lord is just and good, he shows his paths to all who stray. He guides the meek in what is right and teaches them his holy way. To those who keep his covenant laws, he shows his love consistently.

For your name's sake, O Lord, my God, forgive my great iniquity. Who then are those who fear the Lord? He'll teach to them the chosen way, that they may prosper all their life, their children in the land will stay.

God's friends are those who fear his name. With them his covenant he will share. My eyes are always on the Lord. He'll free my feet from every snare.

These verses then to conclude to God's praise. Because the Lord is just and good, he shows his path to all who stray.

[61 : 11] He has the meek in what is right and teaches them his holy way.

To those who give his path and lot, he shows his love consistently.

He's the meek in what is right and teaches them his holy way. To those who give his path and lot, he shows his love consistently. He's the meek in what is right and he shows his love consistently. He's the meek in what is right and lot, he shows his love consistently. He's the meek in what is right and he shows his love perfectly. Who then are those who fear the Lord?

He'll teach to them the chosen way, that they may prosper all their life, Their children in the land will stay.

[62 : 43] God's friends are those who fear his name. With them his love and he will share.

Thy eyes are always on the Lord. He'll free my feet.

Amen. He's near. Tonight, after the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right here. 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. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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