

# Jesus our confidence

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[ 0 : 00 ] O my soul, praise Him, for He is your help and salvation.

Come all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near, praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord above all things so mightily reigning, keeping us safe at His side and so gently sustaining.

Have you not seen all you have lived in has been met by His gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord who shall prosper our work and defend us.

[ 1 : 17 ] Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend us. Ponder and hear what the Almighty can do, who with His love will befriend us.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him.

All that has life and breath come now with praises before Him. Let the old man sound from His people again.

Gladly we praise and adore Him. Amen. Do please sit down.

As we praise God for how wonderful and great and holy He is, we think of ourselves and we realize that we are not worthy to come to His presence, to have a relationship with Him, to be called His children.

[ 2 : 43 ] So let's just spend a few moments reflecting on how we've let God down and to say sorry for that and to be reminded that He has forgiven us because of what Jesus, His Son, has done for us.

So would you join me with the words of a prayer of confession that are going to come up on the screen? Let's say these words together. Dear God, I praise you that you are so loving and perfect. I confess that I have turned away from you and sinned. Please forgive me for my sins and help me to seek and follow you.

Create pure thoughts in me and make me faithful again. I know that you love me. Indeed, your Son, Jesus, lived, died and has risen so that I might know that you forgive me.

And when I admit my sins, you promise to forgive me. Thank you, God. Amen. Amen. Now we're going to continue in worship now.

[ 3 : 50 ] The next song, Gary, could you just please put up the words of the next song? The next song is an action song. We don't have anyone specific lined up to help us with the actions, but I'll talk you through what I think they are. Correct me if I'm wrong.

And then you can all have a go at the actions and maybe some people might like to help me up the front here. So it's God's love is deeper than the deepest ocean. So deeper than the deepest ocean, we can go down deep.

God's love is wider. Sorry. Thank you. God's love. Thank you, Paul. Thank you, Miriam. Others? Yes. Yes. God's love is deeper.

I just wanted to get to that bit. That's cool. The deepest ocean. God's love is wider. Now, this one is hard for me. Some of you may know I broke my elbow a couple of months ago. Actually, this is one of the exercises I've been given to do by my physiotherapist.

This is good for me, but you can encourage me as well by going really wide. Wider than the widest sea. God's love is higher than the highest mountain.

[ 4 : 53 ] Deeper, wider, higher is God's love to me. And then after that, the next verse goes God's grace. God's grace.

And then the next verse is God's joy. I think that's right. That seems to be the consensus among people. God's joy. Is there another verse after that? That's it.

God's peace. God's peace. Great. Okay. I need some people up here to help me clearly. Judith, you know this so well. I need you here. Anyone else, please come up and help me out.

That would be great. Thank you, Kim. Well done. Let's stand, and we're going to sing together. Let's sing. tuning in, you know this so well.

Let's sing. God's love. Casa is mixing together. Let's sing together. God's love is deeper than the deepest ocean God's love is wider than the widest sea God's love is deeper than the highest mountain Think I'm higher than the sky so far God's grace is deeper than the deepest ocean God's grace is wider than the widest sea God's grace is higher than the highest mountain Deeper water higher is God's grace to me Joy is deeper than the deepest ocean God's joy is wider than the widest sea God's joy is higher than the highest mountain

[ 6 : 48 ] Deeper water higher is God's joy to me God's peace is deeper than the deepest ocean God's peace is wider than the widest sea God's peace is higher than the highest mountain Deeper water higher is God's peace to me Deeper water higher, deeper water higher Deeper water higher is God's joy to me Well done. Thank you so much.

Clap for our helpers. Clap for God. That's amazing. Thank you. Now, I don't know if anyone has ever received something really exciting in the post.

Anyone ever had a really exciting letter in the post? Put your hands up. A few of you. Yeah, we don't get so much post these days but it's sometimes when it's something special if it's something personal, that's really exciting.

Now, in the next few weeks what us grown-ups are going to be doing here as we stay in the service and our young people are also going to be looking at one of the books of the Bible which is a letter and it was a letter which was written by Paul to the church in a place called Colossae where the people were called Colossians and it's known as the letter to the Colossians.

Now, we have a letter here the original letter didn't look like this it probably would have been a scroll but here's a representation of the letter and it says put it there so I can lean it up no it says to the church of Colossae Archippus' house because they met in a house Colossae in Asia Minor that's what's now Turkey and it's got a postcode and on the back it says from sender apostle Paul of Tarsus HMP Ephesus prison oh, he wrote this from he wrote this from prison now it looks like there's some pictures inside this letter and they're quite big pictures so I'm going to need some volunteers I think there's about 12-14 pictures in here so it's very easy this morning all you have to do is hold up the pictures so thank you Bella you were so quick there I'm going to give you the first picture and I want you to go and stand up over on that side and hold up the picture nice and high you come and stand over here so we can see it now these are some of the things that Paul says in his letter he starts with his greetings because he always starts his letter with greetings and he finishes his letter with greetings as well he's saying hi, how are you doing?

[ 9 : 23 ] now Paul had actually never been to Colossae so they hadn't actually met him in person but he'd heard all about them and he felt like he knew them so he gave them some greetings now the next one Elliot well done can you go and hold that one up next to Bella over there the next one is it's a prayer now you're going to have to hold it from the middle that's it hold it up nice and high praying hands because Paul starts his letters to the Colossians with a prayer and he starts with a prayer of thanks thanking God for all the good things that he's heard about them and then he goes on to pray so Jameson you can hold that one up if you can stand over there this one it's thankfulness he's thanking God he's so thankful for what he's seen in the life and heard about in the life of the Colossians and what God has done for them his prayer is full of thankfulness right next one Daniel thank you very much can you go and stand over there now this one it looks like something being poured out something being filled up this is about being filled because Paul's prayer for the Colossians is that they would be filled and he prays that they would be filled by God's spirit with the knowledge of God's will and with wisdom and with power and that's a wonderful thing to pray for other Christians so he prays that they would be filled now Ethan hold on

I've got an interesting one for you okay this is like a magnifying glass with a alright actually you can stand up on the step there Ethan then you can get even higher can you stand up on that step then we can see that it's a magnifying glass with a question mark in it it's a mystery Paul mentions a few times in his letters to the Colossians about a mystery but this wasn't a mystery that is yet to be solved this is a mystery that he says it has been revealed it's God's mystery of how he's going to reconcile the world and the mystery has been revealed because God has sent Jesus to show us who God is and so at the heart of this letter is Jesus now I've run out of volunteers this is a problem I need two more volunteers of any age this one is big so I need two people so this one folds out and can you two stand on the stage up there and I'll pass that to Kim thank you Bethany you come up

this side I want you to fold that out and hold it up nice and high this one because right at the centre of Paul's message in his letter to the Colossians is that it's all about Jesus and he explains why Jesus is the centre of our faith as Christians

I still need more volunteers guys there's at least three or four more so keep them coming thank you Sam right if you can stand you can stand here in front of the lectern I'll move along that's great he talks about the universe the earth the universe and everything in it because he talks about the fact that Jesus actually is in the centre of the universe the universe was created through Jesus and for Jesus and Jesus is sustaining the universe and this is quite amazing we'll see that at the end of chapter one need another volunteer thank you Chris if you can hold that one up because Paul says that the universe was broken but what Jesus did when he died on the cross is that he's reconciling everything in the universe back to how it should be and he's reconciling us back to God and reconciling us back in all of our relationships so that leads us to this one looks like people hugging this is about reconciling it's about bringing people together it's bringing us back to God in a relationship with him but it's reconciling all relationships which is what Jesus achieved for us when he died on the cross okay need another one thank you very much it could go this way but it actually goes that way which means it's not a tree what is it it's roots

Paul talks about being rooted in Jesus we need to be rooted in the truths of what Jesus has done for us and that's the basis of our life as Christians there's three more to go so I need three more volunteers thank you Melody if you can hold that one go stand next to Ben there okay if you can get lined up with that one so this one he goes on having talked about being rooted in the truth of what Jesus has done for us he then talks at the end of the letter about how we actually live out our lives as Christian and part of it is putting on clothes he talks about putting on characteristics that we need as Christians like humility like compassion like love and he talks about actually we make an effort to put these on like getting dressed and then he talks about here's a home with a heart in it it's how to live as Christians in our homes with husbands and wives with those that we're closest to how we can live out being a Christian and I've still got one more so I need thank you Perley so much that's great there's just about enough room that's perfect isn't it and at the end we've got a speech bubble there with love in it he talks about how we can live out being a Christian in what we say to people and how we can make an impact on other people in how we speak to them so what a fantastic letter it's so exciting there's so much in there we've got prayer we've got praise we've got Jesus at the centre of it and how to live our lives as Christian that's what we're going to be studying over the next few weeks let's give our volunteers a round of applause and can you make a pile of them just on the stage here that would be wonderful so children if you're in explorers or adventurers or navigators trailblazers when you finish your group today and meet up with your parents again ask them about what they learnt from the book of Colossians today young people in salt and light are going to be doing the book of Colossians the same as us so we can talk about that when we see each other again

I'm going to pray for our children young people before they go out to their groups now Father God we thank you for your amazing word and everything it has in it for us we pray for our children for our young people as they study your word and have fun together that they will be touched by it that they will see more of you that they will grow closer to you and I do pray especially that you'll bless the leaders as they teach them and as they guide them and have fun together this morning we pray that in Jesus name Amen so children young people you're going to go to your groups if you haven't already registered your children there's a table downstairs where you can get them registered and then find out where they're going they're going to do that as we stand and we're going to sing our next song which our music group are going to lead us in let's sing amazing grace how sweet the sound amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me

[ 16 : 34 ] I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy rains unending love amazing grace

Lord has promised good to me his word my hope secures he will my shield and portion be as long as life and jewels my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy rains unending love unending love amazing grace my dreams are gone unending love amazing grace my dreams are gone my dreams are gone my God my Savior my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood his mercy rains unending love unending love unending

love amazing grace

Amazing grace. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow.

The sun forbids the sun. But God who called me here below will be forever mine.

Will be forever mine. You are forever mine.

[ 20 : 16 ] Amen. Do please sit down and Andy's going to lead us in our intercessions. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 21 : 34 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. the space where you will be honoured and glorified for many years to come.

As a church meeting planned for Tuesday, God willing, Lord, be present as we as a church discuss and decide on matters which are important in the running of the church. Let them be your decisions, not ours, Lord.

We bring before you the many missionary societies that are represented by the members here as they work in their various fields, be it in translation, work in their projects to improve the living conditions in remote areas or amongst the needy on our streets and in our town here in Wickham. Lord, we thank you for giving them the passion and the commitment to further your kingdom. Bless them, we pray.

Back in February, the world was witnessing the dramatic events and subsequent devastation due to the earthquake in southern Turkey and northern Syria. Seven months on, we are now seeing the same scenes in Morocco and the floods in north-eastern Libya.

There are thousands of lives lost this time and we can only imagine the despair and devastation of the relatives that are left. Father, we do pray into that situation.

[ 22 : 58 ] May they be able to equip themselves to build up their communities again. We pray that you'll give the aid agencies the resources required to help all they can. And above all, show your mercy to the people of Durnah and that surrounding area that's just devastated.

Father, as time passes, we pray that the two governments that are in Libya there will seek to sort of reconcile and grant them wisdom as they rebuild for the future.

Lord, we've sung about your love being deeper than anything and your amazing grace. Pour it onto those poor people, we pray. We continue to pray for the people of Ukraine as they continue to endure threats to their lives and country.

Lord, we see no end to this needless destruction. Lord, only you can change people's hearts and minds. Give the leaders a conscience and a realisation of just what their actions are doing.

We pray for your protection for our children and young people as they've started this new academic year. Especially if you're thinking of those children who have just started school or moved up to secondary schools.

[ 24 : 08 ] Give them peace as they settle into very different routines and find new friendships. We pray too for the young people preparing to leave home to go to college or university.

We pray that they will make good friends and will be able to connect with a CU and a local church and just grow their relationship with you, Lord. We bring through the teachers, the head teachers, the lecturers and all staff working in schools, colleges and universities.

Lord, give them wisdom, strength and energy for this new term. We pray now that you will prepare our hearts and minds as David brings the reading to us today and fill Andrew with your Holy Spirit as he brings your word to us a little bit later.

All these things we ask in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. The reading this morning is from Colossians chapter 1 verses 1 to 14.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. And Timothy, our brother, to God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, grace and peace to you from our God Father.

[ 25 : 49 ] We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, of the love you have for all God's people, the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven, and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you.

In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the world, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.

You have learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may have a life worthy of the Lord, and please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people, in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of the sins.

[ 27 : 40 ] Thank you.

For now, if you just wave, and a Bible will come to you. Thank you so much to those who are giving those out. That's really helpful. As those Bibles are going out, just have a thing.

Have you ever been really encouraged by a message that somebody is praying for you? Now, I've shared this before, but Yop and Joan are known to many of you.

Joan passed away last year. When I was working in Tanzania many years ago, someone on my team got sick, and got medevaced, evacuated to Johannesburg in South Africa.

I went with this person, and I kind of got stuck in Johannesburg for three weeks, trying to sort out the medical care for this person, and the insurance. Finally, the insurance company agreed to send a relative out.

[ 28 : 54 ] I went to Johannesburg Airport to meet this person, and who should I see coming into the arrivals, but Joan and Joke van der Waal. And it was so lovely to see them. It was completely unexpected. They were on their way to visit a relative.

And Joan told me, Andrew, we've been praying for you every day since you went to Tanzania. And that was just such an encouragement to hear that, to know that someone had been praying for me every day.

It would have been so encouraging for the Christians in Colossae to receive this letter from Paul. He wanted to encourage them. He had some concerns about the pressures that they were under as a fledgling church in that town.

There's a lot of pressure in the society around them to join in and worship all the other pagan gods that everyone else was worshipping, and to see Jesus as just another deity, which is how the others would have seen that.

Now, this was a particular problem for people in that time, because people were expected to pray to the pagan gods, and if anything went wrong in the place that they lived, they would assume that the gods were unhappy.

[ 30 : 00 ] Now, at that point, the finger of blame would point to anyone who had not been praying to the pagan gods. Do you see the problem here? If you're a Christian, and you're not praying to those pagan gods, or not worshipping those pagan gods, they would have been under pressure.

It's not surprising that the Colossians would have felt fearful and lacking in confidence. And that's the context in which Paul prays his prayer, which is in verse 9 to 11 of the passage that we've looked at in Colossians chapter 1, and it's on page 1182 or somewhere around there.

My Bible might be slightly different. And we're going to see what we can learn from Paul's pattern of prayer in this first chapter of Colossians.

We're going to look at this under three headings. I'll tell you what they are, and then we'll go through them one at a time. So first of all, Paul's prayer was stimulated. Secondly, Paul's prayer was sustained. And thirdly, Paul's prayer was specific.

So we'll take those in turn. First of all, Paul's prayer was stimulated. So if we look at verse 9, it says, for this reason. So he starts praying because of a reason that he's already given.

[ 31 : 05 ] So let's go back to see the reason that he's given, which is in verses 3 to 8. So he says in verse 3, So here he describes his thankfulness.

And thankfulness is a means for him of building up into prayer. Very often, I think, our stimulus for turning to prayer is often knowledge of something negative, whether it's sickness or bereavement or a difficult situation.

But Paul's stimulus for turning to prayer is for all the good things that he sees and hears about. Remember, he's never met them in person, but Paul is so thankful to hear about what God has done and is doing through the Colossian church for the love they have for each other and the love they have for all God's people.

We were challenged last week when Tim shared about Acts chapter 2 about the devotion that was shown to each other by the early church. Well, Paul is thankful here in verse 5 of the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven.

Now, these three things, these three characteristics of the Christian life, faith, hope, and love, they often go together in a few of Paul's letters. Here he describes how the faith and love spring from the hope which is stored for us in heaven.

[ 32 : 41 ] In other words, what God has done for us gives us the reason and resources to live a life of faith and to love other people. These things spring up in us when we discover the transforming truth of the gospel.

Often people who aren't Christians see their Christian faith as something very narrow and restrictive. Now, most of us will recognize this famous front door. This is number 10 Downing Street. The interesting thing about this building is it really looks quite small from the outside. Really, it looks like a normal kind of London terraced house. Some of you may know, I had the privilege of going inside a few years ago accompanying my son who was invited to go there.

It's another story. But when you go through to the inside, it actually opens out into remarkable, enormous proportions inside. It's much bigger on the inside than it looks on the outside.

It goes a long way back and there's all sorts of meeting rooms, conference rooms, the cabinet room, apartments, all sorts is in there. It's like you open up into a whole other world inside through this quite narrow front door.

[ 33 : 50 ] As this letter was read out in Colossae, it would be like stepping through the door of number 10. Maybe stepping into a Tardis, something which seemed quite narrow, opening up into an exciting world of opportunity.

Well, Paul says in verse 5 that they've heard the message of the gospel. Now, we think of the word gospel as quite a biblical word, a religious word. At the time, it was a word that was used for a special announcement from the government, from the Roman Empire, essentially.

So Paul borrows this secular word, word from the government at the time, to describe the message of Jesus. And he's saying this is news. It's better news than anything that the Roman Empire could unleash on the world.

Now, Colossae was not a large church, but Paul encourages them in verse 6 that they're not on their own as Christians. He says, It's an encouragement to know that we're part of something bigger.

Paul reminds them that the gospel is growing throughout the whole world. Now, according to the World Christian Encyclopedia, approximately 2.7 million people a year currently convert to Christianity from another religion.

[ 35 : 16 ] Every day, the church grows by 174,000 people every day, worldwide. This week, 3,500 new churches will be opened worldwide.

While we see an overall decline in church attendance here in the UK, in most denominations, there is tremendous growth worldwide, and especially in Africa, South America, and Asia.

Paul reminds them that the gospel is growing around the world. And it's growing among them since they truly understood God's grace. I believe that we will grow if we truly understand God's grace and allow it to transform us and then live our lives in response to that.

The Christian author called Philip Yancey has written a book called What's So Amazing About Grace? And he wrote this in that book. A friend of mine, riding a bus to work, overheard a conversation between the young woman sitting next to him and her neighbor across the aisle. What are you reading? Asked her neighbor. I guess this takes place in America where people do actually talk to each other on buses because it tends not to happen here. What are you reading? Asked the neighbor. A book a friend gave me.

[ 36 : 27 ] She said it changed her life. Oh yeah? What's it about? I'm not sure. Some sort of guide to life. I haven't got very far yet. She began flipping through the book. Here are the chapter titles. Discipline, Love, Grace.

The man stopped her. What's grace? I don't know. I haven't got to grace yet. Haven't got to grace yet. I think of that line sometimes when I listen to the news. A world marked by wars, violence, economic oppression, family breakdown clearly hasn't got to grace yet.

Have we got to grace yet? It's the most wonderful discovery which opens up new horizons and extraordinary possibilities. I wonder if Paul was writing to Union Baptist Church.

Would he be able to say that we truly understand God's grace? These things in verses 3 to 8 are the stimulus for Paul's prayer. The second thing that we notice in this passage of prayer is that it's sustained.

If we look at verse 9, he says, For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God. So ever since he heard about them, Paul and his companions have not stopped praying for the Colossians.

[ 37 : 37 ] Isn't that amazing? Once you're on Paul's prayer list, you can't get off it. Do we really commit to praying for people or do we pray for a few days or weeks or months and then kind of lose steam?

Now, realistically, we can't pray for everyone. So perhaps we need to be careful what we promise to people about praying for them. But we should ask God to lay on our hearts the people and situations that we should be praying for daily or weekly.

The third thing about Paul's prayer, it was specific. If you were to make a list of the top five things that you tend to pray for people, what would be on your list?

It's interesting to see how our priorities in prayer compare with the prayers that we read in the Bible and the prayers of Paul. Let's see what Paul prayed for the Colossians.

What was top of his list of priorities? He prays to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. He's asking God to fill them with what?

[ 38 : 46 ] With the knowledge of God's will. Now, this is not so much about receiving what we would call guidance for big and small decisions that we make, but it's about knowing what's on God's heart and what his priorities are.

It's about knowing what God wants from us. If you've ever experienced working for a boss who doesn't make his expectations clear, you'll know how frustrating that is to know what you're supposed to be doing and what is actually being asked of you.

It's so much better and more satisfying to work for someone where you understand and they've communicated clearly what their expectations are of you. Well, we gain this knowledge, says Paul, through wisdom and through understanding.

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul contrasts the wisdom of God with the wisdom of the world. The Spirit gives us wisdom from God to see things as God sees them.

Now, in the world we live in today, we're bombarded with so much data and so much information, but we desperately need wisdom to know what to do. Because data and information doesn't tell us what to do.

[ 39 : 54 ] That became very clear during the coronavirus pandemic, where every day that we were hearing from the government, we're going to follow the science, we're going to be guided by the data. And there was so much data, so much information, and yet the government, people making decisions, were floundering, really, to know what to do.

Because despite the vast amounts of data, that didn't give them the wisdom that they needed to know what is the right thing to do in that situation. So we need God's wisdom to know what is truly beneficial for us and for others, for our community.

So, so far we've seen that Paul's pattern of prayer is stimulated, sustained, and it's specific as he asks for the Colossians to be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

But then he goes on here to explain why they need to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in verse 10. It's about the life that they are to live. So verse 10. So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.

And what we should aim for in our life as Christians is to please God. This is not to earn our salvation. It's not to make us acceptable to God.

[ 41 : 05 ] We cannot do that, and Jesus has done that for us. Let's just be clear about that. But we do this, living the life is what we do in response to the grace that he's given us and what he's done for us.

It says to please him in every way. Nothing less than that is the standard set out for us here. Paul goes on in the second half of verse 10. Bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Good work is a fruit, not a root, of our relationship with Christ. The gospel, what Jesus has done for us, is the root. But we will be fruitful if we do good works in response to what Jesus has done for us. And this leads to growing in the knowledge of God. So there's a bit of a cycle here. We grow in knowledge and wisdom so we can please God, and then Paul says that leads us to grow in our relationship with him.

So we go around the cycle, and we get closer and closer to God. You may have heard about something called a positive feedback loop. This has been talked about in relation to the greenhouse effect.

[ 42 : 11 ] Chris Manxlow can explain this better than I can. I asked him about this last week. But with the greenhouse effect, global warming, the Earth's sea level temperature is rising, and the temperature of the Earth is rising.

So that means that the polar ice caps are melting. So that means there's more water in the oceans, and there's less of the ice caps, which normally reflect a lot of the light and the heat from the sun back out into the atmosphere.

So when you have less of that, then the Earth actually absorbs more heat. So actually the rate in which it heats up gets faster and faster. So it's a positive feedback loop, something that increases and increases.

In the greenhouse effect, in global warming, that's bad news. But here, this positive feedback loop applies to our relationship with God. That as we seek to grow in the knowledge of God, we start to live our lives his way, do things his way, and that actually helps us to know God better, so we know what his will is, so we go around that loop, and we get closer and closer to God.

The more we get to know God, we live his way and please him, and that helps us to get to know him better. But Paul goes on in verse 11, and this is part of a very, very long sentence, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might.

[ 43 : 27 ] So he prays that they would be strengthened with all power. Not just a little bit of power, but all power. And this is available for all Christians. You don't need to be a special Christian to be able to get the all power, to get the higher level.

It's not like when you sign up for broadband in your home and you get the regular package, but then you can pay extra and get the super fast turbo broadband. God's power is available to all of us. And it says, according to his might. So it's not out of his might. If it was out of his might, we would probably just get just a little. But it's according to, which means in the manner of. It's power corresponding to God's own power.

This is available to us through the Spirit. So Paul goes on at the end of verse 11, so that you may have, and he continues. Now what would we imagine comes next?

Because in the flow of what he's saying, what he's praying, it seems to be building up. He says, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you, so that you, and what would we imagine might come next?

[ 44 : 32 ] So that you might push back against the powers of darkness as you do daringly courageous and adventurous feats for God. Well, no. Actually, what follows is probably the biggest anticlimax of the New Testament.

It says, so that you may have, wait for it, great endurance and patience. Great endurance and patience. Oh, we were expecting something a bit more exciting, weren't we?

But that's it, having great endurance and patience. That is what we need the power of God for, friends, to keep going. Because the hardest thing about the Christian life is to keep going. Don't take it for granted that you will keep going in the Christian life, that you won't give up, especially without the close support and prayers of others.

That's why we need to be meeting in small groups so much. After reflecting on his victory at Waterloo in 1815, the Duke of Wellington said, our men were not braver than the enemy.

They were merely braver five minutes longer. He was a realist. He knew that what's important is to keep going. But if we do keep going, we'll see that we have so much to be thankful for.

[ 45 : 37 ] Paul goes on in verse 12. This is the truth to be treasured, that we can be thankful for.

Verse 12, giving joyful thanks to the Father. So just as he is thankful, he prays that the Colossians

will have this spirit of thankfulness.

Now, if I take a glass of water, if I just fill up this glass, if I just fill this up really, really full and go for a walk with a very full glass of water.

Now, if one of you were to bump into me, what would happen with this very full glass of water? It's not a trick question. What would happen? It would spill. What's in the glass would spill out.

I'm going to take a sip of this. Or I will spill it. What the glass is filled with will spill out. And it's a bit like that with thankfulness.

If you bump into me when I've got a full glass of water, some of that water is going to spill out because that's what it's been filled with. If we're filled with thankfulness, then when stuff happens, when the unexpected stuff happens, maybe when the difficult stuff happens, what's going to spill out is thankfulness.

[ 46 : 53 ] If we're filled with thankfulness. On the other hand, if we're filled with bitterness, if we're filled with ingratitude, if we're filled with envy and jealousy, then it won't take much of a bump for what's inside, that stuff, to spill out.

That's what people will see. So Paul says, I want to ensure that you people are marked by this thankfulness. And he actually mentions it again and again. You'll see this as we go through Colossians.

He keeps talking about thankfulness. He says, in everything, the overflow of the Colossian Christians is to be marked by their thankful hearts. Because you see, that's one of the real indications that a person's life has been touched and changed by the gospel, touched and transformed by Jesus, is that they overflow with thankfulness.

They're thankful whatever the situation, whatever immediate circumstances we're facing, we can always be thankful. Why can we always be thankful? Well, Paul goes on to explain in verse 12, the reasons that we can always be thankful, whatever our circumstances.

Because he says, God has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

[ 48 : 14 ] God has qualified us for himself. We're not qualified ourselves. We cannot do that. We can't qualify ourselves to be put right with God. But he has qualified us through Jesus to enter his kingdom, and it's a kingdom of light.

Without that, we're prisoners, it says, in the dominion of darkness. Back in June, the news was dominated by the story of the missing Titan submarine, you remember that?

Which went down to explore the wreck of the Titanic in the North Atlantic, and it lost contact with the mothership on the surface. And it was horrible, wasn't it, to read that news story.

It was such a tragic and hopeless fate for the crew of that submarine to be trapped in darkness with no escape. Well, without Jesus, we are trapped in darkness, unable to escape ourselves.

But God has brought us out of that darkness into the kingdom of the Son that he loves. A kingdom that's characterized by love and light. And that gives us a lot to be thankful for.

[ 49 : 19 ] let's just spend a moment in silence reflecting on that. I'll ask Paul just to play the piano quietly as we reflect on what God is saying to us through this, and then I'll pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Lord God, we thank you for your word to us.

We thank you for Paul's example of prayer. We thank you for his thankfulness. Lord, we've been reminded we have so much to be thankful for, for what you've done for us, for your gospel, for the good news, for the way it transforms us, for the way it empowers us, for the fact that you have rescued us.

[ 51 : 15 ] We were trapped in darkness without you, but you have rescued us and brought us into your kingdom of light and love. You've brought us into the kingdom of your son and we thank you that Jesus has made that possible.

Lord, I pray that we would be filled with your spirit, that we would know your will, that we would grow closer and closer to you, that we would know your character, know what's on your heart, know what your priorities are.

And that that would guide us as we live our lives, that we would live fruitful lives for you, which draw other people to you and which draw us back to you and which draw us to get to know you better and better so that we can just overflow.

I pray, Lord, that you would fill us with thankfulness. So often when we come up against unexpected things, difficult things, yeah, maybe some stuff spills out which isn't thankfulness and which doesn't look like Jesus.

Lord, we pray that you would just wash that away, Lord, and just fill us with your spirit, that we would be so full of thankfulness, that that would overflow from us in every situation, in the good times and the bad.

[ 52 : 24 ] Lord, that we would overflow with thankfulness of what you've done for us, that we would point others to you. We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. And I invite the other musicians to come up.

In a moment, we're going to be reminded again of what God has done for us, what Jesus has done for us, the sacrifice he made for us. As we share around the communion table, as we prepare for that, the music group are going to lead us as we sing, Here is love. Let's stand and we're going to sing together.

Let's stand and we're going to sing together.

Let's stand and we're going to sing together.

Who can cease to sing together. Who can cease to sing his praise? We will never be forgotten.

Throughout heaven's eternal days.

[ 54 : 11 ] Grace takes my sin, calls me friend, pays my debt completely.

Love rescued me, seated me with my King forevermore.

On the Mount of Crucifixion.

Found in the Mount of Crucifixion. Open deep and wide. Through the floodgates of God's mercy.

Flower dust and gracious tide.

Grace and love like mighty rivers. Born in the Mount of Crucifixion. Born in the Mount of Crucifixion.

Born in the Mount of Crucifixion.

[ 55 : 11 ] Christ is a great day. I'm going to sing together. I'm going to sing together. Christ is a great day. I'm going to sing together. I'm going to sing together.

I'm going to sing together. Grace takes my sin, calls me friend, pays my debt completely.

Love rescued me, seated me with my King forevermore.

Let me all your grip and grip sing Love you ever all my days Let me seek your kingdom only And my life be to your praise You alone shall be my glory Nothing in the world I see You have cleansed and sanctified me God himself has set me free Grace pains my sin, calls me friend Hased my death completely Love rescued me

Seated me with my King forevermore In your truth, God lead me By your spirit, through your word And your grace, my need is meeting As I trust in you, my Lord Of your fullness you are pouring Your great love and power on me Without measure, full and boundless Drawing out my heart to thee Grace takes my sin, calls me friend

[ 57 : 53 ] Pains my death completely Love rescued me, seated me With my King forevermore Amen, deeply sit down At this part of the service We come to remember that sacrifice That Jesus has made for us To qualify us, to enable us

To come into his kingdom His kingdom of light I'd just like to invite those deacons Who are going to be assisting To serve the communion To come and you can take a seat Just over here at the side For now, thank you As we come to share Around this table together Let's just remind ourselves What this is about And what we're remembering So I'm going to read from Luke Chapter 22 Verse 14 to 20 When the hour came Jesus and his apostles Reclined at the table And he said to them I've eagerly desired to eat This Passover with you Before I suffer For I tell you I will not eat it again Until it finds fulfillment In the kingdom of God After taking the cup He gave thanks and said Take this and divide it among you

For I tell you that I will not drink again From the fruit of the vine Until the kingdom of God comes And he took bread Gave thanks and broke it And gave it to them saying This is my body given for you Do this in remembrance of me In the same way After supper He took the cup saying This cup is the new covenant In my blood Which is poured out for you So this meal is a celebration Of the fact that we can have A close relationship With our heavenly father Through Jesus Christ Because of what

he has done For us It's a means by which We can be helped to understand The grace which has been Shown to us by God It's a way we can celebrate And express joyful thanks To the father Who has qualified us To share in his inheritance To be part of his kingdom He's qualified us Through the price That was paid By the body and blood

Of his son Jesus So what we'll do in a moment Is we'll pass around Plates of bread And we can each take A piece of bread And we can eat it As we receive it Reminding ourselves That Jesus died For each one of us Individually And he wants to welcome us Into the presence Of his father There's a small dish On each plate That's got the gluten free Bread in it So please take that one If you need gluten free Afterwards we'll pass around The trays Which have the small cups Of non-alcoholic wine When you receive the cup Please just hold on To the cup Don't drink it yet Because what we'll do Is we'll wait Until everyone has been served And then we'll drink together As a reminder That we've been saved Into a family And we can celebrate Being family together today Sharing in holy communion Is something that we That we take part in As individuals Who've decided To follow Jesus As our lord and saviour Now that's between us and God If that's something That you're not sure about Or you're not ready for yet

Then feel free To let the trays And the plates Just pass you by But I encourage you Just to listen And look And just ask God What he might be showing you Today Through this meal That we're celebrating Let's pray As we give thanks For this meal Father God We come to your table To celebrate This special meal This special sign This special reminder Thank you for the invitation That you gave us That you do give us To come to your table To be made righteous Through Christ Thank you that this meal Reminds us That we can We can one day Come home To eat a feast With you In eternity But for now We can come into Your presence daily And we can receive From you As the bread of life Thank you For what this Shows about Redemption And forgiveness And how you have Redeemed and forgiven us Through this meal May we be filled With the knowledge Of your love And may we be filled

[ 63 : 00 ] With thankfulness Thank you Lord For your body Broken for us And for your blood Shed for us Amen So Jesus As we've been reminded Took the bread And he broke it And he said This Is my body Which is for you Do this In remembrance Of me Let's remember Jesus Body Broken For us Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 66 : 29 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. And we remember that after the supper Jesus took the cup and he said this cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood.

Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me. Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us. Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

[ 69 : 21 ] Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us. Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us. Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us. Let's drink and remember Jesus' blood given for us.

Thank you.

Sacrifice for us. Let's pray.

Dear God, we thank you that you are a good father. And yet you did the hardest thing that any father could do. You sent your precious son to die in our place.

[ 71 : 00 ] So that we could be rescued as your children. Thank you that you welcome each one of us as your children. That you have a place for each one of us in your kingdom of light.

And you want to use us to build your kingdom. Please, Lord, continue the work you've started. Help us to grow into your likeness. To please you in every way and be fruitful for you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you to the deacons who've helped serving. We're going to invite the musicians to come. And they're going to lead us in our final song.

As we sing to invite the Holy Spirit to fill us and to lead us. And to empower us for everything that we face when we go from here. We're going to sing together Holy Spirit, living breath of God. Holy Spirit, living breath of God.

[ 72 : 06 ] Breathe new life into my willing soul. Let the presence of the risen Lord come renew my heart and make me whole.

Cause your word to come alive in me. Give me faith for what I cannot see.

Give me passion for your purity. Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within. May your joy be seen in all I do.

Love enough to cover every sin In each thought and deed and attitude. Kindness to the greatest and the least.

[ 73 : 29 ] Gentleness that soars the flood of peace. Turn my strivings into works of grace. Spread the power of God.

Show Christ in all I do. Holy Spirit, from creation.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth, giving life to all that God has made. giving life to all that God has made.

Show your power once again on earth, cause your church to hunger for your ways.

Let the fragrance of our prayers arise, lead us on the road of sacrifice.

[ 74 : 27 ] That in unity the face of Christ may be clear for all the world to see.

Let the fragrance of our prayers arise, lead us on the road of sacrifice.

That in unity the face of Christ may be clear for all the world to see.

Amen. Amen. Do please sit down. Before we finish with a final prayer, I'd just like to remind you of a few things that are happening or to be aware of.

One's today, one's tomorrow, one's on Tuesday, so that's easy for me to remember. So the first one is the life groups. Today is the last day to sign up for our life groups. I think we should have a slide about that.

[ 75 : 32 ] We'd really encourage you to sign up for a life group, particularly if you've not been part of a small group. It's a way you can meet with others during the week, various times, various places, to be encouraged, to encourage others, read the Bible together, and encourage each other to grow as Christians, to be disciples who make disciples.

And if you haven't already signed up, there's a number of ways you can do that. On the website, you can see the QR codes, you can scan them, or Chris Croft, give us a wave. See Chris Croft after the service, and she'll be able to help you with the sign up.

So that's today. Tomorrow, we'd like you to sign up for something about harvest. So next Sunday is our harvest celebration service. There's lots happening next Sunday. We're going to have an all-age service in which we're inviting our beavers and cubs and scouts to as well.

We'd like to encourage you as part of the service, bring along some items of non-perishable food, more info on the website, which will be given to One Can Trust, but we'll present them in the service as part of our worship.

And also, we encourage you to make a financial gift to one of our partner organisations, Emmanuel International, for their Imerika project in Tanzania. After the service, there's going to be a lunch, which you're all invited to.

[ 76 : 45 ] It's a lovely time to spend together as a church family. It's going to be bread and soup.

We'll invite you to bring a dessert or cake, if you're able to. We'll share that time together. And Chris Mangslow, who's recently been to Tanzania, will share a little bit about his trip, do a presentation during that meal.

So we do encourage you to come along for that. We do need you to sign up just so we know numbers to cater for. And the deadline to sign up is tomorrow. So please sign up on our website or just contact us at the church office and we can get you booked in for that.

And then finally, for church members, on Tuesday, we've got a church members meeting, incorporating a special church members meeting. We've sent out the information about that. Do please join us if you're a church member here in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 on Tuesday evening. I'd like to finish our time with a prayer of blessing. This is a prayer of blessing which is based on Paul's prayer for the Colossians. You may like to hold out your hands like this as a sign of being ready to receive a blessing from God.

May you be filled with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. May you live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.

[ 77 : 57 ] May you bear fruit in every good work. May you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. May you have great endurance and patience.

May you share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. I do encourage you to stay and pray with someone after the service. Myself or anyone with a praying hands badge. If you feel that God has changed something in you today you know if that's you.

Please come and talk to one of us and we'd love to pray with you and for you. If you've got children please go and pick up your children. You've been blessed. If you've been blessed if you want to bless the children's leaders offer to help them pack up in their rooms.

That would be a wonderful blessing. And then we've got activities for the children in the main hall down there where the tea and coffee is. So do go and make use of that. And please greet people that you haven't already spoken to or don't know so well.

[ 79 : 08 ] God bless you and see you soon. Amen. God bless you and see you soon.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I have a husband. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 81 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.