

The Gift and Blessing of Faith

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Date: 11 September 2022

[0 : 00] Well, as we join together today to worship, we come together as a people and as a nation, very mindful of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday past.

And we do remember her family at this time and her new king, King Charles III, as he takes up that role. And we pray for God's comfort to them as a family and God's blessing on them as a family as they seek, as they mourn her passing, as they seek the way forward.

And our focus today is very much going to be on something that was precious to Her Majesty, and that is God's Word. And that's where we will turn today.

We will hear about faith and what faith means and the blessing that we have through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But as we come, before we begin our worship, we're going to observe a minute's silence.

So if you're able to, please do stand. And we'll join together in a minute's silence. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[1 : 09] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Now, blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone doth wondrous works in glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen. So let it be.

Please be seated. Amen. As we come to worship God, we're going to begin by singing to his praise in Psalm 16, the Sing Psalms version.

Our first two singings are from this psalm. Psalm 16 on page 16 of the psalm book from the beginning at verse 1. Protect me, O my God, you are my refuge through.

[2 : 49] I said you are my Lord. I have no good apart from you. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 6, the Tuna Selma, and we'll stand to sing.

O God, you are my refuge through.

I said you are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

The glory in the land are holy and extreme.

O God, you are my refuge through.

[4 : 16] O God, you are my refuge through.

O God, you are my refuge through.

O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through.

O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through.

O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through.

[6 : 10] O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. O God, you are my refuge through. generation and for all people that we can look to you and put our trust in you and at a time time when there is much sorrow and sadness in our nation and indeed in many nations of the world we think of all that's going on around us Lord there are so many issues that will bring many tears to our eyes we thank you that with you there is one who is able to wipe away every tear so help us Lord that we will draw near to you in our time of worship that you might bless us and keep us and bless your word to us today as we will share from it we do remember the family of her majesty the queen we pray for our new king king charles we pray for his brothers and sister we pray for their children and grandchildren and all who mourn in the passing of the queen in these times we pray oh Lord that as they come together as a family just like we do at times of sorrow that they would be given time to grieve and to mourn her passing we know it can be so difficult in their situation but we pray that you will comfort their hearts that you will uphold them and strengthen them we thank you for the queen's reign over us and for how often she spoke of her king her savior Christ Jesus and we pray that her faith will be reflected in her family passed down to a generation to come and that faith and your word will be at the forefront of all that is done in these days and for our nation and for the nations of the world that the bedrock of our world would be Christ Jesus our Lord so may you bless us together as a people as we worship we thank you for everyone here for every home and family represented thank you for our young people Lord we pray your blessing on them we pray for all that takes place in the sunday school the creche and the twinnies today may you bless them all together look down upon us Lord and guide us in all we do as we ask it all in

Jesus name amen just before the young ones go out I'll just say a word to you I'm sure you're very aware of what's happened in these past days when people have been very sad to hear of the passing of her majesty the queen and I'm sure you're very familiar with how she looked and maybe you'll remember all kinds of different things about her and everybody can remember maybe their own different memories about about her some people would be very focused on maybe the clothes that she wore she was often well turned out in different colored clothes that some is very bright clothes she often wore beautiful outfits and people would often comment on that maybe you're familiar with the places that she lived the places that she went it wasn't just ordinary houses she lived in she had Buckingham Palace she had all kinds of places she used to live she was in Windsor she was in Balmoral she was in all kinds of different places she even had a yacht that she used to come even to Stornoway on to visit Stornoway she used to come with her family here on her yacht maybe you're familiar with other things about her her voice her voice was very distinct when you heard her voice you knew it was her and she would give speeches at different times and give maybe a message at Christmas time each Christmas time she'd deliver a message to the nation there's another thing about her though that I want to think about just now just for a wee minute and that's the crown that she wore did you ever see her crown it's a beautiful crown and it's covered in diamonds and all kinds of jewels very precious stones this crown is for whoever is king or queen over our land and for the last 70 years as she has ruled over our land the crown has been hers and she's worn it at different points not often but at different points during her life and you wonder to yourself I wonder what kind of what's it like to wear that crown she said herself at one point it's really heavy you have to be so careful when you're wearing it that you can't tilt your head forward just in case it falls off it's really heavy maybe not the most comfortable thing to wear either but it's a very precious thing

I wonder if anyone knows how much it's worth if you would have a guess how much it's worth what do you think is it thousands of pounds hundreds of pounds millions of pounds while you keep going up and up and up the the royal family have their precious jewels the crown jewels they're called and they estimate that they're all together worth between three and five billion pounds that's just an estimate so the crown is very precious and I wonder if you'll ever get to wear that crown yourself it's very unlikely isn't it nobody gets to wear it apart from the person who is queen or king of the land so we'll maybe never get to wear it but you know there's another crown and a crown that we receive through faith and we've heard of so much about the queen and the faith that she had in the lord jesus christ and the promise to all who believe in the lord jesus is that they will receive a crown it's spoken about in the bible in different places one is second timothy chapter 4 verse 8 where it says henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing so there's a crown for all who believe in the lord jesus so maybe one day you won't get to wear the crown of the queen or the king but there's another crown that we can all share and that's the crown of righteousness by faith in the lord jesus if we believe in him the queen will receive her crown and everyone with that will all be equal before god in his sight and we'll all receive that same crown through faith the queen often spoke about being a servant and that's what we are to be she had her own servants but she spoke about being a servant so who was she a servant to she was a servant queen as she said in a book to the king who she serves and who was that king king jesus who she served so may we all come to serve that same king to love him with all our hearts and put our trust in him that we will all receive that crown of righteousness but we're going to say the lord's prayer together now let's say the lord's prayer 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 forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever amen well we'll continue our singing in that psalm psalm 16 and we're going to sing from verse 7 down to the end of the psalm i'll praise the lord my god whose counsel guides my choice and even in the night my heart recalls instructions voice we'll sing from verse 7 to the end of the psalm to the tune golden hill and we stand to sing before me constantly

i'll not be over the throne therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will receive my body too will receive my body too will receive my hope unweivering for you will receive my soul in death to sing my soul in death to sing my heart will receive my prayer for my heart my heart will receive my heart my heart will receive my heart your holy one to see the tombs decay

You have made Lord to me the path of life divine.

[16 : 36] Lish shall I know that your right hand joy from your face will shine.

Let us turn together to God's word. We're going to read in the New Testament and Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. First Thessalonians, we're going to take it by reading it towards the end of chapter 2 and at verse 17.

And then read on into chapter 3 and the whole of that chapter. First Thessalonians chapter 2 and at verse 17.

For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction just as it has come to pass.

And just as you know, for this reason, when I could bear no longer, I sent to learn about your faith. For fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

[18 : 43] But now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. And reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you.

For this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God. As we pray most earnestly, night and day, that we may see you face to face.

And supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all.

As we do for you. So that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father. At the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

[19 : 58] Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. We'll again engage in prayer. Let us bow our heads in prayer. Father, we thank you for your word.

That it is a word that is never ending. It will always stand and endure for all time and for all eternity. We thank you that it is a word that you have breathed out for us.

That is inspired by you. That it is unchangeable. And there is a truth there for us and for all people down through every generation. And through all the different periods of time.

And all the different trials that people face. Individually, collectively, as nations and as a world. We thank you for the enduring strength of your word.

We thank you for the first time. We thank you for the first time. We thank you for the first time. We thank you for the first time. We thank you for the first time. And the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. That your word is seen to the forefront so often.

[21 : 02] It may be a word that our nation has in many ways pushed away at different times. And especially maybe over these last number of years. There has been a great attack upon your word.

And upon the Christian faith. But we thank you that your word is still there for us. That it is spoken into our nation at this time.

That your praise is heard sung. That great and eternal words such as that wonderful psalm. Psalm 23 where it speaks of the Lord who is our shepherd.

We thank you that a people have been heard singing that psalm. A people who maybe would normally not sing these words. And a nation has heard these words sung.

And will hear more sung and read in these coming days. And we pray for your spirit to be powerfully working in the midst of it. We know our nation has seen so much change in this past week.

[22 : 02] With the passing of the Queen. With a new Prime Minister installed. With a new King now in place. And our prayer is that the legacy of Her Majesty the Queen.

Will remain long with us. With her family. And with her nation. And indeed with the Commonwealth and the world. That the Saviour she spoke of so lovingly.

And so often. That these words will continue to bear much fruit. Within our family we pray. That they will remember her faith.

And all the other memories they have. We remember King Charles III. As he takes up his reign as King. May you bless him from on high.

May your spirit be with him. May the God that he has spoken of already. Become a God and a Saviour. To him in a very personal way. We pray Lord your blessing on his family.

[23 : 01] And upon all the wider family at this time. That you will console and comfort. As only you can. We remember too our new Prime Minister. We pray for her.

That you will also give her wisdom. The one who has sworn allegiance to a new King. By the authority of God given. And by your word.

We pray for the word. To become precious to her also. That our land. Our nation. Would once again return. To be a people. Who put their trust.

In the word of God. And in the Saviour. Who is Christ Jesus. Our Lord. So we pray for your guiding hand upon us. That in the days that lie ahead.

That your spirit will be poured out upon us. That you may bring days of peace. And days of revival. Days when your name. Will be praised and glorified in our midst.

[23 : 58] We know that there are many other things going on in our lives as well. And we do continue to remember. Our own needs locally. In our homes. And in our families.

Lord we know that. There are those who are grieving in this past week. In our own midst. And in the week ahead Lord. When there are funerals to take place as well. And we pray. For you to draw near to our people.

To surround them. To be with them. In all the different needs. Guard our hearts and our minds. In Christ Jesus. We pray. So that those who are unwell. Those who are failing in health.

Those who are going through times of great difficulty at this time. And those who are struggling. Maybe even unseen to others. That they will be able to call upon your name. As the one who is able to help.

We pray Lord. That we will remember one another. And encourage one another. We pray for our land. And our world at this time. As well as we continue to hear of the conflict in the Ukraine.

[24 : 56] And all that's going on Lord. We do pray for days of peace to come. We pray for families. And many people who have lost loved ones. In this time of conflict.

We know Lord. That it seems so senseless in our eyes. And yet your word tells us. That there is a purpose in all things. So help us to pray in faith. Looking to you as the one.

Who is able to do so much more than we ask or imagine. And Lord we pray. That you will give us faith in our own hearts. To go on in your strength. So we pray Lord your blessing on us.

To continue with us throughout this day. Lead us into your word. Lead us to see. A saviour who is Christ the Lord. May we have him before us always.

That you would direct us. In the paths of life divine. We pray all these things. Confessing our sin anew. How far short we fall oh Lord. In our hearts.

[25 : 54] In so many different ways. But we thank you. That with you there is forgiveness. And we pray Lord. Have mercy upon us as a people. And as a land. As a world and the nations of it.

May you come in a day of your power. We ask it all. For the glory of your name. For our Lord our King. The one who is King of all. And Lord of Lords. In the name of Jesus we ask.

Amen. Amen. Before we turn back to our reading in 1 Thessalonians. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 42.

Again sing Psalms version. Psalm 42. And we'll sing verse 1 to verse 5. Psalm 42 at verse 1. As pants the deer for flowing streams.

So long's my soul. O God for you. I thirst for God the living God. When can I meet with you anew. With God anew. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 5.

[26 : 52] In the Tunis Herengate. We stand and sing to God's praise. As pants the deer for flowing streams.

So long's my soul. O God for you. I thirst for God the living God.
When can I meet with God anew. My tears have been my constant fruit.
Both in the night and in the day. While all belong existently.
Where is this God of your church's sin?

[28 : 14] Thus I pour out my soul in thee. These things I do remember still.
How with the multitude I went. Up to God's house from Zion Hill.
In their possession I would lead.

As we approach with cheerful song. And shout of joy and thankfulness.
Rejoicing with the festive song. Why are you downcast, O my soul.

[29 : 41] Why are you so disturbing me? Trust God for I will praise him.

My Savior and my God. I will turn back to our reading in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3.

1 Thessalonians chapter 3. We can read again at verse 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 at verse 5. For this reason when I could bear it.

And our labor. And our labor would be in vain. Now that Timothy has come to us from you. And has brought us the good news of your faith and love.

And reported that you have. That you always remember us kindly. And long to see us. As we long to see you. For this reason brothers. In all our distress and affliction.

[31 : 03] We have been comforted. About you. Through your faith. And so on. The last few days have been a momentous time for our nation.

For the commonwealth. And in many ways for the world. In which we live. A huge change has taken place. For us with the passing of her majesty. Queen Elizabeth the second.

In the midst of a week that had already seen a new prime minister. Installed. There's been a great change. That's come upon us. And after 70 years.

Reigning over the nation. There is a new king now. King Charles the third. And all of these things. It will take time to get used to. When there's something that's been.

A constant in your life for so long. And a change takes place. As often is the case. It takes a long time to get used. To these kinds of change coming upon us.

[32 : 01] And any change will bring about it. Questions. What will change in these days for us? What will stay the same? How are things going to be?

Going forward. There will be change. No doubt that comes along. There is always change in our midst. And when you look in God's word.

Particularly maybe if you look into the Old Testament. And you see. In the Old Testament times. When change came upon a nation. Very often when. Maybe a king passed away.

Either in battle. Or through ill health. And a new king was installed. It was a time of great uncertainty. For that nation. And a time when often. The enemy surrounding them.

Would seek to pounce on any weakness. That may be found. It was a time when a nation. Whose king had changed. Would become very vulnerable. To many different forms of attack.

[33 : 00] And for ourselves. As a nation. And as a people. This time of change. Can maybe feel. A little bit uncertain too. We give thanks to God.

For the way. The queen ruled over our nation. For all these years. And for how often. She spoke about. A God who was very personal. To her. And the faith that she had.

And the influence. And the calmness. That this brought. To her land. And the question may be now. What does the future hold? What does it mean. For our nation.

And for our land. Are we going to see. Many changes. Well today. We look to the word. Of God. A word that was precious. To her majesty.

And a word that we seek. Will be precious. To ourselves. And what does it say. To us. It talks about change. In so many different ways. But then you have.

[33 : 53] Great verses. That remind us. That the word of God. Will always stand. Isaiah 40. Verse 8 says. The grass withers. The flower fades. But the word of our God.

Will stand. Forever. God's word. Will always endure. And will always stand. There has been much said. And written about the queen.

Since her passing. I'm sure you've been tuning in. At different points. And seeing so many different. Reports given about her. Two things have stood out for me.

In all I've heard about her. In these past days. Two things have struck me. One was her servant spirit. And the second thing was. Her faith.

We thank God. That this faith. Has been spoken about. It was spoken about. In Westminster. By Tim Farron. He spoke about.

[34 : 50] A personal faith. That she had. And faith. Is such a precious thing. And a servant spirit. Is such a precious thing. Not just.

For a queen. But for every one of us. We can have. That same servant spirit. Prayerful spirit. Seeking God's blessing.

And goodness. Over our land. Over all of our leaders. That we would know. His kingdom come. In power. A book. That the queen.

Allowed to be published. By the Bible Society. Maybe sums it up. With the title. Of the book. It said. And I quoted it earlier. To the children. The servant queen.

And the king. She serves. In her last Christmas speech. Last year. She spoke of Jesus. And said this. The one.

[35 : 44] Whose teachings. Have been handed down. From generation. To generation. And have been the bedrock. Of my faith. In this time of change.

Our prayer is. That this generation. And generations to come. Will still have. The word of God. As a bedrock. Of faith. That our nation.

Our land. And our people. That we will be built. Upon the rock. That is Jesus Christ. That our nation. Would enjoy. Much blessing. From God.

And as we turn. To God's word. And this letter of Paul. To the Thessalonians. We are reminded here. Of the precious. Nature. Of faith. Of what it means.

And as I. A reminder. To us. That no matter. Who we are. Whether we're royalty. A prime minister. Or just common people.

[36 : 42] Such as we are. That all of us. Can have faith. In a king. In a king. Who wore a crown. For his people. Not of jewels.

Of gold. Or silver. Or diamonds. But a crown. Of thorns. That was pressed down. On his head. As he bled. And died. For the sins.

Of this world. It was to that king. That she looked. And served. And it's to that king. And faith in him. That the word of God. Points us.

To this day. To this day. Today. As we turn. To his word. So we want us. To be encouraged. Not just in the faith. Of the queen. She wouldn't want.

She wouldn't want. A sermon. Just about her. She would want. A sermon. About her king. The Lord Jesus. And for us to come. And have faith. In him.

[37 : 36] So this letter. To the Thessalonians. It's a real letter. Of encouragement. A real letter. Of a. To a church. That was blessed. Through God's word.

But a place. And a people. Who faced. Many different challenges. And not least. The challenge. To their faith. And Paul. Longs to hear. About them.

How they are going on. What is happening. In their life. And to encourage them. To go on. In their faith. You read. In the earlier chapter.

In chapter 2. And at verse 13. That they had received. The word of God. Gladly. We also thank God. Constantly for this. That when you received.

The word of God. Which you heard from us. You accepted it. Not as a word of men. But as what it really is. The word of God. Which is at work. In you believers.

[38 : 30] There was this word. That was at work. In this place. And it's this word. That we look to work. In this place here. In our congregation. In our town. And far and wide.

That God's word. Would work. In our midst. Be heard. And received. Gladly. By many. But Paul. And his fellow servants.

Sylvanus. And Timothy. They had been challenged. In many ways. And they'd been forced. To flee. From the people. Of Thessalonica. But as they had been. Torn away from them.

As it says. In verse 17. Of chapter 2. They were so concerned. For them. To hear of their faith. And how things. Were going.

And in some ways. We think of. The Queen. And how she would address. The nation. And how. King Charles III. Addressed the nation. Just yesterday. And these.

[39 : 26] Addresses. They go far and wide. To all people. Well here. Paul is writing. To a people. Far and wide. Not just for his time. But for every generation.

That people would come. And hear. Of this word. That is powerful. This word. That is able to save. And this saviour. Who is able to save. The Lord Jesus Christ. And their focus here.

Is they. Address these people. And I say. Address ourselves. Today as well. The great question. The great concern. That they have about them. Is. Not just how they are going on.

What is their great concern? Their great concern is. How is. Your faith. As you read through. These verses. In chapter 3.

How often do you see. The word faith. Mentioned. Verse 2. Verse 5. Verse 6. Verse 7. Verse 10. They all mention. This word.

[40 : 22] Faith. And Paul is asking them. How is your faith? How is your faith growing? Is your faith being challenged? And they are openly. Talking about the subject.

Faith. How is. Your faith. The queen spoke. Of her faith. Often. How often do we speak. Of our faith. How often do we encourage one another. In our faith. How often do we ask one another. How is. Your faith.

Well Paul here is addressing that very question. He's asking. The question. How is. Your faith. Today. And when we think about that for ourselves.

We have to just ponder that question. How is. Our faith. Are we feeling. Downcast. Are we feeling dismayed.

[41 : 18] Are we feeling. Discouraged. What can encourage us. In the midst. Of these times. Well Psalm. 42. Gives us that great instruction. Its instruction is.

To come to God. I thirst for God. The living God. When can I meet. With you and you. The psalmist says. My tears. Have been my constant food.

Both in the night. And in the day. While all day long. Insistently. Where is this God of yours. They say. The people around us. Are saying. What is your faith. Going to do for you now.

Where is. Your faith. Well the psalmist. Gives response to that. When he says in verse 5. Why are you downcast. Oh my soul.

Why are you so disturbed in me. Trust God. For I will praise him yet. My saviour. And my God. Is he. There is faith in these words.

[42 : 16] And that is the faith. That Paul. Longs for his people to have. And he has this great desire. As he writes to them. To know. How their faith. Is. In verse 5.

He says. For this reason. When I could bear it. No longer. He was longing to hear. How their faith was. And he could bear it. No longer. He wanted to know.

So he sent. To learn about. Your faith. He sent to learn about. How their faith was. He had this longing. To know. How their faith was.

Imagine. And this is a time of year. When. Many people. Will have children. Going away to college. And university. Going away. From home. For the first time. But imagine.

Your child is gone. And you haven't heard. From them. For a few days. You're going to be wondering. What's going on? Why haven't they phoned? Why haven't they been in touch? Your concern is only going to increase.

[43 : 12] The more the days go by. And you're worried. And you're longing to hear. What's happening. Well this is the way. Paul has this concern too.

He's been torn away. From the people of Thessalonica. But his concern is to hear. How are they? And this is God's concern. For his people today as well.

God is speaking through Paul. Not just to the church of Thessalonica. But through every generation of people. And he's asking and longing. To hear about our faith.

How is your faith today? Sometimes we can have a general concern. For people. And that's right. How are they keeping in their health?

How are they keeping in their home? How are things going in the workplace? We have all these kinds of concern. For people. But do we ask one another. About our faith? How is your faith today?

[44 : 12] How is your relationship. With the Lord today? Are you coming close to God? Are you drifting away from God? Paul's longing here is to know.

How their faith is. And our concern for one another should be that too. How is your faith? How is your relationship with the Lord?

God is a God who has communicated through his word. From generation to generation. And this communication demands a response.

This communication as he speaks to us day after day. Week after week. It's not just a one way. A communication. God is speaking to us.

That we might respond to him. God is speaking to our nation just now. He is communicating to us in so many different ways. He has spoken to us in very powerful ways.

[45 : 12] The things that have changed in our midst. The things that have changed even in these last few days. Things that have been bedrock and foundation to our land. God is shaking us.

But he's communicating to us through his word. And still saying to us that he is the God who reigns. Even when change comes to our nation. He is still God who reigns supreme.

We have a king. Who is Jesus. Jesus was the great one who spoke to his people. And challenged them about faith.

So often. For example when Jesus. Was speaking in Matthew chapter 22. The Pharisees had gathered together. And Jesus asked them the question.

What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They said to him. The son of David. Jesus would often challenge people about their faith.

[46 : 11] Again. In Luke 9 verse 18. He said. He asked them. Who do the crowds say that I am? And they answered. John the Baptist. But others say. Elijah and others.

One of the prophets of old has risen. Then he said to them. But who do you say that I am? And Peter answered. The Christ.

The son of God. God's word. Convicts. A people. Doesn't matter who we are.

Royalty. Or common people. God's word convicts. And it is to this word. We are to come. And find the bedrock. The solid ground.

The cornerstone. That is Christ Jesus. Paul is concerned. Here. That the people. Regarding their faith. That they would go on learning. That they would.

[47 : 07] Stand strong in the midst of affliction. That they wouldn't be tempted away. By Satan. That's what you see in verse 2. Through to verse 5. These were the very real challenges. That were going on.

Around them. He speaks there. In verse 5. For example. To learn about your faith. For fear that somehow. The tempter. Attempted you.

And our labor. Would be in vain. There are all these real challenges. That go on around us. To this day. But our faith. Is to remain in Christ Jesus.

To stand strong. In him. So the question was. How is. Your faith. That was. Paul's great concern.

For Thessalonica. That's God's great concern. For his people today. How is. Your faith. Don't let your faith. Be shaken. When change comes.

[48 : 03] Remain strong. Stand steadfast. With faith. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. So there were all these challenges. But look at how. Paul hears.

Back then. From Timothy's report. In verse 6. He's taken action. To hear. He could bear it no longer. To hear about their faith. So he sent Timothy.

And then in verse 6. We read these words. But now. That Timothy has come to us. From you. And has brought us. The good news. Of your faith. And love. There has been good news. Heard about their faith.

And love. The time between. Paul sending Timothy. And hearing back. You can sense that change. In the words that he writes. There in verse 5. And then verse 6.

He could bear it no longer. In verse 5. But then in verse 6. But now. That Timothy has come. To us. From you. He has brought. Good news.

[48 : 59] About your faith. There is great joy. As they hear. About the faith. Of the people. And wouldn't it bring us. Great joy. Today. To see our nation.

And its rulers. Turn to God. In faith. To be led. By a new king. Who proclaims. A faith. In Christ Jesus. To be led.

By a new prime minister. Who would profess. A faith. In Christ Jesus. To be led. By a first minister. Who would pledge. Her faith.

To God. And to Christ Jesus. As her Lord. Not just with platitudes. And words. But with a sincere heart. And a reverence.

And a fear. Of the Lord. Wouldn't that give us. The same great delight. The news that Timothy. Has brought. From Thessalonica. Is good news.

[49 : 53] Of your faith. And your love. May our prayer be. That for our king. Our prime minister. All of our land. That there will be good news.

Of faith. And love. There was real worry. In what might happen. In Thessalonica. And there's real worry. What might happen. In our land.

But may we hear. Good news. You know. This isn't. Just a school report. That's coming back. Through Timothy. When you get school reports. For your children.

I can't remember. The last time. I think. We had a negative one. Because I think. Teachers will always find. Something positive. To write in a school report. No matter what it is.

There'll always be. Something positive. That can be said. Sometimes we just have to be told. We're not good. God's word.

[50 : 49] Does that so clearly for us. We're reminded. That we are all sinners. We fall short. Of the glory of God. But then there can be good found too.

There can be good found. When we see a saviour. Who is Christ. When we see how precious. He is. When we come. To put our trust.

In him. That is good news. And we are thankful. That we hear good news. Good news. That God is working. Throughout the world.

That God is calling our people. To himself. We hear. Bad news. So often. It's there for us. Every day. But God brings.

Good news. Good news. That there is one. Who is able to save. Good news. That her majesty. The queen. Would often remind. Our nation of.

[51 : 44] In her Christmas address. No matter. How bad. The year had been. And she often spoke. Of many different challenges. That they faced. As a family.

They are families. Just like ourselves. They had their crises. As we have our crises. As. They had their tragedies. As we have our tragedies. No one is immune.

From them. And yet. In the midst of it all. She could still speak. Of a savior. A savior. Who had given strength. A savior. Who had given help.

A savior. Who was there. In many different times. Of need. And that is the savior. That Christ. Who is Christ. That is the savior. Who is Paul.

Paul is encouraging. The people here. In Thessalonica. To go on in. In his strength. And that is the savior. That we are being encouraged.

[52 : 36] As a people. To put our trust. In. There is a great delight. In hearing. Good news. And what effect. Does this good news have?

Well when you look at verse 8. It says. For now we live. If you are standing fast. In the Lord. As they are standing fast. In the Lord. They go on in strength.

And that is what we need to. To go forward. To go forward. Standing fast. In the Lord. Seeking his face. Seeking his goodness.

Upon us. Rich. And poor. Royalty. And common people. What can unite us together? Faith. In the Lord. Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther. Once said. God our father. Has made all things. Depend on faith. So that whoever has faith. Will have everything. And whoever does not have faith.

- [53 : 35] Will have nothing. No matter how much more. Value we maybe think. The queen. Had than us. Without faith. She was nothing.
- Just as we are. But with faith. She had everything. Just as we can. Faith. Is what we need. And the third thing.
- And final thing. We see here. Is this. As we go forward. In faith. It gives us a real sense. Of focus. And devotion. Given the outcome. The response here.
- Is prayer. And thanksgiving. They were delighted. To hear. That the people. Were going on in faith. And God seeks. For his people.
- To go on in faith. And in verse 9. Says. For what thanksgiving. Can we return to God. For you. For all the joy. That we feel. For your sake. Before God. As we pray.
- [54 : 31] Most earnestly. Night and day. That we may see you. Face to face. And supply. What was lacking. In your faith. They long to come. And encourage them.
- In their faith. And this is a great reminder. To ourselves. Of the devotion. That we should have. To our saviour. That we should seek.
- To be a servant people. To a king. We serve. And may we come. To have this prayerful devotion. For one another.
- For our land. And for all its people. And for all who rule over us. That we will go forward. Forward. United. In faith. United. United. And strengthened.
- By God. As verse 11 says. Now may our God. And Father himself. And our Lord Jesus. Direct our way to you. And may the Lord. Make you increase. And abound in love.
- [55 : 26] For one another. And for all. As we do for you. So that he may establish. Your hearts. Blameless in holiness. Before our God. And Father. At the coming of our Lord Jesus.
- With all the saints. What kind of prayer. Is this? It's an earnest prayer. And today our prayers.
- Are to be earnest. Pleading with God. Direct us. In your paths. Show us. Your ways. That we may delight in them.
- Guide all our steps. That they may be steps. Of faith. And love for God. Our saviour. And God. Who has blessed us. May our plea be earnest.
- For our new king. For our new prime minister. For our land. And for the nations. Of the world. We need healing. We need help. And he is the one.
- [56 : 24] Who can provide it. We need all of these things. We need to plead. With God. It is also a persistent prayer.
- Night. And day. It says in verse 10. As we pray most earnestly. Night and day. There is a real sense of pleading. And persistent prayer here.
- May we go on praying persistently. Asking God. Night and day. To pour out his blessing on us. Night and day. To give blessing to our land.
- To give renewal. To our land. It is a specific prayer as well. We can be specific in our prayers too. Paul was saying.
- We pray that we may see you face to face. And that you supply. To supply what is lacking in your faith. May our prayers be specific as well. Asking God.
- [57 : 22] To bring a people of faith. To lead us well. And to keep on praying. We are commanded to pray for those who rule over us. In God's word. May we take that prayer seriously.
- No matter what our differences of opinions may be. May prayer unite us. To ask God to bless. And to guide our nation.

In the days ahead. That he would bear much fruit. In our land. John Newton. John Newton. Was a great preacher in his day.

John Newton who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. And he preached. Well past his retirement age. As I said. And very often as he was preaching. Towards the end of his days.

He would have an assistant. Standing beside him in the pulpit. Who would support him. As he was feeling weak. He was nearly blind. And he spoke in whispers.

[58 : 22] But nothing would keep him from preaching. One Sunday. While he was delivering a message. A sermon. He repeated the phrase.

Jesus Christ. Is precious. Jesus Christ. And his assistant beside him. Just whispered to him. You've already said that twice.

John Newton turned. To his helper. And said. Yes. I've said it twice. And I'm going to say it.

Again. And he lifted up his voice. And he shouted at the top of his voice. Jesus Christ is precious. That is what he wanted his people to know. Jesus Christ is precious.

How is your faith today? Speaking on the 3rd of August this year, just over a month ago, Her Majesty the Queen said this, Throughout my life, the message and teachings of Christ have been my guide, and in them I find hope.

[59 : 45] She was a queen, but more than that, she was a servant, a servant to her king. Jesus Christ was precious to her. We pray our new king will rule well and wisely with that same servant spirit.

But above all, we pray that Jesus Christ will be precious to him. We pray that for our new Prime Minister, that Jesus Christ will be precious to her.

Let us remember too, kings and queens and Prime Ministers, come and go. That crown of the queen and king may be passed on to others.

But there is a greater crown for all who put their trust in Christ Jesus as a precious Saviour. May we find in him the crown of the crown of righteousness.

Awarded not just to royalty, but to all of Christ's servants who put their trust in him. How is your faith?

[61 : 02] Is your faith in Jesus Christ who is precious? May we find in him the one who is our Saviour and our God and find our hope in him.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we rejoice in our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that he is head over all.

We thank you that we worship a living Saviour. One who came and bore the crown on the cross for us. That crown of thorns so that we might receive a crown of righteousness.

We thank you for his sacrifice, for his service. We thank you, Lord, that he gave all for us. We pray that no matter our position, whether it's the royalty and rulers of this world, or ourselves as a common people, that we would find our hearts serving our King and our Lord, and putting our trust in him for now and for eternity.

May you bless your word in this day and in the days ahead. There will be a word that reverberates around our land. A word that bears much fruit for your glory.

[62 : 23] May you continue to comfort and to bless all who need you in different ways, as we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 117 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 117, page 397 of the Psalm books. We'll sing this psalm to God's praise and we stand to sing.

Amen. O give ye praise unto the Lord, All nations that be, Like white sheep people,
throughout our credit card, The Lord andARD Chris.

One song for me to praise, While glory is there Amen Lord our praise and power, His
kindnesses, His truth endures forevermore.

The Lord, O doing best. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left.

[64 : 31] Close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with us all now and forevermore. Amen.