

Convinced by the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] 106, Psalm 106, and this is on page 140, so it's a Sing Psalms version. We're going to sing verses 1 to 10.

Praise the Lord, extol His goodness, for His love endures always. Who can tell His mighty actions, or in full declare His praise? Blessed are those whose way is right, acting justly in His sight.

When You show Your people favor, then, O Lord, remember me. Help me when You come to save them, let me know prosperity. Joyful with Your chosen race, joining them and giving praise.

And so on through to verse 10, Psalm 106. Praise the Lord, extol His goodness. Praise the Lord, extol His goodness, for His love endures always.

Praise the Lord, extol His goodness, for His love endures always. Who can tell His mighty actions, or in full declare His praise?

[1 : 17] Blessed are those whose way is right, acting justly in His sight.

When You show Your people favor, then, O Lord, remember me.

Help me when You come to save them, let me know prosperity.

Joyful with Your chosen race, joy in heaven and giving praise.

We have sinned just like our fathers. We have done what was not right.

[2 : 26] When our fathers wed in Egypt, with His might, your deeds of might.

All you have made, Lord, at the reds, He's burned the Lord.

Yet for His sins saved He saved them, and rebuilt His mighty hand.

By His word the sea He parted, led them through us on dry land.

From the land of the foe set free, rescued from the enemy.

[3 : 40] Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's all join together in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, help us to approach You in that right spirit, that right frame of mind.

Help us to come before You, not because it is our custom to do so, though it is so. Help us to come before You, O Lord, not even because we know it is the right thing for us to do.

Lord, help us to come before You with desire, with relish, with happiness that we are here in the presence of God. Help us, we pray, to enjoy our time in worship.

And to do so, O Lord, in a way that realizes in You the wonder of Your forgiveness, of Your acceptance of us, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We approach You, O Lord, on the basis of all that He is for us, on the basis of His accomplished righteousness, which alone is able to give us a standing in Your presence, but which is so full and replete that we need nothing else in order to be righteous in Your presence.

[4 : 53] We thank You, Lord, today for the way in which Your Word so clearly brings to us the account of our own sinfulness, against the provision that You have made in righteousness and in forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, help us ever to realize both of these aspects of our need before You, that we are needy sinners, that we are lost sinners.

We cannot produce a righteousness ourselves that will be acceptable to You, and yet You require righteousness of us. We thank You for the provision, Lord, that You have made, that You have made Your dear Son, the one who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Help us today to marvel at the wonder of this. That this is what You have done as a holy and righteous God, that You have not marked our iniquity against us, that You have not treated us the way we deserve, Lord, the way we sometimes treat one another.

You have treated us in mercy. You have come toward us in the provision of life. You have brought to us, O Lord, a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

[6 : 14] We pray today that He may be made precious to us, even if we have already known Him and do know Him as a precious Savior.

May that sense of preciousness be deepened today. Speak to any here, O Lord, who still don't know Him as a Savior, who have not yet accepted fully the offer of the Gospel, and come to receive Jesus for themselves.

We pray today, O Lord, that You would work in their hearts, that You would give them the power of Your Holy Spirit to draw them to Yourself, to bring them to come to confess their sin and their need of salvation, and to come to enjoy the provision of such in Your forgiveness.

Bless today, we pray, all the gatherings of Your church throughout the world. Lord, we realize that many people today gather in the same name of Jesus. We give thanks, Lord, that we come along with them to recognize that You are worthy of such worship as we offer You today.

We pray that those in very different circumstances to ours, especially those who are so affected by war, by terrorism, by the fear that is instilled through such events and such conditions.

[7 : 36] Lord, we pray for Your people in these different parts of the world, and we ask that You would draw near to them to encourage them, to strengthen them, and to give them that which You alone are able to give, and a continued resolve to trust in You, and a continued resolve to resist the attempts of the evil one, to say that if God were real, You would not allow such things to happen.

Help us also, Lord, to face such criticism and such opinions in our day, and enable us to bring people in our response to accusations against You.

Help us to bring them to the cross, for this is the God we present, the God we love, the God we know, the God who instead of marking up our sin against us, and rejecting us forever as we deserve, instead placed His own Son in our place, that He might die that death which we deserved, and that through resurrection from the dead, He might bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Bless, we pray today, those who need You. In special circumstances, Lord, we ask that all those who are unable to be with Your people today physically will be blessed. All those who are prevented by illness, by injuries, by various circumstances, that prevent them gathering together as they would like with Your people.

Remember those who belong to our own number, Lord, in that regard. Remember, too, those who continue to mourn the passing of loved ones. We ask that You would bless them, bless those who are waiting and have been waiting for some time, for the funeral of those that have departed.

[9 : 22] Lord, remember them, we pray, and continue to uphold them and to bless them, and to grant them the strength of Your Holy Spirit. Remember, we pray also our church at this time, our denomination, as we look forward to various events over the coming weeks and months.

We pray that You would bless those who are preparing for the General Assembly that takes decisions affecting all our congregations. Remember them, Lord, we pray, in their preparations.

Remember, too, O Lord, our mission meeting this coming week. We pray that it may stimulate us to engage further in mission. And we pray for Manuel, as he comes to speak to us of his work in Spain, that You would grant him Your blessing while he is here in the island.

We pray for the work of street pastors in our locality and in other places throughout our land. We pray for those we know ourselves here locally who are involved in the work of street pastors going out on various nights of the week and seeking to help people as they come across them in distress and in need.

Uphold them, we pray. Protect them. Use them, Lord, we pray, to bring benefit and help to those that they seek to minister to. And we ask that You would bless our young people.

[10 : 41] Protect them, Lord, we pray. Shield them about with Your own care and love. And as they are taught of Your ways, O Lord, we pray that You would establish them in Your ways, that You would protect them from all the evil influences that surround us in this world.

And we ask that the love and the teaching and the concern of parents prayerfully before You might truly be answered in Your blessing. And we ask that You would continue to bless us here in our locality.

Bless all who have particular places of importance and influence in our society. Remember them, Lord, we pray, as they take decisions that affect us all, especially at the higher levels of government.

We commend them to You once again. And we pray that You would continue now to bless us here in this service of worship. Guide us into Your truth, we pray. And all we ask is with the forgiveness of all our sins, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Let's read now from John's Gospel, New Testament and the Gospel of John. reading chapter 16 and verses 1 to 15.

[12 : 01] Gospel of John chapter 16, beginning at verse 1 through to verse 15, as you know. This is part of the teaching that Jesus gave the disciples in what's called the Upper Room.

These verses, these chapters 15 to the end of 17, and, sorry, 14 to the end of 17, before He then went out to face His trial and subsequent crucifixion.

So in chapter 16, we read at the beginning, I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you.

I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to Him who sent me. And none of you asks me, Where are you going?

[13 : 08] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away.

For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. Therefore I said, that He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

[14 : 21] Amen. And may the Lord once again follow that reading with His blessing. Let's turn again to praise the Lord, this time in Psalm 65. Psalm number 65, on page 82, singing verses 1 to 5.

In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray. When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, you pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. With awesome deeds of righteousness, you answer us, O God, our Savior, hope of further seas and all the earth abroad.

These verses, In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord.

To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near.

[15 : 50] To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray.

When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, You pardoned all our trespasses.

You pardoned all our trespasses. You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your house.

We're filled with blessings in your house. We're filled with blessings in your house.

[17 : 08] We're filled with blessings in your house. We're filled with blessings in your house. blessings in your eyes in your most holy place with awesome deeds of righteousness you answer us O God our Savior hope of far the seas our Savior hope of far the seas and all the earth abroad now if you would turn with me please to the passage of scripture we read in john chapter 16 today we're looking at verses 8 to 11 john 16 and beginning at verse 8 this is jesus talking about the helper who is the holy spirit the spirit of truth as he refers to him in verse 16 when he comes he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment concerning sin because they do not believe in me concerning righteousness because i go to the father and you will see me no longer concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged well we can safely say that the coming of the son of god when he came into this world by taking our human nature to himself and the coming of the holy spirit as you find that described in act chapter 2 what happened on the day of pentecost the coming of the son of god the coming of the spirit of god were really the two definitive events in the history of the world the only other event that you could say is of like nature to that is the coming of christ again his return on the great day of judgment and here in this passage jesus is anticipating the coming of the holy spirit that you find described in acts chapter 2 by referring to that in this way he speaks of the spirit of truth the helper the old translations had comforter all of these meanings are built into the words that jesus uses the holy spirit is the helper he is the comforter he is the spirit of truth he is the spirit of god and of course the holy spirit like jesus himself is god we worship this god who is three persons in one god in the mystery of that trinity that we believe though we cannot but understand but a small amount of it that's what the bible reveals to us and we believe that because that's how god has described himself well the coming of the holy spirit here is described by jesus as having this effect when he comes he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment the world there means people like you and i the world the world in the sense of being estranged from god the world in the guilt of sin the world really being human beings that have rebelled against god that's the kind of people that jesus came to save

there were no other types anyway and so for you and for me today it's describing what we are ourselves by nature we are the world until jesus comes and changes that and brings us to know himself to be his saints and that's what the spirit of god here in the ministry of the spirit is described as doing now the holy spirit was already in the world in creation before he came so definitively on the day of pentecost you read way back at the beginning of the bible in genesis chapter 1 verse 2 that the spirit of god moved upon the face of the waters god's creation of the heavens and the earth the earth was void it was without form and void it needed to be shaped but until that happened the spirit of god moved on the face of the waters holding all things together until god said let there be light and he fashioned the other parts of the creation we're now so aware of in this world especially and you can find also in the old testament that the spirit of god is described sometimes as coming upon people david for example in first samuel chapter 16 the spirit of god came upon him from that day onwards but that's how the old testament tends to describe the spirit of god in the world in regard to god's people he came upon them he came upon samson spirit of god actually came upon different personalities different people throughout the ages of the old testament but it's only when you come to the new testament it's only when you come to what happened after jesus had come and died and risen again and gone back to heaven that you find the holy spirit coming permanently to dwell in the hearts of god's people and now that's anticipated in the old testament for example you go to ezekiel and in ezekiel chapter 36 you find a wonderful description of days of blessing that lie ahead from the perspective of the old testament where god is saying to the people of israel there that he is going to bring them together to bring them to know himself chapter 36 of ezekiel and verse 27 there where he's saying i will take you from the nations i will gather you to from all the countries and bring you to your own land i will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols i will cleanse you and i will give you a new heart and a new spirit i will put within you i will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and i will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules that's an anticipation a prophecy of the coming of the holy spirit that would take place in the new testament and of course when you go to john itself john's gospel and chapter 7 you'll find a very significant passage in chapter 7 at verse 37 where jesus is saying on the last day of the feast jesus stood and cried if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not yet been given because jesus was not yet glorified you see what that is saying to us that it required first of all jesus to come into the world the son of god to die on the cross to rise from the dead to be glorified to return to heaven from where he came

that's what he's saying in this chapter in chapter 16 as well he's going back to the father only then only after that is he speaking of the spirit of god coming the way that he came on the day of pentecost and the spirit's own work is what is described here by jesus in verses 8 to 11 now we need to look at a couple of words and the meaning of these words before we enter more fully into the verses he says here he will convict and he's saying he'll convict the world of righteousness of sin righteousness and judgment so the convicting is to do with sin and with righteousness and with judgment it follows into these three categories and the word convict is probably not the best translation though it can mean that the word convince will probably carry the meaning of it better for us he will convince the world and when you go back to chapter 8 the word is used with regard to what jesus himself said to those who were seeking to find fault with him chapter 8 verse 46 where jesus said which of you convicts me of sin he's really saying which of you can present an argument and convince that I am a sinner that I have sinned that I am wrong so that convincing really the same word is used exactly as here when he comes he will convince the world concerning sin concerning righteousness concerning judgment he will convince in the sense of successfully persuading you might say of these three matters he will successfully or powerfully persuade the world of these three issues and you notice the connection in each of these cases with the work of jesus himself he will persuade the world concerning sin because they don't believe in me concerning righteousness because I go to the father concerning judgment because the ruler of this world the devil is judged and you can see how specific that is as well the word because are words concerning there really means specifically about this and in other words he is saying when he comes he will convince the world specifically concerning sin because they believe not specifically because specifically concerning the fact that they don't believe in me specifically concerning relating to the fact that I go to the father specifically concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged in other words all that jesus is saying here about the work of the holy spirit is keyed into his own work but it's keyed into his person it's keyed into what we make of the truth concerning jesus that's what the holy spirit and the holy spirit's work of convincing us is really about so let's look at these three issues in turn when he comes he will convince the world concerning sin because they do not believe in me we need to be convinced concerning sin why is that well for one reason is because sin and because our sinfulness prevents us from realizing that for ourselves one of the things that has happened in our fallenness in adam is that we don't realize exactly what our need is about we don't realize the seriousness of our lost condition we don't realize the sinfulness of our lost condition we don't realize the seriousness of not believing in jesus of not accepting jesus and the consequences of not accepting jesus you see one of the sins

one of sins effects is that our minds have become numbed you might say to the truth of god when you cut a nerve in your hand or wherever it is i cut this thumb many years ago with a piece of glass right across here had to go away and get the nerve put back together again but there's still a numbness there when i do that i don't feel anything in that specific spot and our minds our souls have become numbed to the seriousness of sin to the seriousness of our lostness to the seriousness and the criminality if you like in the face of god of not believing in jesus of not accepting the provision that god has made for us in jesus and the spirit of god comes to exactly that point where he convinces us of our sin and especially our sin in not believing in jesus and of course believing in jesus in this context and a lot of other contexts in the teaching of the bible means more than believing things about him when jesus is saying here he will when he comes convince the world concerning sin because they do not believe in me that's equivalent to not accepting him it's equivalent to rejecting him it's equivalent to not embracing him i remember the words of the catechism and catechism 31 that was one of the catechisms we uh well certainly when i was a youngster you dreaded being asked in sunday school to repeat catechism 31 it was the longest and uh it's effectual calling how we come to be savingly united with jesus and what does it say what is our effectual calling it is the work of god's spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery enlightening our minds in the knowledge of christ and renewing our wills he doth persuade and enable us to embrace jesus christ that's the work of the spirit of god he persuades and he enables he convinces of our sin especially in regard to not believing in christ when you're convinced you see of of the merits of jesus of the worth of jesus of how jesus deserves that your faith is placed in him of how jesus deserves that you accept him as god's great gift of a savior when you're persuaded that that jesus has that merit that he deserves this to say nothing else then you're persuaded that not believing in him is a serious business if god has as he has provided this savior for us then not accepting him not closing in with him not in the words of the catechism embracing him is the most serious thing you can do because it's tantamount to rejecting the love of god the mercy of god the gift of a savior on god's part to us who are undeserving of it so you see that's so important that today we're being taught by this passage that this is the work of the holy spirit and that we need this work of the holy spirit in our lives in my heart in your mind in your life to persuade us to actually convince us about our sin that it is something so serious that only the remedy that's in jesus will do for it nothing else is going to meet your need today as a sinner the way this is and indeed the spirit

of god as we said earlier persuades us of the criminality of rejecting him it's as if god is and god is indeed saying this is the highest guilt this is something that places you in the category of being so clearly guilty because here is something that's so wonderfully shown in the gospel the provision of a savior do i need him of course i need him can i produce what he has produced for myself of course i can't i am a sinner i'm a lost sinner i'm an unrighteous sinner i'm a sinner incapable of creating the righteousness as we'll see in a minute that god requires of me that god himself is calling for but i don't need to create it for myself and when i try and create it for myself the holy spirit when he convinces me this way will turn me away from myself to jesus and will say that's what you need there is your there is your salvation there is your provision there is forgiveness for your sins there is the answer to your guilt convinces because this is what the spirit does he will convince the world concerning sin on account of or specifically in relation to the fact that they do not believe in me and you know when you actually don't accept jesus when that sin of not accepting jesus let's be clear that's what the bible is telling us here to reject him not to accept him is a sin on your part and mine and when that sin is still in place then every other sin is unforgiven it's logical isn't it if i haven't placed my trust in christ which is the way that god actually sets before me as the way to salvation the way to forgiveness the way to righteousness

[35 : 23] I need to trust in Christ first that's the root that's the key that's the entrance point so unless I've done that no other sin on my part can be forgiven or is forgiven I need first of all first and foremost to accept Christ to receive God's gift in Him then everything else follows on from that and it's the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us concerning sin in regard to the fact that we do not believe ourselves as we are in Jesus secondly he talks about the Holy Spirit convincing us of righteousness see what he's saying here specifically in regard to righteousness on account of the fact that I go to the Father and you will see me no longer now you know what righteousness is it's a concept that's not that easy to understand necessarily but it's quite clear in the Bible what it is righteousness is God himself being righteous morally righteous no defect whatsoever in Him the standard of righteousness that he requires of us you might say is the standard that we would have if we were able to complete and hold the law of God for ourselves in obedience all the time if we were able to say every single aspect of what God commands and requires of me I can do if we were able to say that which we're not we would be righteous but because we're not what does God do he sends the Holy Spirit to convince us that our righteousness is in Jesus he doesn't just convince us of our sin and of our misery as the catechism said he persuades us as well he successfully convinces us that being sinners we need the righteousness that's in Jesus because we don't have one of ourselves there's the wonder of what God does in our experience he comes to persuade us regarding our sins our need of forgiveness of cleansing of washing and so what does he then do he brings us to Christ he shows us we cannot produce the righteousness that he requires but Jesus has done that for us and when you come to trust in him to give your life to him to believe in him whatever words we use they're all used in the

Bible to give you the complete picture of what it means to accept Christ to embrace Christ what then happens well his righteousness is put onto your account in the presence of God the guilt that's honored up to then is wiped clean it disappears it will never appear there again but it stays there and it will condemn you and condemn me if I've not accepted Christ as my righteousness that's the solemnity but the beauty of the gospel that God brings us to know this to realize this to appreciate this and especially that he does so through the work of his Holy Spirit you go to the likes of Saul of Tarsus the apostle Paul as he came to be known here was a man who thought that he was righteous because in his own estimation he was blameless as touching the law of God the righteousness which is in the law blameless

I've got that he was able to say of himself wrongly of course as he came to realize but after he met with Jesus after Jesus apprehended him on the road to Damascus and from that moment showed him that he was actually very unrighteous that all the attempts that he could make of keeping that law for himself would amount to nothing because he was a sinner and he needed the righteousness that was in Christ and you examine all his epistles that he wrote subsequent to that great event what do they all state in some way or other some more than others well if you go to Romans and if you go to Galatians especially that a man or a woman is not justified by the works of the law that's to say by our own attempts at keeping the law of God we're not justified we're not accounted righteous because of that but through faith in Christ

Jesus through accepting the righteousness that's provided for us in Him you see how this comes together the Holy Spirit persuades us of our sin persuades us of the enormity and of the heinousness the gravity of our sin in rejecting and not accepting Christ and then he brings us to the righteousness of Christ and he persuades us that's the righteousness that we need that God has produced for us that remains as it is forevermore and will never be taken from us when we have put it on our account through faith in Christ and it fits exactly with our need of that righteousness that we come to believe in Christ you see he's saying here concerning righteousness on account of the fact that I go to the Father and you will see me no longer now that's significant he's talking here about the righteousness that we need the righteousness that we come to possess through faith in Christ to believing in Christ but how does that come about what does he why does he add because I go to the

Father and you will see me no longer well because that's the root that Jesus took in order to produce this righteousness for us it cost him the death of the cross it cost him all the suffering that he endured in order to bring this about it cost him the agony of hell in his own soul the thing we deserved for our sin and our rebellion against God that is what Jesus took to himself what he experienced my God my God why have you forsaken me the forsaken of the cross the forsaken in Jesus experience is precisely this the penalty the what we deserve for our unrighteousness because he said I go to the Father and you will see me no longer and the root to the Father was the cross the resurrection the ascension to glory that is the root that Jesus took before the

[42 : 50] Spirit of God came on the day of Pentecost as in fact had been promised by God up to that moment Jesus took that root from heaven into this world to the death of the cross he humbled himself as we saw in Philippians 2 and was obedient unto death even that death of the cross where for God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name that is the root that Jesus took from heaven to the cross to the grave to resurrection to ascension back to glory why is it all there because he loved sinners like you and I because he loved sinners like you and I that's why when he comes he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and thirdly judgment concerning judgment specifically in relation to this because the ruler of this world is judged and of course he means by that the devil the ruler of this world why is he called the ruler of this world this is not the last judgment at the last day this is specifically what happened in regard to the devil through the death of

Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus and the ascension of Jesus what happened well he was judged he was condemned the ruler of this world is a reference to the fact that after the fall of man remember Adam and Eve listened to the voice of the serpent Satan coming in that form and yielding to that temptation and bringing this disaster upon mankind you and I would have done no better and from that moment the whole world lay in darkness under the sway of the evil one until that moment that Jesus came into the world died and rose from the dead what happened the devil is judged he's lost his right his claim whatever it was under the sovereignty of God of course his claim to hold people in darkness in spiritual blindness and what does that mean for you and me it means that you and I can now say absolutely assuredly since the death blow has been given to

Satan's kingdom to Satan's sway to Satan's persuasive ways to Satan himself as the ruler of this world since the death blow has already been given he's been judged by by Jesus in this way and therefore there is no reason in the world why anyone should listen to him why anyone should continue to give heed to his insinuations to his temptations to his hold on human life the Holy Spirit convinces us that we can indeed and should be free indeed as Jesus put it elsewhere in John's gospel if the son makes you free that's himself the son of God if he makes you free then you are free indeed what is freedom well if you listen to the world the world will tell you freedom is having the ability and the freedom to do what you want to follow your own inclinations to live life the way you think it should be lived never mind what the church says never mind what ministers faithful to the gospel preached freedom is to be rid of all of these things that entammel people's lives that close their minds against the truth of the liberty of the world that is what Satan persuades so many people about that is what the world will tell you that is why it is so difficult to witness to the gospel that is why it is so difficult to come even lovingly and tactfully to tell people that actually those ways that people spend their lives in sinful debauchery is actually wrong they will say it is not wrong in my eyes

I am free to do what I like well God through the gospel today is saying to you and me you know better than that you know better that the freedom that the bible speaks about the freedom and liberty that is within God's salvation that is not the freedom to do what you want it is the freedom to do what you ought the freedom to do what God himself specifies you ought to do freedom to trust in Christ freedom to enjoy righteousness in the presence of God in Christ by faith in him freedom to look forward to serving God in this world and looking forward to heaven afterwards freedom to be a Christian God's way freedom to belong to God's people as Christ's witnesses God's God's God's he the prince the ruler of this world is already judged that doesn't mean that we forget about him doesn't mean he doesn't continue to hold sway and influence with people but it means he has no valid arguments whatsoever to persuade people that they should bow in obedience to him that's all gone he's been judged he's been found wanting he has condemned written over him already and that's all because of what

Jesus has done so today that's the good news for you and for me there is forgiveness with God there is righteousness with God there is true spiritual freedom because of what already God has done with evil specifically in the devil you remember in John's gospel the same gospel in chapter three that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night symbolic of his spiritual state though he was a ruler of the Jews he was a member of the ruling Sanhedrin of the Jews but it's in John's way of presenting darkness and light he came to Jesus by night yes he was coming because he was afraid probably of being seen going to Jesus but there's also that spiritual dimension to it he came because that's where he was spiritually he was still benighted he was still in the darkness and he said Rabbi we know that no one can do these miracles that you do unless God be with him how did

[50 : 08] Jesus respond well he didn't actually say to Nicodemus Nicodemus this is what you must do he said Nicodemus this is what you must become except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God and of course you know he went on to say except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God whatever it means water that goes back to the symbolism of washing in the Old Testament but you notice there unless one is born of the spirit unless one becomes a new creation he cannot enter into the kingdom of God truly I say to you that which is born of the flesh is flesh that which is born of the spirit is spirit don't marvel that I said to you you must be born again the wind blows where it wishes you hear its sound but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes so is everyone who is born of the spirit to be born again to be a new creation through the spirit to come to know of our relation with God that involves that newness of life all of that is built into this passage and more so let me finish with a quotation from

Octavius Winslow a work of Octavius Winslow the work of the Holy Spirit the name of the book and I came across this passage as I was preparing for today and it's specifically addressed to the unconverted so if you're here today and you're not yet in Christ you're not one of those who's accepted Christ all the ways in which we've seen that in the passage believing in him trusting in him accepting him accepting righteousness in him coming to experience the freedom with which he makes us free let me lovingly and sincerely read this passage to you because with all my heart as I stand here as a preacher of the gospel this is really what it's about for us that you will come to be born again and know

Christ as your own savior unconverted reader what solemn truth does this subject address to you you must have perceived that the word of God sets before you a new mold into which you must be cast it professes to work a great change in you in the hands of the Holy Spirit not of opinions only but of your nature of your heart is this done do not turn away from this question do not lightly pass by it eternity hangs upon the issue I'm not asking what you hold what you know or what you profess but what you are are you he goes on born again are you a new creation let's pray Lord God our

Father in heaven our great privilege today is to know you through the gospel to have that gospel that you set before us in which you bring to us this message of life and our greatest privilege oh Lord is to know you to know you savingly to know you in a way that brings life into our deadness we ask today Lord that our sin may be forgiven that our righteousness may be confessed to you as unrighteousness and that we may have your righteousness imputed to us we pray today Lord that you would deliver us from the persuasive ways of the devil and of our own hearts Lord we pray today for the power of your spirit to come effectively into our experience to turn us to yourself to give us Lord to know that great work of rebirth that you alone are able to effect we pray for all you people who know you that your spirit

Lord will continue to refresh us daily even as we saw Lord last Wednesday evening as you call upon us to be filled with the spirit and we ask now that you bless us through this day continue to bless your word to us Lord we pray in Jesus name we ask Amen well let's conclude our worship this morning singing in Psalm 143 Psalm 143 that's on page 440 from verse 7 we'll sing down to verse 10 Lord Lord Lord let my prayer prevail to answer it make speed for lo my spirit doth fail hide not thy face in need lest I be like to those that do in darkness sit or him that downward goes into the dreadful pit and you notice verse 10 concludes by reference to the spirit of

[55 : 59] God my God alone art thou teach me thy righteousness thy spirit good lead me to the land of uprightness let's sing these verses to God's praise Lord let my prayer prevail Lord let my prayer prevail to answer it makes thee for though my strength of fail I know thy face in need lest I be like to those that you in darkness said I in that thy word goes send to the dreadful pit because

I trust in thee O Lord cause me to hear my love in kindness sweet when morning does appear cause me to know the way where my path should be up away to say when I I do And safety do me hide Because I'm weak to thee

For the cloud is behind My God alone art thou Teach me thy righteousness Thy splits could lead me to The lamp of the brightness I'll go to the side door here to my left this morning.

Thou may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen.