

# "Substitution"

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, church. Would you turn with me to 2 Chronicles, chapter 35. That is page 360 in the Pew Bible. 2 Chronicles, chapter 35. As John mentioned, there are some air-conditioned seats downstairs in our overflow room where we live-stream the service, so please feel free to get up at any point during the sermon if you need to find a cooler seat.

Let me pray for us as we come to God's Word, and then I will read. Amen. Holy are You, Lord. Thank You that in Your goodness and in Your sovereignty, You have spoken to us words of life. Thank You that we have in Scripture the record of Your gracious dealings with us, Your image bearers, and that You continue to speak through these words even today to point us to Your incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus. So be with us now as we come to this Word.

Prepare our hearts to receive what You are saying to us through Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. All right, 2 Chronicles 35. Let's start with verses 1 through 19. Let me read.

Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first month. He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the Lord. And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the Lord, put the holy ark in the house that Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, built. You need not carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and His people Israel. Prepare yourselves according to your father's houses by your divisions as prescribed in the writing of David, king of Israel, in the document of Solomon, his son. And stand in the holy place according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of your brothers, the laypeople, and according to the division of the Levites by father's household, and slaughter the Passover lamb, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers to do according to the word of the Lord by Moses. Then Josiah contributed to the laypeople as Passover offerings for all who were present, lambs and young goats from the flock to the number of 30,000 and 3,000 bulls. These were from the king's possessions. And his officials contributed willingly to the people, to the priests and to the Levites, Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings 2,600 Passover lambs and 300 bulls.

Conaniah also, and Shemaiah, and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, and Jael, and Josabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave to the Levites for the Passover offerings 5,000 lambs and young goats and 500 bulls. When the service had been prepared for, the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command, and they slaughtered the Passover lamb. And the priests threw the blood that they received from them while the Levites flayed the sacrifices. And they set aside the burnt offerings that they might distribute them according to the groupings of the father's houses of the laypeople to offer to the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so they did with the bulls, and they roasted the Passover lamb with fire according to the rule. And they boiled the holy offerings in pots and cauldrons and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the laypeople. And afterward, they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were offering the burnt offerings and the fat parts until night.

[ 3 : 40 ] So the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the command of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jedethon, the king's seer. And the gatekeepers were at each gate.

They did not need to depart from their service, for their brothers the Levites prepared for them. So all the service of the Lord was prepared that day to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord, according to the command of King Josiah. And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, seven days. No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were present and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the 18th year of the reign of Josiah, this Passover was kept. Well, I wonder if you have any annual traditions or annual celebrations. Maybe you have a particular way of celebrating your birthday every year. Or maybe you have an annual family vacation that you look forward to. These sorts of traditions, they're important, aren't they? Not only are they enjoyable, but they mark the passage of time in meaningful ways. They give us a chance to reconnect with what's most important in our lives, and they reset our perspective towards what matters most. Last week, Beth and I were away with our family in Delaware, and on our drive home yesterday, Google Maps took us through the small town of Middletown, Delaware.

And unbeknownst to us, this was the day that Middletown, Delaware was celebrating their 32nd annual Old Time Peach Festival. Old spelled with an E and time spelled with a Y. I guess that sort of gave the festival an air of antiquity and importance to the local residents. You know, but all in all, it looked like everyone was having a good time. And yet, as an outsider, I was a bit confused. I had never been to Middletown, Delaware before, but I didn't think that Northern Delaware was particularly known for peaches. Why were they having an oldie-time peach festival? Georgia? That would be understood.

Delaware? Not so much. So I started searching the internet. And of course, I found a page all about the Peach Festival, which I learned was organized by the Town Historical Society. Ah, surely I thought, there must be some good history here, some interesting bit of Mid-Atlantic history. But alas, after scrolling the festival website, and after looking through their 17-page PDF about the Peach Festival, the only faint rationale I could find was a one-liner on page four, declaring, that life is peachy in Middletown. Every year, for 32 years, this town has held an old-time Peach Festival. They even crown a Little Miss Peach and a Little Sir Peach. And there was simply no indication as to why. Well, I did a little more digging. And apparently, on a page buried on the

Historical Society webpage, apparently in the mid-19th century, Delaware was known for peaches. Who knew? And by 1850, Middletown, of all places, became the center of the peach industry in Delaware, which supplied markets all across the Northeast, from Philadelphia to New York, all the way to Boston.

[ 7 : 36 ] Meh, who knew? Okay, now here's the point. Our passage today is about an annual festival, an annual celebration that God commanded His people to perform in the Old Testament, the Passover.

In fact, this is probably the most important annual celebration in the whole Old Testament. It's the first one that God commands Israel to keep, and it's meant not just to mark time in meaningful ways, but it's meant to reset and renew God's people around what matters most in their relationship to Him. But many of us today don't know what really lies at the heart of this most important Old Testament festival and why it matters. Of course, you and I would be no worse off if we had no idea why Middletown, Delaware had an old-time peach festival, just like you might not be no worse off if you have no idea why we light candles and baked goods to celebrate a birthday, or why we lower a giant glass sphere down a 135-foot pole to celebrate the passing of another year.

But this festival, the Passover, is something that God, the Creator of all things, etched into the history of His people.

This is the story that God wanted told and retold for over a thousand years as His people awaited the coming of Christ. Surely to miss this story, to miss this meaning, is to miss something absolutely critical to understanding who we are and what it means to be humans in relationship with God, our Creator, and our highest good.

So we're going to think about the Passover today. And in light of that, I'm going to do something a little different as we approach this passage. If you're new to Trinity, typically on Sunday, we would walk kind of verse by verse or paragraph by paragraph through a passage and sort of unpack it as we go. But today, I want to do something a little different. I want to take a step back and take a look at the Passover itself across Scripture.

[ 10 : 01 ] I want to ask, what is at the heart of the Passover? Why was it so significant that Josiah, like Hezekiah before him, is largely remembered as a good king because he dedicated himself and his people to celebrating the Passover like never before? What's the Passover all about?

And why, at the heart of the Passover celebration, why at the heart of this most important festival, is there this strange ritual act of a lamb being slaughtered?

So let's dive in. Now, if we were to go back to Exodus, where the very first Passover is recorded, and where God then institutes the annual celebration that commemorates that Exodus event, we would see clearly that the Passover festival was the annual celebration of the great saving act of God.

The Passover was the celebration that reminded Israel year after year that the creator of all things, the creator of stars and planets and galaxies, the creator of mountains and forests and oceans, the almighty creator of the glory, the almighty creator of the glory, was also their redeemer.

The Passover festival was the annual celebration of the great saving act of God. And we can think of this saving act in three ways. We can think about what God saves us from, and what God saves us for, and lastly, we can think about how God saves us, what God saves us by.

[ 11 : 55 ] So first, what is it God saves us from? Well, in the Passover, what God saves us from is slavery. Israel was enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years, and their cry of oppression was heard by God, and God remembered his former promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God acted mightily in the Passover to deliver his people from Egyptian cruelty and suffering and to bring them out of slavery.

Every year, the Passover reminded the people of God that they were once enthralled to a cruel master. They were enslaved to toil and bitterness and death, that they were once helpless and lost, but now now no more. God had overthrown their oppressor. God had cast down the cruel master who sought only to use them and exploit them for what they could produce. God saved them from being mere things, mere objects. That dark past was gone, and they were slaves no more.

God saved them from being mere. And there's a lesson for us here. Because in the full light of God's revelation in Scripture, we see that the slavery of Israel and Egypt becomes a picture of something deeper. It becomes a picture of fallen humanity's slavery to sin. Sin is the ultimate cruel taskmaster.

At first, sin may seem like a path of joy or flourishing, but in the end, it steals our agency and it binds us to futile pursuits. Like the Israelites were soon cursed to make bricks without straw, and every year the required quota gets greater and greater.

But the good news of the Passover is that God sees you. God sees you and I. He sees us in our slavery to sin. He sees the futile pursuits. He sees the empty paths. He sees how you have little regard or no regard for Him.

[ 14 : 22 ] And He has come to save you. You see, God did not create you to live as slave to your desires, to your circumstances, to your addictions, to your faults, to your failures. God created you to live in freedom.

And that brings us to our second point about the Passover, what God saves us for. And what God saves us for is just that, His freedom. The Israelites were brought out of slavery in Egypt to become a people who were free, and not just free from something, oppression and cruelty and slavery, but free for something. Free for a life of purposeful image-bearing of their Creator.

You see, in the slavery of sin, alienated from God, we're treated as things, and our work was futile. But in the freedom of God's salvation, God sends us into the world to be makers in His image, to be sub-creators of cultures, of communities, of families, of relationships that will resound with His joy and life.

We are no longer living as slaves to our own desires or to the desires of another. We now live to magnify the love and glory of God and to seek the flourishing of the created order, and in particular, to seek the flourishing of our fellow human beings, our fellow image-bearers.

Now, what is, what is the sort of highest form of freedom? I think if you were to ask many people today, they'd say that real freedom is to do what I want, to have no one stand in the way of my desires, to have no limitations, to have no impediments to fulfilling my wants. That's real freedom, we think.

[ 16 : 38 ] But let's apply that concept of freedom to a real-life example. What is real freedom for, say, an athlete? Is freedom not to enter the game and perform at her highest level? Is that not? Is that not real freedom?

But how does that freedom come about? Does it come about through no limitations and no impediments to her desires? Through no one standing in the way of her doing what she wants? Well, not really. In order for an athlete to be really free, she has to follow a path of discipline, of training, of practice, hours in the gym, hours on the field, and it will be challenging. There will be days when it feels like the training, the practice, the practice, the path, actually goes against her desires and wants in the moment. It will impose limitations and impediments.

But those limits are what make her most free when it comes to really being an athlete.

The same is true of nearly every other human pursuit, is it not? How does a musician become really free or a doctor or a teacher or a craftsman? You know, a craftsman can frame a house or carve a piece of furniture with beautiful freedom only when they've apprenticed and trained and worked hard for hours, for days, for weeks, for years.

But friend, what if this same thing were true? Not just of certain human pursuits we might take up.

[ 18 : 28 ] What if the same thing were true of being human itself? You see, the world that we live in is a created world, a created world with a created order.

It has a shape, it has a grain, it has a reality to it, a shape and a grain that's fashioned by a good creator, by God. And what real freedom means for a human in this world is not ultimately to live with no impediments to my desires, but to actually learn the grain of the world and to live in line with it. That is, freedom really means knowing God and knowing God's intentions for His creation and knowing God's purpose for us as image bearers. This is what God has saved us for.

And this is what the Passover reminded Israel of year after year, that they were free people now, free not just from slavery, but free for a life lived in productive engagement in the created order, in glad obedience to God's Word to make all of life sing with joy to God our Creator.

But third, we have to ask how. How does God save us from slavery and for this wonderful freedom?

And here we come to the heart of the Passover, and really to the heart of the whole biblical message of redemption. And at the heart of the Passover is what? Well, we see it mentioned at least three times in our passage, verse 1, verse 6, verse 11, where it says, they slaughtered the Passover lamb.

[ 20 : 32 ] At the heart of the Passover is a sacrifice. But what is this sacrifice meant to represent? To understand that, we have to return again to the Exodus story, the first Passover.

And you remember there that God, at that point in the story, had sent nine plagues on Egypt, and one more plague remained. And the tenth plague was going to bring death to every firstborn in the land of Egypt. The firstborn, of course, representing the whole family. So the death of the firstborn was a sign of God's judgment upon human sin and guilt. But unlike some of the previous plagues, this last plague will not just affect the Egyptians, it will come to everyone in the land, Israelites included.

You see, everyone is accountable to God as their creator. And because none of us has loved God and worshipped Him as He deserves, and because none of us have loved our neighbors as ourselves, we all stand condemned. There's no one righteous, not one. God's judgment rightly falls on us all.

And so when the destroyer of God's judgment in Exodus comes upon the land of Egypt, no family will be spared. As God's perfect justice is enacted, the representative firstborn of every family will die. God is not a respecter of persons, you see. God, unlike us, is perfectly good.

So if judgment must come upon Egypt, then it must come upon all justly. And yet consider now, consider now the dilemma. In order for God to deliver His people from slavery and into freedom, justice must be done. Wrongs must be righted. Evil must be accounted for. Guilt must be punished. Because there's no entrance into real freedom without a real reckoning with evil and wrong.

[ 22 : 43 ] To simply just ignore or overlook the penalty of sin, to leave sin unpunished, would actually just produce a false freedom, a kind of illusion of freedom. How could we walk in freedom when sin, the cruel master still roams about uncondemned? What sort of freedom would it be if the judge opened the prison door, but we still remained handcuffed to the cell walls?

No, in order for real freedom to exist in the world, sin must be judged. But here is the dilemma. If sin must be judged, and if all have sinned, who will be left to enjoy the freedom?

But on that night thousands of years ago in ancient Egypt, God revealed the mystery of His redemptive plan.

God's people would be saved by a substitute. In the place of the firstborn, families were instructed to sacrifice a lamb, without spot, without blemish.

And they were to take the blood of the lamb and mark their doorposts on the sides and on the top. And so when God's judgment came that night, God's judgment would literally pass over.

[ 24 : 14 ] Why? Because the lamb was the substitute for the firstborn. God provided a way for sin's penalty to be paid by another in the place of the firstborn. This substitutionary sacrifice satisfied the demands of justice because sin was judged in full while also opening the door to real freedom for sinners. The Passover reminded the people every year that their freedom was won through God's provision of a substitute. A substitute who would stand in the place of their judgment so that they could enter the place of real freedom.

And yet, as God etched this story into the history of His people and as they told it and then failed to tell it and then renewed their efforts to tell it again, as we see throughout the story of 2 Chronicles, as we see throughout the story of 2 Chronicles, as we see throughout the story of 2 Chronicles, as we see throughout the story of 2 Chronicles, aren't there questions that remain?

Does this substitute really preserve God's justice and win our freedom? Can a lamb really stand in the place of a human being?

How can a lamb take responsibility for what a human, a divine image bearer has done or failed to do? Is that not, in a very real sense, not just?

But the Passover lamb you see was not the final word. It was just the first brush strokes on the canvas of God's redemptive picture.

[ 26 : 22 ] God provides a substitute so sinful humans can be set free. That is the bold brush stroke of the Passover upon the canvas. And those strokes would remain true and bright and unmistakable for the rest of time.

But the outline would need to be filled in. The depth, the color, the texture would need to be added to that redemptive canvas. The sacrificial lamb was not the final picture. It was not the climax of the story, but the beginning.

It was just a whisper of something greater to come. A man. After all, a lamb couldn't really stand in the place of a human being.

being. But could a human being stand in the place of the Lamb? Could one human take responsibility for another? But push it a little further. Could one human take responsibility for humanity?

Just as Adam was responsible for humanity's fall, could there be a second Adam, a true Lamb of God, who would take responsibility for humanity's liberation?

[ 27 : 48 ] And then with the history of Israel's kings, it might have seemed like such a promise was underway. The kings came to represent the people, and David was a shepherd after God's own heart, and Solomon was wiser than any before him. Surely, liberation would come through one of these great kings. But no, each king, David, Solomon, and every Old Testament king that followed, they were as much in need of rescue themselves. They too needed a substitute.

But on through the Old Testament, God didn't stop painting the redemptive picture. The substitute would be a king, and that king would be the true Lamb. But this king to come would be unlike any king before him. This king would be a servant.

And Isaiah, with the most clarity, would prophesy about this servant, that this servant would be strong and gentle. He would be a descendant of David. He would fulfill Israel's vocation, but he would not have worldly glory or fame. He would be despised and rejected.

He would be spotless. There would be no deceit in his mouth. But he would bear the transgressions of the many. Isaiah would say, all we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all, like a lamb to the slaughter. You see what Isaiah is saying? What God is saying through Isaiah?

[ 29 : 52 ] That God promised a true Passover lamb would come, a true substitute. And it would be over 500 years until that promise was fulfilled, and yet God was faithful.

Because nearly 500 years later, on the banks of the Jordan River in the early part of the first century, another prophet would be preaching. And one day, this prophet named John the Baptizer would lift his eyes as the crowds gathered, and he would see Jesus of Nazareth.

And the Holy Spirit, through John the Baptist, John would proclaim, behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, who according to Matthew's gospel is a descendant of David's kingly line, came as a servant.

Is this not how Jesus understood his own vocation? Listen to what he says in Mark 10, 45. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

You see, Jesus' own self-understanding is that he would be this substitute. He would give his life for the many as a ransom.

[ 31 : 11 ] And what is a ransom? It's the price that would purchase another's freedom. Jesus is the true king, the true Passover lamb.

He is the new Adam. You see, through the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, Jesus, takes full responsibility for humanity by assuming a fully human nature.

He is the one human who can stand for all of humanity. And so God provides the substitute we need by becoming the substitute we need.

You see, the story of the Passover was all along a story about God himself and the lengths that God would go for our freedom.

Consider with me the character of Jesus. By contrasting Jesus' final days with the final days of Josiah, this good king in 2 Chronicles 35. Why don't we read the rest of 2 Chronicles 35?

[ 32 : 24 ] The Chronicles 35. The Chronicles says, After this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho, king of Egypt, went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. But he sent envoys to him, saying, What have we to do with each other, king of Judah?

I'm not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God's commanded me to hurry. See, supposing God who is with me, lest he destroy you. Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him.

He did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God, but came to fight on the plain of Megiddo. And the archer shot king Josiah. And the king said to his servants, Take me away, for I am badly wounded.

So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah. And all the singing men and singing women had spoken of Josiah and their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel. Behold, they are written in the laments.

[ 33 : 29 ] Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his good deeds according to what is written in the law of the Lord and his acts first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Josiah was a good king.

But consider how much greater Jesus was. Josiah goes out to battle against God's will. Jesus goes out to battle according to God's will.

Josiah goes out against the political powers of his day, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. But Jesus goes out against the deeper spiritual powers of our world, sin, death, and hell.

Josiah dies and is lamented. Jesus dies. But consider, there is no lament written for him.

Why? Why is it that history passes down to us not a single lament of Jesus' death from his followers? Surely, if such a great teacher died, would there not be an outpouring of laments?

[ 34 : 41 ] But there are none. Why? Because on the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, God demonstrated that Jesus' death was no tragedy.

God the Father raised Jesus from the dead in demonstration that Jesus was the sinless Son of God and his death was the substitutionary sacrifice that God promised to send.

Jesus was the servant Isaiah foretold. Jesus was the Lamb who would take away the sins of the world. And so when the church remembers his death, it's not with songs of lament for a dead teacher, but with songs of praise for a risen and victorious King.

Because in the sorrow of the cross, every sorrow was swallowed up. And joy became ours. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood.

Sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah. What a Savior. Or as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

[ 35 : 50 ] God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. What, after all, is the nature of sin? It's when humans put themselves in the place of God.

And what is the nature of our salvation? It's when God puts himself in the place of sinful human beings for our redemption. And so now that Christ has come and has lived, died, and rose again and has ascended to the Father's right hand, in light of the full light of the New Testament, the message of the Passover is this.

God has become the substitute in Jesus so that sinful humans can be set free. And the question now is twofold.

Will you receive this substitute for yourself? And will you keep the feast? Christ identified with us as our substitute.

The only right response in light of what he's done is to now identify with him. To put yourself, as it were, under his death and resurrection, just like the Old Testament Israelites put themselves under the blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt.

[ 36 : 59 ] And how does one do that? How does one identify with Jesus? Well, it is through repentance and faith. It's through agreeing with God that your sins deserve death and through entrusting yourself to Jesus as your substitute.

And once you've come to receive and believe in Jesus, the next step is to make that internal act public through baptism. Baptism means publicly identifying with the risen Jesus as your and the only substitute and Lord.

But the question isn't just will you receive this substitute for yourself, but also will you keep the feast? Notice in verse 17 of our passage, the people keep the feast of unleavened bread for seven days after the Passover celebration.

This feast of unleavened bread for seven days was a symbolic time when the people cleaned out all of the leaven in their homes to remember their hurried flight from Egypt when they didn't have time for their bread to leaven.

So they left and they only ate unleavened bread. And the Apostle Paul picks up on this pattern in 1 Corinthians 5 and he writes, Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

[ 38 : 16 ] Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

What the Old Testament celebrated symbolically for seven days becomes for the New Testament church an entire way of life.

All of life now is the feast of unleavened bread, but it's not about the sort of bread that we eat, but about the sort of lives that we lead. As people who've been set free, we now live as free people.

Here, Paul mentions specifically in the freedom of sincerity and truth. Think, if Christ really is our Passover lamb, if that truth really hits home for us, then we will become more truthful people, will we not?

How? How does the Passover lamb of Christ make us more sincere and truthful? Well, because in Christ's substitutionary death, the ultimate truth has been spoken about our lives.

[ 39 : 32 ] And on the one hand, it's a truth that's more revealing and more unmasking than any other truth about us. The truth of Christ as our substitute says that we are sinners who deserve judgment.

That truth has already been publicly proclaimed in Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. He didn't die for his sins. He died for ours. And we've already agreed with that truth when we become Christians.

And so now, there is really now no truth that we cannot speak for fear of embarrassment or shame.

You see, the ugliest thing about us has already come to the fore. Our truth is already known. And so we can be sincere people, admitting when we're wrong, confessing our sins to trusted friends and mentors, taking responsibility for our mistakes.

We become people of truth and sincerity because of the substitute. But there's another side to it as well. The substitutionary death of Christ doesn't just speak the truth about our sin.

[ 40 : 44 ] It also speaks the truth about our acceptance. What's true about us isn't just that we're sinners, but what's more true is that we are loved and embraced by God.

Jesus Christ took your place. Why? Because He chose to. He chose to.

Nothing compelled Him. He was not forced to take your place. He did it because He loved you. And He wanted to set you free in His love. And if you know the freedom of that love, you won't just be a loving and compassionate person, you will be that, but you'll also be a truthful person.

You'll be able to speak the truth no matter how costly it is because no matter what it costs, you can't lose now the most important thing, which is the love of God.

And friend, I submit to you that if you don't see the substitutionary nature of the gospel, then you haven't yet begun to see the real power of the gospel in your life. When you can say, in my place condemned He stood, when you can sing, for me He died, for me He lives, and everlasting life and light He freely gives, when you can say that and know that, you will become a person who is sincere and truthful when everyone else around you is afraid to speak.

[ 42 : 27 ] You will be bold, but you will also be patient and wise because you don't need to prove yourself either. You don't need to win arguments or best your opponents.

What more could that give you than you already have in Him? Behold Him there, the risen Lamb, my perfect, spotless righteousness, the great, unchangeable I am, the King of glory and of grace, one with Himself, I cannot die.

My soul is purchased by His blood. My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Savior and my God.

Let's pray. Father, by Your Spirit, help us to see in Christ the wonderful and glorious provision of His substitute, our great Lamb who has set us free.

We pray this in His mighty name. Amen.