

What Christ was Doing on the Cross

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0:00] And we're going to begin now by singing to God's praise in Psalm number 63.! This is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm number 63. It's on page 295 in the Blue Books, and the tune is Weatherby, Psalm 63.

As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place, since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

Even as with marrow and with fat my soul shall fill it be. Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee. To the end of verse 8, Psalm 63, verses 1 to 8, and the tune is Weatherby, Lord, thee my God, I'll early see.

Amen. Let thy heart shines, when no water shines, but thy thy power may behold, Behold, the brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee near to forth within thy holy place.

Since bitterness, thy love the night, my mercy reign shall give.

[2:45] I give, I give, will end my arms.

I bless thee, my life, I live. I pass with my, O angel, my soul shall be let thee, and shall my love with joyfulness sing Christmas unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight, and wake on thee, I meditate, and watch this all the night.

In shadow, I live, I enjoy, for thou my help us be.

My soul thee follows hard, and thee thy light and dust sustain.

[4:54] Amen. Let us bow and pray. Amen. The psalmist said, Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek.

My soul doth thirst for thee. And we pray that we also will have that thirsting soul where we'll be seeking after the living and through God. Help us, Lord, to realize that above all that we need and all that we should have in this world, the greatest blessing is to have you as our Lord and our Savior.

And we pray that you will open our hearts and open our minds to discover more of you in the truth. We give thanks, Lord, for your word, because it is truly a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

We give thanks, Lord, for the reality of your truth and for the way it shows us so much of who you are and indeed of who we are ourselves.

And it reveals to us our duties and our responsibilities before you. And so we pray for help and grace that we might walk in your paths.

[6:07] Because we have to confess, O Lord, that so often we are wayward. So often we walk with a limb spiritually. So often we wander spiritually.

So often, Lord, we need the good shepherd going out after us. And so we pray that you will bless every single one of us here tonight and that our focus will be entirely upon yourself.

We pray that we may be able to see you as the great, mighty Lord of heaven and earth, the one who spoke this very world into existence, the one who spoke the planetary system, the one who spoke all things into being.

And we worship you tonight as the great creator God and the one who has not only brought life but continues to sustain life. And the God who rules and overrules all things.

And that we give thanks, Lord, that even when our world, as we look out, may appear chaotic, that there is no chaos with you. And that you will order and bring things to a conclusion in your own way and at your own time.

[7 : 19] And so we pray that every day that we might live with an expectant heart, because one day the Lord will return without any warning. The word of God tells us to watch and to be ready.

And so we pray that we might have that spirit and that we might have that eye of faith looking ever towards the heavens. We pray that you will bless each and every one of us tonight as we gather round your word.

And we pray that you will open that word into our hearts, into our minds, and that it will go down deep, that it will affect us. Forbid, Lord, that we just come here as a sense of duty, like marking a card and then going away, that we might come with a genuine desire in our heart to know more of you, that there might be a true longing within our heart to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we pray that we will not be those who simply hear the word and don't do it. That we pray, O Lord, that our lives might be lives of faith and help us to remember that what is not of faith is sin.

And so we pray that faith will govern and guide us as we focus upon you as we journey through this life. We pray that you will be merciful to us as we come confessing our sin.

[8 : 43] We confess our sins personally, individually, and we also confess our sin collectively as a body of your people. And ask for that cleansing and that forgiveness, which is yours to give and which was achieved by yourself.

And we pray that we might know what it is to be rid of the guilt and the shame that sin brings. And to have the peace of God that passes all understanding. And to have the freedom that comes in Jesus Christ.

We pray that you will bless everybody here tonight according to our own individual needs. We all come with our own issues in life. And for some people, they might have very sad hearts.

And yet they're hiding it. For other people, life might be going very well just now. We're all in different situations with different circumstances. But we pray, O Lord, that you will help each and every one of us according to our own particular needs.

Bless homes. Bless families. Bless husbands and wives. Bless them. Bless parents. Bless children. Bless grandparents.

[9 : 57] Bless those who are so old now and infirm that they are no longer able to get out and about. And in fact, are now at a stage where they need to be cared for.

We pray that you will be with them. And we give thanks, Lord, for all the care that we have in this community. And we give thanks, Lord, for the many blessings that are brought through that. We pray, Lord, for those who are in hospital.

Those who are unwell. Those who are maybe waiting for treatment or undergoing it. Or likewise for surgery. We pray, Lord, your blessing upon them. And we give thanks for all that is done for us.

We give thanks for our hospitals and for all that is done in so many different aspects and ways. And we give thanks, Lord. Help us always to be giving thanks.

Because so often we can take for granted and just look and say, well, this is what's due us. This is what's all right. Help us to remember that everything ultimately comes from your hand.

[10:58] And so we pray that we might have thankful hearts. And that we might not be slow in giving the Lord thanks for all the many blessings that we receive from you. Pray to bless all the different activities of this congregation.

As there will be a return to school tomorrow. And return to all the activities. We pray your blessing upon all that is done. Those who commit week by week and month by month to the ongoing work that takes place.

We give thanks for them, for their willingness, and for their love for you. We pray that you'll bless them. Bless all who attend from the senior fellowship right all the way down to the creche.

And ask your blessing upon them. We pray your blessing upon our young ones growing up. And a day full of challenges. Yes, opportunities. But a very different day to the day even when we grew up ourselves.

And so we pray for them. And you will bless them. Bless all the instruction that they receive at home. And the instruction that they receive in Sunday school. And the youth fellowship.

[12:05] And at the various clubs. We ask, Lord, your blessing upon them. We pray that you will bless teachers as they go back. And pray safety upon the pupils. We pray that you will be with us nationally and internationally.

Pray your blessing upon our leaders. And ask, Lord, that you will grant them divine wisdom. Even if they don't acknowledge you. Even if they don't look for it. But it is our duty.

Our duty to pray for our King. It's our duty to pray for those in authority over us. And so we pray for them. Because if they don't pray, then who's going to pray?

And so we pray that that wisdom from above will be given to lead us in the right way. We pray for truth to prevail. And we pray that you will raise up your people into places of position of prominence and authority.

And so that their witness will be a good one in the day that we live. We pray for peace on earth. Oh, Lord, how we long. That nations would lay down their arms so that conflict would cease.

[13:11] And we realize that in so many parts of this world, right now, people are living in fear. People are so apprehensive.

They don't know what the next moment is going to bring. We don't understand that, where we live. We give thanks for the safety and security we enjoy here.

But it's not like that for many people in this world. There's so much suffering, bloodshed, hatred, violence. Oh, Lord, we long for a day when that violence will cease.

And people will be able to live side by side, one with another. And it is really only in and through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, where that radical, powerful change can take place.

And so we pray for the spread of your word globally tonight. And we pray that many will come under the sound of the gospel. And that many will respond to the gospel.

[14:10] And so we pray your blessing upon your word, wherever it is preached throughout the nations of this world. We pray your blessing on the 40th reunion that took place.

And we give thanks for these times along the way, where there's a time of meeting up together, time of reflecting, often time too of sadness of those who are no longer part of the group.

And we pray your blessing upon them. And we give thanks, Lord, for the friendships that we make in life. Often school friends become lifelong friends. And we give thanks, Lord, for the way that these things enhance and enrich our lives.

Watch over us then as we wait upon you. And take away from us our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. We're going to sing again from Psalm 32.

And this is in Sing Psalms, Psalm 32. We're going to sing verses 1 to 7. It's on page 38 of the Tunis Arlington. Psalm 32.

[15:10] Psalm 32. Psalm 32. Verses 1 to 7. How blessed the one who has received forgiveness for a sin, whose sins are covered from God's face, whose debt is cancelled in God's grace.

There's no deceit in him. Psalm 32. When I kept silent, all my bones with groaning were worn out. Beneath your hand I felt entrapped. Both day and night my strength was sapped, as in a summer drought.

Then I laid bare my sin to you, the guilt that lay within. I said, O Lord, I have transgressed. And you forgave when I confessed. You pardoned all my sin.

Psalm 32, verses 1 to 7. The Tunis Arlington. How blessed are the one who has received forgiveness for his sin. How blessed are the one who has received forgiveness for all his sin, whose sins are covered from God's face, whose death is cancelled in God's face, whose death is cancelled in God's face, whose death is cancelled in God's face, Death is counseled in God's grace.

There's no deceit in heaven. When I kept silent all my wounds, With rolling weather worn out, Beneath your hand I felt a child.

[17:23] O day and night my strength was soft, Out in the summer cold.

Then I leave my sin to you, The guilt that me within.

I said, O Lord, I love God's grace, And you for me claim I confess, You pardon all my sins.

So let the glory pray to you, While you are to be found.

Surely when waves are singing past, And mighty waters rising fast, You keep them safe and sound.

[19:16] You are my hiding place, O Lord, my true security.

You keep me safe in troubled days, You circle me with joyful grace, When you have set me free.

Let's turn to read God's word now, In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, and chapter 5.

2nd Corinthians, chapter 5. And we'll read the chapter.

For we know that if the tent, Which is our earthly home, Is destroyed, We have a building from God, A house not made with hands, Eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, Longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, If indeed by putting it on, We may not be found naked.

[20:49] For while we are still in this tent, We groan, being burdened, Not that we would be unclothed, But that we would be further clothed, So that what is mortal May be swallowed up by life.

He who has prepared us For this very thing is God, Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage.

We know that while we are at home in the body, We are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, Not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, And we would rather be away from the body, And at home with the Lord.

So, whether we are at home or away, We make it our aim to please Him. For we must all appear Before the judgment seat of Christ, So that each one may receive what is due, For what he has done in the body, Whether good or evil.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, We persuade others. But what we are is known to God, And I hope it is known also to your conscience.

[21 : 59] We are not commanding ourselves to you again, But giving you cause to boast about us, So that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance, And not about what is in the heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, It is for God. If we are in our right mind, It is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, Because we have concluded this, That one has died for all, Therefore all have died.

And he died for all, That those who live might no longer live for themselves, But for him, Who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, We regard no one according to the flesh.

Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, We regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has passed away, Behold, the new has come.

All this is from God, Who through Christ reconciled us to himself, And gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, Not counting their trespasses against them, And entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

[23 : 23] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin, Who knew no sin, So that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. I'm going to sing again now in Psalm 73, From the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 73, From verse 23, To the end, And the tune is Tiverton.

Psalm 73, At verse 23, Page 316. Nevertheless, O Lord, I am with thee. Thou dost me hold by my right hand, And still upholdest me.

Thou with thy counsel, While I live, Wilt me conduct and guide. And to thy glory afterward, Receive me to abide. Whom have I in the heavens high, But thee, O Lord, alone?

[24 : 29] And in the earth whom I desire, Besides thee there is none. My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, But God doth fail me never. For of my heart God is a strength, And a portion forever.

Verses 23 to 28, Psalm 73, Nevertheless, Continually. Nevertheless, Continually, O Lord, I am with thee.

Thou dost me hold by my right hand, And still upholdest me.

Thou with thy counsel, Orth voyque voyque The heaven's sight, but thee, O Lord, alone.

Hath in the earth, through thy desire, besides thee there is none.

[26 : 22] My flesh and heart doth inch and veil, but God doth veil me never.

For of my heart God is the strength and portion forever.

For, O they that are far from thee, forever perish shall, they plant a holding from thee, O the past destroyed all.

But surely it is good for thee, that I draw near to all.

And, O I just, that all my words I may declare abroad.

[27 : 59] Let's turn back again to the chapter we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And it's a fairly long section, so I'm not going to read it all, but from verse 14.

And I'm not going into every verse of it or every aspect of it, but just looking at it quite simply. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. And then in verse 18, we read, all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself. Verse 20, therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[29 : 17] Now we know that Paul was a man who was on a mission, and Paul loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul lived for the Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul in the end was going to lay down his life for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he tells us here that it is the love of Christ that controls him, or as we have in the AV, constrains him. And that was very true in Paul's life.

This was the driving force. This is what propelled him on. This is what gave the impetus to his life, this sense of the love of Christ.

Of what God had done in Christ for Paul, and what God in Christ was doing for Paul. And if you're a believer tonight, you can echo the same, that what God has done for you in Christ, and what God is doing for you in Christ.

And Paul sees this amazing love in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when Paul talks about the death of Jesus Christ, he isn't just talking about a historical fact.

[30 : 29] You know, quite often people, they will talk about the death of Jesus, and they will say that, yes, Jesus died on a cross. And they will think of Jesus' death no more than any other person who was maybe executed.

And they will say, well, he was either hung, or he was crucified, or he was beheaded, or whatever. And it's a historical fact. And they think about it like that. And there's others who might go a little further on, and they might say, well, Jesus Christ was a really quite remarkable person.

His teaching was so extraordinary, and his moral life was beyond blemish in any shape or form. And he died the way he lived, a life of just self-sacrifice.

And he died for what he taught. And a lot of people look at it just like that, and they say, he left a great example for us. That's not how Paul is looking at it, and neither should we.

Because Paul is looking at why he died. What was taking place on the cross as he died. Because that is at the very heart of what Christianity really is all about.

[31 : 45] And that is why Paul, he says earlier on in Corinthians, for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And that was a great message of all the early church, was preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified. And when they talked and preached that, it was what took place, and what that involved, and what it was for us as well.

So what was Christ doing on the cross? Well, there's two or three things that we can see. Well, one of them, if we go right to the end, we see this word righteousness, that we might become the righteousness of God.

So, an incredible transaction took place on the cross. Because the problem for all of us is that we don't have righteousness ourselves.

The Bible tells us what a righteousness is like. It's like filthy rags. You know, sometimes when you're in the city, you sometimes see a poor, down and out, a poor beggar in a doorway.

[32:50] And they're looking utterly and absolutely disheveled. Their clothes are torn. Their face is dirty. And you say, oh, what a poor soul that is. Well, with regard to our righteousness, that's how it is in God's sight.

Not one of us is able to say to the Lord, because I've done this, because I've done that, I have a claim upon you. And that's really hard for us to get hold of.

Because we cling, it's very hard to uncover self-righteousness. And it's very hard for self-righteousness to be broken. Because we kind of judge one another.

And a lot of people will say, they look around and they say, well, I know I'm not perfect. I know I would never dare to say I'm perfect. But I'm a pretty decent citizen.

Never done anything drastically wrong. And sometimes you look at somebody and you say, oh, see what he did, see what she did. I would never have done that. And so we kind of, we puff ourselves up.

[33:55] That's a self-righteousness. It's very judgmental self-righteousness. But it's within us all. It's part of who we are. It's part of what we are. And we somehow think at the end of the day, the Lord will say, well, I know that you're not perfect.

And I know that, but it's going to be all right. No, it doesn't. It's not. That's not the way it works. God says that, as we said, oh, right, you're right.

There is none righteous. No, not one. In the whole wide world, ever, there's not one that has ever been righteous. And because we are unrighteous, it means that we are guilty before God.

that we have no place of protection, that we have no shelter, because we're under, Scripture tells us, under God's wrath, because of our unrighteousness.

But on the cross, God was doing something amazing. It was like, people describe it like in a bookkeeping term. And you have, on the one side, you have all the wrongs.

[35:05] And there's all your sin, past, present, future. All recorded. Everything you've said, everything you've done, everything you've ever thought.

It's all there. And on the other page is Christ's righteousness. And on the cross, a transfer was taking place. Where all our sin was being placed to Christ's account.

That's what he was experiencing through the abandonment and forsakenness when God's wrath was being poured upon him. For our sin. But more than that, Christ's righteousness has been placed to our account.

It's not that all of a sudden we become perfect and altogether righteous. But in legal terms, as God looks on us, once you become a believer, God looks at you through Jesus.

And as he looks at you through Jesus, he sees the perfect righteousness of his Son. And so you're accepted because of what Jesus Christ has done.

[36:13] And so there's this incredible transaction taking place on the cross. And sometimes it's hard for us to understand that and to understand that we are as righteous as we will ever be in God's sight.

There's another level, of course, we know with regard to our ongoing sin and such like. But in legal terms, that's how it is. But another thing was taking place on the cross and we see that in verses 18 and 19 because it tells us here that God, through Christ, reconciled us to himself.

Verse 19, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself. Because you see, by nature, we're alienated from God.

God, we're estranged from God. That's our default position. We don't want God. We're ignorant of God. God, don't care about God.

I suppose if you went around Stornway tonight and you did a survey, there'd be a lot of people who would say, I don't believe in God. I never think about God. I don't care about God. And people often find that God's word, when they hear it, they find that his word is intolerable and that his law is distasteful.

[37:32] And they say, no, I don't want this. As we're hearing this morning, we want our life and we don't want anything cutting across our life. And that's so true.

That's the way we are by nature. It's my life and I will live it my way and I'm not in any way ready to live my life with somebody else ruling, somebody else on the throne of my heart.

It's mine. Me. Mine. And so, by nature, we are alienated. We're strangers to God.

We're at enmity. We're told in Scripture that the haters of God, who is the Lord, it says in Scripture, that we should obey him. Also, remember what it says, we will not have this man rule over us.

So, you see, there's this alienation which needs reconciliation. So, reconciliation is essential, but here's the thing. It's not just us that have to be reconciled to God, but God has to be reconciled to us.

[38:42] And that's a serious thing. Why? Because, well, we know the story in Genesis 3. We know what happened. We remember the story of the fall, of how Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

And how do we find Adam and Eve after that? We find them outside the garden. How did they end up outside the garden? Did they get lost? Did they sort of wander out?

And did Adam turn to Eve and say, oh, you know, we've gone outside the garden here. We'll have to try and get back in. No. What did God do? He drove them out of the garden. He expelled them.

And more than that, there was an angel with a flaming sword barring their way back in, lest they come to the tree of life.

So, from that moment on, we need reconciliation with God, but God has to be reconciled to us as well. Because God is against us.

[39:40] His wrath is against us. We're told that in Romans, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. As we say, that's a default position. You know, it's a grim situation.

But that's how it is. And that's the wonder of what has happened here. That there's reconciliation. And the wonderful thing is that God, the God who has been wronged, is the author of this reconciliation.

reconciliation. Now, usually when we think of reconciliation in human terms, in our everyday thing, we always talk about negotiation. Supposing it's just within a family, supposing there's a breakup in a family, there's, you try and, and you need, you need both parties coming together.

You'll often see it in employment, in work. And you'll see that the workers and the management have reached an impasse.

And often you'll find there's a strike takes place. Because neither side will agree. And there's an ongoing strike. And then all of a sudden you see, oh, there's talks taking place.

[40 : 57] There's negotiation. And when there's negotiation taking place, there's always hope that there'll be an outcome, a good outcome. We see it again in global conflicts.

And we've seen it with the likes of Ukraine and in Gaza. And you're saying, just it's ongoing. And then you hear there might be talks. And there's always this hope. Oh, the moment people start talking, you're saying, well, hopefully, hopefully this will bring a solution.

Hopefully we'll get things together. Is that how it was with us and God? No. Because we couldn't negotiate with God.

We had nothing to negotiate with. We couldn't even approach God. So this is the extraordinary thing that God is the one. He is the initiator of it.

God is the one who has initiated and that was what Christ was doing on the cross. However, there were negotiations. And the negotiations that took place with regard to reconciliation took place in heaven.

[42 : 03] because Christ, the Son of God, entered into a covenant with God the Father. So the negotiation for the reconciliation took place in heaven where the Son agreed to come in our nature.

Think of it. The Son of God, the one who is equal in power and glory to the Father, took our nature, became one with us to be our representative in this world in order to reconcile us to God the Father.

And so all this was taking place on the cross where God was reconciling us to himself through the work of Christ.

And again, when you think of the cross and you think of these hours of desolation and isolation and abandonment for Christ, what was he suffering?

Right? Try and turn this personally. And you think, try and say to you, right, for the next three hours, I'm going to list every wrong deed that I have done that I can remember.

[43 : 20] and I'm going to write it down. And I'm going to write down everything wrong that I said. And you're writing down things that you're ashamed of, things that embarrassed you, things that you felt real guilt about, things that you were remorseful about, and you so wish that you had never said them or never done them.

And what about our thoughts? Imagine if there's a big screen here at the back of the pulpit. And every thought that you thought was screened up there.

Every thought. And when you think of all the filth and the anger and the murder, every commandment is breached in our mind. Every single one. Can you imagine the shame and embarrassment and the sense of guilt we would have if it was all screened for everybody to see, I don't think we'd ever come out of the house again.

Well, on the cross, Christ was bearing all our guilt, all our shame, all our embarrassment, all the defilement of our sin and our iniquity, everything.

and he was enduring the Father's wrath upon him for our sin. It's that personal because sometimes we look at it in an abstract way.

[44 : 50] But this was personal, right on. And there was nothing for Christ but silence. He couldn't hear the walk of the Father or the talk of the Father, just his anger.

And this is what he was doing for us in order that we can be reconciled. What was keeping us away had to be removed.

And of course, it is the work then of the Holy Spirit to apply that to our hearts. And that is what Paul talks about in verse 17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away because the new has come. And that's exactly what happens when we come to faith. It's a new creation. Every bit as powerful and as awesome as the original creation.

At the very start, God said, let there be light. And there was a day God said into your heart, let there be light. And you saw in a way you never saw before.

[45 : 53] You saw the way of salvation. You saw Christ as your Savior. And everything changed because you have new desires, new aims, new ambitions, new hopes.

The Word of God, you might have been used to reading the Bible, but it was maybe just out of habit or out of duty. But now this book has become precious to you.

And every day you go to it because it gives you food for your soul, gives you nourishment, gives you light. It sets out before you the whole future of what's ahead for you.

This book is just the most amazing book in the world. And that is because you are now a new creation. And this is all part of what the Lord has done for us, what God was doing for us in Christ Jesus.

And so because of this, now there's lots of things we could look at, but because of this, it tells us now that we are ambassadors for Christ. Prior to that, it tells us that we no longer live for ourselves, but we live for Christ.

[47 : 09] That'll tell you exactly tonight where you are. Who do you live for? Is it yourself? Or is it for Christ?

You know that sometimes we fear that we're not living for Christ in the way that we should. But you know, one of the things that makes it so clear to us is, you know when you do anything wrong or say wrong or you think wrong, what's your immediate thought?

I'm letting Christ down. It's not letting yourself down. There was a day you only thought about letting yourself down. You never thought about the Lord. Oh, I've let myself down badly here.

That's not the way you think now. You say, oh Lord, have mercy on me. Oh, forgive me Lord. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have done that. What on earth has been going on in my head?

Because you're living for Christ. You see, it's all changed. That's the way you live. Every day, you're living not for yourself, but you're living for Christ. But we're told here that we are ambassadors.

[48 : 17] Ambassadors. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. Isn't that amazing? All of us. God is making an appeal through us.

Now, an ambassador, as you know, is somebody who represents king and country. And when an ambassador goes to a certain place, he's not there in any way or shape or form to represent himself.

He's not there for his own glory, his own honor. It's got nothing to do with him. It's all got to do with the king and the country that he represents. So it is for you and for me.

It's not about us. It's all about the Lord. The ambassador has to be absolutely faithful to the message that he or she brings.

Not at liberty to add to it. Not at liberty to detract from it. Neither are we. We're not at liberty to say, well, you might say, well, this is a rather strong message.

[49 : 22] This is a bit hard. This might make people feel uncomfortable. I'd better water it down a bit. We're not at liberty to do that. This is God's word. This is God's message. And it has to be, it's a message that has to be delivered faithfully and honorably.

Some people want a kind of a pick-and-mix Bible. I'll take this bit and this bit, but oh, that's too harsh. I'm not having anything to do with that. No. We've got to be honest and faithful with everything.

But you'll also notice what it says. We appeal. God is making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God.

Implore. When we're preaching or when we're witnessing, it's not just sort of a, well, it's not a lecture. It's not a, well, here it is, I'm going to tell you a few things.

This is serious stuff. We're dealing with the most important thing in our life, our soul, our future, our destiny. And that is why, you see, the Lord is, you can almost see a desperation in the Lord that the word of God will go out and that people will hear.

[50 : 34] Because it's only here in this world that this message is proclaimed, not proclaimed in heaven. Everybody in heaven has heard the message and responded to it. It's not proclaimed in hell because the day of the good news is over, the day of opportunity is gone.

Sadly, there will be many in hell who heard the message and they will, throughout an endless eternity, wish that they responded to it.

But it's too late. It's a fearful thought. And so there is this urgency about it all. And in fact, further back, Paul says, we have to implore people on behalf of Christ.

Why? Because, verse 10, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Now, there's a lot of, there's a lot in that. But there's one thing I'm just going to say just now. We've got to remember that sitting on the great white throne will be the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, in all his majesty and in his glory.

[51 : 51] And I'll have to, tonight, I will have to stand there and answer for tonight. Was I faithful? Was I in any way seeking my own honour or own glory?

Was I absolutely faithful to the message that was given? You will have to give an account for what you did with it. Did you accept or did you reject?

And if you reject, you're telling Jesus, the one who tonight is offering you himself, I chose to reject you. Well, it's solemn because if you reject Jesus, what's the outcome?

He rejects you. depart from me. Imagine these, the final words ever hearing from Christ. Depart from me.

And so it's important that you respond to this message because all the doing has been done. The reconciliation has taken place. God initiated, Christ did it, and it's there ready for you tonight.

[53 : 03] All you have to do is ask him into your life to accept him and to believe. It's as simple as that. And the moment you do, you become a new creation where you're able to see and to believe and understand in a way that you never did before.

Let us pray. Lord our God, we pray to bless us. We give thanks for this message that we have, a message that is often weighty, a message that is wonderful.

And we pray that we may respond to it in a right way. Our days are short. One day our time of opportunity will be no more. Lord, and it won't be long until all of us will be standing before that great white throne.

Oh Lord, have mercy upon us. Take us all to our homes safely. Pray to bless this congregation. We pray your blessing on Calamurdo and Joanne and family at this time of a wee break for them.

May they have recharging and renewing in themselves. We pray for Colin the Inter Moderator, ask your blessing upon him as well. And pray, Lord, that you will direct us and lead us as a congregation, lead us forward in the right way.

[54:27] As the psalmist said, show me thy ways, O Lord. We pray that that might be our prayer collectively. Show us your ways, O Lord. Take away from us our sin, in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 126. And this is in Sing Psalm, Psalm 126. I'm going to sing the whole psalm.

And the tune is Denfield. And there we have a picture of going out mourning, going out with tears of grief, bearing the seed, sowing the seed, because sowing the seed can be hard.

But there's a great encouragement coming back with songs of joy bearing harvest sheaf. Psalm 126. When Zion's fortunes God restored, it was a dream come true.

Our mouths were then with laughter filled, our tongues with songs anew. The nation said, the Lord has done great things for Israel. The Lord did mighty things for us.

[55:32] Enjoy our hearts new will. Restore our fortunes, gracious Lord, like streams in desert soil. A joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil.

1, 2, 6, a whole psalm to the tune Denfield. Amen. When Zion's fortunes God restored, it was a dream come true.

Our mouths were then with laughter filled, our tongues with songs anew.

The nations say, the Lord has done great things for Israel.

the Lord in mighty things for us and joy and hearts new will.

[56:55] Restore our fortunes, gracious Lord, like streams in desert soil.

A joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil.

singing, singing, singing, Let your heavenly singing, grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. I'll go to the door on my right.

Amen.