

1 Thessalonians 5:20-28

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[0 : 00] Seeing one more, there's a list of the August communion services are now available for collection at the doors of the church and seminary. So that's for the communion services, there's a list of these available for collection at the doors of the church and seminary.

Let us worship God now, singing to his praise from the 19th Psalm, Scottish Psalter, Psalm number 19. Psalm number 19.

And that's on page 223. The tune is Moravia. The heavens God's glory do declare. No, sorry, we're reading at verse 7.

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

The Lord's command is pure and doth light to the eyes impart. Unspotted is the fear of God and doth endure forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

[1 : 20] They more than gold, yea, much fine gold to be desired are. Than honey, honey from the comb that droppeth sweeter far. Moreover they thy servant warn how he his life should frame.

A great reward provided is for them that keep the same. Psalm 19 verses 7 to 11. The tune is Moravia. God's law is perfect and converts.

God's law is perfect and converts. The soul is in the lies.

God's testimony is most sure God's law is perfect and has made with you.

The Lord's moment is pure and a light to the eyes of God.

[2 : 48] Unswalled in its memory of God, and love came to forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

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[4 : 50] The Lord's moment is pure and a light to the eyes of God. The Lord's moment is pure and a light to the eyes of God.

And we give thanks, O Lord, for the wonderful working of God's Spirit in our hearts, so that we can be changed and brought from darkness into light, from death to life.

And we pray to bless us all here today as we gather together. We pray that our hearts might be filled with a sense of the wonder and the privilege that we have.

that we are worshipping the God who had brought into being what never existed before.

The God who said, The God who said, let there be and there was. And help us to remember that this is the God that we worship today. The God who indeed is the one who dictates our every movement.

[6 : 14] The God who has purposed our being in this world. The God who takes glory from our life, however long or short it is in this world.

And we pray that we might realise that this is the great end, is the glory of God in everything. And may we not dismiss these thoughts, but may we seek in our life to become caught up more and more in these very things.

We pray to bless us as we gather together. And we pray that we may hear what God the Lord will speak. Deliver us, Lord, from the wandering thoughts that we are so prone to, particularly when we come to God's house.

Give us a mental focus. And give us a spiritual insight. So that we may rest upon the truth. And that our souls may delight in it.

And that we might know the peace of God that passes all understanding. O Lord, we confess before thee our sin. And we acknowledge our sin directly and indirectly.

[7 : 21] Directly, directly before thee, and also indirectly in the way that we sin one against another. We pray, O Lord, to forgive us for all the sins that we are aware of and the many that we are not aware of.

The sins that we commit and the sins of omission. For things that we ought to do and don't. Forgive us, O Lord, for what lies down deep within us.

Because there are times we even catch our own thoughts. And we are astonished at what we can think. O Lord, we give thanks that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.

And all sin involves all that we do that is wrong. And all that we say that is wrong. And all that we think that is wrong. And all that we are that is wrong. O Lord, we give thanks for the forgiving, cleansing efficacy of the blood.

And we pray then to help us in our worship. And help us as we journey on in life. With all its challenges. Often with its problems. We pray for the grace to meet all these challenges.

[8 : 34] And we pray to help us as we go from day to day. We pray to be with us. Gathered here as a congregation. We pray for all who gather as we do this morning. Seeking to worship God.

And we pray that the word of God will go out with power. Wherever the gospel is preached. We ask, O Lord, to bless all the young people who are moving away.

All the students. Some going away for the first time. We pray, Lord, particularly for those who are going away for the first time. We pray to bless those at home who will miss them.

And we pray, Lord, for those who go. And we ask that they will settle in into the new life in which they go to. We pray, O Lord, to guide and bless in the cities and the different parts even of this world where people will go.

We ask, O Lord, that thy hand will be upon them for good. We ask, O Lord, to bless the youth camps which will be taking place, God willing, next month in Scaladale and in Eust.

[9 : 37] And we pray for safety. And we pray for the prospering power of God to be upon all that is done at these times. We pray, O Lord, to bless all those whose hearts are heavy and sore.

Those who miss loved ones. Those, Lord, who just cannot come to terms with the silence that death brings. The emptiness.

The sense of being bereft of those who are so integral to life. We ask, O Lord, that into that emptiness that your peace might be known.

That people will be able to be aware that God is helping. That God is supporting. In the darkness. In the bleakness. O Lord, we pray for all within our own congregations who are mourning and trying to peace together.

We think even of the MacLeod family just at the funeral yesterday. And we remember all who hurt and all who are sore. We pray for those in hospitals and those who are ill.

[10 : 43] Disease is so rampant. And we pray, O Lord, for those who are battling through difficulties and have experienced bad news and where illness is rife.

We pray for help, for grace and for healing. Lord, be with us and we pray. Lord, be with us and we pray. We pray especially for Ivor at this time. Grant him peace and calmness in his mind and soul.

And we pray for complete wisdom to be given to those who deal with him tomorrow. And pray that this procedure will be completely successful. And that he will know the riches of thy grace.

That he will know help and healing and restoration. Be with us all, we pray. And do us all good and take away sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, I came across this story.

My memory is so bad. Forgive me if I have told you this story before. Because I can't remember what I have told and what I haven't told.

[11 : 50] But it's a story that caught my mind. And as I've been thinking over it, I was saying, I'm sure that I've told this. So if I have, forgive me.

But it's worth telling. And it's about the great evangelist D.L. Moody. And he was passing a collier with this great big mine.

And there were loads of miners. And, of course, they were all working at mining coal. And he was speaking to the man who was sort of the foreman miner.

And he was trying to share with him about how a person accepts Jesus as Savior. And he was trying to explain to him the whole way of the gospel.

And of how simple it is. And he says, you know, at the end of the day, all you have to do is believe. Just believe in Jesus. Trust Jesus. And you will be made right with God.

[12 : 50] Jesus will take you, as it were, to God. Jesus, the Son of God. He's done everything. And this foreman miner couldn't get it.

And he says, I can't accept something that's so cheap. I have to do something. Are you telling me all I have to do is believe?

And Moody was saying, yes, that's all you have to do. No, I said, I can't accept that. He said, to me, it doesn't seem worthwhile. Because surely it's got to cost me something.

Surely there's something that I have to do. And then Moody said to him, are you going down underground today? Yeah. He said, how far down do you go?

I said, probably about going 400, 600 feet down underground. Oh, he said, that's very far. How do you go down? I said, we'll go down on a lift. So Moody said, can you explain?

[13 : 49] Oh, he said, the miner said, it's an amazing thing. He said, oh, the mining company, they spent a fortune drilling down. And then this huge shaft. And they fixed in this lift.

And there's a cage in it. So Moody said, so how do you go down? Well, he said, in fact, look, it's just come up. See, somebody just pushed that button.

And the cage has just come up. And I just go into it and press a button. And I'm on my way down. Press another button. And back up. And Moody said to him, is that all you have to do?

Yeah, he said, it's amazing. He said, mining company, they've done it all. We don't have to do anything. Just press it. And Moody said, that's what I'm trying to tell you. Salvation costs a fearful lot.

In fact, so much that nobody, supposing all the people in the world came together and tried to buy salvation. They wouldn't have enough. Supposing everybody in the world tried to do their very best, it wouldn't be enough.

[14 : 56] God sent his son, his perfect son, to do. The cost is incredible. It cost the life of Jesus.

It's all been done. And all we have to do is go in. The door is open. As the Bible says, I have set before you an open door.

Just as you walk into that cage, you're trusting that that cage will take you down. You're trusting that that cage will bring you back up. Because it's all been provided.

It's all done. In the same way, the door of salvation is open for you. Go in and trust Jesus.

And so Moody was able to explain to the miner using the very thing that he was talking about himself. And that is salvation.

[15 : 52] The doing has been done. And I would ask all of you to go in, as it were, through that open door who is Jesus. And trust him.

Accept him as your Lord and Savior. We're going to sing again from Psalm 25. Psalm 25.

And the tune is Gerlach Sides. And again, it's from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 25. And we're going to sing from verse 8, which is on page 231.

The first version. God good and upright is. The way he'll sinners show. The meek in judgment he will guide and make his path to know.

The whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure. To those that do his covenant keep and testimonies pure. Now for thine own name sake, O Lord, I thee entreat to pardon mine iniquity, for it is very great.

[16 : 58] What man is he that fears the Lord and doth himself? To the earth and doth himself. Him shall he teach the way that he shall choose and still observe. His soul shall dwell at ease and his posterity shall flourish still.

And of the earth inheritor shall be. With those that fear him is the secret of the Lord, the knowledge of his covenant he will to them afford. Psalm 25, verses 8 to 14, the tune of Scare looks.

And we'll stand to sing, God good and upright is. The way he'll sinners show.

For the joy he'll make his path to know. When we give judgment, he will guide and make his path to know.

The whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure.

[18 : 10] To those not who lives of manly, I'm tested on his true.

Not for thine own in sin, O Lord, I need and drink To pardon my iniquity For it is very great.

What man is he that fears The Lord of the Lord is served It shall be taught the way That he shall choose and still observe It shall dwell at ease And it was empty Shall flourish still and all fear In heaven it turns shall be With those that fear him is The secret of the Lord

The knowledge of his covenant He will to them afford Let us read now in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

We'll read the whole chapter as we come now to the end of our study of this letter. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. And we'll just read the whole chapter.

[20 : 40] 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, You have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware That the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

While people are saying there is peace and security, Then sudden destruction will come upon them As labor pains come upon a pregnant woman And they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, For that day to surprise you like a thief. But you are all children of light, Children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

So then let us not sleep as others do, But let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, And those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But since we belong to the day, Let us be sober, Having put on the breastplate of faith and love, And for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, But to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, So that whether we are awake or asleep, We might live with him.

[21 : 55] Therefore encourage one another And build one another up, Just as you are doing. We ask you, brothers, To respect those who labor among you, And are over you in the Lord, And admonish you, And to esteem them very highly in love, Because of their work.

Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, Admonish the idle, Encourage the faint-hearted, Help the weak, Be patient with them all.

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, But always seek to do good to one another, And to everyone. Rejoice always, Pray without ceasing, Give thanks in all circumstances, For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Do not quench the spirit, Do not despise prophecies, But test everything, Hold fast what is good, Abstain from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace himself Sanctify you completely, And may your whole spirit and soul and body Be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 09] He who calls you is faithful, He will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord To have this letter read to all the brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. We're going to sing again from Sing Psalms, Psalm 138.

Psalm 138 from Sing Psalms. The tune is Weram, And we're going to sing from the middle of verse 2. Psalm 138, From the middle of verse 2, Or we would say the second verse, The second stanza of the psalm.

I'll praise you for your faithfulness, And for your covenant love, O Lord, For over all things you have raised your holy name and faithful word.

The very day I called to you, you gave an answer to my plea. You made me bold within myself, With new resolve you strengthened me. O Lord, let all earth's kings give praise, When from your mouth they hear your word.

[24 : 23] Let them extol the ways of God, For grades the glory of the Lord. Although the Lord God dwells on high, The lowly person he protects.

For us, the proud and haughty ones, He knows afar off and rejects. Although I walk a troubled path, Your tender care preserves my life. You raise your hand against my foes, Your right hand saves me from their strife.

The Lord will certainly fulfill, For me, the purpose he commands. Your love endures forever, Lord. Preserve the works of your own hands.

These verses are Psalm 138, On page 179. The tune is Wareham, I'll praise you for your faithfulness. I'll praise you for your faithfulness, And for your covenant love, O Lord.

For your faithfulness, I'll praise you for your faithfulness, And for your faithfulness, And for your faithfulness, You may be whole within myself, With you resolve, You strengthen me.

[26 : 26] O Lord, let all that things in praise, When from your mouth they hear your word, Let all the grace of God, For grace and glory of the Lord, You may be whole, for your faithfulness, See you for your faithfulness, All the peace of God, For your faithfulness, You may be all the world, With you your faithfulness, CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS O man, to a venture forevermore, Precept the works of you, O man.

Let's turn again to the chapter we read in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. We've been going through this for quite a while, this letter. But we've just come to the end. Last week we were looking at some of these brief exhortations that Paul had given.

We saw in verse 16, we're told to rejoice always. Verse 17, we're told to pray without ceasing. In verse 18, we're told to give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

And then we finished off looking at verse 19, do not quench the spirit. Verse 20, do not despise prophecies, but test everything.

[29 : 32] Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Now as we say, we've come now to the end of this letter.

And we find that the Apostle says, do not despise prophecies. Now we've got to remember that the church in Thessalonica, just like the church in Ephesus and the church in Colossae and the church in Philippi, did not then have the New Testament in the way that you and I have.

They had the Old Testament, but at that point they didn't have the New Testament. And initially the church in Colossae wouldn't know what Paul had written to the church in Ephesus.

[30 : 47] And the church in Thessalonica wouldn't have known what the Apostle had written to the church in Philippi and so on until these letters, of course, were gathered together and they would be shared eventually amongst the churches.

But initially they had the Old Testament and gradually, of course, there was a gathering together of all that we have of Old and New Testament.

So at that particular time, we've got to remember, there was still what we would term this apostolic ministry, where these apostles who were witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ and who were directly sent out by Christ into the New Testament church.

And they had a special role. Now we have to ask ourselves today, when it says, do not despise prophecies, we've got to ask ourselves, are there still prophecies today?

Does somebody come to the church and say, well, I have a new revelation from the Lord, and this is what it is. If we reject that, are we despising prophecies?

[31 : 57] Well, what we've got to remember is that today, the prophetic word that we have is what is here before us in the Bible. This is a complete revelation.

Everything that God wants us to know about himself, he has revealed to us. There will be other aspects, I believe, that throughout glory, we will come to discover.

And even what we have learned here is, as it were, just like dipping our foot into the Atlantic Ocean. There is a whole ocean of knowledge that goes on and on and on and on.

We've only begun to understand and to grasp the fullness of who God is. But God has revealed to us all that we need to know.

God has revealed to us in the Word all that we need to know with regard to salvation. God has revealed to us all that we need to know with regard to future things.

[33 : 02] Now sometimes we want to know more. And we say, well, and often, I'm sure it's often part of our discussions, we often go into what we call speculative theology, where we're not sure, but we kind of argue, as it were, from Scripture, and then jump into what is speculation.

We just don't know. And there's something about us that likes to do that. But at the end of the day, we should really content ourselves with what is revealed to us. Because God is saying, this is what I want you to know about myself.

This is what I want you to know about the way of salvation. Everything you need to know with regard to salvation, I have revealed in the Word. So we have a complete Word here.

And if anybody comes saying, oh, well, you know, I've got a new message from the Lord. And some of the old ways have gone. There is a new way. You have to say, well, that's wrong.

Because we have a complete revelation. So that begs the question then to say, well, does the Lord ever speak to a person? Does the Lord ever reveal anything to you, to me?

[34 : 18] Well, I believe He does. And does it in a very simple and a very personal way. For instance, you might be praying about something. Something that you've been praying and praying about for a long time.

For instance, maybe with regard to guidance over something. And you are really sincerely and genuinely, with all your heart, praying that the Lord will show you.

And maybe as you read the Word that particular morning, the way as you read the Word, it all of a sudden, the answer becomes so clear.

And you're seeing there through your reading that day, it's like the Lord is making it so clear to your own heart. And you're given the faith to lay hold upon it.

We're not to take things out of context. And we're not never to put Scripture against Scripture. God will never contradict Himself. So that if you, say, you take a wee portion of Scripture out and say, well, I've got my guidance here.

[35 : 27] But it's going, your guidance is going against the clear revelation of God. Then you have to say to yourself, well, that is not God's guidance.

Because God does not contradict Himself. He doesn't go against His revealed Word. Because, you know, you can take anything out of context. You can take three or four lines, or three or four words.

You can take a few wee words out and say, oh, well, here, I've got a few wee words here. And many a heresy is built on taking bits of Scripture completely out of context and building a heresy on it.

Scripture always sheds light on itself. But as I say, I do believe that the Lord will bring His truth to bear upon our mind, upon our heart.

And we believe that this is God's Word to us. Always, as we say, in keeping with His revealed will in other ways. And that's why the Apostle then says, do not despise prophecies, but test everything.

[36 : 33] Because what we've got to remember is that Satan is the arch-deceiver. He is an imitator. Satan sometimes comes as an angel of light.

He loves to deceive. And that is why we have to test everything. And that's why in the New Testament church, they had to take all that they were hearing.

Because there were loads of people going around. And loads of people were telling them this and telling them that. And they were saying, oh, this is the new way. Well, whatever they heard, they had to take it and bring it against the light of the truth that they already had.

Against the words of the apostles. Against the words that they had in the Old Testament. Against the life and the words of Jesus. They had to bring what they heard and test it against the truth.

And we are the same. We must always be bringing whatever we hear. And putting it and bringing it against the light of the truth that is revealed.

[37 : 38] The revealed will of God that we have. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

In a sense there's a double exhortation here. One in the negative and one in the positive. Now, obviously we have to abstain from every form of evil. But we've always got to be careful in these things.

That we don't become over negative. And allow negativity to be our driving force. And say, well, it says I have to abstain from every form of evil. Because if we become legalistic in the likes of this, we will become like the Pharisees.

Pharisaic. That's what happened with them. Because in their effort to abstain from every form of evil. Or to appear to look really, really good. They avoided everything.

And they built layer after layer after layer of laws. So that it became almost impossible to live. It didn't matter what you did. You were doing something that was wrong.

[38 : 43] So we've always got to be careful. Because, as you know, there are obviously things that are right and things that are wrong. But there are a lot of what we would term grey areas of life.

And we've got to, we have to bring, again, it's test everything. We always have to bring the truth. The word of God to bear upon all these different situations. And work out scripturally and biblically what is right and what is wrong.

And so we've got to guard against just being totally negative. Because we can build up for ourselves a Pharisaic lifestyle like that.

But we still have to lay hold upon this truth. Abstain from every form of evil. Somebody said, if you're in question about anything, ask yourself, would Jesus do this?

Can I take Jesus with me here? Can I take Jesus into this situation? Is this something that I feel comfortable being with Jesus here?

[39 : 56] Or is it something that I say to myself, oh, no. And so we have to be careful in all these things. Abstain from every form of evil and hold fast what is good.

The positive. And if we seek to live according to the positives, then in a sense the negatives will look after themselves. And you know, a person, really what it is saying here is, live a Christ-like life.

And you know, a Christ-like life lived in a community is an extraordinary blessing. And that's one of the great blessings that our communities here have enjoyed. Is so many wonderful Christ-like lives.

There are still people, and it's very easy to go back and think, oh, there were such wonderful Christians. And thank the Lord there were.

And their influence upon us was great. And they influenced life for good. And they brought good into people's lives by the kind of lives they lived.

[41 : 03] But it's still the same today. And it's a wonderful thing. It brings blessing. It brings so much good. And so it's seek to live a Christ-like life.

And then Paul offers this superb prayer in verse 23. Beautiful prayer.

It's very interesting that as Paul prays this prayer for them, he also, in verse 25, he says, Brothers, pray for us. Paul's saying to them, Look, I'm praying for you.

And I'm telling you what I'm praying. But he said, It's to work two ways. I want you to pray for me. And I think it's very important. Here's this great man.

And, you know, I'm sure there would be some people in the church saying, You don't need to pray for Paul. Paul's this great saint. He's so close to the Lord. He doesn't need prayer. Paul needed prayer more than most.

[42 : 04] And let me assure you that the more a person does for the Lord, the more they will be attacked by the enemy. You know, Satan, people might not understand or realize this.

But just one thing that Satan does to those who are serving the Lord and working for the Lord is that very often he will, say, create or bring a spirit of oppression or heaviness upon a person's soul.

If you're going to do something for the Lord, suppose you've been asked to go and speak somewhere and to speak to people, whether it's at a fellowship or whatever. Don't be surprised if you have company in the form of blackness and darkness.

And there's many a time when a fearful spirit, I can testify to that, the most oppressive spirit of heaviness comes over.

Where a physical, an absolute physical exhaustion, and a mental blackness, and a spiritual oppression takes over.

[43 : 19] Just like that. It's not natural. It's darkness. And we've always got to remember one another. Because this is satanic.

Because the evil one does not want any work done for the Lord. And he'll do everything that he can to thwart or to prevent. And Paul knew all about these things.

Paul was at the forefront. He was blazing a campaign for the Lord through these early years. And he suffered like few for his faith.

He needed prayer. But he also needed prayer for doors to be opened. And that is one of the most important aspects of Christian work.

Is praying, men and women, boys and girls, praying that gospel doors will open. That people's hearts will open.

[44 : 20] That barriers that are there will be removed. That obstacles will be removed. We can pray. And that's the beauty of it. We aren't confined to our prayer just here where we are.

We can today pray for all the areas in the world. We can start praying for the church in North Korea. In places of real oppression. Where there is no liberty and there's no freedom.

And Christians are in fear of their life. In Iran. Christians just meet in little cells here and little cells here. Little pockets.

Tiny little groups. One group doesn't even know the existence of another. Because at any moment they will lose everything. They will face death.

But we can pray for them. And more and more that's one of the wonderful things is that we're being made aware today with all the the way that modern media and technology is opening up to us.

[45 : 23] about the needs of a suffering church. We can pray. And that's what Paul was saying. Look, you elsewhere, I think it's in the church to Colossae, was saying, talking about their prayer, he says, you're working with us.

Paul was seeing them back there in the church as working with him right at the forefront blazing a trail. We're all in this together.

And a praying church is a vibrant church. A praying church is a growing church. A praying church is something that hell fears.

Make sure that we are a praying church. But then Paul tells them what he is praying for. And he's telling them, he says, now may the God of peace himself sanctify you.

Now, I love this. Paul is saying, listen to my prayer, may the God of peace himself. I'm praying to the God who is the creator of this whole universe.

[46 : 31] The God who brought everything into being by the word of his power. The creator God. You know, it would have been the most extraordinary thing ever.

to have watched the creation. Where God said, let there be light. And there was light. Sometimes God's creative power was where he brought into being what there was absolutely nothing before.

And he didn't use anything. He brought it into being by the word of his mouth. There were other aspects to his creation where he brought into being through what already existed.

For instance, he says in Genesis 1 about the earth, after he had created the world, let the earth bring forth. Let the sea bring forth.

He was still using his creative power to bring what hadn't been but it was coming out of what he had already created. Let us create man in our own image.

[47 : 35] But he took the dust of the ground and made. so he was using what he had already brought into being. But it's all his... Imagine if we could have witnessed the creation.

Awesome! Well, this is the God that Paul is telling the church that God himself, the one who has made you, the one who has made everything, the one who has made this amazing universe, may God himself sanctify you.

And he terms him here, may the God of peace. And that's who God is. He is a God of peace. He is completely at peace with himself.

There is nothing within God that will ever disturb him or ever break that peace. There is nothing that surrounds him that will ever disturb or break that peace.

And he is the one who is able to impart that peace to us. The peace of God that passes all understanding. And if you're in turmoil today, and if your hearts are upset and you have anxiety, now I know that different circumstances can bring that.

[48 : 55] I know that different dispositions, some people are prone to anxiety. It's their disposition. and for some people it seems harder to know peace in their heart than for others.

But the thing is that the God of peace is able, irrespective of how bad things are with you, he himself is able to give you that peace because he is imparting himself to you.

So may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. Sanctify completely. This is what God is doing. He's working within us.

He's preparing us. Now as we know, to sanctify at one level, before it's a moral condition, it's a condition of a relationship.

because to sanctify, as we know, is to separate or to set apart. That is why furniture can be sanctified. That's why the tabernacle was sanctified.

[50 : 02] That is why to a certain extent at the communion, at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine is sanctified. It is set apart from a common to a holy use.

So we can use that with regard to a relation and our relation to God is one of where we have been sanctified. We've been set apart.

That's what God did. When he saved you, he set you apart for himself. That's why you no longer belong to yourself.

And the Bible keeps telling us that. You are not your own. That's what salvation does. Before salvation, we think we belong to ourselves.

It's my life and I'll do what I want. Well, as much as I can. When we become Christians, God is saying, no, you belong to me.

[51 : 02] And so there's a new king on the throne of our heart. We are now set apart to God for his glory in this world.

But then with the setting apart, what we would term there, sometimes it's termed positional sanctification or definitive sanctification, it's with regard to the relation, then we come to what we term the progressive sanctification, which is the ongoing growth and development of the believer in this world.

So the Lord is going to sanctify you completely. And that's really what Paul means when he says your whole spirit and soul and body. He isn't dividing everything up.

It is really saying that the totality of your being is going to be completely sanctified. Now you and I know that in this world that won't take place, but we are still to try to attain to it.

Can I ask you, is that your goal today? is it something that's in your heart and you're saying, you know, I really, really, really want to become more Christ-like.

[52 : 19] My prayer is that the Lord will deliver me over all my struggles and all my failings and all these temptations and all these sins to which I am so prone.

Or are we keeping little corners to ourselves? And we're saying, Lord, yes, most of me, but I want to hang on to a wee bit here. I have a few wee secret things I want to keep hidden in there for me.

Lord, you can have the rest. Well, Paul is saying, no, that's not the way it's to be. It's to be your entire being, no little secret parts kept for yourself.

And that's, you know, you'll find out if you're really honest with the Lord and say, Lord, I'm afraid there are little secret bits. Or are you today prepared to be unopened before the Lord and say, everything, Lord.

Well, that's really what Paul is saying. It's everything. May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[53 : 37] And you know, the more that we come to know the Lord, the more we will fear him. And the more that we fear him, the more we will love him. And the more that we love him, the more we will obey him. You see, this is the way it works.

Our obedience should not come from hearts that are saying, well, you know, I better do this. I don't want to do it, but I better do it.

And we go and do it grudgingly. And we say, I better do it so that I'll be seen to be doing it. No. If we're doing things out of that spirit, our spirit and our motive is wrong.

And the Lord sees our spirit and our motive. But when our heart is right, then there is a fear within our heart, a reverence before God.

And as we see this reverence and this fear produces love which in turn produces the obedience, it's because we want to. When you love somebody, you want to please that person.

[54 : 42] If you really love somebody, you don't want to spend your life doing things that you know will hurt them and offend them. You want to do what you know pleases them.

And so it is for the believer when we know what the Lord wants us to do. And that's what he has revealed to us in his word. And so there is this putting on and putting off in the Lord Jesus.

And so we see the great end of sanctification is that we will be blameless, complete and blameless at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you say to who is sufficient for these things? God alone. Verse 24, he who calls you is faithful, he will surely do it.

So we're both in this together, the Lord and you. And that's how Paul puts it in Philippians, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

[55 : 53] God's at work and you're at work. God's at work, working in you in order that you will do. And that's what we've got to pray. Lord, help me in this whole area of sanctification.

Make me willing to do your will. Make me willing, Lord, to submit under your word.

Even in the areas, Lord, where it's most difficult. It's not easy, but the Lord will help you. He will give you the grace. He will give you this thing. Lord, we'll never ever, ever turn away the prayer of the person who is saying, Lord, make me holier.

Lord, make me more like yourself. Do you think that the Lord will say, no? Of course not. Often there's a cost to these prayers, but we've always got to see the end in view, which is Christ-likeness and to be with himself.

So Paul is saying, brothers, pray for us, greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. That was obviously the culture in the day. We still often greet one another with a kiss or with a handshake.

[57 : 07] I think basically what it is saying here is, make sure that brothers and sisters in the Lord are made welcome. It's an awful thing where we don't make welcome our brothers and our sisters in the Lord.

If it's a kiss, if it's a handshake, if it's an arm round, whatever it is, there always should be this sense of identification, this sense of welcoming.

If we were to sum up this letter, Paul is really saying, Jesus is coming again. We don't know when. In light of Jesus coming again, let's be ready for his coming.

That's really it. And I can't think of any greater message that we could take with us than to think that. Every night as we go to bed, we should be saying to ourselves, you know, Jesus might come tonight.

Am I ready? Every day as we get up, we have to ask ourselves the same question. I wonder, will Jesus come today? Am I ready?

[58 : 13] And we need to ask the Lord, Lord, help me to be ready when Jesus comes. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray that we might indeed all be ready, every one of us in here, when Jesus returns.

That we might be ready even if it is a call from this world before his coming, but called to meet the judge of all the earth.

We pray that we might all be made ready in Jesus. Help us and bless us, we pray. Take us home safely and guide us in all that we are about. Have mercy upon us and forgive us in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.