

Isaiah 55:12-13

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[0 : 00] Let us turn now to the Old Testament scripture, to the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 55, and the last two verses.

For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree, and shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

We noticed last Sabbath evening the preceding verses, two things in particular, namely the greatness of God's parting mercy illustrated.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. And then secondly, the means through which this parting mercy is made available to us, is communicated to us, is through the word.

[1 : 38] And verses 10 to 11 illustrates how the world acts or operates savingly in the experience of the sinner in bringing him to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we notice how the Lord through the prophet illustrates this saving activity. He uses illustration of the snow and the rain as the part of the process that God employs in bringing a fruit forth from the earth so that in the course of time, when seed time comes from turn again, seed is given to him that sows, and throughout the year bread is given to him that eats.

Now, there are two or three things to be said about the snow and the rain falling from heaven upon the earth. We notice that this can be either unpleasant or pleasant.

It depends, I suppose, in the circumstances which you find yourself. It depends, I suppose, in the circumstances that it can also be uncomfortable or perhaps very comfortable.

People can complain about it or they can rejoice in seeing it. It can come as a few, perhaps as a few drops or a gentle shower.

[3 : 12] Or that could become a veritable downpour. The rain or the snow can be either intermittent or very steady.

But the point is that in whatever way it comes, under the hand of God, it proves effective and powerful. And so it is when the word of God comes to people, when God has in you for the word that purpose, it shall not return unto me void, it shall accomplish that which I breathe and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

The word can have all these various effects upon people as they are being brought to faith in Christ. The experience can be quite uncomfortable, quite unpleasant, and people may very well complain.

But that same word can produce the peaceful, effective purpose for which God has sent it, bring them to faith. And the classic example, one of the great examples of that, of course, was on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached to the thousands there.

And as he preached, they felt decidedly uncomfortable. And the word that is used there is that the word cut them. It tore their heart apart.

[4 : 42] And they felt decidedly uncomfortable under it until they cried out eventually, what shall we do? And it was through that same word which produced that feeling of greatest comfort that they were brought into the peace of believing.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thousands of them entered into peace through the effective application of the same word by the power of the Spirit to their heart.

And this is the way the word operates. It comes to us with, reminding us as this chapter particularly says before us, it comes to us with news of the mercy and the pardon and the forgiveness and the peace that is available to us through faith in God.

It reminds us of the divine pity and the divine forgiveness. That no sinner is too far away from God for God to receive him if he comes.

That no case is too difficult. No matter what you think, says the God to the apostle, to the prophet, that's not the way that I think. It tells us of his love and of his readiness and of his willingness to forgive the past and to restore the rebel to all that he has lost.

[6 : 05] And as we saw, God has a loving regard and a loving interest and a loving concern for that word. It's as though he stands guard over it.

It will not return unto me void. It will prosper in your accomplishments at which I please. It will prosper in the thing whereto I have sent it. As he stands guard over it, so he makes sure that that word produces the desired effect.

That word is going to bear fruit. And so it is that to this day and to the end of time, as long as sun and moon endure, while the Lord has people in this world who fear him and who love him, the prevailing influence of the doctrines of grace and truth will be found effective in the lives of men and women and boys and girls.

And the effectiveness of that word operating in the lives of people is now brought before us in this final illustration we have in this chapter.

For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountain and hill shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

[7 : 27] Now what we have in this chapter. Now what we have in these words, first of all is this. The result of God's pardoning mercy. The transformation that is accomplished in the life of a person for whom that word has become effective, savingly effective in his life.

And you will notice, as we look at this, you will notice the tremendous change that has taken place in the picture presented to us in verses 1 and 2.

And this change in the picture presented to us in verses 12 and 13. The chapter opens with a picture of man in his lostness, in this arid wilderness existence.

Fursing for that which doesn't satisfy him. Hungering for that which doesn't meet his need. Living a life in which he is deluded and disillusioned.

Fursing for that which doesn't satisfy him. Sad. Because in all his fervent activity, he is looking for something in the wrong place, in the wrong direction. And his life is one vast wilderness.

[8 : 54] And the Lord speaks to that man and he cries to him, stop. Listen to what I have to say to you. Take what I have to offer.

And here now is a very changed picture. A picture of joy and peace and singing and deliverance.

A picture in which the thorns and the nettles have become fruitful trees and bushes. And the change from the wilderness experience of the first two verses to this wonderful, peaceful, joyful, fruitful experience in the last two verses is accomplished purely and simply as a result of a person listening to what God has to say and receiving what God has to offer.

Submitting himself to God's claims upon his life. Relinquishing his hold upon his own way of life, his own way of living, his own thinking about how salvation is going to be obtained and achieved and accomplished.

And the receiving what God says and what God offers. So the wilderness becomes a well-watered garden produced by the gracious influence of the Spirit of God operating in and through his word.

[10 : 28] And you will notice that the keynote here seems to be that of joy and peace. The change is unmistakable. The change is so evident.

The life is full of joy. Now I suggest to you that this is a perfect picture of what happens to a man who turns in faith and in penitence to the Lord Jesus Christ.

C.S. Lewis spoke of it in his own life and titled a book on it, Surprised by Joy. And the prophet or the Lord through the prophet goes on to use four figures to illustrate this marvelous change.

The first one we have at the beginning of chapter 12, for ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. It's the picture of a company of people released from bondage and glory in the liberty that they have found and being led forth in that liberty and in that experience of joy.

We'll look then first of all at that picture at the beginning of verse 12. For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.

[11 : 58] Now from time to time some of us have seen on our television screens this kind of thing. People for example who claim to have been wrongly imprisoned and when the thing went to when their appeal was brought before the highest court in the land, their appeal was upheld and they were ordered to be released.

And you've seen from time to time and you've seen from time to time just bustling out of the prisons in which they were held and being welcomed into their arms of their waiting friends and colleagues.

A picture of people coming out with joy and being led away in peace. And you will notice the emphasis that we have here on joy and peace.

Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. Now these are two elements which are at the very heart of the Christian's life, the Christian's experience.

There is what people speak of as the joy of forgiveness. And there's what the chapter is all about. The Lord calls to men and women, boys and girls, come unto me, seek the Lord while he may be found.

[13 : 18] Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the righteous man is thwarted and return unto the law. He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

And he is a person who accepts that. A person who comes and who receives what is freely offered. And as a result, he is seen now full of joy and full of peace.

The joy of knowing that his sins are forgiven. The peace that comes, as the New Testament tells us, peace through believing.

Paul gave us a graphic picture of it in the chapter we read there, what happened in Thessalonica. Where a revival of religion broke out as a result of their preaching.

And these people turned from idols to say the living God. They were full of joy and full of peace. And all that happened in Thessalonica was broadcast throughout all the known world then.

[14 : 25] It became a common knowledge that these people, something wonderful had happened to these people.

And what had happened was this. That the despair which their idolatry had brought them into was replaced with joy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fear with which they were gripped by their religion was replaced by peace through believing.

And the Christian faith is one of joy and peace. Man has joy in himself. He's at peace with himself.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a source of joy. Too many around him. I know that there are people here tonight in whose homes joy broke out when they came in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[15 : 34] Joy for themselves. Joy for those connected with them. Their whole home was transformed. And the misery that used to aim.

The misery that was part and partial of that environment was replaced with joy and rejoicing. Jesus telling, illiciting this, tells us, you know, the story of the lost son, the prodigal.

And this is the main color in the pic that he paints. It's one of joy. He tells, he says, the elder brother, it is right that we should rejoice.

This thy brother was dead. He is alive. He was lost. He is found again. So he says there is joy in the press of the angels over one sinner that repents.

There is joy in heaven, in the Father's heart. The word that he sent to accomplish that purpose in the life of that individual is a source of joy to the Lord.

[16 : 36] There is joy for Christ. This is what he died for. He died for. He died for forgiveness and pardon and mercy may be given and offered and received by sinners who don't receive it.

And that is part of the joy that was set before him. He despised the cross. He endured the shame for that purpose. It occasions joy in his heart. There is joy in the heart of the angels.

Ministering spirit sent 40 minutes to those who are age of salvation. There is joy in the church on earth. You know that when revival breaks out in that place, there is joy in that place.

And when news of the revival is broadcast, there is joy in other places. Similar with the conversion of one soul. If you were to hear tonight that so and so was converted here or converted there, you'd be right to rejoice and to rejoice in the Lord.

It causes joy in the church on earth. And of course, I believe it causes joy in the church in heaven. As the Lord communicates to the redeemed church above the success of the gospel in the world below.

[17 : 53] And amongst people maybe, for whom many redeemed saints in heaven tonight prayed. They never saw their prayers answered.

When a soul comes in faith, a soul for whom they prayed, comes in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and to experience joy in his own heart.

That occasions joy, I believe, in the heart of the church above. Peace. The peace that comes through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at these people who are redeemed, delivered from prison. The peace that comes because they've been released from that bondage which the prison life engendered in their heart.

They knew that they were imprisoned and they couldn't get out of it. And that caused them bondage. The peace that comes for a believer through sheltering now in the salvation that is available to them in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[19 : 00] Sheltering in God's way of providing a remedy for his need. You see, these people thought that there was going to be another way. But no, it's the Lord. Your way, that's not my way.

They had other thoughts. But he confounded these thoughts. That these weren't his thoughts. And they came to see that salvation was to be received through faith in God's appointed way.

Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is a beautiful Old Testament picture of this. When the Old Testament worshipper came up to worship to the temple, to the tabernacle. And he came up with the animal to sacrifice to the altar.

A very large part of that process was this. As he worshipped God, as he sought forgiveness on the basis of blood, he placed his hand on the head of the sacrifice.

As he stood before the altar. And there was communicated through that act, this fact. That God and the worshipper must meet at the place of sacrifice.

[20 : 12] At the altar of sacrifice. At the head of the sacrifice. And it's a perfect picture of what happens when a sinner comes in faith to Jesus.

There is only one place where God and the sinner can meet in peace. And that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We meet together there. God and the sinner in Christ. Peace. Ye shall go forth.

Be led forth with peace. The peace that comes and the peace that Paul speaks of so often in his epistles. We have peace with God.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. And notice this other thing. Ye shall go out with joy.

[21 : 08] And be led forth with peace. He himself in this is again Jesus. When in that wonderful chapter, John chapter 10. Where he speaks of himself as the shepherd and the door.

I am the door. By me if any man enter in. He shall go in and out. And find pasture. When a man he says come in.

Comes in through this door. The shepherd leads him forth. Or leads him out. The idea. Of being led by your shepherd.

And being led by your king. And being led by your head. Into the experience of peace. Into the experience of joy.

He will lead me through. Over and over again. You find the same strain in the book of Psalms. He will lead them. Beside still waters.

[22 : 05] He will lead them. Through. All these trials. And all these difficulties. And all these afflictions. He will lead them. To himself.

And the thought has even continued. In the picture we have in Revelation. Of life in heaven tonight. The lamb. In the midst of the throne. Will lead them.

To fountains. Of living water. Here you have then a picture. Of a person coming to Christ. Knowing what joy is. The joy of forgiven sin.

And the peace of believing trust. As he is led. By him. Into greater and further. And deeper experiences. Of all these things.

There's a picture of this given to us. Graphically by John Bunyan. In that marvelous book. Pilgrim's Progress. And in that book.

[23 : 05] You know that Christian meets evangelist. An evangelist points him. With his burden of guilt and sin. To the cross. And he leads him.

To the cross. And an American writer. J.G. Mitchell. Takes up. That strain. In his own book. Marvelous book.

A little book called. What is faith? He takes up the strain. And expresses the hope. Using John Bunyan's language. That more.

Of this will be seen. In our day. And this is what he says. May men. In our time. Like Christian. Meet some.

True evangelist. Who shall point them out. The old. Old way. Through the little wicked gate. To the place. And he's using Bunyan's language.

[24 : 02] To the place. Somewhat ascending. Where they shall. Really see the cross. And the figure of him. That it hang there. That at that sight.

The burden. Of the guilt. Of sin. Which no human hand. Could remove. May fall. From their backs. Into the sepulcher. Beside the way.

And that then. With wondrous lightness. And freedom. And joy. They may walk. The Christian path. Through the valley. Of humiliation.

And the valley. Of the shadow. Of death. And up. Over the delectable mountains. Until at last. They pass. Triumphant. Across the river.

Into. The city. Of God. Joy. And peace. In believing. Joy. And peace.

[24 : 57] In being led. So that. Peter. Could say. Of these people. We don't now. See Jesus. And you may not. Have ever seen him.

Like we saw. But nevertheless. By faith. You love him. And you rejoice in him. With joy. And speakable.

And full. Of glory. If only. You would believe this. That if you come. And place your hand. In his.

You too. Will know joy. And go out with it. And you will be led forth. With peace. The second picture. We have. And. Spending less time on it.

Is this. The picture of. A festal. Procession. The mountains. And the hills. Shall break forth. Before you.

[25 : 54] Into singing. And all the trees. In the fields. Shall clap their hands. Now you can see the imagery. Can't you. A few weeks ago. The.

Queen's own Highlanders. Marched through this town. And there were people. Lining the streets. And no doubt. There were people. Joining in. With sort of. A rhythmic.

Movement themselves. Perhaps even clapping. The music. That was being played. By their. By their pipe band. And that's the idea. You have here. This is this.

Redeemed. Delivered people. Full of joy. And full of peace. Released. Walking home. In triumph. And lining the route.

As it were. The mountains. And the hills. And the trees. Joining in. And being caught up. In this great movement.

[26 : 48] Themselves. Being caught up. In the joy. Of these. People. And I suggest. To you. That there is a picture. Here. Of what happens.

When a person. Is converted. When people. Are converted. When a revival. Breaks out. In a place. From the one. To the ten. To the thousands. The same.

Kind of idea. Is presented. To you. Here. The mountains. And the hills. And the trees. Things. Which were. Before. Obstacles. Maybe. To that path.

No joining. In acknowledging. The freedom. And the peace. And the joy. That they have. It may be.

A grudging acknowledgement. In some sense. Perhaps. There are people. Who know. Of. Some. Who are converted. Perhaps suddenly. Though every conversion.

[27 : 46] Isn't suddenly. As a matter of fact. Most conversions. Are not suddenly. But you know. That there are some converts. Which can't. Class this. Quite extraordinary. People will expect. So and so. To be converted.

And you know. The people he worked with. And the people he lived with. Perhaps he was converted. Last Sunday. And they went to church. They went to work. On Monday. And they heard. He was converted yesterday. No. And they're 12.

And the whole place. Almost comes to a standstill. You don't believe it. Yes. How is converted? And they're 12. And. Everyone there.

Is caught up. In what happened. To this individual. Of course. It may be. See in a minute. Some people may start. Poking fun at. Or attack.

Some people may start. Persecuting. And mocking. But the fact is. That. They're caught up in this. They cannot. But be caught up in it. And there are some.

[28 : 43] Who acknowledge. And who must acknowledge. That the grace of God. Has done this. The power of God. Has done this. Him. Well.

If that person is converted. It must be true. What God can do. You yourselves know this. I've got families here tonight. You've seen your husband. Your father converted.

You know that no one could do it. But God. And you admire. In some way. The work of grace. In that person's life. Someone you worked with. Perhaps yourself.

And the people you worked with. Caught up. In the wonder. Of what happened to you. By. The grace. Of God. You know that Paul.

I think I mentioned this last week. Or the previous one. Writing the second letter. To the Corinthians. Speaks about this great. Gospel movement. Of which he himself. Is a part. He was but a preacher.

[29 : 40] Of the gospel. And he never considered himself. Anything more. Anything less than that. God sent me. He said to preach. The gospel. And he pictures. This great gospel movement.

As it works. That is operated. Throughout the world. He writes the church. In Corinth. And he says. You know. He says. This gospel. That we preach. And that others preach. It's like a.

An order. Ascending up. Into heaven. The order. Ascends. When the Roman army. Marches and triumph. Comes home. With its conquests. And those. Who have been captured.

And at the head of the Roman army. Those people. With censors. And from the censor. The aroma. Ascends. The aroma. Of victory. And triumph. And power.

And there are some people. Who are caught up in this. Some people. For whom it is a savor. Of life. Unto life. To the Romans. This is marvelous. To the poor.

[30 : 35] Prisoners. And shackles. Being led by them. Into the captivity. Of Rome. It is not us. It is not a matter of joy. At all. But a savor. Of death.

Unto death. Whatever it is. Within Rome. But death. Death. Eventually. That he says. Is the gospel. For some.

A glorious. Sound of life. For others. A mournful. Dirt of death. One way or the other. People.

And every. People. Everybody. Caught up. In this. Room. Ah well my friend. If you have been converted.

To Christ. If you know. Joy. And peace. Through believing. You believe this. Some people. Have stood by.

[31 : 29] And watched. Some people. Have been caught up. In it. And whether. Willingly. Or otherwise. They have. Clapped their hands. In rhythmic.

Almost in. Rhythmic. Music. To the sound. Of joy. And peace. And deliverance. Have found themselves. Almost unconsciously.

Caught up in it. As you know yourself. From time to time. I remember someone. Telling me. Of a service. That he went to.

On holiday. And he happened to go to. One of the. Pentecostal services. And he. He went through. All the emotions. Himself. From sadness. To sorrow. And anger.

As he saw. As he saw. The. Froth. With which. Some people. Were caught up. And as you know. Some of these services. It becomes very much. A part of the scene.

[32 : 23] Now. To clap. And even to dance. And to. Jump about. And he noticed. That someone. In his own party. Was caught up. In the movement. Almost unconscious.

Clapping away. To the rhythmic. Sound of the music. Well if you. Convert it. You be sure of this. That's the way.

Some people will be. Who know you. And who have lived with you. And who know the life. That you live. And the kind of person you are. And you wear. And you convert it.

And you speak to them. Of the joy. And the peace. That you found. Through faith in Christ. Well my friend. They will acknowledge. The reality of it. The reality.

Of the grace. Of God. The third picture. We have here is this. The picture. Of the marvelous. Transformation. Instead of the thorn. Shall come up.

[33 : 22] The fir tree. Instead of the briar. Of the nettle. Shall come up. The myrtle tree. Now this is quite staggering. That those trees.

Those thorns. And nettles. Which were so useless. Cumbering the ground. You know yourself. What it's like. The very thing. You'd want to get rid of. Thorns. And nettles.

And this is the pic. That God gives. Of grace. In the life. Of the convert. The forgiven sinner. His whole life. Is changed. As always. To change a thorn.

And a nettle. Into. A briar. Into. A fir tree. And a myrtle tree. What is useless. And come in the ground. Becomes.

Beautiful. And noble. And stately. And effective. Now the thing about this. About this is. He uses these terms. God used. So that you and I can understand.

[34 : 20] That thorns. And nettles. Where do they come from? Well there's one thing certain. That didn't come from the hand of God. And creation. This was a fruit of sin.

In the life of the individual. A fruit of sin. In the life of the world. Through the individual. Adam. It was because of sin. That thorns. And nettles. Came into.

This world. And ever since. Man. By the sweat. Of his brow. Has to get rid of him. Rid of him. If he's cultivating a garden. If he's a gardener.

Of any note at all. And if he wants his gardener. To be. What it ought to be. He makes pretty certain. That he gets rid of. The nettles. And the. The. The thorns.

Very difficult. Back. Bending stuff. Work this rather. Getting rid of thee. And it can be quite.

- [35 : 16] Hard. Rending as well. Because when you think. You've got rid of them. Perhaps one more. You go. What's there. The very thing you spent. The whole of last week. Ridding the ground of.
- And it's come up again. You see. Thorns and nettles. Have this. Optitude to. Propagate themselves. And to. Multiply. Themselves. The things.
- Which are so useless. That weren't meant to be. The original creation. At all. All. And. The things that. That spoil.
- The best. God. Is that not what sin done? Is that not what sin has brought into this world? Is that not what sin has done to your own life? When you ought to be bringing forth.
- Fruit of the glory of God. Where do you find yourself? Living a life which God would have so useless. So unproductive. And so harmful too.
- [36 : 15] It can be so harmful. And so hurtful. Thorns are like that. And nettles are like that. It's the things you try to avoid. You don't. You just don't grab.
- A handful of nettles. Nor would you willingly fall into a patch of thorns. And this way in which the Bible states for us.
- The way in which a person lives without God. Without Christ in this world. In the Song of Solomon. The church is pictured in this way. By Christ.
- As the apple tree. Amongst the thorns. As a rose tree. Amongst thorns.
- Thorns have an awful habit of creating damage. Unhurt. When you come into contact with it. And the life of the unconverted man and woman.
- [37 : 12] Boy and girl. Is very often pictured like that. You see. As far as God is concerned. You're supposed to bring forth fruit to his name. And to his glory. But you don't. It isn't that there aren't men and women unconverted.
- Who don't do good things in this world. And who don't benefit the society. And mankind. Of course. We all owe a great debt of gratitude. To some people.
- Who perhaps didn't believe in God. And people who wouldn't go. To hear the gospel. Read the Bible. And some of these people. Have been.
- Have brought. Great benefit. In the field of medicine. And the field of science. And the field of electronics. And the field of education. And the field of the social sciences. Of course they've done that.
- And we acknowledge it. But as far as bringing forth fruit to God. Is concerned. No. And that's the useless life. After all. At the end of the day. Because God will call every man.
- [38 : 12] Woman and child. To stand before him. And render his and her account. What have you done. With the life. That I gave in the world. To deliver a useful life.
- To my glory. Did you come to love me. And to trust me. And to have your faith in me. If not my friend. It's a useless life.
- And it can also be a very harmful life. And a very hurtful life. Just like thorns and nettles. Can be harmful and hurtful. There are people. Who make life very difficult for other people.
- And especially for Christian people. People who are going their way. To poke fun at the Christian. To laugh at the Christian. To try to destroy the Christian faith.
- And the Christian gospel. Remember what Jesus said to Saul of Tarshish. On the Lord of Damascus. The great religious zealot. And he was arrested by that great life.
- [39 : 09] And he was addressed this way. Saul. Saul. Tell me something. Why do you persecute me? Persecute you? How was he persecuting Christ?

Because he was on the way to arrest Christians. Bring them back to Damascus. And probably be instrumental in putting them to death.

And you know. There is something else that pains the Christian. When he thinks of non-Christians in this world. When you think of thorns and nettles.

I said earlier. Isn't it heart-rending a time for you to think of. How easily they multiply themselves. I spoke about the gardener. Telling to get rid of them. And if he is not careful.

If he just leaves his garden a few days or a week or two. The thing that was so clean before is overrun. With this kind of weed. The nettle. And the thorn.

[40 : 07] The psalmist. Looking around him said. Oh Lord. How are my falls increased? Oh Lord. How does the godly man increase.

And prosper. They seem to sow their own seed. And you know. When you look out at. When you look across Lewis. The island of Lewis tonight.

You look at Lewis. That on the answer to the gospel. 50, 60, 70 years ago. Was so fruitful. Godward.

Where you had so many communities. In which. In which. In every home. In which the word of God was honored. Where family worship was conducted. Where church. What path to the rofter. Change seen nowadays.

The ungodly. Haven't creased. Those. Who have no time for Christ. And his gospel. And his day. And the Christian faith.

[41 : 08] Haven't creased. Thorns. And nettles. Thorns. But this is the wonder of the grace of God. When the power of his grace. Comes into a life like that.

Into a community like that. Thorns and nettles. Instead of them. And mortals. And mortals. You're here tonight.

There was a time when you were an enemy of Christ. Now you're a friend. A time when you hated the things of God. Now you love them.

A time when you were indifferent. Now you're zealous. For the gospel. And for his kingdom. A time when you were in darkness. Now the light of his grace has dawned.

A time when you lived a useless life. God would. Now you want to be useful. In his service. Lord. said that. Persecuting Jew.

[42 : 06] Lord. What would thou. Have me. To do. A life. You lived once. Persecuting. Now you want to defend. A life that was defiled.

And defiling. Now you want to be holy. You see this is what grace does. It makes all things new. A new creation. As God said through the prophet Zechariah.

Ye were a curse. But now. Are you a blessing. See the change. Has this change come in your own life.

Would you like it to come in your own life. Well my friend. God. Can accomplish it. And the final figure is this. It shall be to the Lord for a name.

For an everlasting sign. That shall not be cut off. Two things. The name of the Lord. And the everlasting memorial. That God has established.

[43 : 09] Where? In the life. Of the convert. That's where. This is where his name lives on. This is where his memorial is etched.

Not in stone. But in the changed life. Of this individual. The name of the Lord. We sign that here tonight.

I will extol the name of the Lord. In the name of the Lord. Will I rejoice. Look at how often you have that. In the book of Psalms. And right throughout the Bible. The name of the Lord.

What is the name of the Lord? The way in which the Lord has revealed himself. What he tells about himself. Your name. Tells you a lot about you. People know you by your name.

People know me by my name. And when they mention my name. Those who know me. They know. Who I am. The kind of person I am.

[44 : 08] The things I do. And how. What I say. And how I say it. And so on. The name of the Lord. What he is. The revelation he has given of himself. Of his mercy.

And of his grace. And of his love. What he has done. People of our name. In society. Some names attached to them are honored.

Others dishonored. Some people leave a good name behind them. Others don't. I mentioned earlier. The way in which some people benefit society. Their name lives on.

Through what they have done. In society. But the name of the Lord lives on. Wonderfully. Through what he has done.

In society. In the life. In the life of an individual. In society. And in the community. What he has done for man himself. And for his home.

[45 : 03] And for his family. God perpetuates his name. Through his promise. Through those who are the objects of his mercy. And of his pardon. And of his land.

Through the saved sinner. The channel through which God's glory. Is seen. Strangely enough. In this world.

As nowhere else. To God be the glory. Said the hymn writer. Great things. He has done. And you know my friend. If he's done great things for you in his grace.

His name. Is seen. In the life. That you now live. And seeing this thought. Has crossed my mind. Wouldn't it be good for you tonight.

As a parent. As a father. As a mother. And the same must be good for you. As a child. As a son. Or a daughter. Wouldn't it be wonderful for you tonight. If it were known.

[46 : 07] That it is the name of God. That is displayed in your life. And not. The name of the devil. If it were the power of grace.

And not. The power of sin. If it was service to Christ. And not service to Satan. Wouldn't it be wonderful.

If you were a part. Of this society. Through which God is perpetuating his name. And which he is carving. His own memorial.

It shall be to the Lord. For an everlasting sign. That shall not. Be cut off. Very often. What men have done. Is carved in the stones.

That stand over their grave. This is so and so born. This place. Died at this age. This is what he did. And so is memorial.

[47 : 07] Is carved in stone. And there are some people. Who spend lots of time. Going around cemeteries. And there are some very historic cemeteries. Very ancient stones.

Unfortunately some of these stones are crumbling. Others fall. And the course of time. The writing becomes obliterated.

Until eventually you can't make out a single word that is written. On these stones. And however long they stand. Or last.

One day. They won't be there at all. But this person will. The person must be redeemed by his grace. Lives on in this world.

And lives on and lives through into the next. And his life. In this world. Is a memorial. Is a memorial. To the power.

- [48 : 05] Of the grace of God. This. Is what God has done. For this person. And when he leaves this world. And enters into glory.
- He'll be seen there as well. As the person who's life. God has done so much. As he lives here. And as he lives there. This is his theme.
- Those of you. You young people. Who belong to campaigners. Remember your theme. Unto him. So it is in the life of the convert.
- In life. In death. And in eternity. Unto him. Who loved us. And washed us from our sins. In his own blood.
- To him. Be glory and praise. Forever. And ever. But. Some people are saying. And I close with this.
- [49 : 01] And I close a chapter with this as well. And there are studies in it. Some people are saying. That religion. And the Christian religion.
- Is dying. In this community. Some people are saying that. And generally. As you look abroad. As I said earlier. Looking around.
- And generally speaking. There is an element of truth. In what is being said. Religion is not as vital. Nor as living.
- Nor as vibrant. As it used to be. Nor as strong. God. And as the Christian religion. Dies in our community.
- In one sense. So does the name of God. In that community. As you know yourself. There were communities in the world. Where the Christian religion was strong.
- [49 : 54] No longer there. You would find it difficult. To hear. The name of Christ. And in some of them. You would not be allowed. To mention the name of Christ. May I ask you this question.
- Is the name of God. Living. And continuing to live. In your life. In your life. And will the name of God.
- God radiate. Through your life. As you live it here. And as you continue to live it. In the eternity. To come.
- Wouldn't it be good. If this transformation. That these verses speak. Would take place. In your own life. Tonight.
- Let us pray. Blessed to us. Thy truth. O blessed Lord. May Christ precious to us.
- [51 : 00] Fill our hearts. With thy joy. And thy peace. And grant that we may be. Renumered among those. Whose lives will be. Fruit bearing to God.
- Through faith in Christ. And the praise will be thine. Forever in him. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. compris Twenty. Let us pray. Amen.
- Amen. Amen.