

God is Faithful

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 April 2026

Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

[0 : 00] Great fear and meeting of the saints is due unto the Lord. He of all about him should with reverence be adored.

What a wonderful summary that is of the spirit of worship as the Lord's people gather together Sunday by Sunday or as opportunity presents itself to give glory to the Lord.

And as verse 8 puts it specifically in the chapter we read together earlier in 2 Timothy chapter 2, Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, has preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal, but the word of God is not bound.

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

You cannot but read this letter and take on board what really drove Paul, what mattered most of all to him, what he really wanted more than anything else, what drove him was giving Jesus Christ all the glory and all the praise.

[1 : 23] And so here we have in just the second chapter of this wonderful letter that's so personal, so moving to read this and think of the providence behind it, the circumstances, here he is bound as a criminal, writing furiously, his right, his written ministry, still going on even though he himself was suffering, bound with chains, but he knew the word of God is not bound.

But what drove him, these wonderful words here in verse 8, Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. This was his mission.

To understand Paul, we need to bear these words in mind and ourselves. Remember what drove him, what shaped him, what moulded him, what motivated him was this exact sense of service and mission and purpose.

Remember Jesus Christ as preached in my gospel. That, Timothy, is the key to you taking your place in service in his church as one of his people.

If you're going to lead, you yourself must be led. That's an ethic of grace. That certainly has its place in whatever role you're fulfilling in the work of the congregation.

[2 : 45] To lead others, you yourself and I myself, you need to be led by the Spirit toward understanding Jesus Christ, his finished work upon the cross. And to share that with others, we ourselves need to study and delve into the scripture and understand the gospel and seek the grace of the gospel to make Jesus known.

And that's all gone on in the heart and mind of Paul. He wanted people to hear the good news and to grow in their newfound knowledge and understanding, gained through the gospel ministry that he was part of.

Remember Jesus Christ as preached in my gospel. Gospel. Still wonder then, with this motivation, this love, this desire, that we find him calling Timothy to get the perspective right in order to step into leadership, in order to fulfill his ministry, in order to meet the responsibility and privilege that would be his as a pastor, as a leader, as a teacher.

He had to first and foremost get the fundamentals right. The foundation had to be in place. And here it is, friends, remember Jesus Christ. So I want to think about that for a few moments with you this evening, and in the hope that we would benefit, as Timothy would have in reading these words for the first time, that we would be encouraged, that we would be motivated to express real loyalty and sharpen our perspective and deepen our hope that the light would burn brightly as we go into a new week.

And who knows, Christian friend, the opportunities to witness to your Lord and Saviour that await this week. None of us know that. We'll get to that in a moment. The first thing then to notice tonight, I'll put it to you this way, you are to cherish your Lord and Saviour.

[4 : 34] Cherish your Lord and Saviour. If we don't remember our Lord, then our spiritual growth cannot occur.

This word, we might just glance over it, but this wonderful call, the call here to remember Jesus Christ is an absolutely crucial principle in spiritual growth and Christian living.

Because forgetfulness is an enemy of faithfulness. If we forget, we're going to stumble, we're going to mumble, we're not going to be certain, we're going to be hitting the grey areas instead of being black and white, showing forth the praises of him who called us from darkness into his marvellous light.

For that light to shine brightly, we need to remember. This is a starting point. I'm sure many of you know that John Newton is famously on record as saying toward the end of his own life, my memory is nearly gone.

But I remember two things, that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Saviour. That Christian friend is a message that is the pulse of the New Testament.

[5 : 47] It is where our hope is sourced from. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour and friend, he's done everything for us. We have it beautifully described so movingly by John in chapter 19 of Christ.

He bearing his own cross as he leaves the city behind, making his way to Calvary's hill. There's our Saviour. And why did he go there? So that tonight you and I would have hope.

So that you and I, friends, could speak of forgiveness, redemption, adoption, and salvation, wonderful, glorious words of grace. These are words that are just chocked full in the New Testament to help us understand who he is and what it all means for you and for me this evening. And this is where it all starts. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.

So if we're going to remember, that's going to protect us as we cherish our Saviour. We're going to refuse to forget. We're going to remember the blessings. We're going to remember what we've learned in our pilgrimage, Christian friend.

[7 : 02] We're going to store up these nuggets, these beautiful moments in time and fellowship under the word, together, perhaps at the Lord's table in this very building. Time and time again, the Lord has fed you and nourished you and blessed you and filled you and built you up.

And you are to remember these things and draw on these things as you go into the world and that world out there that's waiting for us is a dark world. It's a world of indifference and apathy.

It's a world where the devil reigns as a prince. It's where his influence is felt in the secularism that seems to be gripping our own nation and driving this progressiveness toward liberalism and atheism, secularism at the back of everything.

And who's driving it? Who's fanning that flame? The devil. Because he wants the church of Christ silenced, all the more important that we cherish our Lord and Saviour and remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

Paul writes from a prison cell. He is writing where things have not gone according to his own plans. He didn't wish to be chained, suffering, bound as a criminal.

[8 : 16] But nevertheless, this is where providence finds him. We need to, friends, as we remember, hope for the best but plan for the worst.

There will be times where providence overtakes us in a manner that we wouldn't wish on anybody and things will suddenly change and we may be disorientated and buffeted and uncertain of where to turn and so all the more important, we remember Jesus Christ.

we remember who he is and look where Paul was writing from. As far as we can piece things together, a New Testament scholars have been so detailed in the study of these things.

It seems that the two stages of the Roman judicial system, Paul has been through the first, he's been found guilty. It's now just a matter of the second where the pronouncement, the sentence will be carried out.

He doesn't know how long he's got. Time is ticking and for him, he knows that there isn't much left to go. He knows that he has been poured out as a drink offering.

[9 : 17] He knows that the time for his departure has come. Time is short. There's not much left. And so we find him in this letter particularly emphasising what needs to be emphasised.

Remember Jesus Christ. Christ, cherish your Lord and Saviour. Christian friend, there's a reminder here for all of us that if we cherish our Lord, it will protect us from apathy.

Where does apathy come from? Apathy comes from disillusionment, disappointment, despair. All these things can combine and collide and take the hope right out of your heart and leave you uncertain of things.

But not if you're fixed on Christ. Not if you remember who he is and what he has done for you. Not if you as a Christian can speak to him tonight as your Lord and your Saviour.

And so cherishing the Lord is something that begins in here. It's a heart work. It's personal. But there's another element to this and that comes out in these words in verse 9. I am suffering for which I am suffering.

[10:25] So he makes a link there. Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, the offspring of David as preached in my gospel. So has everything gone smoothly because of that? Absolutely not.

For which I am suffering, bound with chains, as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound. So here we're seeing Paul and his awareness, not just of the need to have our heart warmed with a love that is completely focused on Jesus.

He wants us to be protected from the apathy and disappointment that comes from disappointment and setbacks. But he also is very conscious of the watching world. What did the world make of Paul at this time?

As far as the Roman security detail were concerned, this was just a troublemaking Jew. He was finished, hopeless, beaten, a religious troublemaker, a zealot, a fool.

He was weak, he was puny, and above all, he's in chains, in a cell, he's alone. That was the world's view of Paul. But it was not God's view. God's view of Paul, that's his view of every child that belongs to him.

[11:35] Precious, forgiven, adopted. A child, not forgotten, not alone, but loved and redeemed and part of his plan to make the gospel known.

So Paul accepts this. Remember Jesus Christ. Remember the gospel for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal, but the word of God is not bound.

And so friends, tonight, the call from this great personal epistle is to cherish your Lord and your Saviour. You'll notice the language in verse 10 in these few verses we've read together and we're going to get to this in a moment, but just to jump ahead into verse 10, there's another link.

Therefore, because of all this, I endure everything for the sake of the elect. Why, Paul? That they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

He cherished his Lord and Saviour. He loved making him known. It was his motivation. And he loved those who, like him, had responded in repentance and faith.

[12:58] And this is the supreme question of the Bible now before us here in verse 10. He speaks in this phrase of the elect, those chosen by God, that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

What is that? It is to be saved from the wrath to come. It is to be saved from being under the law, banished and helpless, facing a lost eternity and to be transferred into the kingdom of his dear son.

That is salvation. And so the question in all of this, friends, tonight is, do you know and do you cherish Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? That is the supreme question of the Bible.

Are you saved? Do you know the Lord as your Saviour? Do you know what it is to speak of salvation in Christ Jesus?

I pray so. And the question is this, of course, as we speak about cherishing the Lord, if tonight you're unconvinced and unconverted, I wonder if you would ask yourself in the quiet and privacy of your own heart now or this evening, why?

[14:08] Why are you unconvinced? why are you unconverted? What is it about the cross and the saving work of Christ that leaves you still far off?

Are you waiting for something else? Are you waiting for something more? Are you waiting for someone to say something to you that hasn't been said before? Bearing his own cross, he went out and he gave himself a ransom for many.

I would urge you tonight, friends, to be very, very careful from saying to the living God, I want a sign. I want something else. I want something more because if you're saying that to God tonight, what you're saying is the cross is not enough.

The death of your precious beloved son is not enough. His atoning sacrifice, that's not enough. I need something more. I want something else. I need to be gripped.

I need to be impressed. I need to be entertained. I need something that I haven't had yet and I want you to give it to me. That is to say to God, the cross is not enough.

[15:16] Be very, very careful, friends, that you do not stay long on that dangerous ground, but come to Christ. Trust in him with all your heart.

Cherish your Lord and your Saviour. There's something else here to turn to secondly and we find it in these words. We've read through verse 10 already.

Paul, in this wonderful perspective, he himself was chained to all intents and purposes. He was restricted. He was of no use to anybody, but look at this. 2,000 years later, we have all his epistles that form the canon of Scripture that feed our souls, that give us insight and understand the glorious gospel of grace.

The world had no idea who they were dealing with. They were dealing with Jesus, the King of Kings and here his apostle, his servant, was writing furiously, maybe by lamplight, who knows, scratching furiously away on these parchments led by the Spirit as the word was breathed out.

He was born along and he wrote these beautiful, precious words and sends them off to Timothy and he draws this incredible letter to a close in verse 4.

[16:27] I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who was to judge the living and the dead. Preach the word, Timothy. Keep the focus, Timothy.

Take heart, Timothy. But whatever you do, preach the word. Because Paul knew, secondly, that that was to the benefit of the church of Christ and this is the second thing here.

We are to cherish our Lord and our Saviour and we are secondly to cherish his church. Cherish his church. I endure everything for the sake of the elect.

This was a man who wasn't just driven to some kind of apostolic high office. He wasn't lording it over anybody. He was the least of all the apostles. He was a man who had been truly humbled. He was a man who, in his own words in his testimony in 1 Timothy, remember he says it twice in a very short space of time, I received mercy. He knew he had been a pompous, arrogant, proud sinner heading for a lost eternity until Christ stopped him in his tracks and he received mercy.

[17:39] That's the gospel. And so Paul is giving himself to the furtherance of that cause and the spreading of that wonderful name, Jesus Christ and he wants to serve the Lord and by serving the Lord he wants to nourish and encourage and look out for his people.

I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. He was driven to encourage, nurture, build up the faith because he knew they were living in a dark and sinful world.

as we are tonight, Christian friend. I want to share with you what Oswald Chambers said about this dynamic. Oswald Chambers, maybe you know his very famous devotional work, my utmost for his highest.

Oswald Chambers at one point and it's very effective and yes, minister was so short. He said, all heaven is interested in the cross. All hell is terribly afraid of the cross.

While humanity are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning. We know how true that is. We have cultural heroes tonight in the UK for instance and I mention them often because they seem to be even more prominent than ever, are comedians.

[19:05] Comedians are leading the charge in the secular world, the progressive mindset that uses repeatedly the gospel and the things of Christ and the things of Christianity as a battering ram, as something to mock and something for cheap laughs.

Be careful with them. Don't let them get under your skin or in your mind. A lot of them are bad people and we need to be careful of their influence on ourselves and our youngsters because they're cultural heroes, these comedians, and they will mock and abuse and deride the cross of Christ just as Oswald Chambers saw over a hundred years ago.

Humanity are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning. And we as Christians, the church, can feel that. We feel the heat of the mockery, the disdain, the way that the world can shun us at times and leave us, don't want us involved, don't want the voice, don't want the influence, don't want the space, don't want a seat at the table because we're going to bring them to Christ, we're going to live for Christ, we're drawn not by an ethic that has as its head cultural progressiveness.

The Christian church is counter-cultural, we're not going to be shaped by the culture around us, we're going to engage with the culture, we're going to enjoy as much as we can of it, of course we

are, but the ethic that drives us is an ethic of grace, for to me to live is Christ, to die is gain, we honour him above all, we put him first, his name, and our loyalty must be seen in these words, remember Jesus Christ, so let us do so friends together as we cherish our Lord and Saviour, secondly let us cherish his church, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, Paul is very keen on using the word saints in his writings of the church, people, brothers and sisters, set apart, Adelphoi, often used, often translated in the ESV as brethren, but it could and should be translated, brothers and sisters, his sense of family was never far from the surface, as he wrote to Christians around the then known world, he knew they were under the cost, he knew they were suffering, he knew they were open to attack from the enemy and agnosticism and secularism and atheism and pluralism, he knew all these things were coming against the church, not only from out with, but then the problem from within, false teachers saying you need circumcision, you need the Aaronic priesthood, you need to maintain the bond we have with our father Abraham and all the Abrahamic practices and the tension from out with and the pressure from within, the church was really under the cosh, that's why it meant so much to the apostle Paul, that's why we have wonderful passages such as 2nd Corinthians and chapter 11, where we read from verse 23, these words, five times I received at the hands of the Jews forty lashes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked for a night and a day, I was adrift at sea, on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

[22 : 46] Cherish his church. And so we find tonight that the words of scripture place great dignity on the Christian church.

We don't create it ourselves, we receive it. Behold, what manner of love the Father has given to us, we should be called children of God. As with Paul, so with the Apostle John.

They were caught up with the great dignity that is ours through Christ, the dignity that belongs to the church. And so he knew and accepted that to further the gospel, he was required at times to suffer for the gospel.

And so he accepts this readily and gladly, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. If I have to suffer for their well-being and their nourishment and their encouragement, well, so be it.

Perhaps he had understood at this point as his life and ministry and service was fast drawn to a close that the Lord had put him in prison so he would write and write and keep writing.

[23 : 51] and so we have the prison epistles and the pastoral epistles and the Corinthian letters that furnish us with such great insight and understanding of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

John Stott said this, glory comes through suffering. This is an invariable law of Christian life and service. We are not entitled, Christian friends, to an easy time.

That's not a promise we receive in the Bible. What we do receive is great dignity as children of the living God and that is a wonderful humbling reality tonight.

So there's no sense in us sitting back leaving it to God or leaving it to others. We have to take an example from these early believers, this first century church that reached out, that turned the world upside down, that lived out what the Lord had worked in and they made Jesus known.

I endure that they may obtain. We too must cherish the church and do the work we are called to do in our day and in our age. Many passages in the New Testament deal with the nature of the church and how it is that the church is to conduct herself.

[25 : 07] By this of course I'm speaking to you and to me as Christians this evening. We've gathered in a place of worship but we know that the Bible and New Testament makes it clear that the church is not a building we are living stones.

We belong to Christ. We are called to worship together to nourish ourselves through the word and through sacraments and prayer. This is where we learn where understanding deepens and expands that it is those who are poor in spirit that inherit the kingdom of heaven.

And that's why Paul is so clear in other writings that we are to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the calling with which we have been called. Called from darkness to light.

Therefore as Jesus said let your light shine before men that they might glorify your father who is in heaven. And so I mentioned earlier that we are driven by an ethic of grace.

An ethic not of moral principles of course but principles that have at their heart the grace of the gospel. So we put Jesus first.

[26 : 20] We die to self to live for him. And this is very important especially in your situation this evening as a vacant congregation. You've been now 21 months going through this process.

It's been a privilege to be part of it with you. I wish it had been shorter. I wish it had been clearer. At times I know things could have been so much better. But the best of men are men at best.

And I hope you'll forgive my blunderings and my uncertainties as we've gone through just to get to this point. Where are we in this process? At this point in time we have had the speeches, we've had the election, we've had the votes, the votes are in, the counts have been done.

And now for you on Wednesday the next phase is just around the corner. Now I need to speak tonight specifically and particularly to the members of this congregation.

Let me say this to you gently and with all respect, you need to be here on Wednesday. If you're not here on Wednesday there are mandates available for you to take part in this process.

[27 : 26] That allows you to put your name to the call we hope to sign here on Wednesday evening. It's not me now that's telling you what to do. I'm pointing you to the ethic of grace.

I mentioned the election that's happened. All that we have to go on as a branch of the church of Christ when it comes to vacancies is numbers. We've had the vote and the numbers have been cast.

The clear majority said we wish to call Calamurdo. So what do we do now? How do we run with this? How do we deal with this? I'm going to turn now to where perhaps this ethic of grace is most clearly and famously spelt out.

How do we conduct ourselves perhaps at a time when you're challenged because things maybe didn't turn the way you'd hoped for? Well, so be it. That happens often in life, doesn't it? We don't allow our own sense of things to cloud our judgment at a time like this.

Let me read to you from Philippians in chapter two, how it is we are to conduct ourselves going forward with an eye to Wednesday in particular and this is for the members. If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and one mind.

[28 : 51] Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourself. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

of this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

There is the ethic of grace. Count others better than yourselves. Members, you need to be here on Wednesday. There is a clear responsibility and duty for you to be here.

I am not telling you to be here, but what I am doing is I am taking you to the scripture and I am presenting you with a word that says there is a time and a place where the church, where the believers and members of the church, the living stones, have to be gathered in together and conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the calling with which we have been called.

So there we have an ethic of grace in Philippians and when we turn forward to Paul's final letter, we find him enduring. He is bound with chains as a criminal. But he knows that is not the end.

[30 : 17] He knows that the word of God is going out, is going forth, is spreading. Therefore he endures for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Cherish your Lord, and your saviour, and cherishes church. Sometimes that means getting in line, getting together, working together, pulling together, and taking your part in what could be the next phase, the next season of ministry here among you as a congregation.

What an opportunity. At a time of real challenge, many of us, if we think back, will be hard pressed to find a time in our denomination where we've had so many vacancies to deal with.

Everybody's double-hatting. There are intermoderators and lay preachers crisscrossing our island every Sunday and sometimes on a Wednesday as well. And it's the same in the north of Scotland,

past that I have come from the past that I have come from the past that I have from the past that I have from the past that I have from the past that I have from the past that is to mention for a final time these mandate forms that I've been doing the rounds.

[37 : 32] If you're unable to be present and wish to be part of the call process on Wednesday night and you have yet to complete a mandate, please speak to an elder, get in touch with him yourself. We will get your mandate complete and it will be part of the process on Wednesday night.

Thank you. Thank you.