

# Confidence

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[0:00] I know who stands behind, the God of Angel of Miss, is always by my side.

The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine. The God of Angel of Miss, is always by my side. I know who goes before me, I know who stands behind. The God of Angel of Miss, is always by my side.

The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine. The God of Angel of Miss, is always by my side. Well, welcome everyone to our morning worship this morning here at Union Baptist Church. You've never seen the baptistry open.

[1:05] It is open, the water is warm. We're very excited that Andy and Catherine are getting baptised this morning. It's really lovely to have family supporting them here this morning.

So welcome, you're really welcome amongst us. I'm Malcolm Hazel, I'm the Senior Pastor here at Union Baptist Church. And it's a joy for us to perhaps remember our own baptisms. How many people have been baptised here?

So as we go through this baptism service, remember your own baptism. Now I was told that Pam Hutt was baptised years ago.

And because she didn't go entirely under, they pushed her down again. And then she started spluttering. So I think she probably remembers her baptism rather well.

But welcome everybody. Let's come to God in prayer and give him our thanks. Loving Heavenly Father, on a beautiful sunny morning like today, our hearts are full of thanksgiving and praise to you, our Creator God.

[2:13] We thank you, Lord, that you didn't just make us, but you love all that you made. And you love us. Thank you that you've shown that love supremely in your Son, Jesus Christ, who went all the way to the cross for us.

Our hearts are full. We're confident in your love. And we pray, Holy Spirit, come amongst us now and fill our hearts with thanksgiving, praise, and yes, divine love in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, our first song is a golden oldie, and it's been chosen by Andy and Catherine. It's How Great Thou Art. This song talks about God, the maker of everything, the God who comes to us in Jesus, and the God who's coming again.

So can I invite you to stand and sing your hearts out as we sing How Great Thou Art. O Lord my God, did I in awesome wonder?

Consider how the world I had made. I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, the color of the universe displayed.

[3:44] And saints, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Then saints, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art. When through the woods and forest blaze I wander, And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees. When I look down from mountain mountain mountain grandeur, And hear the birds and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

[4:44] Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

And when I think that God, His Son, not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in, That on the cross my burden gladly beareth, He bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.  
Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.  
When Christ shall come, He shall tour and relation, And did He know what joy shall fill my heart?  
[5:57] Then shall I come, He shall come, He shall come, In humble, Lord,  
to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.  
Then sings, my soul, my Saviour, to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art.  
Yes, Lord, we declare Your greatness. Sometimes we imagine that we're great. How can we think  
that when You are so great, Maker of all that's seen and unseen.  
Perfect in love. Faithful, even when we're unfaithful. We worship You. We give You thanks. We  
praise You for Your glory. Amen. Amen.

[7:02] Do take a seat. Just one or two notices. And then Helen's going to  
come and share with us. First of all, I hope you've started on your 40  
days of confidence, our devotional journey.

How many people have enrolled and getting their emails through? That's wonderful. Lots more than  
last week. That's fantastic. If you haven't yet done so, then just go onto our homepage, click on that  
picture, and you can get daily readings and prayers, which will encourage you as we go on this  
journey of confidence in the gospel together during the time of Lent.

Moving on. We have a bereavement service, and you may have seen one of these little postcards  
in your pews. That's on the 12th of March at 3 o'clock. If you or you know of those who recently are  
still suffering from grief through loss, then we really encourage people to come along.  
Grieving the loss of a loved one can be a very lonely thing, and so it's nice to be able to come  
together. We have this annual service each year, and we'd love people to come and to know they're  
not alone.

For others are on a journey of grief too, and that God promises to comfort those who grieve. So  
take one, give it to a friend, a neighbour if you think that would be helpful to them, and do come  
yourself.

[8:18] And then onwards we have an Easter holiday club, and that's from  
the 12th to the 14th of April. Two things to note. One is if you've got  
people around you, friends, family, who you think would like to come to  
that holiday club, in terms of children, you know, not just love holiday  
clubs, sort of, then do pick up one of these postcards.

There's some at the front here, some as you go out, and give it to them. And if you are able to help  
at the holiday club, I know that Andrew will be delighted to hear from you.  
If you don't know who Andrew is, he's just over there, he's waving at you. There he is, isn't that  
marvellous, or Miriam next to him. Fantastic. I think there are the notices. Helen, come and speak to  
us.

Good morning. Good morning. Now this morning we're looking at Romans, chapter 8, verses 28 to  
39. But now we're just going to focus on Romans 8, 28, so that we can hear the verse.  
We can learn what it's saying, we can know the verse, and we can tell other people about it. So first  
of all, let's hear the verse. Thank you.

[9:32] And we know that in all things, God works for good for those who  
love him and have been called according to his purpose.

So what can we learn from that? Well, it starts by saying, in all things, God works for good. When  
we become Christians, God doesn't say that life will always be easy, that we won't face challenges  
or difficulties.

Indeed, the Bible says, take up your cross and follow me. But what it says is in all things, for those  
good things, those bad things, and everything in between, God works for good.

So what's that good? Well, God wants us to imitate Christ. So that when you're facing the good,  
when you're facing those challenges, you imitate him.

You are like him. So, having learnt, learnt what that verse is, how can we remember it?

[10:46] How can we truly know it? Well, I've got some signs, some hooks,  
some memory hooks to help us that I'd like to share with you this  
morning. And they go like this.

In all things, God works for good. Have a go with me. In all things, God works for good.

For those who love him. For those who love him. Now, we're called, and I don't think it means called like this.

I think it means invited. So we're going to say called according to his, God's, purposes. We are called according to his purposes.

So where does it come from? Romans. You need to cross your fingers and touch your forehead and your nose. I know. Romans.

[11:47] Romans. And then it's chapter eight. So that's your thumb and your middle finger. 8. 28. That's Romans. 8. 28.

You didn't know you were getting a workout this morning, did you? Shall I ever go at putting it all together? Okay. Okay. In all things, God works for good for those who love him, who are called according to his purposes.

Romans 8.28. You're nearly there. But we need to remember what that means. So who is that for? Who is that Bible verse for? Us. That's you. That's me. That's Andy and Catherine this morning. All who know and love God and are called according to his purposes.

So it's those who know and trust God. Who know and trust God. And what will happen? We're going to be imitators of Christ.

[13:00] We're going to be transformed to be like him. So I've gone for made. We're going to be made like Christ. So you point to the scars in your hands. We're going to be made like Christ.

Feeling brave? Do the whole thing. Let's do it. In all things, God works for good for those who love him, who have been called according to his purposes.

Romans 8.28. And what does it mean? Those who know and trust him will be made like Christ.

So we've heard the verse. We've learnt what it means. We know the verse. My challenge for you this morning. Who are you going to tell?

I don't think my fingers can do that, Helen.

[14:10] I... Who struggled with the 28? I'm feeling good now. That makes me feel... Who was doing it? Very good.

Very good. Well done. Well, thank you very much. Helen said, don't expect too much. I thought it was amazing. I thought it was absolutely brilliant. Thank you so much. And such an important verse and one that we'll be looking at a bit more later.

Now, just as the musicians come up, if you... When you come out for coffee afterwards, and we'll be going through this door and up the stairs, last week we had a wonderful church weekend and I don't know how they did it, but various people in their church produced a knitted script, musical script, of may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.

Now, I asked Gary if he could get the camera so you could all see it, but we couldn't do that. The cable wasn't long enough. But if you can have a look at this afterwards, it is amazing, but we're going to sing it now.

We're going to sing this lovely, lovely song, which... Oh, it's a song, but it's also a verse that we're holding on to this year as our 2023 verse. So, can I invite you to please stand?

[15:23] And as we sing this song, we will declare that we are looking for God to fill us with his hope and his peace. Thank you. Thank you. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, as you trust in him.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace As you trust in him, as you trust in him So that you might overflow with hope By the power of the Holy Spirit So that you might overflow with hope, with hope By the power of the Holy Spirit May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace As you trust in him, as you trust in him May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace As you trust in him, as you trust in him

So that you might overflow with hope By the power of the Holy Spirit So that you might overflow with hope, with hope By the power of the Holy Spirit Father God, I love you Father God, I trust you Father God, I need you every day And we'll remain standing And I'm going to pray for our children and young people As they go to their groups now And then we'll continue in worship Father, we know that we face times of much joy in our lives

And sometimes we face times of testing and trouble And we recognise that often children experience that at school And we pray for them That you would strengthen them With your love,

with a faith that trusts in you So they know that every day Wherever they are That you are near And they are loved by their heavenly Father We pray that for us too For we're all children of yours Hear our prayer Lord And strengthen us in the faith Amen So if you can go to your groups now And we're going to continue in worship as we sing Blessed be your name Blessed be your name In the land that is plentiful Where the streams of abundance flow Blessed be your name Blessed be your name When I'm found in the desert place Though I walk through the wilderness Blessed be your name Happy blessing you for our love The birth to raise When the darkness closes in long Till I will say Blessed be the name of the Lord Blessed be your name Blessed be the name of the Lord Blessed be your glorious name Blessed be your name

[20:05] When the sun's shining down on me When the world's all as it should be Blessed be your name Blessed be your name On the road marked with suffering God incarnate at the heavens I j tickets on me And it's a miracle Blessed be the name of the Lord Let us pray Blessed be the name of the Lord Blessed be your name Have this plain in the offering Blessed be your name Blessed be your offering Blessed be your name Every blessing you pour our love devil sounds in long Amen.

Amen. Amen.

It's just a moment of quiet as we stand. Yes, for every blessing that you've poured out, we praise you.

Amen. And in those places of testing, of pain, of suffering, we still praise you, Lord.

Strengthen us by your Spirit that we'll praise you in the good times, we'll praise you in the difficult times, and we'll praise you when we see you in glory.

[22:45] Amen. Do take a seat. And we like to declare our faith from time to time, particularly when we come to the waters of baptism.

So, as a whole church, I'm going to invite you to say these words of faith that have been said down through the centuries. It's called the Apostles' Creed. And at one point in this particular statement, it says, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

Now, Stephen suggested to me I point out to you that Catholic means universal. It doesn't mean Roman Catholic. Now, it's nothing against Roman Catholic people.

They're wonderful. But I want you to know that when we say Catholic, we mean the whole universal church. Is that okay? So, let's say this statement of what we believe as Christians.

So, together. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

[24:01] He descended to the dead. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen. I feel like we should be going into a crescendo at the end there. Amen. Can I invite Lucy?

Oh, no, it's going to be Sam. This is Lucy's husband is going to come and bring our reading.

Thanks, Sam. This morning's reading is taken from Paul's letter to the Romans, which can be found on page 1135 in the Church Bibles.

This is Romans chapter 8, verses 28 to 39, page 1135. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

[25:27] For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters, and those he predestined, he also called.

Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who, then, is the one who condemns?

No one. Christ Jesus who died. More than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us.

[26:42] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Lord, as it is written, for your sake we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen. Amen. I wanted to say to Sam, preach it, brother. That was wonderful. Thank you so much. Let's ask God to speak to us through his word. Open the eyes of our heart that we might see wonderful things in your word.

[28:02] Holy Spirit, we invite you to take this written word and apply it to our hearts and to our lives. We pray that all the glory and all the praise will go to you.

Our great God. Amen. Well, as many of you know, who are regular members here at Union Baptist Church, we're on a journey. We're on a Lent journey of confidence in the gospel.

And I mentioned earlier that you can join that journey just by going on our webpage and on our homepage and making sure you get daily readings coming through. So do do that if you haven't already done so.

And as you read this passage, you do get the impression that Paul is a pretty confident follower of Jesus, wouldn't you say? He's full of confidence.

He's convinced of the love of God. And I think he's got much to teach us. But how do we, as human beings, grow in confidence? I thought we'd take the example of learning to drive.

[29:01] Is that okay? I want to check. Were any of you here born, born, not like a little baby, but you always knew you'd be a confident driver?

You know, from the word, you felt that, did you? Yeah. That's amazing. How many crashes did you have early on? None. Do you want to go on? Yeah, yeah, yeah, go on.

I'm the driving instructor. Oh, God. Keep going, keep going. This gentleman's a driving instructor. I'll just make sure it goes on the tape. Go on. I'm driving tractors at 12 when I was 5.

Tractors. I first drove tractors when he was 6. It was 11. He drove tractors when he was 12. Do you know, once, sorry, I'm going off-piste here, but once I went, I was a men's group at Cheney's and they had this game which was driving tractors blindfold.

And you had somebody behind you who told you whether to stop or to turn. And when I was driving, the guy behind me thought it was really funny to not say stop.

[30:10] And we went through a fence. It's got nothing to do with the sermon this time. But anyway, sorry, I apologise. We have one person who was born a confident driver.

Most of us, most of us, I suspect, weren't born confident drivers. Personally, I remember getting in the car and they said, you've got to use the wheel, change gear, indicate, and possibly do something with the clutch.

And I personally thought this was completely impossible. How many, can I just check, is there anybody else here who thought initially it was impossible? Brilliant.

OK. So my question is, how do you go from lacking confidence to growing in confidence? Now, not all of us have a tractor to mess around on in fields, which does sound great fun.

But I think what most of us do is we have somebody to teach us and we practise. We have lots and lots of practise. Also, I remember when I first had to go round the Hemel Hempstead magic roundabout, perhaps a bit like here.

[31:14] I remember somebody saying to me, don't worry, I've done it. I survived. And they said, what you've got to do is just always give way to the right. Just keep that in mind. You won't go wrong. And so a bit of advice from people and hearing that other people have survived and it's OK.

So having a community is useful. And I guess ultimately, you end up having the courage of your convictions that, yes, I believe I can come before a driving instructor and a test examiner and I can

succeed and pass.

And that's kind of a way in which we learn to drive, I guess. Now, as Christians, confidence, I think, can grow. And I want to highlight some things that can help us to grow in confidence.

Over the next six weeks as a church, we're going to be looking at each one of these six C's. And the first one is, we can grow in our convictions as we learn.

I hope today you will be more convinced of the gospel than you were before you came this morning. Also, we gather together. It's so lovely to have the whole family of Andy and Catherine here to support them.

[32:18] But we gather together on a Sunday to encourage one another. We gather in small groups, in home groups and life groups to encourage one another in the faith. That can really help our confidence to grow.

And we encourage you in that. Also, as we show compassion, and many of us are involved in the job club, helping people to get into work. Yesterday, we had people at the Child Contact Center helping people who are estranged from their partner to have their partner being able to see their children, which is fantastic.

So lots of ways in which we can show compassion in our families, in our communities, at work. And as we show compassion, we realize, I'm reflecting the compassion of God, the love of God. And that can grow us in confidence in the gospel.

We know it's a good thing. He tells us to show compassion. We show it and realize, that's just like my Heavenly Father. And we also can try to enter into consistent practices. Today, we've prayed, we've read the Bible, we've worshipped in song.

These are wonderful spiritual practices which strengthen faith. And we grow in confidence.

Competence in God. I remember when I was learning to become a Baptist minister, they told me it was a ministry of incompetence.

[33:31] I thought that was a bit rude, really. You see, I am absolutely incompetent to do what I'm called to do. Some of you have been thinking this for some time. You see, the task of a minister, and in fact of every disciple, is to encourage the life of Christ to grow in other individuals.

To see Christ formed in everyone who would believe. And I can encourage, I can teach, but only God, by his Spirit, can do that.

And friends, you will realize you're competent as a Christian, not when you feel strong, but when you realize that you need God to do that work in you by his Spirit.

Competence comes by knowing that God is with you. And lastly, courage. Well, I think Andy and Catherine are showing some courage today. God's given them that strength to be able to take this step of faith, to be baptized, and we're really looking forward to seeing them baptized a little bit later in our service.

Now, we're going to look at those six things, but today, we're particularly focusing in on conviction and being convinced of the good news of Jesus Christ. And we're going to be looking at Paul's letter for this.

[34:49] So, if you want to go back into your Bibles, Romans 8, verse 28, let's have a look at what Paul has to teach us. Now, Paul, in verse 37, if you have a look, he says he's not just convinced, he is absolutely convinced.

In verse 38, I am convinced, he says. Paul has great conviction about the truth of the gospel. Now, I'm going to talk about three different ways in which we can be convinced and growing confidence from this text.

And you'll notice that Paul says he's convinced about the love of God. Now, friends, if I sort of say, am I confident as a Christian?

And I say, well, you know, if I look, am I confident and I say, well, what's my life like? Well, my life goes up and down. You know, I have good days, I have bad days. I imagine you do too. And if my confidence is based on how I'm doing, then it's going to be pretty up and down.

My confidence can be, I might think that my confidence can be in, you know, just how I'm feeling, but my feelings go up and down. But confident faith for the Christian is always in the object of our faith.

[36:08] And that is our loving God. Okay? So if you want to grow in confidence as a Christian, don't look to yourself, don't look to your experience, don't look to your experience in the sense of life going up and down.

Look to God who is loving and kind. And I believe that's what Paul is doing. He says, I'm having a bit of a nightmare, basically. He's having ups and downs, all sorts of hardships.

But he says he's convinced about what? In verse 37. He's convinced about the love of God. The love that God has for him. And that's a beautiful thing to be absolutely convinced about.

Now my question is, where does he get that conviction from? Have a look at verse 32 just for a moment. It says, in verse 32, he, God, who did not spare his own son Jesus, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us everything?

What Paul is saying, and the reason why he's so convinced that God is loving and nothing can separate us from his love, he says, this is how you're to know you're loved of God.

[37:24] And then he would kind of, I don't know whether he ever did this, he would put out his arms like this and he'd say, this is how much God loves you. He sent his son to die on a cross for you. That's how much he loves you.

That's a lot of love, isn't it? To die for the world. That's what God has done. And he says, well, if God is willing that his son would die for us, surely he'll give us everything that we need.

That's how much he loves you. So if you're lacking confidence today as a Christian, I think Paul would say to you, have a good long look at the cross. Have a good long look at what Jesus did for you in dying for you all those years ago, bearing for you what you deserved.

So that's the first thing that confident faith is based upon. The fact that it's the object of our faith, the love of God.

Secondly, confident faith is based upon a conviction that bad things can turn out for good. For those who've been called of God as we were learning in that wonderful verse that Helen took us through.

[38:41] The conviction that bad things turn out for good for those who love God. Now, where does Paul go to get that idea? Certainly it's there in verse 28.

He states it. It's a verse that many of us have learnt during our lives. But where is that conviction based? I think it's based upon the life of Jesus again.

You remember on Good Friday this year, we'll celebrate again that Jesus died on a cross for us. It's a very sad thing to remember but it's an amazing thing. That's how much God loves you. That he died on a cross for you.

But then, in a sense, you know, there's bad news for Jesus, isn't it? You know, to die on a cross. But it's amazing news for you and I. Because the Bible says that the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, Jesus did nothing wrong. So the wages of sin is death shouldn't have gone to him, should it? But he died a death that we deserved on our behalf.

[39:50] The wages of sin are death and Jesus took that death for us. Isn't it beautiful that somebody would die for you and for me? But, the verse goes on, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You see, he takes our death and gives us life. And you say, well, how can we know that? Well, Jesus died on Good Friday but what do we do on Easter Sunday? We celebrate the resurrection because Jesus on the third day, on that first Easter Sunday, he rose again from the dead.

And so, when we look at our God, he can turn death, the death of Jesus, into life. life. Is the death of Jesus good?

It was very bad for Jesus, good for us, but he turned that bad thing into a glorious thing that means that you and I, all of us, are destined to die one day, but after death, there'll be a resurrection from the dead for all who believe.

Our God can turn even the worst thing, I think, I think death's a terrible thing, he can turn death into life. Don't you think he can do a bit of work on our difficult days and turn the bad stuff into good, bring it about for good somehow?

[41:13] If he can turn death into life, surely he can do something with our dismal days, our testing times, and the sufferings that we endure. That's what Paul has discovered.

Now, I had a neighbor when I was over, Dawn and I had a neighbor called Anita, she lived just next door to us and she was a single lady, she lived on her own, she's very nice, but she kept herself to herself.

Have you got any neighbors like that? Keep themselves to themselves. You know the kind of thing? She'd just go, hello, closed door. Anyway, we tried to be pleasant, we said, hello, sorry, my dog's barking and things like that, but we didn't really get very much further than that.

Anyway, one day, we were having a dinner party and it was a lovely day, we had the back door open and halfway through the dinner party, we heard this person crying out from next door, help, help.

We were like, gosh, what's going on? So, I don't know, did I go or did you go, Dawn? Well, you haven't got the story right. This is all, I haven't got the story right.

[42:24] Did we? Oh. Okay, I'll just correct this. In order to get the story right, we would go, we went, I don't remember that.

Apparently, we went out to see the guinea pigs. I thought we were in the kitchen, the back door was open. We weren't. As we were going to see the guinea pigs, whose names I do not remember, we heard Anita crying out to us.

We went round there and she'd broken her leg on the slope in her garden. Well, we did what any neighbour would do. We stayed with her, called 999, ambulance came quite quickly in those days and she was taken off to hospital.

From that day on, Anita suddenly became a neighbour who spoke to us. We got to know her and wonderfully, she came through to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

She now lives in the New Forest. Was her breaking her leg a good thing? No. I mean, broken legs are bad things.

[43:37] It's very painful. I would observe that God worked that for good. He worked these things together for good and in a way, I wish he hadn't had to have a broken leg for it to happen, but sometimes, maybe we do need these things to happen to us.

C.S. Lewis says that suffering is the megaphone God uses to a deaf world. Maybe some of us need to hear from him. So, firstly, what was the first thing?

That if we're going to become convinced and confident Christians or our faith is in God and his nature, his loving nature. Secondly, a confident Christian recognises that even bad things God can turn around for good.

And lastly, and beautifully, we're convinced that the best is always yet to come for the believer. Better make sure I get the next bit right.

I've got the first bit wrong, the second bit wrong. Here we go. The first, the third bit. Now, on Good Friday, Jesus died, but on Easter Sunday, he rose again.

[44:47] I think it's good to remember his death, but Christian people are resurrection people. We say that he is risen. He is risen from the grave.

That's our destination. Nothing less than resurrection life. I was chatting to somebody during the week. They said, oh, I think I've let God down.

I said, well, how's that? Well, I'm going through a very, very tough time. I said, well, you are. I can see that. God is with you and he's going to even work this for good.

And you, this person hasn't got very much longer in this life. You are going to see your Lord in glory face to face and all the sufferings now are like the title page on a novel with the whole novel yet to come.

That's the reality for the Christian. That is the reality that we want to share with others. Why would we want to hold that good news back? It's such good news.

[45:50] 100% of people are destined to die and most in our country do not have an understanding, a conviction that they are destined if they place their trust in Jesus for resurrection life and a place in the Father's house.

Isn't that great news? I wonder whether that's your focus. You get up in the morning and think, that's my destination. Resurrection life. Well, I could go on but I'll try not to. Paul says this in verse 18 of chapter 8. Yes, he says, I am convinced, oh no, sorry, he says, our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. And by the way, he was shipwrecked, flogged, in prison, had a really tough time. He's saying that whatever you're going through, it's not worth comparing with the glory that is coming. He was convinced and he was confident. He's, if you like, an advanced driving instructor for us. We might want to go back to this passage again, read it again, and allow him to guide us into confident Christian faith.

[47:05] The last part of the passage is just so beautiful. I'll read it to you. It was read so well by Sam. And I want you to know that this is the place to dwell as a Christian.

Let me read it to you. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither the future nor any powers, no angels nor demons, neither the present or the future or any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us, you, Andy and Catherine, from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isn't that beautiful? So, do you see? God loves you. He's shown it in his son. He loves you. Can you see? Are you convinced that he can turn bad things, even bad things, right round for good as he did in the resurrection of his son, as he did for Anita, my friend? And are you thrilled? I hope you are. Are you thrilled at the future? Resurrection life, nothing less. A new home in the Father's house, in a new heaven and a new earth where there'll be no more wars, where there'll be no more COVID, there'll be no more fatigue, there'll be no more COVID.

[48:31] I said that once, twice even. This is good news and we want to, as Helen said, tell people about this. He loves you in Jesus.

He loves you even through the bad things. He loves you and will take you home. This is gospel good news. May it sit in your heart with great conviction.

May you know the confidence in Jesus. Let's pray, shall we? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Father, we're so sorry that too often our focus is on ourselves when you call us to look to our loving Heavenly Father.

We want to look to you and see the full extent of your love for us. You've made this beautiful world for us to enjoy and you haven't even held back your one and only Son.

truly you are loving and kind. Thank you, Father, that you can even turn death into life, turn the broken places of our lives into resurrected life.

[49:44] And Father, we thank you that always for the believer, the best is yet to come. Thank you that the best is yet to come for Andy and Catherine. The best is yet to come for all who believe.

May we place our whole trust in you today. Hear our prayer. Amen. Well, it gets to the really exciting bit now where Andy and Catherine are going to be baptized.

We're going to invite the music group up. We're going to sing a beautiful song, Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus. And after that, I'm going to interview Catherine and Andy and ask them some questions and they're going to say to us why they're getting baptized.

And then Mike and Andrew are going to baptize them in the water. And we've got a camera set up so you'll all be able to see really well. Can I invite you to stand and turn your eyes upon Jesus? Cry causes. Thank you.

[51:14] 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. Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to you. Jesus, to you we lift our eyes.

[54:16] Jesus, our glory and our prize. We adore you, we hold you, I'll save you ever true.

Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to you. Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to you.

Do take a seat, thank you, and I'll ask you to come up in just a moment. Now, Andy and Catherine are going to go into this water and they're going to be lent back and they'll be lent back and go right under.

We won't do it twice. We'll make sure they go right under first time. And in laying them back, we are identifying them with the death of Jesus who was laid in a tomb.

It's a symbol that their old life is dying and a new life has begun. They come back up out of the water and they are linked with the resurrection life of Jesus.

[55:39] Remember, we're resurrection people. Hallelujah is our name. And they're going to come back up out of the water and from there on, they're going to go out the back.

This baptistry is very clever. You go in one direction, you turn right and go out the other way through here. And that's a great symbol, isn't it? That we go in, we meet Jesus and he directs us in a new direction for our life.

We leave parts of our behavior behind and he carries on changing us during our Christian life. My prayer particularly today for you both is as you go under the water, that symbolically you will be completely immersed in the love of God.

Isn't water... Do you ever go into a bath and you just put your head right under? Do you ever... Anybody do that? Your knees come up. That's the only problem, isn't it? But anyway, there we go. But they will be entirely immersed and I pray that you will know the overwhelming love of God for you both.

And as we watch you, we will smile remembering our baptism. Remembering when we were washed, all our sins washed away, rising to eternal life.

[56:49] Wonderful, wonderful. So, enough from me. I think we need to ask you some questions. So, Andrew, do you want to come out first? And I'm going to ask you some questions. And then... So, if you stand just here on the first step...

Is that okay? Just on... Well, second... Well, first step there. You go there. And then you face all these lovely people. Is that all right? If you go a bit further along, you'll be fine. Go there.

That's it. And then you can... Your voice will be caught on the mic. Right. We're going to ask you some questions. They're going to come up on the screen. Up there, I think. There we go. So, I'm going to say the words and then...

Can you see that? Yes. Brilliant. And then you do the bit in italics at the bottom. Is that okay? Yeah.

Fantastic. So, Andy. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do. Fantastic. Do you confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? I do. Fantastic. Do you turn from sin, renounce evil and intend to follow Christ?

[57:47] I do. And will you live within the fellowship of the church and will you serve Jesus Christ in the world? I will. Fantastic. That's it. So, why are you wanting to be baptised?

We're delighted, but you talk in there and tell people. Because I know God died for me and I know my best interests are to follow him. Fantastic.

Yeah. Shall we give Andy a clap? Thank you. You're going to take a seat for that. Thank you.

You're going to take a seat for him. Thank you. Yeah. Come on, Catherine. You can see how it's done now.

Thank you. Fantastic.

You just go slightly further on. That's it. So, I'm going to ask you the same questions, Catherine.

And then at the end, if you can tell us why you want to be baptised, that would be great. So, can you see that up there? Yes. Excellent. Do you believe, Catherine, in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

[58:51] I do. Brilliant. Do you confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? I do. Do you turn from sin, renounce evil and intend to follow Christ?

I do. And will you live within the fellowship of the church? And will you serve Jesus Christ in the world? I will. Fantastic. So, tell us, why are you wanting to be baptised, Catherine?

You'll tell all these people here. Because Jesus died for me and I want to serve him for the rest of my life. Wonderful. Wonderful. Wonderful. Oh, actually, you stay there.

You stay there, actually. Yes. Well, yes. Now, we thought ladies first. So, I think Mike's going to go down into the water first.

Is that right? Yes. Sorry? We'll be doing ladies first. Ladies first. That's right. And I think Andrew's going to come and help Catherine down. Now, after the baptism takes place, we're going to baptise and then Catherine will come up and then we're going to sing the song.

[59:58] Do you know the song? How marvellous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. Do you know the one? Yep. It's going to come up on the screen. And they'll play the song, the music, so you'll know what to sing.

So, we're going to do that. How are we doing? Are we doing okay? Great. And after that, a prayer will be said over Catherine. And then if the congregation wanted to offer prayers or a word, there'll be an opportunity for that.

And my wife, because she interrupted the sermon, is going to be taking the microphone round so that we can catch what you're saying on the microphone. No guinea pigs allowed.

Marvellous. Over to you, gentlemen. Step forward. Step forward again. It's together like this.

Catherine, put your hands together like this.

This is yours. On hearing of your repentance towards God and your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we now baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[61:06] Amen. Wow. Wow. There it is. How marvelous.

How wonderful. And my song. Jaiia will be. How marvelous. How wonderful.

Please, my Saviour's love for me. Let's pray for Catherine. Father God. We thank you so much that Catherine has chosen to take this step of marking publicly her faith in you.

And I pray that you would bless her now. And I pray that you would fill her to overflowing with your Holy Spirit. That she would be so convinced that you died for her because you love her.

Because she belongs to you. You are her loving Father. There's nothing that she can do to separate herself from your love because of what you've done for her. And I pray that you'll fill her with joy and with the power of knowing just how much you've done for her.

[62:09] And I pray that that power of knowing you would shine out of her life like a shining star, like a shining light to all those around her. I pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.

I just invite anyone from the congregation now to pray for Catherine or share a verse of scripture. Amen. I pray for you, Catherine.

Thank you that you've come to know the love of God. And I pray that in your heart of hearts you will know his deep love surrounding you in everything you do. And I pray that you will learn to love him more deeply in your life.

That you will love him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. Amen. Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father, we just thank you, Lord, for the gift of Catherine to us.

We thank you, Lord, that she's joined our community here. And we just lift her to you today. We thank you for her profession of her faith in you. And we entrust her into your precious hands, Lord.

[63:31] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Catherine, I have a verse for you.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your life in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Bless you, Catherine. Amen. Amen. Well done. Right, you can go up this way now, Catherine. It's your turn now.

Come on up and wait for the gentlemen to be ready for you. Thank you.

[64:44] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Just take a little step forward so you're almost on the front here. Hands together like this. Take it. That's it. That's it.

So, Andy, on hearing of your repentance towards God the Father and your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we now baptize you in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Good morning. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[66:39] Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. And when I looked up where it came from, it comes from Psalm 73, which is actually quite a difficult psalm, a psalm where the person who wrote it is having doubts and worrying about, you know, is God really there?

But I think that's the purpose of this psalm. I think this is for you to hold on to, not just in the good times, but to remember in the bad times. I'll say it again. Yet I am always with you. You hold me by your, by my, you, this is the psalm speaking.

Yet I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand. Amen. Amen. Andy, I pray for you.

[68:07] I thank you that you've come to know and love God for yourself. And I pray that you will know that love of God that surpasses knowledge and that you will be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God in your life.

Amen. Amen. And a verse for you, Andy. For you are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works which God prepared in advance for you to do.

May he bless you with that. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, whilst Andy and Catherine get changed, we're going to sing a beautiful worship song in Christ alone, My Hope is Found.

And this particular song is a statement of great assurance that we don't have to look to ourselves, look to our past experience, but look to God, look to Christ. So can I invite you now to stand and to bring your testimony as you sing this song.

And it's just gonna be called and to bring your buton.

[69:38] In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my soul His cornerstone, His solid ground Found through the fiercest drought and storm What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are stilled, when striving seeks I comfort her, my all in all Here in the love of Christ I stand In Christ alone, fruit of flesh

Own us of God in helpless pain His gift of love and righteousness Scorned by the ones He came to save Till on that cross as Jesus died The wrath of God was satisfied For every sin on Him was laid Here in the death of Christ I live There in the ground His body lay Light of the world by darkness slain And blessed Him for the glorious name

Up from the grave He rose again And as He stands in victory Since person lost his grip on me For I am His and He is mine Walk in the precious blood of Christ No guilt in life, no fear in death This is the power of Christ in me From lifeless cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of man, no fear in death No power of man, no scheme of mind Can ever bear the scheme of mind Can ever bear the scheme of mind

Till He returns, oh cause be home Here in the power of Christ I stand No power bear the scheme of mind and ever have me from his hand till he returns or calls me home here in the barrel of Christ I'll stand Amen. Do take a seat and just got a few things to mention.

In baptism services like this, often God speaks to people. It may be that he's spoken to you, this morning, and it might be that you know that you want to be a true follower of Jesus.

[73:32] If that's you, then I'm just going to say a prayer now and just repeat it in your heart. Let's pray. Lord Jesus Christ, I know I have sinned in thought and words and actions. There are so many good things I have not done. There are so many sinful things I have done. I'm so sorry for my sins, and turned from everything I know to be wrong. You gave your life upon the cross for me.

Gratefully, I give my life back to you. Now I ask you to come into my life. Come in as my saviour to cleanse me. Come in as my Lord to control me.

Amen. And I will serve you all the remaining years of my life in complete obedience. Amen. Good prayer to pray when you've been a Christian a long while too.

If you'd like to find out more about the Christian life, we have a little booklet here called Journey Into Life. If you need to go back to the basics again and read what it means to be a Christian, then do take one of these. They're just on the side here or in the main exit as you go out.

It may be that, as you saw Andy and Catherine simply acting and responding to God, that you realize that God's calling you to be baptized by going through the waters of baptism. If that's you, then I've got a booklet. Andrew and I have got a booklet called Baptism, Belonging and Breaking Bread.

[75:09] We'd love to give you that. So just come and ask one of us for that. Now, I'm going to say a final blessing, but at the end of the blessing, we've got agreement to show what I think is quite a beautiful and quite moving song. It's a very particular rendition of Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus. And that will be the end of our service as we just sit and listen to that. If you need to go and encourage Catherine and Andy during that song, then that's fine.

If you want to just sit here and enjoy that song, that will also be wonderful. Let me read those last two verses about the love of God. And may you this week, may you experience and live in the love of God. Paul says, for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And all God's people said, Amen. Do enjoy this.

God's peopleographer studied Anyone can learn about how radio is, our Lord has never met, so maybe only our biggest prayers for you and great ways to live daily, with happiness for life and peace.

Amen. The horn is always at the end of the heart of God's people who desire to hold whether your children's to die. १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११ १११

Underneath me, all around me, is the current of thy love.

[78:36] Leading onward, leading homeward, to thy glorious rest above.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, and his grace from shore to shore.

How he loveth ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, tis the heart of hands to me.

And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee.

[79:51] O the deep, deep love of Jesus, and his grace from shore to shore. O the deep, deep love of Jesus, and his grace from shore to shore.

Over Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.