

Opportunities, Opposition and Optimism

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0:00] We're going to begin our worship of God now, singing firstly tonight, today in Psalm 46, in the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 46. We're going to be focusing later on in the service on the supremacy, a rule of Jesus, or God through Jesus Christ. So we'll sing these well-known words, I'm sure for most of us, in Psalm 46, the tune of Stroudwater, God is our refuge and our strength, in straits a present aid.

Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make and troubled be, yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake.

We'll sing to the end of verse 7, God is our refuge and our strength. If you're able to stand, please stand to sing. What is our refuge and our strength, in straits a present aid?

Therefore, although the earth we have, we will not be afraid.

For the flames of the best we will not be afraid, For the hills amidst the sea be cast, While waters falling make and troubled be, by swearing seeds to shake.

[2:02] And when the desert streams to die, the city of the God, the holy place where the Lord most high hath is the Lord.

In the midst of heart doth dwell, nothing shall the re-boot.

The Lord to die on Elmeroo, on that right air he knew.

The evil bridge to outrust thee, the kingdom's new let dwell.

The Lord your love, the lax is born, the earth did melt for thee.

[3:49] The Lord of hosts upon our side, the hope shall thee remain.

The God of thee, the God of the rest of the rest, the Lord have still thee to maintain.

Well, let's now pray. The prayer is going to focus mostly on the children and young folks just now.

Lord, our God, we thank you for the truth of these great words that we have been singing, that you have given us to sing. For they are part of the record of your word, that God is our refuge and our strength, in our straits of very present help in our times of need.

And we give thanks, Lord, today that we can sing these words with the conviction that we know from our own experience as you people that they are true. For you have proved yourself down through the generations to be one who is utterly trustworthy and dependable.

[5:12] And we give thanks that you are the God today whom we worship. Bless then, we pray today, our young people. Bless our children. Grant them your blessing in all their activities, in all that they learn of your word and of the gospel.

Lord, we pray that your Holy Spirit will lay these things to their heart and that as they learn them, they will apply them in their own lives day by day and realize more and more the importance of being related to God in a saving way and of placing God first in their lives.

So bless them today and bless all who teach them. Help them, Lord, at this time of holiday as well, that they will know of your blessing to enable them to relax and rest.

And give us, we pray, to value those things that we have at times when we are able to turn aside from a normal course of life into a time of rest and recovery.

Bless us then now in the remainder of the service and throughout this day. We ask it all with the pardon of our sin for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, children, since I retired, since I left and went to live in Tongue, and you're welcome to come and see me anytime, come and see us there.

[6 : 28] But one of the pleasures is taking Roscoe for a walk every morning. Everybody knows who Roscoe is, I'm sure. Those are our visitors. Roscoe's our wee Jack Russell.

He's 14 now, still quite lively, keeps you on your toes. But I take him for a walk every morning, usually around 7 in the morning or so, down to the beach nearby. And last week, it wasn't quite fully light when I went down with him.

And I looked out on a large area of rock jutting up above the sea level. I thought what I saw was a seal. I'd seen a seal there some weeks before that.

And I thought, this is definitely a seal. It's pulled itself up out of the water. It's lying on this rock. And I was sure, even though I couldn't see because it wasn't quite daylight properly, I was sure I saw it move.

So I went down, and I thought, it'd be good to get a photograph. I had my phone in my pocket. So I crept out with Roscoe on the lead across an area of seaweed. Tide was quite far out.

[7 : 32] And then as I reached closer and closer, I thought, no, it's not actually moving. And it turned out it was just a huge rock sitting on top of this area of rock.

And as I'd pulled Roscoe along on his lead, I turned around, and he looked at me as if to say, you stupid man. You should have been dragging me all this way just to see a large rock.

Well, it looked like a seal from a distance. And it reminded me of how the Bible teaches us or warns us against something that looks like being a Christian, but not really a Christian.

Or something that looks really like the gospel or the teachings of the Bible, but isn't really true to the Bible. There are many ways of belief that you can actually follow.

And sometimes, as the Bible tells us, there's a belief which has Christian things in it or attached to it, but isn't really the true gospel. And salvation is not really found except in the true gospel and in a saving relationship with Jesus.

[8 : 43] Now, Paul, when he was writing to Timothy, he said there would be a time when people would have a form of godliness, but lacking or denying the power.

And so for you children today, and for us as adults too, it's important to realize that salvation includes, very much includes, a proper relationship to Jesus.

If somebody looks like a Christian and acts like a Christian, somebody will say, well, I live a good life. I don't use bad language. I don't abuse other people.

I don't do the bad things that I see in the world. So is that not enough to be a Christian? Well, you ask them, well, what's your relationship with Jesus? Oh, I don't want to know Jesus.

I don't want to be that religious. But I think I'm okay as I am. Well, the Bible is saying to us, that looks like what a Christian is. That looks like Christianity, but it's not.

[9 : 39] Because you have to have this personal relationship with Jesus as your Savior in order to actually know eternal life in him.

And so when the Bible tells us to be aware of that, how do we actually ensure, how do we make sure that what we've got is not just something that looks like Christianity or looks like what being a Christian is about, but isn't really?

Well, as I say, the first thing is, how do you relate to Jesus? What place does Jesus have in your life? Is Jesus the most important person in your whole life?

And if you can say that he is, that's what it's like to be a Christian. No Christian is perfect. I'm not perfect. Nobody in here is perfect. But Jesus is, and as a perfect Savior, he is always dependable for us.

So remember, being a Christian is not to be like what the Bible describes a Christian to be. Having a Savior is not something that looks like Jesus, someone who appears like Jesus, making up your own mind of what the Bible teaches.

[10:48] It has to be a proper, saving, believing relationship with Jesus. All the things the Bible tells us belong to a Christian life must be found in our life too, rather than just something that looks like it.

So be sure, children, that you're following Jesus, that you're trusting in Jesus, that the Jesus of the Bible is your Savior, and that you're following him so that you have in him eternal life, whatever happens in this world.

Well, we're going to say the Lord's Prayer again together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. We're going to sing again now some verses to God's praise this time in Psalm 115.

[12:00] Psalm 115. That's on page 395. Tune is St. Thomas. We're singing from verse 12, page 395, Psalm 115.

The Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will bless us still. He will the house of Israel bless. Bless Aaron's house he will. Both small and great that fear the Lord, he will them surely bless.

The Lord will you, you and your seed, a more and more increase. His wonderful words of promise that when God's people are faithful to himself, they can indeed rightly expect his blessing, and his blessing to continue with them according to his own great promises.

We'll sing these verses 12 to 18. The Lord of us hath mindful been. The Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will bless us still.

He will the house of Israel bless. Blessed are God's hearts he will.

[13:24] the Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will be, and he will be, and he will be, and he will be, and he will be.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord the Lord, and you see thy more and more increase.

Blessed are ye all the Lord, the mighty earth of heaven.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more.

[15:12] Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more. Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more. Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more.

Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more. Blessed be blessed, the Lord, and you see thy more and more. Yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie.

Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

[17:26] I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.

Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea, write the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

I know your works. You are neither hot nor cold. Would that you were either cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

[18:31] I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments, so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness be not seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered, and sat down with my father on his throne. He who is anear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Again, we pray that God will bless this reading of his word to us. Let's join together once again in prayer. Lord, our gracious God, we are conscious from these readings in your word, that we come to the one who is described here as above all things and presiding over all the events that ever happened in history.

We thank you today for the privilege of drawing near to you, of coming before your throne, of worshipping you as we seek to do in spirit and in truth. We thank you, Lord, for the many promises that come to meet us as we come to you through your word, and through especially the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[20:05] We thank you today for the way that he is our access to you, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through him.

We bless you for the way that he is the way, the truth, and the life is so abundant in grace and in love and in mercy. We thank you that even as we contemplate, as we read in these words of the final judgment of all, we know that he will do all things right.

We pray, Lord, today that your blessing will reach us here as we meet in your name. We thank you once again for the privilege of being together to worship you, and we pray that all the privileges we have in this life will be blessed to us and will be appreciated by us, and that we will treasure them in our hearts.

For it is in your kindness and your goodness, O Lord, that you have dispensed so many good things to us, and we know as a people how we can look back over many years and realize that in this place in which we live, in common with many other places in the world, there are so many good things to enjoy.

And we thank you today for your day, for this Lord's day, for this day that you have set apart so that we would keep it holy to yourself, that we might enjoy its benefits, that these might come each successive week to remind us, O Lord, that your goodness in providing this for us is a goodness that dispenses to us so many good things.

[21 : 41] Bless your day to us, we pray, and grant that we may in every endeavor we have to maintain it, and that we would know your own blessing and help in doing so.

And we pray, Lord, when we face so many other views of this day and so many activities that are not conducive to our right advance in holiness and grace.

Lord, we pray today that every attempt to undermine, to overthrow your holy day might indeed be thwarted by yourself. Lord, you know how our hearts crave that everybody should enjoy the good things of life and that we should seek, O Lord, that all around us would enjoy the benefits of a Lord's day, the benefits of rest, the benefits of rest for mind and for body, the benefits of worshipping together in the name of Christ.

And we pray, gracious one, that all attempts in the present day that we're so aware of, that you would come, O Lord, and show how this day has been so beneficial in our history, in our society, and in our own culture locally.

And we ask that you would enable us, as we appreciate your day, to take our stand meaningfully and tactfully and lovingly against all attempts that would seek to overthrow those things that are precious to us.

[23 : 12] And so we ask that you would hear us in our prayers as we address these matters to you. We pray, Lord, that you would give us in reaching out with the gospel into our neighborhoods and throughout our whole country at this time.

We pray, gracious one, that you would bless the gospel, that you would help us in an unashamed stand for it, to know your blessing following, and give us the kind of life, O Lord, that would commend your gospel, that would commend your word, so that we ourselves may not act contrary to those things that we recommend to others.

We pray for a spirit of love to continue to pervade us in our dealings one with another. And we ask, O Lord, that you would continue to own and bless your word amongst us especially.

Hide your face, we pray, from our sins, for we all individually have sins to confess. And as we confess them, Lord, we pray that you would be pleased to forgive, to restore, to lift us up in righteousness, and to enable us to progress as a people, not in the things which we ourselves might imagine are the basis of a true prosperity, but give us, Lord, we pray, to prosper in the things of the gospel, to prosper in holiness and righteousness of life, and to prosper in a way that would commend the things of God in a knowledge that they are above all else the things that you have provided for us to enjoy.

Bless this congregation. Continue, Lord, to be with them each and every week that goes by. Bless them in all their endeavors in the gospel to reach out with the message of Christ and of salvation in him.

[24 : 57] We ask that you'd bless each and every activity in the congregation along with the regular services of worship. We pray your blessing for those today, Lord, who come to avail themselves of the advantages that we have in the congregation here.

We ask that you would bless these times of meeting together in different ways, and we pray that they'd be blessed to young and old alike. Bless, we pray, our generation.

Bless our young people. Continue to provide for them. We pray those things that are wholesome, those things that, in the gospel especially, will give them to thrive spiritually and mentally and physically.

And help us, we pray, to be living examples to them. Remember our nation at this time, we pray. And remember the nations of the world in times of great turmoil. Remember the places where war and terror and persecution and such a drastic loss of life is so evident, Lord, as we see in our news items day by day.

Bring peace, we pray, where there is war. Bring people to lay down their opposition and hostility to one another. And grant that you would create through the advance of your kingdom that situation and these conditions that will prove to be of benefit to us all.

[26 : 25] Lord, continue with us now, we pray. Hear us in this prayer and pardon our many sins for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, before we turn back to that passage in Revelation, let's sing once again.

Singing in the Sing Psalms version this time. Psalm 103. The tune is before the throne. We're singing verses 1 to 11. That's on page 135 of the Psalm books.

Praise God, my soul. With all my heart, let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits, his praise, my soul, and song proclaim.

The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress. Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness.

Psalm 103, verses 1 to 11. Amen. Psalm 103, verse 1.

[27 : 36] Let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits, his praise, my soul, and crowns you in song proclaim.

The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress. Your life he rescues from the grave and drowns you in his tenderness.

and crowns you in his tenderness. And bless you in his tenderness. Father, I swear to you decide from his amending stores of good so that just like the eagle's strength your youth will make a lift renewed.

The Lord has zoned for righteous act and justice to down-throught and wards.

To Moses he made no choice his mighty deeds to his well-sons.

[29 : 10] His mighty deeds to his well-sons. For his merciful and kind to hunger slow and full of grace he will not thoughts and fleeting prove or in his anger hide his face.

He does not punish our misdeeds or kill our sins their just reward.

How great is love as high as heaven towards all those who fear the Lord.

Towards all those who fear the Lord. Well, please turn with me now to the passage we read in Revelation chapter 3.

We're going to look for a short time at verses 7 to 13. this letter that's headed the letter to the church in Philadelphia.

[30 : 31] Not to Philadelphia of course. We know nowadays in the USA but Philadelphia and that area where these other churches were situated and about the Ephesus area there in Laodicea.

So from verse 7 until the angel of the church in Philadelphia write the words of the Holy One the True One who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut who shuts and no one opens.

Well, you might say the whole of the book of the Revelation is about the supremacy of Jesus. It's about the way that he and his people will ultimately prevail through his grace, through his power, through his rule not by anything in which they themselves are qualified to have such a status.

and as you look at these two chapters the letters to the seven churches I think we can take it that because they're seven churches not that they weren't through historical churches they were in fact actual churches at the time but because the number seven in many ways in the Bible in many places is a number that has to do with completeness or wholeness we can take these seven letters as indicative of God's message to the church at all times.

In other words when you take these letters to the seven churches there that applies then to the church wherever the church is placed because there are things in them not that every detail is applicable to every church but the principles in it and the basic message in these letters really applies to the whole church in every age.

- [32 : 21] It deals with things like decline life recovery service and the relationship with God especially is at the heart of each of these letters and the message they bring.

Philadelphia was a true church as we said like the others mentioned but it wasn't a very strong church they needed actually a building they needed to have strengthening and so the letter is designed itself at that particular time to bring that strengthening to them all the things that the Lord mentions here as his letter effectively to them are designed to actually give them further strength and encouragement in the service that they are carrying out for Jesus himself.

that itself is important to us here because we need that strengthening we need that encouragement we need the Lord's own word to encourage us we need more than the encouragement we can and are able to give to each other because as we sang in Psalm 46 for example it is God who is our refuge and our strength and in difficult times in challenging times whether they're challenging to us as people as a congregation as congregations our individual our families the encouragement we need the strengthening we need is from God directly from himself through whatever agency he uses but these words remind us this is where our strength our security our hope really lies so what is this church what is it saying about this church what was Jesus in his message to this church saying to them first of all he reminds them they are a church under his stewardship under the stewardship or control or guidance of Jesus himself secondly he reminds them they are actually engaged in Christ's service in his own service despite the fact he says they're weak yet they've been faithful and he's writing to them to continue to do what they're doing and he will actually look after them thirdly they are ultimately secure in Christ they have in fact the prospect of greater security to come of course in eternity and you could say the letter is really about opportunity opposition and optimism in looking to Jesus and I hope that these will be useful for yourselves as a congregation in your own situation and that you will find even from the likes of this letter further evidence of opportunities given to you to serve the Lord opposition and how to face it and optimism in grasping the promises of God and applying them to yourselves so what is he saying about Christ's stewardship well you notice how he begins in describing himself the words of the holy one the true one who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut and shuts and no one opens under Christ's stewardship he describes himself as the holy one the true one in other words he's guiding them immediately to his own perfections he's guiding them to trust in him as one who is utterly dependable and true and holy and faithful there is nothing imperfect about this

Lord that is presiding over the issues of the church he guides them to think of himself and that's itself an important matter for you and for me as individuals for you as a congregation as well who do you look to when do you look to it's this Jesus who presides over your life today and mine over the life of this congregation of his whole church who is he he is the true one he is the holy one he's the one who's always dependable he's the one who's never short of fulfilling his promises he's the one whose word you can trust he's the one that you have to place above all others whatever your relationship with him is so is this the one who's controlling your own life today is it to this Jesus you're looking or just some other description of him in the word in a loose or a formal sort of way do you know him in your own life personally as one who is holy and true one who has proved himself to you and will never actually let go of you or let you down ah the holy one the true one and then he says who has the key of

David who opens and no one will shut why does he say he has the key of David well you know David in the old testament the king David was someone who ruled over Israel for a fair long time and he is brought out in the bible as one who is in many ways the ideal king it wasn't perfect but the bible talks about Jesus as the son of David because promises were that from David himself eventually would come one who would roll over God's people and that happened when Jesus was born and came into the world and lived the life he lived and died on the cross and rose from the dead and ascended to heaven he is himself the son of David in that way of lineage but also in terms of promises that spiritually this is the ideal king this is the one who could be said to be the king par excellence but why does he say he has the key of

[38 : 20] David who opens and no one will shut and shuts and no one opens well of course to give somebody a key is a sign of trusting in that person for somebody to have a key to a safe means that that person is dependable not only dependable but has actually been given authority to open that safe or that door or whatever it is he has a key to or she has a key to the possession of keys is indicative of having authority to use them the right to use them the ability to use them the knowledge to use them the wisdom to use them whether they're opening things or shutting things the possession of the keys is a mark of status and here is Jesus saying I have the key of David I have the key of supreme kingship I have that which belongs to the ideal sovereign who opens and no one will shut who shuts and no one opens and that's true of him in many respects you go back to the very beginning of the revelation and you find someone there described in these wonderful terms from verse 12 onwards in the first chapter all the way through there he stands in the midst of the church or the churches and he says fear not

I am the first and the last I am the living one I died behold I am alive forevermore and I have the keys of death and of hades the keys to death itself and to life beyond death the keys of heaven the keys of hell whose hand are they in the hand of this Jesus who today presides over eternity who presides over the things of time who presides over the development of events in the history of the world in whose hands are the keys to the destiny of human beings they are in the hands of this Jesus whatever people may think of him whatever people may think of this Bible as Christians that is what you believe and as you believe them you are thankful today that the destiny of this world the advance of the course of this world whatever it will be is not in the hands of human beings human beings have a part in it human beings very often make a disaster of it and yet all of that comes under the overall rule and kingship and sovereignty and the key possession if you like of David of the son of David of Jesus you know when Jesus opens no one can shut it that's what he's saying to us as we'll see in a minute when Jesus opens something up opportunities events great things in history no one can shut these when Jesus shuts nobody can open it and Jesus brings something to an end then that's an end of it unless he opens it again that's the kind of person he is not a despot not a tyrant but the ideal king the one who has the authority over all things ultimately that's what he says about himself even death itself he has the keys to it

I have the keys of death and of Hades it's a solemn thing to say but we have to say it in keeping with the message of the Bible death is something we all face death is something we're so familiar with and in a society in a community like we live in it's quite common to attend funerals of friends of relatives of neighbours to show support and that frequency with which we do that reminds us of the frequency of death and reminds us especially of our own death and what's lying in front of us that that death is going to be our death one of these days in whose hands are we how are we facing that prospect that inevitability are we in the hands of the one who has the keys to it who can open out death for us so that we live beyond it that we live above it that we conquer it that's who Jesus is the one who is himself the way the truth and the life remember he said at the grave of Lazarus before he raised him from the dead

I am the resurrection and the life whoever lives and believes in me shall never die and then he said to Martha do you believe this she said yes I do Lord do you believe it today are you living by this conviction today that your life is directed by the one who has the keys of death that death is not going to claim yes you're going to die I'm going to die what's beyond it though will be ushered into the eternal life that Jesus gives to his people or will it be the opposite of that what the Bible calls death or hell these are the issues when you think about the one who has the key and who opens and no one will shut well that's Jesus a church under his stewardship but they're engaged in Christ's service he says

I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name now very often in the Bible you find this description Paul for example writing to the Corinthians spoke in chapter 16 of his first letter that an open door was set before him but there is much opposition there are many enemies but he spoke about this open door this open door of opportunity for the gospel and that's what he's saying to us today that's why you and I are here today to make the best possible use of the opportunities God gives us to serve him and he's saying to you today as a congregation I've set before you an open door yes there are just like Paul said there are many opponents there's much opposition but if Jesus has opened a door of opportunity nobody's going to shut that until he shuts it see that you're making the most of that open door use that opportunity while you've got it to serve him to love him to commend him to be his people in this world that's why he saved you that's why he's given you the gospel not so that you'll hide it and keep it to yourself but go out with it tell people about this

[45 : 19] Jesus and he's saying here I have set before you this open door that's important to the Philadelphians it wasn't an easy place in which to witness to Jesus and then he says you have a little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name you see he's describing them the reality of what they are and who they are and the circumstances in which they're placed and that itself is really a wonderfully encouraging note for us to actually see that Jesus knows today our exact circumstances and therefore our exact needs and he's able to provide for us exactly as we require and here he is saying to them I know your works I know that you have but little power and I know that you have kept my word and have not denied my name you might think today that you're doing all too little for Jesus nothing like as much as you'd like to or as much as you might think others are doing he knows and he knows exactly what you're able and not able to contribute be encouraged today that whatever you're doing for

Jesus he has registered it he knows it he's taken note of it it's in his book it's in his record book and you see what he's saying I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name you have kept my word have not denied my name despite the fact that they have little power and are weak spiritually perhaps morally too but he's saying you have kept my word and have not denied my name remember Paul writing to Timothy he wrote to Romans as well saying that he wasn't ashamed of the gospel he wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 8 not to be ashamed of him Paul the apostle as a prisoner for Jesus and not to be ashamed of this message this gospel but he says take your own share of the afflictions of the gospel now that gives us a key into understanding what the Bible means by being ashamed of

Jesus when you've got something you're ashamed of you don't bring it out into the open well sometimes nowadays that's actually commended things that people ought to be ashamed of that's another issue but if there's something you know you're deeply ashamed of you don't go around broadcasting it to the world you keep it hidden or you keep it to yourself and to be ashamed of the gospel really means essentially that it's not just a feeling it's not just a conviction it's an action it's a hiding of things which ought to be brought into the open to be ashamed of the gospel to be ashamed of Jesus means to keep him hidden to keep him well to keep him to yourself or to keep him so that he's not at all made known through your life now you're not going to be like that I'm sure because if this Jesus means anything at all to you as I hope he does to everyone here you're not going to keep him hidden you're not going to be ashamed of him you're not going to say well

I think I am a Christian but I really I don't want to make that known to the world what will others say what will my family say what will my friends say what will my work colleagues say don't be ashamed he says to Timothy of me his prisoner of the gospel's teaching but take your share of the afflictions of the gospel following Jesus brings difficulties following Jesus doesn't make many times for an easy life but the comforts that Jesus brings far outweigh any of the difficulties or the afflictions or the troubles that accompany following him being true to him making him known and facing the world's hostility because of that what he's saying is I know your works I know that you have little power yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name you have not been ashamed of me and Jesus is saying

I know that and I know that and it will not go unnoticed in eternity and he goes on to say I will make because you have kept my word about patient endurance I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world and that hour of trial seems to be referring to the final judgment where he is saying that's coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth behold I'm coming soon and that's not so much in terms of time or span of years it's just that in the whole scheme of things it's not that far away and here he is giving us this great promise too because you have kept my word I will keep you you see the correlation between the two when you're faithful to Jesus you'll find that he is always faithful to you that he will be faithful to his promise in that great day of judgment if you've been faithful to him doesn't mean your eternity and your salvation is dependent on your faithfulness or the level of your faithfulness it's dependent ultimately on him but there is a correlation there is a relationship between faithfulness on your part to

[51:13] God to Jesus here and his faithfulness to his promise that he will keep you that he will look after you that he'll bring you safely into eternity and he's also saying that their opponents will actually come to bow he will bring them to bow before you and before your feet and will learn that I have loved you well that may be that they will come themselves to acknowledge the gospel and come to be converted and therefore come to join those Christians in Philadelphia to whom he's writing it may be you can take it in another way as well that they will actually come to succumb to the power of this church if Jesus comes with his power to multiply them whatever the point above all else is that it's still dealing with the supremacy of Jesus I will do it doesn't matter what they think of you now doesn't matter their actions now it doesn't matter how it will be from now to the end of the world or the end of the history of this church in Philadelphia

I will make this happen there's a word for you and for me today whatever you think of opinions about the Bible of opinions about the Lord's Day of opinions about your Christian life opinions about the church opinions about this and that what Jesus is saying in his word in its entirety in this whole Bible when he says I will do it he will do it where he opens the door no one will shut it where he shuts the door no one will close it it will open it and they are very important principles for us to take with us the supremacy of Jesus the overall rule of Jesus is such a huge huge feature not only in this letter to Philadelphia and the other letters and this whole book of the Revelation it's a hugely important feature in the whole span of teaching in the Bible that God is God that the

Lord is the Lord how many times you find through the writings of the prophets in the Old Testament where the Lord very often is calling his people back to repentance back to a relationship with himself that they have to some extent gone away from this is the word he says of the Lord I have spoken and I will do it and today it's a great privilege and a great blessing and a great honor to say in your heart of hearts I believe in the supreme rule of Jesus I believe in the supreme power of his love I believe in his justice I believe in his righteousness I believe in his authority I believe that he has the right to have the keys of death and of Hades and of eternity and of history I believe he has the right as chapter 5 goes on to speak about following the great throne description in chapter 4 where the scroll is taken by this same lamb this fruit of David the lion of the tribe of Judah this Jesus this lamb who died who takes the scroll what is the scroll it's the scroll of history it's the scroll of all the events and the destiny of the whole world and for a while there was weeping nobody was found worthy to open it until this person came and took the scroll and then he began to open it you see he's got the keys and that's the Jesus whose love today is so precious

I don't mistake the supremacy of Jesus for that of a tyrant for that of somebody cold and unfeeling and just ruling with a rod of iron that has absolutely no emotion or whatever towards his people that's not this king that's not this Jesus and that's not your Jesus when you know him today as your own saviour so they're engaged in Christ's service they have an open door set before them they have a little power and yet he is keeping them and he is assuring them of ultimate victory that he would keep them even in the hour of trial that's coming on the whole world and he finishes by saying to the one who conquers that's a feature of each of these letters as I'm sure you know he always says to the one who conquers and then something is promised them well to the one who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my

God in other words he's talking here about being established the temple in the old temple days of the Old Testament had pillars very strong pillars to uphold everything that was attached to them but there were also pillars that needed themselves because of what they were holding up they needed themselves to be firmly established these pillars that you see here today upholding this galley that's going all around these pillars that uphold the roof they have to be themselves well grounded well established properly founded on a good foundation otherwise they're going to collapse eventually and what Jesus is saying about his people is I will make him to the one who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God I will set you securely in my kingdom so that you will never fall that no one will ever destroy your relationship with me and you see how the thing has changed it's changed from a collective reference to this church now to the one who conquers and Jesus is reminding us in that that however precious it is and it is precious to belong to a people of

[57 : 27] God to belong to that whole number who worship God who serve the Lord still at the end of the day it does come down to my relationship to him to your relationship to him to that personal individual relationship with Christ where are you with that today to the one who conquers to you to me how does that stand with how you see him how you relate to him how you view eternity with him or without him it's to the one who conquers I will give to be a pillar in the temple of my God never shall he go out of it and I will write on him the name of my God the name of the city of my God the new Jerusalem which comes down from

God my God out of heaven and my own new name in other words there are so many things there that we really need to make have more time to go into but let me just say in closing something of what is brought before us there I will write on him the name of my God numbers chapter six people of Israel were to pronounce the name of God upon the people the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace so you shall put my name on the children of Israel what did that indicate well it indicated they belonged to God they were his family and this is what Jesus is saying I will write on him the name of my God he belongs to me and he'll belong to me forever and in eternity he and others will know he is mine he belongs to me he's my precious possession

Jesus saying this about his people isn't that humbling that Jesus would put that on any of us individually and the name of the city of my God the new Jerusalem go to the end of Revelation chapters 22 21 22 you'll see this new Jerusalem this final order and state of the church of God's redeemed people and in that spiritual city if you like it's described that's their final place of residence this wonderful ultimate place of residence the new Jerusalem the city of God the place of the redeemed under the kingship of Jesus I will write that on them and also I will write my own new name my own new name what you might say is the new name that

Jesus has well he's got the same name Jesus the Christ the son of God all of these titles given to him but this my new name that seems to indicate what was proper to Jesus after his resurrection especially after his ascension to glory he now has the name of the one who has conquered all who has everything placed under his feet who sits upon his throne in majestic holiness and sovereignty and I will give him my own new name they're going to be placed in a final relationship with Jesus where the name of Christ will cover them will be theirs forever and they will value the name of Jesus throughout all eternity they will say

I live now because of him and for him he is mine and I am his friends what great privileges are offered to us and held out to us in the gospel what wonderful privileges to be servants of Jesus to know Christ as the king of our lives to place all things in his hand to leave all things with him because we know that in doing so the assurance we have from him he will never fail us he will always look after us he will bring us safely into the new Jerusalem may God bless these thoughts on his word we're going to conclude now by singing to his praise in psalm 67 psalm 67 from St.

[62:36] Psalms that's page 84 a short psalm which expresses the desire of God's people that the whole earth will come to know the Lord to know his blessing and so it's a call out to both the church and the nations to come to know this sovereign God God be merciful and bless us shine upon us with your face that the earth may know your actions and all lands your saving grace singing to the tune high for doll whole of psalm 67Next roll Things The mighty earth may know your actions and all lands your saving grace.

O God, may the peoples praise you, may all peoples sing your praise.

For you judge the nations justly, ruling over every race.

They sing with joy and gladness, may they all rejoice as one.

O God, may the peoples praise you, as they all unite in song.

[64:36] Then the land will yield its harvest, God will pour its gifts and throats.

God, our God, will surely bless us. All the earth will fill our hearts.

I'll go to the main door after the benediction. 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.

[65:45] Thank you.