

Having the mind of Christ in his Attitude!

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[0 : 00] Okay, so, Philippians chapter 3, we're reading from verses 1 to 11. We are looking at a series called, Let This Mind Be In You, Having The Mind of Christ, from the book of Philippians.

This is our sixth in the series, and we've arrived at chapter 3, Having The Mind of Christ in His Attitude. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same thing to you is not tedious.

But for you it is safe. Beware of dogs. Beware of evil workers. Beware of the mutilation. For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so. Circumcise the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews.

Concerning the law, a Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gained to me, these things I have counted loss for Christ.

[1 : 22] Yet indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Amen. And the Lord will bless to us the reading of His Word. Amen. What is your life ambition? I'll leave you to think about that for a moment.

If you're anything like me, it'll have changed over time. The first time I remember having any kind of life ambition, I wanted to be a bus conductor. Very attractive proposition.

I thought bus conductors were really cool. You know, in the old days of trolley buses, where you kind of hopped on the back, and there was a pole, kind of silver pole, and as the bus was going, if they were really cool bus conductors, they would kind of allow the bus to move on before jumping on.

[2 : 54] So they looked very athletic as well. They had caps and a satchel, and they had a machine that gave out tickets. And I really wanted to be a bus conductor, and one day I was coming home on the 20 past 11 in the evening bus, I was only about 11 or 12, coming home from my Auntie Mary's with my mum, and there was a lovely bus conductor, and he promised me that when he retired, he would give me his cap and his satchel and his uniform, and he was lying.

My ambition. Well, I don't know if he was lying. He didn't give me it. He would never see me again. But my ambition was kind of like squashed. And that's a bit like ambitions in life, isn't it? From then on, I've wanted to be sent forward for Newcastle.

I wanted to be the next heavyweight champion of the world. Struggled height and weight-wise there, I'm glad to say. Well, not for the height, but the weight.

Struggled, I wouldn't have made that. I don't think I've ever wanted to be rich. I never felt I could trust myself with money. I'm a bit of a kind of spontaneous spire.

[4 : 11] So if I had lots of money, I'd just waste it, probably. And then kind of as you get older, your ambitions change anyway, don't they?

You know, you want to be successful in business or successful in your field of work, but eventually you get to an age where you're just glad to be alive, really. Your ambition is getting through the next

day.

What is your life ambition? The one good thing about getting old is that you begin to get a perspective on life that you didn't have when you were young and wanted to be a bus conductor. Your kind of perspective on life changes because you begin to narrow down to the things that really matter. And what really matters at the end is usually family, relationships, health, well-being, yes. But increasingly you begin to realize as you head towards your older years and the inevitable conflict with death that is coming around the corner that there's not really much that you need, really need, to be ultimately happy in life.

[5 : 30] What is your ambition, your life ambition? Next slide, please. J.I. Packer, Anglican theologian now in glory. What makes life worthwhile is having a big enough objective, something which catches our imagination and lays hold of our allegiance.

And this the Christian has in a way that no other person has. For what higher, more exalted, and more compelling goal can there be than to know God?

That is the ambition of the Christian, to know God. Or as Paul would put it, I want to know Christ. I want to press on to know Christ.

Everything I've achieved in life, every accolade, everything of naught, everything that other people would rejoice in because of me, none of them are worth it.

The only thing that is worth holding on to is to know Jesus. The power of His resurrection, the fellowship of sharing in His suffering, becoming like Him in His death, and so somehow to attain to the resurrection of eternal life.

[6 : 46] His ambition, His goal in life, was to follow faithfully on in service with His Lord Jesus Christ, no matter what else might befall Him.

So our sermon focus today is to express the mind of Christ by having the same attitude of striving relentlessly to live for God above everything else, whatever the cost to our own self-esteem, or to our comforts, or to our reputation.

to follow the example of Christ, who at the cost of His own precious blood did the will of His Father in heaven. And to have such an ambition will require us to have a certain attitude to circumstances. Paul begins by saying, finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, for me to write the same thing to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Rejoice in the Lord. Joy is His great theme in this epistle. It emerges again and again, 16 times. He uses the word joy or rejoice.

[8 : 00] To rejoice is to give thanks. To give thanks, Eucharistio. To be blessed and joyful and happy in all circumstances.

Now we have to be careful with the word happy, because by happy we think we've got to go around with a permanent grin on our face, and that's not what he meant. And neither did he mean that to be happy means that you never have anything unpleasant happen to you.

He was in prison, wasn't he, when he wrote this letter. He was permanently chained to a Roman soldier, so he couldn't have been full of smiles and every day feeling wonderful and, you know, just sending lovely pictures on Facebook or Instagram or whatever else that makes you feel that you really want his life.

His joy was not a shallow joy. It was not a joy that was determined by his circumstances. It was a deep, indwelling contentment that he was in the will of God.

He says, I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I find myself, whether well-fed or hungry, whether I'm in need or I have all my needs met.

[9 : 12] It doesn't matter. I have the joy of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. Rejoice in the Lord. It is not tedious, he says, for me to say that to you.

Indeed, for you it is safe. In other words, if you take an attitude of joy in your everyday life, if you are content to know God and know that he is your heavenly Father watching over you and giving you your daily bread, if you are content to know that in Christ you have been justified by faith and have peace with God and have become a part of God's family, adopted into his family, and have the guarantee of eternal life, you can be happy whatever other circumstances come your way.

You can still have joy even if you're given the terrible news of a terminal illness. You can have joy even if you lose all your wealth.

You can have joy if everybody abandons you because you have Jesus. We used to sing, didn't we, I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

I used to hate singing that song. I thought, goodness, I wish that was true in my life. That's the challenge, isn't it?

[10:30] always of the flesh, as Veronica reminded us when we came to communion. And Paul knew that wrestling. He knew that the flesh was strong and that the flesh desired other stuff, stuff that didn't ultimately satisfy.

But there is something in the Spirit that says, in spite of the weakness and frailty of the flesh, I have my Lord Jesus. I can rejoice. nothing is more precious than Jesus to my soul.

And so, his attitude to circumstances, whatever the circumstances, he overcame them by always maintaining his joy in the Lord.

And that's really good. You know, we live in a world that is replete with mental health issues. It's the biggest contagion of our day. And I feel sorry for younger people growing up in such a world.

Life was very simple when the telephone was the most sort of, you know, sophisticated technology you had. People didn't see your face when you were talking to them, which was a good thing sometimes if you kind of thought, oh, goodness.

[11:41] You know, the conversation was going on too long or you'd come out of the shower and answer the phone in your bathrobe or something. You were grateful. But now you just can't get away from all of this information, all this technology.

It's great stuff. Except there's too much of it. Wake up in the morning. By the time you've had your cup of coffee, you've heard about three world conflicts. You know, the stock market's about to crash.

Somebody else has told a lie in government. And so it goes on. And it just increases our anxiety. And Paul says the antidote to anxiety is to rejoice in the Lord.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, with thanksgiving, make your request known to God.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice. Now it's not like, you know, I woke up this morning feeling happy. It's actually just a determination that today, whatever my fears, whatever my troubles, whatever my worries, whatever my concerns, I will rejoice in the Lord.

[12:50] Did you notice last week in the reading that Richard brought that Paul talked about all of the troubles that were going on and then he was grateful that Epaphroditus had come through. He said, it spared me some anxiety.

So it's not as if Paul's saying, I never worry. He's rather saying, when I worry, I give it to Jesus. When I worry, I commit it to God.

I overcome my worry, my anxiety by rejoicing in the Lord, knowing that Jesus has got it. He's got my life. He's controlling my circumstances.

So Paul has joy whenever he remembers them. Next slide. He has joy whenever he remembers them, whenever he remembers the Christians in Philippi. He rejoices when he thinks of Lydia and the Philippian jailer and the jailer's family and when he thinks of Epaphroditus and all of those faithful servants who came to faith so wonderfully when God converted them by his Holy Spirit and formed the church.

Whenever he thought of them, he'd give thanks. They're all miracles. They're all wonderful miracles. You know, as a pastor, I think that. I think of you. I think of some of your stories.

[14:03] I think of your circumstances. I think of what you've come through. I think of what you're going through. I carry that every day and I give thanks. I have some worries for you too when I'm praying for you or when I'm contacting you to ask how things are.

And when you get good news, I rejoice. Like Vicki's good news recently. We rejoiced. And when the news is not so good, well, then I worry and then I say, Lord, carry this because I can't carry that.

I rejoice. Paul says, when I remember you, I rejoice whenever Christ is preached. Even though sometimes Christ was preached maliciously to make Paul's chains even heavier, to get Paul into even more trouble.

the competitive edge that sometimes exists among Christians that kind of causes trouble for one another. Kind of ridiculous stuff, isn't it? But there you go. Paul said, matter, Christ is preached.

And if I end up in trouble because of it, well, okay, I'm in trouble. That's fine. He had joy, whatever the circumstances. We've already referred to that. He's in prison, for example.

[15:17] He's had difficulties. He's had hardships. He's been without parchment, without pen, without money, without food, but whatever the Lord provides. And He can rejoice.

And He has joy whenever true Christian fellowship is expressed. When relationships are renewed. When your dear and Syntyche get on with each other in the Lord and are helped by the brethren. Whenever the church acts as it should and not as it sometimes should not. He gives thanks. Joy. Joy is a tremendous, tremendous asset for the Christian. It is a safeguard against all kinds of troubles. When you wake up every day this week, can I encourage you to say, Lord, help me to rejoice in you today.

So that first moment when you wake up, you know, when you wake up and you're bleary-eyed, alarms got off and you think, I need a cup of tea. That's just me, but never mind. Before you get out of bed, why not say, Lord, help me today, whatever comes my way, to rejoice in the Lord.

[16:32] And then at the end of the day, take a few moments, just as a spiritual inventory for the day, and say, Lord, have I rejoiced in you today? Okay. Forgive me if I spend all of my day worrying or complaining.

See what it does for the next week. A little trial. One to take away free of charge. You see, the thing about joy is it gives confidence.

None of us know what's going to happen, do we? We kind of start a day and you never kind of know what's going to happen in the day, do you? I'm struck sometimes when I read in the newspaper about some unfortunate young person who's killed in a road crash on a head-on.

They didn't go out that morning thinking, well, today's going to be my last day and I'm going to die today. They hadn't prepared for it. But life has a way of doing that to us, doesn't it?

Unexpected things happen. What is my safeguard? My safeguard, my safeguard is my joy, my happiness. In Jesus, my knowledge that He is in control of all things, I have learned to be content in every situation, Paul says.

[17:49] My God will supply all my needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. You see, He is brimming with confidence in Jesus. He has no confidence in the flesh. He doesn't think, well, we'll get through today, guys, because Paul's with you.

And he's just an amazing, clever genius of a man. He never thought of himself like that. He used to. When he was a Pharisee and a Hebrew, Hebrews and all of that, when he was the big cheese, everybody should follow him.

But that confidence in the flesh was leading him to hell until he met Jesus on the Damascus road and what a difference Jesus made. And then he says, I have no confidence in the flesh.

Don't trust me. Don't follow me. Follow Jesus. To have Jesus and to have confidence in Jesus is the secret of our joy and our contentment.

Warren Reesby says, I think I've got the slide, next slide, if you cannot rejoice in your circumstances, you can always rejoice in the Lord who controls your circumstances.

[19:00] Fix your attention on him. He may not change your situation, but he will change you. And that is even better. You see, sometimes we kind of, if we're honest, we kind of think, well, I'll trust in God and Jesus so he'll help me out in trouble.

But if he doesn't help me out in trouble, I'm going to be really disappointed in him and I'm going to let him know I'm really mad because this shouldn't happen. But there's a lot of self in that to be broken, isn't there?

A lot of kind of presuppositions there that my life should be trouble-free and easy, that nothing bad should ever happen to me. And if it does, well, God has let me down.

But how many of us have learned about ourselves and about the things that we really value in life by difficulties, from difficulties?

When we're vulnerable, when we're weak, when we're in need, we've really discovered ourselves and we know there's great value in that. God loves us too much to leave us always in our comforts.

[20:05] In order to conform us into the image of Jesus, sometimes tough things have to happen and we have to truly discover our inner resources and discover that those inner resources are in Him.

If you cannot rejoice in your circumstances and some of your circumstances are really difficult, then do rejoice in the Lord. For He is in control of your circumstances and He will ensure that in spite of your circumstances, you will discover more of His peace, of His love, and of His joy.

So that's the attitude to circumstances. Next slide, please. The next thing you can see here is that Paul talks about his attitude itself and I've already kind of referred to it a little bit.

All of this stuff about being what he was in the past. The Hebrew of Hebrews, that is a way of saying, you know, I'm as Jewish as they come.

Can't be better. It's like when you're waiting at Newcastle, St. James's Park, just before the mat kicks off and they play a song called I'm Coming Home to Newcastle.

[21 : 16] Newcastle's where I belong. I sing along to that because I think, yeah, that's where I really belong. I live in Whitby, but these are my people. I'm a real Geordie. My accent gets thicker.

My blood runs faster. A Geordie of Geordies. If you were writing the Bible in Newcastle, that's what you would say. A Hebrew of Hebrews.

Yeah, a Pharisee. Well taught, well learned, but also a pure one. Really admired for his religion. Well versed, well taught, well liked, well respected.

His behavior, impeccable. as for legalistic righteousness, he says, faultless. You could have spent a long time trying to catch him out, but there was no way of catching him out.

He was a good man and he was not tainted by any kind of scandal. And he says, all of that was gain. Everybody thought I was great.

[22 : 21] He would undoubtedly have been a leader of the Sanhedrin, the future Nicodemus. And then, one day, he presided over the murder of a man called Stephen.

And he heard Stephen say, behold, I see heaven open, the Son of Man. He saw Jesus.

And for Paul, such a statement was blasphemy. It was a tantamount to a claim that Jesus was divine. And so, he was determined after approving of the stoning of Stephen, he was determined that he was going to arrest all of the followers of Jesus and put them in prison and have them killed if necessary.

And so, he was going to Damascus in Syria to ensure that this would be carried out among the diaspora of Jews, the dispersion of Jews in the various neighboring lands. And as he was on the road, a light shone from heaven and he saw Jesus for himself.

And he was blinded. He was led back to Damascus. He was taken into a house. A man called Ananias came to him on Straight Street and as he prayed, his eyes were opened.

[23 : 41] He was a Christian now. He was baptized. And at once, he began to preach. That's what Acts chapter 9 says. At once, he began to preach.

He preached that Jesus was the Son of God. A complete, radical turnaround. And everything Paul thought about himself until that day, from that time, it was all rubbish, he said.

I cast it aside. Your Bible version may have the word dung. Yeah? The scoobala, like reminds me of Scooby-Doo and Scooby snacks, which I can imagine is rubbish as well.

The scoobala is any kind of rubbish from human excrement to really bad food tossed to the dogs.

Paul said, everything that I had attained in life, everything that made me special, everything that people admired about me, I throw it away.

I count it as scoobala, as rubbish, because I have gained Christ. I have been found in Him, having a righteousness that is not of my own from the law, but a righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus.

[24 : 55] I'm no longer, he says, trusting in myself for my salvation, for my approval with God. I'm no longer proud of myself. I am proud to belong to Jesus, and I am glad that He and He alone makes me right before God and makes me acceptable.

Now none but Christ shall satisfy. None other name for me. There's love and life and lasting joy, Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

An attitude to self. Next slide, please. Ralph Martin summarizing this, the time has now come, next slide, the time has now come in the sequence of the chapter for the apostle to say it clearly, the reassessment of his spiritual life, which followed directly upon conversion.

This is introduced by a strong asseveration, but whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. The last words supply the motive and the reason for this dramatic reevaluation.

Because of all that Christ has become to him, Paul is willing to collect all his former privileges, described in verses five to six, to put them, as it were, in one parcel and write that off as loss.

[26 : 17] He is not content simply to dismiss them and become indifferent to them, rather, as Barth suggested, he rejects them with horror and treats them as liabilities.

So it's kind of an accountant's kind of view of righteousness. It's all of this stuff that I kind of laid up, all of this stuff that I would bring before God on judgment day and say, well God, you remember that I studied the scriptures, you remember that I was a Pharisee, you remember that I prayed so faithfully, you remember that I fasted, you remember all of those things that I did, God, that's why

you should accept me into heaven, that is what I'm relying on.

And then all of a sudden he meets Jesus and he thinks, it's no good. I reject that as loss. I don't want anybody to say, Paul deserves this promotion to heaven because he was such a good guy. And that is the heart of a Christian, my friend. The Christian relies entirely for his salvation upon the righteousness of Jesus.

The Christian makes much of Jesus and when he hears and he prays for himself, thanks God for his grace that has made such a difference in his life.

[27 : 42] Paul says, I know that in me that is in my flesh there is no good thing. Who can rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

David Dixon, the old Scottish preacher, he says, when I think of Jesus, he says, I think of my bad works and I lay them there.

And then I think of my good works and I lay them there. And I run from them both to Jesus. No confidence in the flesh.

Remember that because Christians will let you down. Christians are not perfect people and we should never make a pretense of being perfect.

We are flawed, frail, sinful people. We know that sometimes there is in us so many good things. Praise God.

[28 : 41] A desire to pray. A desire to serve others selflessly. A desire to look out for the needs of one another and so on. All of those are good things. Christ inspired things, spirit inspired things in our life and when they happen it's evidence that the spirit of God is working in us.

So we don't pat ourselves on the back and say, well, what a good Christian man I am. We thank God that his spirit is at work within us. But believe me, there are things in us that we would not want people to know.

There are thoughts that we have that we will be ashamed of. There will be behaviors that we sometimes carry out that we are deeply saddened by.

Attitudes and things that the spirit of God has to still sanctify in us. There is still much of the flesh in us, isn't there? And the answer to the flesh is Jesus.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me and the life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[29 : 51] Whenever John Winter emerges too much in John Winter's life, I need to pray, Lord Jesus, I want that crucified with you.

I don't want that. I don't want to think like that, be like that, feel that. I don't want to grieve your spirit by being so, so fleshly.

But I have no confidence in John Winter. I have no confidence in my flesh. My only confidence is in Jesus. When I became a Christian in 18, I used to meet Christians who had been Christians for years.

They used to think, wow, it's amazing. I hope I can make it. I'm 61 now. And I still hope I can make it. Yeah?

Paul says that, doesn't he? Paul said, not that I have already obtained it. Not already perfect. I'm just pressing on. Every day I'm pressing on.

[30 : 55] Sometimes it's hard. Sometimes I want to give up. I just hope that I can make it because there's nothing more precious to me than Jesus and nothing more important for me to acquire than Jesus.

Everything else will go. No matter how much I've got in the bank, doesn't matter how nice my house is or how many grandchildren I have or how healthy I am until I'm 98 or whatever it might be, what really matters at the end of the day is Jesus.

And because I'm not there yet, I just have to keep working, keep pressing on. And that will, of course, change your whole outlook on the future.

we talk about death, but we live in a world that tries desperately hard to pretend it doesn't exist, hide away from it.

You know, we all put photographs on, don't we, on Instagram or Facebook. Look where I've been on holiday, Disneyland or wherever. That's where we like to go. You know, wherever it might be, some beautiful panoramic scene.

[31 : 59] Look in my life, it's wonderful. None of us put on, been to a funeral today. Great fun. But actually, you know, for a Christian, death is not to be feared.

Death is the line we cross. It is the end of our race. It is, well, I've made it. You know, you all know and I bore you to death with Dallas Willard, but Dallas Willard, I was listening the other day about his death.

I thought, wow, I want to die like that. You know, he was in the room, he was on his deathbed and he had a few friends who would come round and they said that one day they just looked at him and he was smiling and then he said, thank you.

And then he stopped breathing. What was he seeing? Thank you. I made it. I got there. Yes, I got over the line.

My citizenship is in heaven. I eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Death for the believer is the gateway to life. Paul dies to himself that he may live to God.

[33 : 16] Self-represented by his past life as a Pharisee is dethroned, indeed crucified, that Christ might be enthroned as his Supreme Lord. Next slide, please.

So an attitude to circumstances, an attitude to self, and then an attitude to service. We've already anticipated, so just a few words on this. Paul says, not that I have already obtained all this.

Not that I am already perfect. But I press on toward the goal for the high, the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

C.H. Spurgeon once said, I do not believe that I have a wish in all the world except to know more of my Master and win more souls to Him. You know, that's one thing you can take with you to heaven. The psalmist says, we shall go out weeping, but we shall come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. Here am I, the writer of the Hebrews says, and the children you have given me.

[34 : 24] I kind of like to think about an opportunity in heaven for a reunion where I will sit down and I'll be surrounded by lots of people and I'll say, Lord, who are these?

And He will say, these are the people that you led to Jesus. These were the people you spoke a word to. And as a result of the seed sown, they came to Christ.

Christ. Not so I can be, well, you're a great soul winner. But just because that seems to me to be about what my life on earth is. My life on earth is to fulfill my part of the Great Commission.

And I want it to count. And nothing counts for all eternity except that, does it? God could have used angels to do it, but He chooses to use us.

And in choosing to use us, we play a part in winning souls to Jesus. Here I am and the children God has given me.

[35 : 36] So, the attitude to the future is a desire to be as useful for Jesus as I can for as long as I can that I may win others to Him.

That's my attitude to self. That's Paul's attitude to self. I keep pressing on. I don't think I can retire now or I can give up. I keep pressing on.

The image is clear, isn't it? The image of a race. But it's a marathon. It's not a sprint. And sometimes you might feel like laying it down, but you just say, no, no. There is no retirement in service in the kingdom of God.

I will keep doing it until my Lord Jesus comes or calls. else. So, our attitude, next slide, is to remember that you have not yet arrived.

Paul thought he'd arrived, didn't he, when he was a Pharisee and all of that. You know, I'm spiritually superior to most people, so I've arrived. Really?

[36 : 42] Well, I know more than most, so surely I've arrived. Really? What do you know? In the end, we know nothing as we ought to know it.

We only ever see through a glass darkly. And the amazing thing about reading the Scriptures and studying Scriptures and so on, is that no matter how many times you do it, you think, wow, I found something new.

Something I should have known. But it's brought a joy to my heart that I've never seen before. You never end studying, you never end praying, you never end servicing until you cross the line.

Only when you're called home. You have not arrived yet. Next slide, please. Stand in front of the mirror, says John Piper. Stand in front of the mirror of the Word and recognize that you have not yet arrived.

the hearty admission of our spiritual imperfection is the starting point for the pursuit of God.

Complacency is the biggest enemy of our souls, isn't it?

[37 : 53] When we stop caring, you know, it's kind of like, you know, stop caring about your appearance. Stop caring about the stuff you eat. Stop caring about what you feed your mind.

Once you do that, what happens? Well, we become a bit sloppy, don't we? To say the least. It's the same in the spiritual life, you know. Once you stop caring about what you're studying, what you're learning, how you're praying, how you're doing, then you will go backwards.

Paul said, have nothing to do with going backwards. Press on, always on, always upward to the high calling of God. Next slide. forget the things which are lying behind.

Not because they're not good. Some are not good. Some are really good. But the trouble with thinking so much about the things that are behind is they become an excuse for inactivity in the present.

Well, you know, I used to serve the Lord in the church, but I got hurt. Or I used to serve the Lord, but I don't have time anymore. Yeah?

[38 : 58] But the Lord will understand, won't He? Well, He might. But I wouldn't bank on it. Not if it's just an excuse for inactivity.

And we know, you know, I know, if my past experiences, however welcome and wonderful they are, prevent me now from serving the Lord with the kind of ambition I once had.

So test yourself on that. Do I wake up every day with a determination to serve Jesus? Do I long to press on to know more of Jesus?

I wish I could say, yes, every day I do that. But every day I ought to do that. And my heart longs that it might be so.

Next slide, please. Know what lies ahead. One day, you will wake up and you will discover that you died.

[40 : 07] And you will think, was that all it was? The thing I feared most? I woke up to discover I'm alive. If you can take that attitude into your life, you will be a happy, joyful Christian.

Think about what is ahead. this life, 70, 80 years, whatever we have, is nothing compared to the eternity that is to come. And all of the stuff that you want ahead of Jesus is nothing compared to what he had in store for those who love him.

And so I want to end by telling you about a baby. There was a baby born, beautiful to look at, lying in his cot, gurgling away.

Everybody who came to look at that baby was delighted. Ah, isn't he lovely? I wonder what he's going to grow up to become. Trouble is, the baby doesn't grow to become anything.

The baby has a serious medical condition that keeps the baby in infancy for the rest of his days. So physically, he grows. Mentally, he does not.

[41 : 26] He makes no progress. His growth is stunted. And he dies at a very young age. The tragedy of the story is that there are lots of people in the Christian church who are a bit like that baby.

they start well. They look authentic. But they never grow. They remain in spiritual infancy. And their life is ineffective and unproductive in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so I leave you with a quote from our good friend A.W. Tozer. How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers.

Everything is made to center upon the initial act of accepting Christ. And we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls.

We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found him we need no more seek him. To have found God and still to pursue him is the soul's paradox of love scorned indeed by the too easily satisfied religionist but justified in happy experience by the children of a burning heart.

[42 : 56] Is your heart burning today with a desire and a longing to know Christ? whatever else to say my desire my ambition is the upward call of God in Christ and I am not finished until I cross the line.

May God help us so to have such an ambition for Jesus. Amen.