

Living For Jesus

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[0:00] God. We can sing to God's praise, first of all singing in the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 40 verses 1 down to verse 4.

It's on page 259 of the psalm books. Psalm 40 verses 1 down to verse 4, the psalm of salvation. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay. On a rock he set my feet, establishing my way. Psalm 40 verses 1 to 4, to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

A length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

[1:19] He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay.

And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify.

Many shall see it and shall hear.

And on the Lord rely. O blessed is the man whose cross upon the Lord relies, Respecting all the proud your sons.

[3:04] As turn the side to lies. Let's join together now in a word of prayer.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord God, we draw before you this new day, this new morning.

This fresh day you've given us to worship your name, to praise your holiness, To bring to our minds the great many and wonderful gifts you have given us as our God.

To bring to mind the reality that we are this very moment worshipping a holy, holy, holy God. The only true and living God.

The only God worthy of worship. The only God worthy of praise. Lord help us this day not to lose sight as to the holiness and the wonder and the beauty of the God that we approach to worship this morning.

[4:09] As we come and as we worship your greatness and worship your holiness, We are reminded so quickly as to our own smallness, our own weaknesses, our own frailty.

To worship you, the unchanging, unending God. You who control and sustain all things. Help us to come with a heart set for worship.

A reverent heart. A heart full of the wonder and the joy of worshipping and of knowing the Lord. Lord, we come before you this day, Lord, and we confess that we bring to this place many distractions, many burdens, many worries, many anxieties.

But many here in person, and perhaps those who are listening at home, that we bring to this place, we bring to this time of worship, So many things which weigh down in our mind.

Just things and things we must take care of and things we must worry about. We do ask that even for this short time together, this short time around your word, You would help us, Lord, to take these burdens and anxieties, these responsibilities and worries, And to lay them at the throne of grace, to take them to you.

[5 : 30] To at that throne find what you promise to give to those who come to you. Mercy and grace. We ask for that mercy, we ask for that grace for us this morning.

For those here with heavy hearts and broken hearts. Those here who are suffering, perhaps physically, perhaps mentally. Those here going through trials and circumstances that perhaps only you and they know about.

Those here who are mourning recent loss, but also those who are mourning a loss of many years ago, As anniversaries come and as they pass. Lord, we bring all these things to you.

We confess that we try and that we seek to do our best, But we confess that so often we find ourselves as such poor comforters. That we find our words falling so short and our actions feeling so small.

But we give you praise that where we perhaps fail, that you do not. In fact, you promise to give to your people the Holy Spirit. The one who himself is the ultimate comforter.

[6 : 37] We do pray that he would work in the lives of his people this day. He would bring them to that place again where they can praise you. And pray for those, Lord, who are not here today, but those who long to be here.

Those who love your people and those who love gathering with your people. But through illness or through age or for other various reasons cannot gather as often as they wish.

We ask that even this day you be with them. If it's your will, Lord, you would afford them a special sense of your presence. They would know that we are praying for them. That we remember them. That we love them.

We do bring before you, Lord, this congregation. We thank you for it. We thank you for the many years of witness you have enabled to come from this place. We pray for them especially just now as they look towards having a new assistant minister.

One who will assist in the leading, in the serving, in the worship. One who will lead in the pastoral and who will help in the pastoral side of ministry.

[7 : 44] Who will come alongside your people here. Who will preach the word to your people. Who will cry with your people. Who will laugh with your people. Lord, we ask you for him and his family just now, Lord.

We ask you bless them. Be with them. Lord, we ask for all the, as it were, behind the scenes practicalities. All the seemingly small bits and pieces.

Lord, we ask that even these things would come together. The practicalities of a moving house. The practicalities of moving family. We ask for them personally as a family.

You bless them spiritually. You bless them in their own walk with you. We pray again for the congregation that they leave behind. Lord, we ask you would bless that congregation.

You would comfort them as they lose, Lord, for a time at least, their pastor. We ask, Lord, that you would bring to them in your good time a new pastor. One who would lead them and who would guide them.

[8 : 41] Who would love them. Who would serve them. Lord, we give you praise, Lord, for the continuation of the gospel work. That your word does not fail. That you are still raising up people to go and share that gospel.

Lord, we do pray that for, again, this congregation, especially today. For any here today who have a burden to share the gospel. Whether in pastoral ministry. Perhaps in mission work. Locally in mission work.

Across our nation. Or mission work across the globe. We ask, Lord, you would help them to have that desire. And we pray, Lord, as hard as it is, we pray that that desire would not leave them.

That you would not give them rest as it were until they came to you and asked how they can serve you. We do give you praise, Lord, that we are at this very moment joining in with the worship of many.

Across this island. Across our nation. Across our world. We give you praise, Lord, for every gospel proclaiming congregation in this island. Lord, we give you praise. There are still many of them.

[9 : 43] We pray, Lord, for our brothers and sisters across our island. Across our nation. Across our world. We remember, as always, our dear brothers and sisters who love you as we love you.

And who worship you as we seek to worship you in spirit and in truth. But who must do so in situations which are difficult. Situations which are, at times, almost impossible.

Brothers and sisters who right now find themselves imprisoned. Who right now find themselves fearing for their lives, for the lives of their loved ones. Lord, you know their names.

You know their specific situations. We ask you to comfort them with the gospel comfort even this day. You draw alongside them. Those who dare to share the good news.

Those who are willing to lay their lives on the line to proclaim the good news that there is a Savior. That he has come and done all things necessary. That he is Savior.

[10 : 39] He is King. He is Lord of all. And who for that glorious truth face beatings. Face imprisonment. And we know at times face death.

Lord, help us to remember them in prayer. At the same time we ask you to give us wisdom to make the most of the freedom you have given us. Whilst we still have it. To be gentle but also to be bold as we proclaim the gospel.

So we can worship freely as we do just now. Lord, help us not to grow accustomed to this. Help us to understand that this is a privilege we have. That you allow us to worship together so openly for so many years now in our country.

Help us Lord to have wisdom. Help us to be bold witnesses of the gospel. Forgive us for all the times that we shy away from sharing the gospel. Forgive us for all the times to our shame that we have chosen not to share the gospel.

Whether through fear. Perhaps even embarrassment. For other reasons which mean nothing eternally. Lord, give us the wisdom. Give us that holy zeal. Give us that joy of the gospel.

[11 : 47] Help us to again refine and rekindle that first love. That through the work of the spirit he would open up our eyes to the scripture. To the beauty of our savior. The wonder of who he is. And what he has done for his people.

Help us to be revived ourselves personally first. To go out this new week. And to tell those around us as to the wonder of who Jesus is. As to the amazing news.

As to what he has done for those who love him. And the great promises that his people have for now and for eternity. We pray Lord for our beloved Lord.

A young folk who are meeting next door Lord. We pray for them. We thank you for them. We thank you Lord that you have week after week brought many out. We pray for their parents and their guardians and those who bring them out.

Those who love them and those who look after them. And we pray again Lord for those involved in youth work and Sunday school and creche. And Lord those involved working with the teenagers. And we then pray as we look forward this week to a meeting.

[12:52] Discussing work with perhaps Lord young adults. And those who are in twenties Lord and up to thirties Lord. We give you praise that all that will be done will be done for your namesake. And Lord for the sake of your glory.

We ask that this place will not be praised. That the free church will not be praised. That none of us will be praised. Or we ask that all that we do we seek to see your name praised.

Your name glorified. We pray for any here today who as of yet can't say that they know and love Jesus. Those here today who perhaps are here quite unwillingly.

Who are here to please a loved one. Who are here to tick off a box for their week. Who are here out of tradition. We thank you for them. We give you praise that they are here under your word.

Lord that they would know that we care for them. They would know that we love them. And they would know that we long to see them know you for themselves. Lord thank you this time together.

[13:51] We ask you would help us to not be distracted. Keep us Lord far away from sin. We confess that even this week and this day and this hour.

We have sinned against you. In our actions and our thoughts and our words. We have done and said and thought things against our holy God. And as we think of that reality.

Or we find ourselves feeling so overwhelmed. We give you praise that for those who know and who love Jesus. But we can know for certain.

This very moment we can know for sure. That though our sins are great. That though our darkness at times seems to overwhelm us. That the mercy of our Saviour covers all the sins of all his people.

That his love is greater than our disobedience. That his care and love for his people. That his care and love for his people. Is far greater than our ability to walk and to move away from him.

[14:53] But we have an obedient Saviour. How does his obedience to his Father. Came and died for his people. How does love for us. Did all that he did. And now reigns and rules at your right hand.

Help us to have our hearts and our minds set on him. Even this morning. Ask all these things in and through. And for his precious name's sake. Amen. Let's turn to God's word.

We can read in the book of Philippians. Philippians chapter 1. The book of Philippians chapter 1.

Let's hear the word of God.

Paul and Timothy. Paul and Timothy. Servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus. Who are at Philippi. With the overseers and deacons. Grace to you.

[16:03] And peace from God our Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God. And all my remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine. For you all.

Making my prayer with joy. Because of your partnership in the gospel. From the first day until now. And I am sure of this. That he who began a good work in you.

Will bring it to completion. At the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all. Because I hold you in my heart. For you are all partakers with me of grace.

Both in my imprisonment. And in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness. How I yearn for you all. With the affection of Christ Jesus.

And it is my prayer. That your love may abound more and more. With knowledge and all discernment. So that you may approve. What is excellent. And so be pure.

[17:01] And blameless. The day of Christ. Filled with the fruit of righteousness. That comes through Jesus Christ. To the glory and praise of God. I want you to know brothers.

What has happened to me. Has really served. To advance the gospel. So it has become known. Throughout the whole imperial guard. And to all the rest. That my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers. Having become confident in the Lord. By my imprisonment. Are much more bold. To speak the word. Without fear. Without fear. Some indeed preach Christ.

From envy. And rivalry. But others from good will. The latter do it. Out of love. Knowing that I am put here. For the defence of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ.

Out of selfish ambition. Not sincerely. But thinking to afflict me. In my imprisonment. What then. Only that in every way. Whether in pretense.

[17:58] Or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that. I rejoice. Yes. And I will rejoice. For I know that through your prayers. And the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

This will turn out for my deliverance. As it is my eager expectation. And hope. That I will not be ashamed. But that with full courage. Now as always. Christ will be honoured in my body.

Whether by life. Or by death. For to me. To live is Christ. And to die. Is gain. For I am to live in the flesh. That means fruitful labour for me.

Yet which I shall choose. I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart. And to be with Christ. For that is far better.

But to remain in the flesh. Is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this. I know that I will remain. And continue with you all. For your progress.

[18:57] And joy in the faith. So that in me. You may have ample cause. To glory in Christ Jesus. Because of my coming to you again. Only let your manner be worthy.

Of life be worthy. Of the gospel of Christ. So that whether I come. And see you. Or an absent. I may hear of you. You are standing firm. In one spirit. With one mind.

Striving side by side. For the faith of the gospel. And not frightened in anything. By your opponents. This is a clear sign. To them. Of their destruction.

But of your salvation. And that from God. For it has been granted to you. That for the sake of Christ. You should not only believe in him. But also suffer for his sake.

Engage in the same conflict. That you saw I had. And now hear. That I still have. We have praise to God. For his holy. And his perfect. Word.

[19:54] Let's again sing. To God's praise. Again singing. From a Scottish psalter. A Scottish psalter. And singing. At Psalm 84.

A psalm of belonging. A psalm. Reminds us. As God's people. That we are part. Of his glorious. Family.

Psalm 84. How lovely is thy dwelling place. O Lord of hosts to me. The tabernacles. All thy grace. How pleasant Lord they be.

My first day soul. Longs vehemently. Ye faints. Thy courts to see. My very heart. And flesh cry out. O living God. For thee. We can sing verses one.

Then the double marked. Verse three. Let's sing. To God's praise. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. How lovely is thy dwelling place.

[20:54] O Lord of hosts to me. The tabernacles of thy name. Let's sing. I.

Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Howommes. Know█████. femininos escenores. Ye fountains. Are plein things.

Nowtanas. Our nature. What believed was an art uniformity.

And their Scott, If things I go to see, my very heart and west cry out, O living God for Thee.

Behold, the sparrow findeth that an house wherein to rest, The sparrow also for herself hath purchased it unless.

[22 : 35] If Thine own altars will she stay, her young ones forth may bring.

O Thou Almighty, Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Amen. Verse 21, Philippians 1 and verse 21.

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. As we said, taking in really the whole chapter as a summary for ourselves this morning, because it is a summary, we can't touch on, let's say, half, a quarter, even the smallest part of the beauty, of course, of this chapter.

And the hope is that as we go through this chapter together, you would take perhaps the parts we looked at and go home and spend some time today and look again at this chapter and see how the glorious truth of this chapter is even more glorious than we have time to look at this morning.

[24 : 30] Looking at our text, we can look at it simply in the two halves our verses split into. Living for Jesus and dying for Jesus.

Perhaps even living for him and looking towards him. Living for him and looking towards him. Again, just a quick summary.

The church here in the city of Philippi. It's a young church, as most of the churches were. It's a new church, as most of these churches, of course, were.

We first, and we see the formation of this church in Acts 16. If you have time, please go and read Acts 16. A glorious chapter. Of course, we see, of course, the first conversion of Lydia.

And then the conversion of the girl possessed by spirits. And the conversion of the jailer. So Lydia and her family, the girl, and then the jailer and his family.

[25 : 37] All converted gloriously. And that's the start of the church in Philippi. That says how this congregation began its life. And here Paul is writing from prison to this young congregation.

In this letter, Paul has two main themes. He addresses plenty of things. He has two main themes for this young congregation. Joy in Jesus.

And encouragement in Jesus. Joy and encouragement. This young church who are serving the Lord in a city which was multicultural, which was vibrant.

A growing trade city. But a city where we see in Acts the gospel was hated. Where God and the message of our Savior was hated. Where the work of the gospel was hated to the point of violence.

This young church, these young Christians were facing a situation that was discouraging. That seemed impossible. And Paul's message to them is joy in Jesus.

[26 : 44] Encouragement in Jesus. Here we are a few thousand years later. I get a few hundred miles away. But it's the same for us, isn't it, this morning.

What do we need as Christians again and again? Again and again. We need that encouragement from the gospel. We need to be reminded of the joy we should get from the truth of our Savior.

And that's what we find in our text today in verse 21. We see that joy. And we see that encouragement. So as we look to our text, we can see it in two halves.

Living for him and looking towards him. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If we're honest, we tend to perhaps emphasize that the second half of that verse, that gives us more to dig into perhaps we say.

It gives us thoughts of heaven and thoughts of glory. And that's at times more exciting for us. It's not a bad thing. And we'll see that more later on. But the emphasis in the verse, the emphasis in the grammar, the emphasis in the context is the first half really of this verse.

[28 : 05] And we hope to give most of our time to the first half of the verse. For to me to live is Christ. In one sense, it's even more striking if we look at it in Greek.

The is has taken away. The is has been added for us to help us understand it. But Paul is much more enthusiastic. Quite literally, verse 21 says, For me to live Christ.

For me to live Christ. Paul was defined by his life dedicated towards, set towards living for his saviour, Christ.

For me to live Christ. Which are at least three or four areas we see in this chapter.

We see what it is for us to live as Christians. Where Paul gives examples. What does it look like for us to be like Paul and to live for Christ? Four examples for us in these verses.

[29 : 17] There's plenty more, but time limits us to four. And that's a good start for us. And again, take time this afternoon. There's at least seven examples I could see that point us towards living as Christians in this chapter.

But four is a good start for us for the time we have. So four ways this chapter points us, or Paul points us towards living for Christ.

How that looks, what it means. First of all, to live for Christ means to live as part of a gospel community. To live as part of a gospel community.

We see that in our first few verses. Verses 1 down to verse 5. We see it again later on in verses 27 and verse 28. Paul and Timothy, verse 1.

Servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons. The truth of Scripture again and again is there is no such thing as a Christian living and serving and growing in isolation.

[30 : 35] There's no such thing. All the promises that God gives his people are always in plural. It's always spoken to his people together.

Of course, there's exceptions where God is speaking to one individual. But the reality is, almost all the promises of the New Testament, all the promises to the church, and most of the promises of the Old Testament, are given to God's people.

Given to us as a people. Now, of course, God saves us as individuals. God knows us as individuals. God saw you. He saved you.

He set his love on you in eternity past. He set a time to save you. He saved you. He brought them to himself. That was done. Just you and God. The truth is, he saved you to be part of a wider gospel community.

And we see that again and again. Through all of New Testament. Through all of Paul's letters. Throughout this letter. Even the first few verses. This letter is for the gathered Christians.

[31 : 40] We see that. To all of us saints in Christ Jesus. I know this is known to most, not many of us. But, of course, in modern use, the word saints has been, we could say, with respect, ruined.

To some kind of holy order of Christians. It's not what Scripture gives us. But, of course, you are saints. Perhaps those who are close to you might argue about the fact.

But you are saints. You are saints. God calls you saints. His beloved people. That's all we have. That's all that means. To the beloved people in Christ Jesus.

Who are at Philippi. With the overseers and deacons. Overseers. There, it's the word we would get from elders, the leaders, and the deacons.

The promise of this letter. The promise of this letter. The hope of this letter. The truth of this letter is given to God's people as a collective.

[32 : 43] To grow as Christians. To serve well as Christians. To work well as Christians. We must do so together. The message of our living Savior is for all the church.

And we all need that reminder. We must pray and worship together. We must serve together. Scripture calls us to not the sons and daughters of God.

Those of us who know Jesus. Who love Jesus. We are sons and daughters. Adopted into his family. Well, a family doesn't work if one member does what they want. How they want.

It works best when all the family work together. The faith mission are down with us in South Loch. Now, we are camped up in Gary Vard. If you have a fast enough car, our last service is tonight at half seven.

But we meet together. And we meet together in a tent. And they ask to help us. We help them put the tent up. This tent holds, apparently, about 200 people. And the tent consists of aluminium beams and struts.

[33 : 56] Which go into the ground and, of course, join together. And these struts will go together and stand independently for quite a while. Long enough for the other struts to be placed beside them to keep them all together.

But these struts won't stay up by themselves. They'll stay up for a few minutes. Enough time to stick some rope and some pins to them. But after a few minutes, these struts will begin slowly.

Ever so slowly. But they will begin to fall. Dear friends, you cannot, dear brothers and sisters, you cannot be a Christian on your own. We must do so in community.

People will object to that and say, well, I'm quite happy on my own. I can worship on my own. I can pray on my own. Of course you can. And you should. But you will not grow on your own.

And we all know this personally, don't we? We all perhaps know in our own lives or see examples. When a Christian decides to do their own thing. And perhaps to leave God's gathered people.

[35 : 01] Ever so slowly. Ever so surely. We begin to drift. We begin to drift away. And drift away. We're saved to live and worship and serve together.

It's not easy, is it? At times. We are a church family. And families fall out. And to our shame, some of us, if we're honest, all of us at times are not particularly likable.

We do things. We say things. We act in ways that are not honoring to Christ. At times, like all family members, we annoy those around us. But that's not an excuse.

We must live and serve and worship together. Across our church. Across our denomination. Across the denominations. Across our island.

Across our nation. We must, if we can, help serve physically. If not, we must be engaged in prayer for the gospel cause across our world. We must have a wide outlook that we, this very moment, are part of the church of Christ.

[36 : 05] When someone is saved in his congregation. On paper, yes, Stormway Free Church grows by a member, perhaps. But more glorious and more beautiful than that.

When someone here comes to faith, the church of Christ across the world grows. We're all serving together. We're serving our brothers and sisters of different skin colors, different cultures, different ways and nationalities.

But we all serve our one Savior. We are saved to serve together. To be in gospel community. We see that again and again in this letter.

The promises, the peace, the love that's given to the people of God. Together. Joined together. Serving together.

And despite being spiritually good, there's also good practical reasons for that. And we see that in our second element here of what it is to live for Jesus.

[37 : 07] First of all, to live for Jesus is to serve together. Be part of gospel community. But second of all, to live and to serve Jesus. It means that we will, indeed we must, suffer.

We see that in verse 7. We see that in the last few verses. Verse 29 to the end.

To be a Christian means we must suffer for the sake of the gospel. There are some here who know that reality already.

Perhaps privately, quietly in their own lives. You have in some ways suffered for the sake of the gospel. You face ridicule. Perhaps even hatred.

Mocking from family members. Those who love you. Those who you love. Colleagues and so on. And we say, well our suffering of course is not the same as we prayed for. Brothers and sisters are being killed for the faith.

[38 : 07] And no it's not. In a sense we praise God. That's not a reality just now in our country. But the truth is, for us Christians, we must all suffer. And this is a theme again.

We see again and again throughout Paul's writings. Again and again throughout even this book. In our home lives. In our work lives. We will suffer for being Christians.

It comes with a reality. And the reality is we shouldn't be surprised. We shouldn't be surprised. For the second we begin to show an interest in our saviour.

For the second we begin to grow in our faith and our love for our saviour. The opposition begins. The suffering begins. As Paul makes clear to these Christians in Philippi.

In the same messages for us. The last few verses here. That when we suffer we do it for the sake of Christ. Verse 29. For it has been granted to you.

[39 : 08] That for the sake of Christ. You should not only believe in him. But also suffer for his sake. They would suffer great physical persecution.

The Christians in Philippi endured things. That we will never go willing to endure. But Christian. You will suffer for the sake of the gospel.

You will suffer for the sake of your saviour. Again many of you have been there already. And what sounds small. Is actually at times. Very very big in life of a Christian.

That ridicule of friends. That mocking of family members. It's hard. Colleagues perhaps. It's difficult. But for the sake of the gospel. It's what you would expect.

But also it's what Christ uses. In his wisdom. In his power. Jesus uses that. To help you grow in your faith. But also. As Paul says. It's a sign to those.

[40 : 04] Around us. To the unbelievers. That they mock us. And they will ridicule us. As we seek to be gentle in our reply. And to be kind in our actions.

To heap as they are with kindness. The coals of kindness on their heads. It's a sign to them. Of who we love. Who we worship. And who we serve. I don't know your stories.

I don't know this past week. I don't know that the home life you may have. Or the work life you may have. Or the friendship situations you might have. But God knows.

And dear Christian. If you are facing suffering. And persecution. And mockery at this time. Know that your saviour has been there before you. That's not just a trite thing.

That's a real thing. The Lord Jesus Christ. Fully God. And fully man. He suffered abuse. And mockery. And hatred. And we will too.

[41 : 03] But he's gone before us. He's felt it. He knows it. And he is there for you. As you face the same. In your life. To be a Christian is to gather together. To be part of gospel community. To love one ever. To serve one ever. To be a Christian is to be persecuted. And mocked. And ridiculed. And to suffer for your faith. To be a Christian is also to proclaim the gospel. And all that you are. And all that you do. To proclaim the gospel. We have this example in verses 15 to verse 18. Of a very complicated situation taking place in Philippi. And a few sermons. Even these verses alone. But for the sake of just summary. We see verses 15 to verse 18. That there was something taking place. We know in our context. That there were those who are preaching the gospel. For their own glory. For their own fame. There were those who claimed to be apostles. Who weren't apostles. And who claimed that for various reasons.

[42 : 06] Some of them were just very deceived. Others did it for material fame. And material gain. For praise. And for other reasons. The summary of these verses. Verses 15 to verse 18. Is that the gospel was being proclaimed. At times proclaimed for wrong reasons. At times proclaimed for good. Just reasons. What's Paul's summary. Of this complicated situation. In verse 18. What then? Only that in every way. Whether in pretense or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that. I rejoice. Without. The politics. Without getting into the politics of it all. And the complications of it all.

[43 : 00] Paul's outlook. And Paul's overview is. That Jesus is being proclaimed. Paul's whole life. His whole ministry. Was one. Of gospel proclamation. Of truly living. For the gospel. Every step he took. Every action he took. Was somehow. Gospel. Centred. Paul was a sinner. Like us. Paul made mistakes. Like us. Paul faltered. And failed. Like us. But the overall arch of his life. Was pointed towards. Jesus. He strove. Every day. In every way. To be. Like his saviour. And to serve. His. Saviour. Dear friends. Our life. Must be a life. Of gospel. Proclamation. And to know Jesus. To know Jesus. Is to love him.

[43 : 55] Isn't it? And to love him. Is to want to talk. About him. That's true for us. Isn't it? In terms of our own. Earthly relationships. With our loved ones. We enjoy talking about our loved ones. To other people. How much often. The angel I listen to. Has gone about them. Is in everything. But we enjoy talking. About our loved ones. Telling them. The news of our loved ones. How they're doing. What they're doing. What they're like. Well how much more. Should that be the case for us. When we want to talk. And share. And think. About our saviour. To know Jesus. Is to love him. And to love him. Is to want to talk. About him. To share. The good news. Of who he is. What he has done. For his people. What he promises. To do for us. What it means. To have our faith. And our hope. Placed. In him. Now not for a second. Brothers and sisters.

[44 : 52] Do we think. Or do Paul think. Or do we say. That somehow. God needs us. To accomplish his plan. His will. He doesn't need us. God needs. Nothing from anyone. But God. In his perfect plan. His wisdom. Uses. His people. He has chosen. His own wisdom. For his own purposes. To make use. Of his. Saved people. To accomplish. His perfect. Plans. And dear brothers and sisters. That includes. You. It includes. Everyone here. Who knows. And who loves. The saviour. You are part. Of God's plan. From oldest. To youngest. In faith. Those here. Who feel. The strongest. Those here. Who feel. The weakest. You are part. Dear brother. Dear sister. If you know. And love your saviour. You are part. Of his plan. To go back. To the tent again. So these big struts.

[45 : 47] Are holding the tent up. And getting hard. These big. And pretty heavy. Lumps of metal. What holds. Them together. What is part. Of their structure. It's not giant. Boats. At all. More. Worryingly. For us. We sit underneath it. On a windy day. Is hundreds. Of tiny. Wee pins. Tiny. Wee pins. Which click in. And keep this tent. Up. The wind we had. A few days ago. In Gravard. It kept the tent up. It moved. It swayed. But it's still there. Hundreds of wee pins. Wee bolts. Wee screws. That go together. It keeps the tent. Up. It's a precious. And important part. Of a tent. Dear brother. Dear sister. You are here. This day. To worship your saviour. And you have a place. And a purpose. In the gospel proclamation. Whose job is it. To share the gospel.

[46 : 42] Who's qualified. To share the gospel. Today. Is it those of us. Who have spent years. Studying. Theology. And history. Those of us. Who. At least. Have some. Knowledge. Of the original languages. Are we somehow. Qualified. To share the gospel. More than you. Well no. Not in the slightest. Qualified. In a worldly sense. Perhaps qualified. In a. An academic sense. Maybe. But called. And qualified. Scripturally. Spiritually. No. Dear brother. Dear sister. You. You. Are called. To be part. Of the gospel proclamation. You are called. To share the good news. To share the gospel.

[47 : 37] To be like Paul. And to take joy. In all you do. In all you are. To share. That gospel. We see that from verse 1. Don't we? This letter is addressed. To the overseers. To the deacons. But also. First and foremost. To all the saints. All the saints. Ministers. And elders alike. We all. With one mind. Serve. Our saviour. And seek to see his name. Glorified. And praised. And like Paul. Our hope is that we find our joy. And find our fulfillment. In seeing Christ. Worshipped. Christ loved. Christ's name being glorified. Whether in pretense or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that. I rejoice. A life serving together. A life facing suffering.

[48 : 36] A life proclaiming the gospel. Every one of us. We sang in Psalm 84. Didn't we? The psalm of. Even the smallest of the birds. Finding their home in God's temple. That glorious image for us. That we have a place. Dear Christian. You have a place in God's family. You have a purpose. In God's plan. That's not just some airy. The airy thing. That's a gospel. Scriptural reality. He has given you. Gifts. And qualities. To be able to serve in a way. That those beside you cannot do.

And make sure to make use of those gifts and abilities he has given you. Gospel living. Gospel suffering. Gospel proclamation.

And finally. A life all about. Jesus. A life lived for Jesus. A life lived for Jesus. Take the whole chapter of that text.

[49 : 32] But taking as a verse for that. Verse 20. Second half of verse 20. Paul says. With full courage. Now as always.

Christ will be honored in my body. Whether by life. Or by death. A life lived for Jesus. A life lived for Jesus. Looks like Jesus being preeminent.

Being first in everything we do. And think. And say. Even in opposition. Christ. Is all.

For Paul. From a prison cell. Chained. Quite literally. Chained where he was on the ground. He still says. That Jesus is everything. And all things for him.

Jesus is everything. And all things for him. Whether in his life. Or in his death. For all time. In all ways.

[50 : 34] Dear brothers and sisters. We confess that. In our actions. This week. In our words. This week. In our thoughts. This week. Christ has not been preeminent. And we know that.

And we understand that. And we. We know to be true of all the Christians here. Paul was an apostle. Yes. But as we said. Paul was not sinless. Dear Christian.

You are called. To serve. And to serve. Your master. You are called. To follow. And to follow. Your master. You are called. To make your whole life. About.

Jesus. How do you do that? How do we. Act out. The verse we have here. How do we make sure. That we can say like Paul. That in our life.

And in our death. That Jesus is all that we have. And all that we are. Is the answer to know more. To learn more. Well it's not a bad thing. Is the answer to pray more.

[51 : 31] Okay. Not a bad thing. Is the answer to attend. And to. To dig into the theology of things more. Or. Again. Not a bad thing. Is the answer to act more Christian.

To look more Christian. How do we become. Better Christians. More faithful Christians. Christians. The answer is simple. And we all know it. The answer is not.

How do I. Become. A better Christian. Do I look to myself. No. How do I serve Jesus better. How can I change.

How can I do this. How can I do that. And we all do that. But the reality is. There's one answer. It's Jesus. You look to him more. You rely on him more.

You trust in him more. You come to him more. You love. And seek to love. And serve. And worship. Him more. Together. As Christians.

[52 : 28] We come together. To worship him more. To love him more. In your suffering. In your pain. You go to him. More. And more. As you seek to see. And to save.

And to point those around you. To salvation. To point those around you. Who are dying. In their sins. Who have no care for Jesus. You take these things. To him more. And more.

The gospel. Is always less of us. And more of him. That goes the same for us. As living as Christians. Christians. We grow. As Christians. By being less of us.

And more of him. The formula is simple. The gospel is simple. We muddy it. We complicate it. But it's always less of us.

And more of him. In summary. That's what it is. To live. For Jesus. To have him first. It's not for us. To try harder.

[53 : 24] And to look better. And to act better. All these things. Are surface level. And they're fake at times. If we're honest. But we strive. To put Jesus first. In all ways.

At all times. We become more. And more like him. That sanctification. Takes place. In the background. Doesn't it? That slow work of the spirit. Making us more like our savior.

Dear brother. Dear sister. That is happening. In your life today. You're becoming more. And more like your savior. You think. Well that's. How can you say that? You stand up there.

You don't know. The week I have had. The day I have had. The year I have had. The amount of ways. I have made a mess of things. I mean. The embarrassment of myself. The way I've sinned. The nonsense I've done.

How can you say. I'm being made more. And more like Jesus. You can say it. And you can. Proclaim it. Dear Christian. And you can hold on to it. Dear Christian. With confidence. The scripture tells us.

[54 : 20] From the day of your salvation. To the day of your death. The Holy Spirit. Is working in your life. Making you more. And more. Like your savior.

So that each day. You can say more and more. For me. To live. Christ. As we said. Very very briefly. What does it mean then.

For us to die. As Christians. If living for him. Means looking towards him. What does it mean for us. To die. As Christians. And to die.

Is. Gain. It's good for us. As Christians. To think about heaven. It's good for us. As Christians. To think about what comes. After. But what the future holds.

What our eternal future. Holds for us. As believers. It's healthy for us. It's good for us. Our savior. Has gone before us.

[55 : 17] To prepare a place. For us. And we know that. And we love that. And we hold on to that truth. Very briefly. We have to say. That there's some things. That. That. Heaven is not.

First of all. It's not just. Some. With respect. Aery. Unknowable. Place. Where things. Float around. And. Where our culture.

Presents heaven to us. But at the same time. Heaven is also not. Fully revealed. And fully knowable. By us. It can't be. It can't be.

But a God in his glory. And God in his love. Has revealed to us. Some core. And beautiful truths. About what awaits. His people. In glory. What does.

The Christian. Look forward to. What is the gain. That Paul talks about. In. This. Verse. What gain. Was there for Paul. In that prison cell. As he awaited his death.

[56 : 16] We can spend. Another two or three hours. And plenty more. After that. Looking at the reality. Of what the scripture says. About heaven. And we. Have plenty of verses. And sections. For us.

Which talk all about. The. Eternity of the Christian. We give praise to God. That. In his goodness. He has given to us. Over the years. Given to his church. Gatherings. And groups.

Where these things. Are discussed. And of course. One of these. Discussions. Resulted in us. For the. Confession of faith. And the catechism. Of course. We all know this. This is our. Subordinate standard.

Scripture is God's word. Scripture is inspired. Scripture is perfect. The catechism. The confessions. They are helpful. They are good. They are beneficial. Not inspired. Not perfect.

But God in his glory. Gives us these things. And they help us summarize. What scripture says. And for the sake of. Of brevity. This morning. As we ask. What does the future.

[57 : 09] Look like. What does the future. Hold for the Christian. We can look simply. At two of the catechism. Answers and questions. Catechism. Question.

37. What benefits. Do believers. Receive from Christ. Rest. At death. The answer being.

The souls. Of believers. Are at their death. Made. Perfect. In holiness. And do immediately. Pass. Into glory. And their bodies.

Being still. United. To Christ. Do rest. In the graves. Until the resurrection. Rest in the grave. Until.

Resurrection. What gain. Was Paul waiting for. What gain. Is there. For the believers. Here today. Dear brother. Dear sister. What gain. Is there. For us. In heaven. What does scripture.

[58 : 06] Tell us. Takes place. When you or I die. Instant. Perfection. All the sin. All the rubbish. All the dirt.

All the darkness. That clings to us. So deeply. It's removed. Instant. Perfection. Instant. Glory. We are there.

In the presence of our saviour. In the presence of our God. Instant unity. We could say. For lack of a better term.

The distance that. Exists. In some sense. Between us and God. It's now then. Physically. Almost gone. We no longer. As I were. See through that glass. Darkly.

Do we? We. We're there. In the presence. Of our God. But still. Waiting. For the body. Still waiting.

[59 : 02] For the day. Of resurrection. Resurrection. Resurrection. Resurrection. Resurrection. Question 38. What benefits. Do believers receive. From Christ. At the resurrection.

On the final day of judgment. When God raises his people. Up from the grave. What awaits us. What is our hope that day. What is our joy. That day. At the resurrection.

Believers. Being raised up. In glory. Shall be openly. Acknowledged. And acquitted. In the day of judgment. And made. Perfectly. Blessed. In the full.

Enjoying. Of God. To all eternity. What is our gain. On the day of judgment. Full acquittal.

We are rescued. From judgment. Christ has done the work for us. We are rescued. From. Eternal. Judgment. Even more than that.

[60 : 02] We are reunited. With. Our glorious. New. Bodies. Sin. Gone. Physical. And mental. Pain. Gone. Destruction. Gone. Glorious. Eternal. Bodies. And we rest. And enjoy. God.

For all eternity. Dear brother. Dear sisters. This. Is. Our. Future. This. Is. What we look. Towards. Lords. This is what we. Long.

To gain. This is what Paul. Has now. Gained. This moment. We say this moment in time.

That doesn't work for heaven. Does it? But for us. Humanly. In time. And in space. At this moment. Paul. Is. In the presence. Of the one. He served. And he loved.

[60 : 56] The loved ones. Whose pews. Are now empty. Whose spaces are empty. And his pews. Have gone to glory. They are now in the presence. Of their saviour. Awaiting that day.

Awaiting that final day. When for all time. The Christians here. And the Christians there. Together. In new heavens.

And new earth. Worshipping our saviour. This is our hope. Isn't it? This morning. And the question. And it's. You can see. Almost the obvious question. But it's a pressing question.

It has to be asked. And believe me. There's no joy. In asking this. You sat the last hour. And heard all it is.

To be a believer. To love Jesus. To serve Jesus. To know Jesus. To be known. And loved by him. We then heard briefly. What it is. To know that at the end of your days.

[61:51] You'll go to be with your saviour. And at the end of the days. Be with him. Body and soul together. Perfectly. For all time. All this is good.

Encouraging news for believers. Here today. Isn't it? That's what gives us joy. And hope. This new week. But the question has to be asked. If. As of yet.

You can't say that you know Jesus. That you love Jesus. That your hope is in Jesus. Then what do you hope to gain? What do you live for?

Paul could say. For me to live. Christ. The Christians here. We can say. Despite all our failings. We can still say. For us to live. Is Christ.

Christ. Dear friends. What are you living for? Only you can actually answer that question. What are you living for?

[62:47] I said this before here. But it's a big building. If you're playing the game. Of the minister isn't looking at me. So. He can't be talking about me. Then that game doesn't work.

The answer is. This minister is blind. I can't see. My contacts aren't that good. I can't see you. Well. But God sees you. God knows you. And the question applies to you.

Again and again. What are you living for? What is your purpose? What is your plan? Even more than that. To your friends. And we do call you friends.

Because we love you as friends. What do you hope to gain. At the end of your days? The Bible is clear. Scripture is clear.

Heaven is the gain for those who know Jesus. And who love him now. Who worship him now. But if you don't worship him now. You will never worship him at the end.

[63:49] You'll never see him at the end. He won't call you a good and faithful servant. He won't as it were. Take you in his arms at the end.

If you don't know him now. Or love him now. Or worship him now. He will never know you at the end of the days. Now this is heavy.

And this is real. We don't say this to. Somehow frighten you into the kingdom. We say this to say to yourself. A second. What am I living for?

What is my hope? You're here just now with breath in your lungs. Of life. God has given you this day to come to him. And it is our humble prayer.

And it would be our greatest joy. If you would come to him. Come to Jesus. Come and have him as your saviour. Come and serve him as your Lord. Be like Paul.

[64:47] Come to him and save him. That you want to have him. As the one you live your life for. Who will not let you down. Who will not give you up.

Come and know what it is to have him as the one you are looking towards. For your end. The one who promises to his people. He will never leave us. Nor forsake us. And the one who has promised us.

His people. That he has gone to prepare a place for us. To one day. Take us home. To be with himself. Don't waste any more time.

You're wasted up to this point in your life. You haven't come yet. Come. Come and know what it is to save. That to live is Christ.

And to die is gain. Let's bow our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord God we ask you to go before us. The rest of this day. Help us even as we come to sing. Our final item of praise.

[65:45] To do so of hearts and minds. Set on you. Lord we ask you to forgive anything that was said. Not in accordance to your word. To give you praise. That the power is in your word. Not in the jars of clay.

Or to stand up here. We ask you to bless your people here today. Encourage us as we look forward. To the eternity spent. With our saviour. Help us in the meantime Lord.

To live lives that glorify him. That honour him. That praise his name. Let's go all these things in and through and for Christ's name's sake. Amen. Let's conclude by singing.

And sing psalms. Sing psalms. And psalm 16. It's on page 17 of the psalm books.

Sing psalms. And psalm 16. We can sing verses 8. Down to verse 11. These of course are words which in one sense truly and fully apply to our saviour.

[66 : 50] These are also words which because our saviour lives. The Christians here. We can sing these words and know they apply for us. Because he lives we will live with him. And through him.

Psalm 16 verse 8. Before me constantly. I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand. I'll not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad.

My tongue with joy will sing. My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering. Verses 8 to the end. To God's praise. Christ. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Before me constantly. I set the Lord alone.

Because he is at my right hand. I'll not be overthrown.

[67 : 52] Therefore my heart is glad. My tongue with joy will sing.

My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

For you will not allow my soul in death to stay.

Nor will you leave your holy one. To see the tombs decay.

You have made known to me. The path of life divine.

[69 : 02] Blessed shall I know. At your right hand. Joy from your face will shine.

Let's close with an addiction. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

For with you now and forevermore. Amen.