

# Anchored by Faith: Trusting God Through Life's Storms

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to have our reading now as Andy comes to preach and it's from John chapter 3. Just while you look that up, just to say one last thing. For I and Georgie churches and being married! FIC church always being supported by FIC churches always preach. It was so important to us that when we came to seek God's call to pastor it.

So I really appreciate you Andy coming back second day in a row to be with us for our weeks. Thank you. Let's read. After this, and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside where he spent some time with them and baptizing at Ijon near Salem because there was plenty of water and people before John was put in prison.

An argument developed some of John over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, Rabbi, on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, look, he is baptizing and everyone...

To this John replied, a person can receive only what is given them from heaven. That I said I am not the Messiah, but I'm sent ahead of him.

The bride belongs to the bride, attends the bridegroom, waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom. And it is now complete.

[ 1 : 40 ] He must become greater, I must become less. The one who speaks from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one of the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above the eyes to what he has seen and heard.

But no one accepts his testimony. Certified that God is truthful. For the one God has sent... For God gives the spirit without limit.

The father loves the son and has placed everything in him. The son has eternal life. But whoever rejects the son will not see life on them.

Amen. Amen. Thank you for your warm words.

It was a real joy and delight to be with you yesterday. To celebrate a really positive moment. And I think this is a kind of more positive moment generally for the church. As I bring FIEC to encourage myself about what God is doing in our nation and among our churches.

[ 2 : 53 ] Not just FIEC as well, wherever the gospel is being preached. Some of you might have seen just in the last week or so the public reality called The Quiet Revival. Showing the increase there has been in the last, I think, five or six years.

From four to twelve percent, which is quite remarkable. And really encouraging. And that actually is a narrative that kind of feedback that we've been getting over these last few years. Certainly post-COVID from churches.

More and more churches reporting some coming along of baptisms, of conversions. The mood music. That before cold struggle, struggle. And of course just keeping church going at the best of times can be a challenge.

Just keeping the services of day-to-day business, of ministry. But I think before COVID, often there was a sense that things were just kind of an increasing sense of optimism. And hopefulness and positivity.

Of course there are churches and situations. But across the board, that general feedback is one which has been really encouraging. I spoke to some folks. And they said for the first time they can really remember, people have just started turning up out of the blue.

[ 4 : 02 ] Just uninvited attacks. But they've just turned up. There's a kind of spiritual itch there among people. Especially among our younger generation. Perhaps not inoculated to an old kind of

form of Christianity.

In terms of some of the older generations seem to have inherited about Christianity. Because for them it's fresh and it's new. With all its promises. And they see how broken and empty it is. And perhaps they're thinking again about what. So let me encourage you. I could go on and on. Giving stories along those kind of lines. But this is a...

We're just in a moment where it just feels a little bit like faith doesn't feel quite so freaky. You know, you go to church. I mean, 10, 20 years ago, that was a bit taboo.

Well, that's a bit weird. Don't talk about that. But now I think there's more of an openness. More high profile people are saying that. So there's a bit more of an openness there. Perhaps to talk about our faith. And to connect with people on that basis.

[ 5 : 01 ] Who knows what it will lead to. I'd love to think that's in God's hands. Maybe in a few years time we'll be thinking of what happened with the quiet revival. But I don't think it really has felt in my lifetime really as a Christian.

That the needle is twitching a little bit. So we want to pray a start of more and more encouragement. More and more of a turning back to the Lord. I'll give you lots of FIC kind of news.

Other than to say that the network has been growing in Scotland and across the UK. Which is encouraging. Another pastor, Raymond Chinudo. A Nigerian brother. Is being inducted as pastor. So it's been a good weekend for FIC churches in Scotland to celebrate. If you've got a Bible handy or your device. Do have it open at John chapter 3.

Where Craig read about this passage. And this is a kind of an ordination induction weekend. We had a message yesterday. From our brother from Kirky Baptist Church.

[ 6 : 00 ] And I guess that was a message quite directed at you Craig. As you see a little bit Craig. So you just have to grin and bear that. You can move on after this morning. But in all and particularly a message for you.

As Craig begins his ministry here. At Crin gave me a book entitled The Prime Ministers We Never Had.

Richards devotes chapters to all those kind of big political beasts. Who just fell that bit short. So there's a chapter on Michael Heseltine.

A chapter on Neil Kinnock. You have to remember these names. Roy Jenkins. Michael Portillo. And he asked the question in each of the chapters. The top job. Because the implication of the book. And of course the whole kind of culture of politics. The top job. They somehow fell short. They ultimately failed in that. Because such is the nature of politics.

[ 6 : 58 ] That the great prize is to be number one. And number ten. So it's worth it like this. That Christian ministry could not be more different.

Because the minister will always be second fiddle. He will always be overshadowed. He will always be a support act. Which is why of course I've turned this morning to John the Baptist.

Because he's in that regard. It's why if I can be a bit anachronistic. John the Baptist was such a great. His words in verse 30. Are the epitaph that we should all aspire to.

Verse 30. He must become less. Because there is only one Messiah. Only one chief shepherd. Only one Lord. Who can meet the deepest needs of the human heart. Break it to you. It's not Craig. And nobody will be more relieved about that.

[ 7 : 58 ] Than he will be. And it's true. Of all Christian ministers. And what all Christian ministers can do. And be a walking. Talking. Living. Breathing.

Signpost. To the one Messiah. To the great chief shepherd of the sheep. To be a signpost. That points others. In fact that's really the calling for every Christian.

Whether you're a minister or not. Whether you have a formal title or not. That is to be a signpost. To Jesus. In this world. And grasping that is really important.

To save us from a lot of grief. And a lot of wasted time. Otherwise. It's going to save us from jealousies. From criticisms. From guilt. Despair. Because Christian ministry.

That is all the ways in which you and I. Survey. If it's about Jesus. But let me suggest. If it's not. We will quickly. The.

[ 8 : 53 ] So to John chapter 3. Then this morning. And the passage that we read. Jesus. Public ministry. Phase. At the time of his kind of baptism.

He's really just being introduced. To the world. John. It starts to supersede the ministry. Of John the Baptist. The one who had. Been the forerunner. Everybody. Is happy.

About that. Some of John the Baptist followers. Were clearly annoyed. Verse 26. They came to John. And said to him. Rabbi. That man. That man. You on the other side of the Jordan. The one you testified about. Look. He's baptizing. To him. Me hears. John. In their eyes. John the Baptist. Was a godly. Courage. And now the crowds. Were just drifting away from him. I'm leaving him. Redundant. But John the Baptist. [ 9 : 48 ] Answer. Is so helpful. Isn't it? There. In verse. Charles can testify. That I said. I am not. The Messiah. I think.

Every Christian. Every Christian minister. But every Christian. Should probably get that printed. I am not. The Messiah. So important. That we remember. That. John. The Baptist. Attendant. My job. Has only. Ever been. To wait. On the groom. There. The followers. Of Jesus. The bride. Are there. For Jesus. And. That will be. Craig's job. Here. But also. Your job. Here. To the bridegroom.

Who point. People to him. See. If you're the best man. At a wedding. Is that a great privilege. Isn't it? It's a great. It's not about you. The wedding's not for you. Your job is to serve. [ 10 : 44 ] The bridegroom. 31 to 36. Of the passage we read. We get a little outline. Of why it would be madness. For us to think. It's not clear. Whether the description.

Of. Jesus. In these verses. Verses 31. Is. John the Baptist. Talking. Or whether. John the gospel writer. Has taken over. To give his own.

But let's notice. Three things about Jesus. That if we are. Clear on. Is. His position. And not ours. Can make our service.

A joy. And not. A burden. Jesus is. Above all. The one who comes from above. Is above all. The one who is from the earth. See the point here is.

That we need to get. Our categories right. No matter. Or charismatic. Or eloquent. Any Christian. Or any Christian. Minister might be. Verse 31.

[ 11 : 39 ] They're finite. They're limited. They're mortal. In fact. They don't. Accept that. Which they have received. See John's point there.

In verse 27. If you drop back. Receive only. What is given them. From heaven. You or I. Don't have anything. To offer. Except from God. You see.

Christian ministers. Are the messengers. The signpost. Not the destination. Again. John. The Baptist. Highlights this. Think of them.

With. Baptism. Itself. Remember. How earlier on. In his ministry. He had told the crowd. As they came to be. Water. But. There is one coming.

Who will baptize. With the holy. Quite clear. Look. I can wash you down. I can rinse you. On the outside. I can get you wet. I can splash. But one. Is coming.

[ 12 : 36 ] Who is going to be able. To wash you. On the inside. Who is going to bury soul. You see. I am just the sign. He is the substance.

Others. Can serve you. Can labour among you. With God's grace. Can love. And bless you. The answer. To the deepest needs. Of your heart. And life. Of all.

See. There is times. When you might be tempted. To put other Christians. On a pedestal. But there will be other times. Where those same people. You will be tempted. To think. Is that it? Is that all you have got?

Whether. You think somebody is a hero. Or a zero. The difference between you. And them. And between any of us. We are all of the earth. There is only one.

Who came from heaven. Remember. That Jesus is above all. We are all. In the same category. There is only one. Who is needs. Of our lives.

[ 13 : 38 ] And hearts. But secondly. Jesus is above all. Secondly. Jesus is God's truth. Verses 33. To 34.

A little bit. We met last week. For coffee. But I think. You can be thankful. That in Craig. You have a man. Someone who has shown himself. To be faithful. Over many years.

In local church ministry. And as an evangelist. Who has a desire. To be a faithful handler. Of the word of God. I was encouraged. To continue. And so.

Pray for Craig. Especially as he prepares. His sermons. And his teaching. Week by week. That the aim. Of every gospel minister. Is to. Show us Jesus.

The aim isn't relations. Or tickle us. With a bit of novelty. But that we might. Week by week. See and hear. Alone. Is the truth. He alone.

[14:33] Is the truth. That can set us free. You and I. Free from sin. From self. From the tyranny. Of idols. From wasted lives.

From folly. Freedom and light. Of peace and fellowship. With God. So expect. And indeed. Craig. And everybody. Who stands in this.

Pulpit. That their preaching. And their pastoral care. Jesus. Pray that he. Like Paul. Will be resolved.

Except Jesus Christ. And him crucified. That is. In all the issues. That Craig. Will not be involved. In pastory. Pastoral ministry. He will never lose sight.

And he will never. Tire. Of the. Few years back. Facebook. Had a. Feature. Where you could. Make how. Comments. That you had put.

[15:29] On Facebook. You know what a word cloud is. It takes kind of text. And the most. Repeated words. Are in the kind of. Least. Used ones. I think. House of games. Richard Osmond. Had a kind of version of it.

Have you ever watched that? And when I did that. Word cloud. One of my. Facebook posts. The two. Bits. F.I.E.C. And the other one was.

Great. Because I think I started. Pretty much every post with. Great to meet. So and so. Etc. But if you were to make a word cloud. Apostles preaching ministry.

The two biggest standout words. On the screen. Would be. And let me say. At the end of his time here. If Craig's preaching word cloud.

He'll have done his job. We live in a very. Anti-authoritarian. In culture. But Jesus cuts across all that.

[16:27] All such thinking. When it comes to ultimate voice from heaven. Thundered on the mount of transfiguration. This is my beloved son. Listen to him. And so in as much.

As Craig. Expounds. Declares. And presents. The word of Christ. Inspired Bibles. Listen to him. And then his work will be a joy.

In this place. So Jesus is the one above all. Jesus. And lastly. Jesus is everything. We need.

Verse 35. The father loves the son. And has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the son. Has he to son. Will not see life. For God's wrath remains.

On him. Verse 35. Is a. Loves the son. And has placed everything. In his hands. Everything. There's no hyperbole. Everything means.

[17:27] Everything. You name it. Visible. Invisible. Top to bottom. Throughout Jesus ministry. Matthew 28. The great commission. All authority. In heaven.

And on earth. Has been given to me. Astonishing reality. That all authority. Is now in the hands. Of Jesus. All the resources.

All the authority. All the prerogatives. All the jurisdiction. Of God himself. Thing that anyone. Can ask for. Which isn't. In the hands. Of Jesus. There's less thing.

No provision. No hope. That can be attained. Or realized. By bypassing Jesus. Verse 36. Is carried. In the hands. Of Jesus. See. Ryle. The great. Bishop of Liverpool. In the. Nineteenth century. Sums this up. Well. And has exposed this. Let us.

[18:24] Embrace. This truth. Reverently. And cling. To it. Firmly. Peace. Of death. In hell. Christ. Is the anointed. Priest. Who alone.

Can absolve. Sinners. Waters. In whom. Alone. We can be cleansed. Christ. Is the prince. And savior. Who alone. Can. In him.

All fullness. Dwells. He is the way. The door. The altar. Of refuge. He that hath. The son. Hath life. And he.

That hath. Not the. May we all. Strive. To understand. This. No doubt. Men. God the father. And God the spirit. But no man.

Ever thought too much. Of Christ. Doesn't it? But it's also. Incredibly. Liberating. And freeing. For Christians.

[19:19] Because you see. None of us. Can change a heart. None of us. Can absolve. Somebody of guilt. Wounded soul. In ourselves. We are powerless. And empty handed.

I'm sure you have felt like that. How often. I know this is true for me. Do we leave a situation. And we feel utterly. Inadequate. And ineffective. But it's in those.

Words. About Jesus. Those prayers. In Jesus. Of love. In Jesus name. There is the power. Of the one. Who holds all.

The power. To bring light. Into darkness. Order. From chaos. Unimaginable power. The power. That raised Jesus. From the grave. Working. Like the. Tectonic power. That is. So much of the time. Imperceptible. And if at time.

[ 20 : 15 ] Much. Of. The time. Even. Christian ministries. See. It's because. The foes. That we face. Are so powerful. So powerful.

Of Jesus. And the resurrection. Power. Of the Holy Spirit. Are able. To overcome them. The power. The power. Powerfully. Within us. But Jesus.

Has that power. He is able. And he is good. And because. Crucially. He is good. He can be trusted. With our lives.

There is a point. That was brought home. To me again. Reading. Jen Wilkins book. In his image. Of somebody. Having total power. And total control.

As we thought about. Jesus receiving. From the father. If that person. Was not. Thoroughly. And absolutely. Good. Through everything.

[ 21 : 08 ] That Jesus does. So. Genuine. Gospel ministry. Doesn't offer. Quick fixes. Doesn't.

Promise. Overnight. Transformation. With overnight. Transformations. Of course. As they do have a habit. Of reversing themselves. Overnight. In my experience. Gospel. Christ. Centred. Ministry. Will be patient.

It will be realistic. About the enormous. Just the. Depth. Of the brokenness. That sin. But even as it. Is realistic. About those things. It can be. That Jesus. Both has the power. And the goodness. To guard his flock. And build his church.

Is. Is the groom. Who is above all. Who is the truth. Who holds everything. In his hands. What else could we. What a privilege. To be able to point. Other people.

[ 22 : 07 ] To him. The obituaries. In the press. If you still get a newspaper. Or online. For seemingly.

Wouldn't be expected. To have an obituary. In the times. Or the. Telegraph. Or the guardian. Or whatever. The obituary. Of an. Or a security guard. And you think. How did they get. An obituary. In the times. And you read a bit. It was because. They were. Winston Churchill's secretary. Or the. Or they were. The queen's butler. And it starts.

To kind of make sense. That their significance. Their honor. Their glory. Served. Or how much more so. For us. To serve the king of kings.

Jesus the Messiah. What honor. Will it be. To get to the end of the life. And to be known. As a servant. Of Jesus Christ. We might have fulfilled. In doing that. So.

[ 23 : 02 ] My encouragement. This morning. For you all. Different signposts. And those. Faithful attendants. People who are looking. To always. To the groom. Jesus Christ.

And that will be. Our honor. And indeed. It will be the source. For Westerhales. Baptist Church. And may God. Bless these thoughts. From his words. End of.

Our service. Very appropriate. How I didn't. Choose it. But it fits in. Beautifully. With hope is found. He is my light. My strength. My song. This cornerstone.

This solid ground. Here. In the love of Christ. I stand. And will stand to sing. Thank you. Our heavenly father.

Father. We thank you. For Jesus. We thank you. That he is the way. That he is the one. In whom. We can be forgiven. Restored. And brought back.

[ 23 : 56 ] Into fellowship. In your presence. The one who is able to meet. Those deepest needs. The one who is able to keep us. And have his hand upon us. And bring us. That as we leave this place.

This morning. Our eyes will continue. To be fixed on Jesus. The author. And finisher. We might have joy. We might have liberty. We might have that great confidence.

To others. To his wonderful. Beautiful name. And we ask these things. For your glory. Amen.