

20.2.22 am The Charges against us

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Preacher: Reverend Mark Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Well, a warm welcome to the service of worship. This Lord's Day, a slight change, I think, from the plans from last week. I'll be taking the service today and your own minister will be down in South Harris, but he'll be back again for the evening service.

I think the intimations are just as they are on the screen there. So we're going to begin our time of worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 51.

Psalm 51. I had given two versions. I don't know which version is going to come up. Is it the older version or the new version? The older version, that's fine. So Psalm 51, the Scottish Psalter, and we'll sing verse 1 to 6, a psalm all about forgiveness.

And that's going to be very much the theme of what we're going to look at, God willing, today. After thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me for thy compassions, great, blot out all mine iniquity. May he cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash, as David calls out for the cleansing of the Lord. May he cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash from mine iniquity. For my transgressions I confess.

[1 : 1 3] My sin I ever see. Against thee, thee only have I sinned. He was aware that sin is always ultimately against the Lord. Even when we sin against others, ultimately it's against the Lord himself.

And I sight done this ill, that when thou speakest, thou mayest be just and clear in judging still. Behold, in iniquity. I in iniquity was formed, the womb within.

My mother also me conceived in guiltiness and sin. Behold, thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art and wisdom. Thou shalt make me know within the hidden part.

We'll be singing another section of that, God willing, at the end of the service as well. So we'll sing Psalm 51 and verse 1 to 6 to the praise of God. Psalm 51 and verse 1 to 6 to the praise of God.

Psalm 51 and verse 1 to 6 to the praise of God.

[2 : 5 8] Psalm 51 and verse 1 to 6 to the praise of God.

Psalm 51 and verse 1 to 6 to the praise of God.

Behold, thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art and wisdom, thou shalt make me know within the hidden part.

Amen. We'll bow our heads and we'll come before God in prayer.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we give thanks that we come before a God who is full of mercy.

[4 : 4 8] A God who cleanses and who washes. A God who cleanses and who washes. And we give thanks for that because we know that when we come before you in this time of worship, we come as sinful people.

Every one of us has sinned and we have sinned. Every one of us has sinned and thought and word and deed. We have sinned every day of our lives. And we give thanks that you have sinned.

And we give thanks that your spirit has opened our eyes to that. That you have shown us our sin.

That you have shown us our iniquity. But we give thanks more so that you also open our eyes to the truth of the gospel.

That you point us to Christ. That in Christ there is one who has died on that cross at Calvary. In order that our sins might be atoned for.

In order that our sins might be cleansed. In order that we might have forgiveness. And as we think about that themeless day itself. Enable us to rejoice in our hearts.

[5 : 4 9] Knowing that we receive that forgiveness. Not because of anything that is in ourselves. Not because of anything that we can do. Not because of anything that originates in any way in ourselves.

But a forgiveness that is ours because of what Christ has done. And help us to see that. Let that be the assurance. The foundation that we rest in. That our forgiveness is ours in Christ.

We know that very often the devil will try and come and accuse us. And the devil will try and steal away this assurance that we have. He'll tell us that we're not forgiven.

He'll tell us that we're not saved. And he'll tell us that we are not firm and secure in the hands of the Lord. But we pray that we would be able to flee from the evil one.

To turn aside from him when he comes at us with these accusations. When he comes casting these doubts our way. Help us instead to turn to your word. And to see the great promises that we have in your word.

[6 : 51] The promises that remind us that when we are brought to saving faith. The evil one can never take us out of the palm of your hand again. That there we are safe and secure for all eternity.

And we pray that you would help us to grow in our faith as well. And we realize that as we grow in our faith. That also means that we grow in an understanding of sin.

We grow in an understanding of the different ways in which we transgress your laws. But that is a natural process. As we learn more about sin. And as we do. We also learn more about the grace of God.

We learn more about your mercy and your love. Because the greater a view we have of the darkness and blackness of our hearts. The more wonderful that picture of Calvary becomes. And the more beauty we see in the cross itself. As we see our Lord and Saviour. And bearing our sins. Taking our sins. And atoning for our sins. There.

[7 : 50] Through his suffering and death. And we pray now that you would help us to live the Christian life. For those of us who have been brought to saving faith. Help us to walk the paths of righteousness.

Even when we do face different temptations. And even when we do face different attacks of the evil one. Different darts. Fiery darts that he sends in our direction.

Help us to take up the whole armor of God. Help us to lay hold of the helmet of salvation. That breastplate of righteousness.

Help us to be adorned with those shoes of the gospel. Help us to take up our shield of faith. Our sword as well. The sword of the spirit.

Which is the word of God itself. You give us an armor to be equipped with. But it is our duty every morning as we wake up. To prepare. And to lay hold of our shield.

[8 : 47] To lay hold of that sword. To become familiar with these tools that you give us. In order that we might soldier on. And help us to remember that we do so together. And the picture and scripture of the church and the army of the Lord is just that.

A collective. Not individual soldiers of the Lord. But a collective army as we seek to support one another. As we go on in this wilderness march.

And to that end we pray that you would help us to share with one another. To care for one another. To love one another. To pray for one another. We read of so many verses in scriptures that speak about how we ought to be with one another.

And we pray that we would take heed of these things. And apply them to our lives. We can so easily become selfish. And just think about ourselves. And especially in the culture and the world that we live in just now as well.

Where the self is so often proclaimed. Help us not to fall into that kind of mindset. But to be shaped rather by your word. To be shaped by scripture in all that we do. And we pray for the congregation here.

[9 : 55] We ask oh Lord that you would strengthen and uphold them all. You know everyone. You know everyone and all that they're going through. All the difficulties and the struggles. And even the blessings that they might be experiencing just now as well.

And as we commit one another to you in prayer. We pray that your word would be a means of grace and strength to us. Even this day itself. And we pray for those who are maybe struggling in particular.

Those who maybe continue to mourn as well. May your hand be upon them for good. May you continue to watch over and support. May you continue to be near to those who are broken hearted. And we think about that in our own community. Just now as God willing in the coming days. We will be partaking in that funeral service of the young girl that passed away a couple of weeks ago.

We pray oh Lord for her family. We pray oh Lord that you would strengthen them. As the time of the funeral draws near now. We pray oh Lord that your word would be a comfort to them.

[10:56] And that your presence would be something that they would know in a time of tremendous grief. And tremendous sorrow as well. Support and uphold we pray.

And help us all to cling to your promises. Watch over our nation as well just now. And even our whole continent and world. As we think about what's going on in the world just now. And how precarious things look.

And it seems every time we look at the news there seems to be developments that are worrying to say the least. And our prayer is that Lord that you would bring peace.

That you would bring about a de-escalation of the events that are currently ongoing in our world. And that you would intervene. And that lives would not be lost.

And that war would not commence. That we would know that peace. And ultimately that we would know not just peace in our lands and our nations. But that we would know that peace that comes from above.

[11:56] That peace that comes from you. And you alone. So continue with us now. Do us good. Cleanse us. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen.

Well I think the young ones now. Are you coming down to the front before you head to your classes? Look at where you see it.

Enjoying your holidays? Yeah. Yeah. Good. No holiday from Sunday school by the sounds of it though. Holidays are good. Well I used to live in a place called Glasgow.

I used to work in Glasgow as well. And very often when I'd be driving to work I'd see diversion signs. Does anyone know what a diversion sign is? White and then yellow.

I couldn't actually tell you what it looks like. I can't remember right now what it looks like. You might be right. But a diversion sign is basically, it's a sign that diverts you away. So say there's like a, maybe there's a crash or something.

[13:00] Or a roadblock or roadworks going on in the road ahead. So you'd get a wee diversion sign. Very often I'd see them. And they would send you another way. Stop you going the way of danger or the way that was blocked.

A blue circle with a white arrow. I'll Google it when I go home. I actually can't remember what it looks like now. But I definitely remember seeing them diversion signs. And then you'd go and you'd eventually get to where you want to go.

So it's a way of diverting you around. Now last week or the week before last I woke up in Leverborough. And guess what sign I saw in Leverborough? A diversion sign.

I don't think I've ever seen a diversion sign in Leverborough. Probably more likely get them up here in the big city of Tarbert. But we don't get any diversion signs.

But the other day I woke up and there was a diversion sign. And it was diverting traffic away from going down the road to Roda. And instead of going down the road to Roda, the diversion was pointing people to a wee road just after the Clachan Corner.

[13:56] There's a wee road, a wee peat road there. And it was diverting people up that way. And the reason it was doing that is because, remember there was bad gales. Well, there's constant bad gales.

But there was very bad gales maybe about a couple of weeks ago. And there was a building in Roda that was really badly damaged. And it meant that it was very dangerous to drive past this building.

So to make sure people didn't drive past it and be in danger, they put this diversion sign to send people the other way. So if you were coming through Leverborough, you'd have to make the decision. What am I going to do? Am I going to stay on the main road and go to Roda and end up in some bit of danger?

Or am I going to go this wee road, this narrow road and be safe on that road? And that reminded me of a wee lesson that Jesus teaches.

Because Jesus actually uses that picture of a main road, a broad road and a narrow road. And he uses that to teach about salvation. And he says, see when we're born, we're all born on this big road, the main road.

[14:53] We're all on this broad road. But he says, see at the end of that road, it's dangerous. It's very, very dangerous. He actually calls it destruction. And he says, you don't want to stay on this road. And what Jesus does is he puts a wee sign on the road.

And the wee sign is the gospel. And that gospel sign, it points to another road. And it's a wee road. It's a wee road going to the side. A narrow road. A narrow road that leads to safety.

And it leads to eternal life and salvation. It leads to Jesus. And if we want to take that road, all we have to do is put our faith in Jesus. So, what we have to do is, when we're all on this big road, we have to decide, what are we going to do?

Are we going to stay on the big road and ignore Jesus and ignore the sign of the gospel? Get off the highway. Yes, exactly. Get off that broad road and take the wee road where it's sign posted for the gospel by putting our faith in Jesus Christ.

So, I hope that we all do that. That we follow that sign. And I'll check what that diversion sign looks like when I go home later on. Okay, so bow our heads now and we'll say a wee word of prayer.

[16:00] Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the gospel message. We give thanks that that message is made clear to all, to the young and to those who are older as well.

And you remind us in your word that we are on that broad road. But that you have placed a sign of the gospel there, leading us to the narrow road of life and salvation.

And we pray that all the young ones here and every one of us would take heed of that sign. That we would listen to Jesus. And that we would go the way of salvation by putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, continue with us for the rest of this service today. Be with the kids as they go to their Sunday school classes now and learn more about you. Be with our teachers as well as they seek to teach them.

So, continue with us now for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. So, thank you very much. So, we're going to sing now. And we're going to sing in Gaelic this time.

[16:59] And we're going to sing in Psalm 103. Another psalm that's very much on the theme of the forgiveness of the Lord.

And we'll sing verses 3 to 4. So, a picture of the Lord.

So, Psalm 103 verse 3 to 4.

Psalm 103 verse 3 to 5.

Psalm 103 verse 3.

[18:42] Psalm 103 verse 3.

Psalm 103 verse 3.

Psalm 103 verse 3.

Psalm 103 verse 3.

Psalm 103 verse 3.

[21:12] Psalm 103 verse 3. Psalm 103 verse 3.

Colossians chapter 2. Psalm 103 verse 3. Psalm 103 verse 3. Colossians chapter 2. So, let's hear the word of God.

So, let's hear the word of God. So, let's hear the word of God. For I want you. For I want you.

For I want you. For I want you. And for you. And for you. face to me. that their hearts.

for you. being knit together. to reach to you. and for you. and for you. knowledge of God's.

[22:28] which is Christ. whom are hidden. wisdom and knowledge. I say this. I say this. Father, with you.

for though I want you. for though I want you. I am with you. I am with you. I am with you. in spirit.

Rejoicing to see your good order. And the firmness of your faith. in Christ.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord. so walk in him. rooted. rooted. and built up in him. and established in the faith. just as you were taught.

abounding in thanksgiving. See to it. that no one takes you captive. by philosophy and empty deceit. according to human tradition. according to the elemental spirits of the world.

and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity. dwells bodily. and you have been filled. in him who is the head of all rule and authority.

[23:25] in him also you are circumcised. with a circumcision made without hands. by putting off the body of the flesh. by the circumcision of Christ.

having been buried with him in baptism. in which you were also raised with him. through faith. the powerful working of God. who raised him from the dead.

and you who were dead in your trespasses. and the uncircumcision of your flesh. that God made alive. together with him. having forgiven us all our trespasses.

by cancelling the record of debt. that stood against us. with its legal demands. this he set aside. nailing it to the cross. he disarmed the rulers. and authorities. and put them to open shame. by triumphing over them. in him. [24 : 48] and knit together. through its joints and ligaments. grows with a growth that is from God. if with Christ you died. to the elemental spirits of the world. why?

as if you were still alive in the world. do you submit to regulations? do not handle. do not taste. do not touch. referring to these things that. all perish as they are used. according to human precepts and teachings. these have indeed an appearance of wisdom. in promoting self-made religion. and ascetism. and severity to the body. but they are of no value. in stopping the indulgence. of the flesh. Amen. and we pray. for God's blessing. on that portion of his word. and we are going to turn.

and we are going to look at verse 14. there in a few moments. but first of all. we are going to sing. again in. Psalm 103. and from verse 5. in the.

[25 : 44] sing psalms. He satisfies your deep desires. from his unending stores of good. so that just like the eagle strength. your youthful vigor is renewed.

so we are carrying on. from where we left off. in our galaic singing there. so psalm 103. verse 5. to 11. to the praise of God. He satisfies your deep desires.

from his unending stores of good. so that you trust. thy legal strength.

your youthful vigor is renewed. the Lord is known for righteous acts.

and justice to downtrodden ones. to Moses he made known his ways.

[26 : 57] his mighty deeds to Israel's sons. the Lord is merciful and kind.

to anger slow and full of grace. he will not constantly reproof.

his faith. he does not punish our misdeeds.

or give our saints their just reward. Lord. how great is the Messiah's hand.

Lord. Lord. Lord. of us. who fear the Lord. Well, if you can turn back to Colossians 2, chapter 2, and verse 14, well, verse 13, but we're going to be looking at verse 14, but I'll just read from verse 13.

[28 : 17] So Colossians 2, from verse 13, And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, and then especially this verse, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. So as I mentioned a few moments ago, we're going to be looking really at the theme of forgiveness.

And forgiveness is an amazing concept, it's an amazing theme that we come across in the Word of God. Forgiveness is something that's, of course, able to restore broken relationships that we have. Because we are sinners, we all know that, we all feel that. And as a result of the fact that we're sinners, that affects every kind of relationship we have in this life, with friends, with family, with others as well.

Our fallenness affects that. And what happens is, we get all sorts of difficulties and trouble in our relationship. And that can happen in different ways. Perhaps you can be wronged by somebody else.

[29 : 38] Or perhaps you might be the guilty part of yourself. And you might be the person who has perhaps done some form of wrong. And when that happens, when wrong is done, a relationship, or it's a friendship, or whatever it is, that relationship, it ends up being broken for a time.

And when that happens, when there's a breakdown like that, communication is affected. Display of love is affected as well.

There's lots of different things that are affected. And that continues to be the case. And it will always be the case until forgiveness is offered in some way.

And then forgiveness is actually accepted. And once forgiveness is given and accepted, then the relationship, whatever kind of relationship it is, it can begin to be restored to something of perhaps what it once was.

But in order for that relationship to be restored, the offer of forgiveness, it needs to be sincere. And as well as that, the person receiving the forgiveness has to fully accept that forgiveness.

[30 : 51] And what happens is that if there's doubt on either side of that equation, if there's doubt on either side, then all that's going to do is going to cause difficulty. It's going to cause problems at some point further down the line.

And the same is true, actually, for the Christian in our relationship with the Lord himself. When we come to Christ, we are forgiven all of our sins.

That's a tremendous feeling. And when you come to realize that, that you're forgiven all your sins, you're filled with this sense of joy and this sense of gladness.

That broken relationship that you had with the Lord, that's all of a sudden restored. And that's a wonderful feeling, to have fellowship with God restored as it ought to be.

A tremendous sense of joy and a joy that I'm sure many of you here have experienced yourselves as well. But the problem is that very often, doubts creep in. We're particularly bad at this in our own culture, I think, our tradition.

[31 : 58] We allow doubts to come in. And as we carry on in our pilgrimage journey, we almost can get into a position where you convince yourself that you're not forgiven. You can convince yourself that you're not actually the Lord's.

And there's different reasons why we can feel like that as the Lord's people, as Christians. I think one of the reasons is that when we come to faith, when we put our faith in Christ, that moment, I don't know whether you can pinpoint it to a precise time or not, but that moment, you have this sense of the weight of guilt and the weight of sin just being removed from you.

And that's a tremendous sense of liberty and freedom when you have all that weight of guilt taken off you. But the issue is that as we continue in the Christian life, we learn more.

I mentioned this in prayer, actually. We learn more about indwelling sin. And we learn more just about sin itself in general. And the more we go on, the more sin we actually see in our lives.

And maybe you actually end up maybe falling into sins that we never, ever anticipated falling into. And when that happens, you can start to see these doubts coming in and you're wondering to yourself, well, am I really saved?

[33 : 20] Have I really been forgiven? So that's one way in which these doubts can come in. Another way that these doubts can come in is when people maybe they misinterpret trials and misinterpret chastisements that come into their lives.

Because as the Lord's people, that happens. You experience trials and you experience hardships and you experience all kinds of difficulties.

And sometimes, maybe especially if we're less mature in the faith, sometimes people can think to themselves, well, this must be God punishing me in some way. Why is God allowing these hardships to come into my life?

This must be a sign that I'm not forgiven. This must be a sign that I'm not actually the Lord's. And again, you can see how in that kind of mindset and thinking like that, that doubts can come in.

But the thing is, the Bible is absolutely crystal clear on this. We who are the Lord's, we who have put our faith in Christ, we are absolutely, we are definitively, completely forgiven.

[34 : 28] Every sin. Every sin. All the sins of our thoughts, all the sinful things that we say, all the sinful things that we do. All of our sinful actions and words and thoughts, all forgiven.

Even when we find ourselves feeling like we're getting more sinful and even maybe when we're falling into the same sins. The truth of scripture is that when we come to faith in Christ, when we put our trust in him, we are absolutely cleansed, absolutely forgiven.

All our sins. All the sins of the past. All our sins of today. All our sins of tomorrow. All of that.

Cleansed. Now, that doesn't take away from the fact that we still need to come with a spirit of repentance.

And we still must have a sorrow for sin. And we must come seeking forgiveness. But when we do that, we do that knowing that we will receive it. That we will receive forgiveness. Because that is the promise of the Lord.

And that's the theme of this great verse here in Colossians 2, verse 14. This picture of all our trespasses forgiven.

[35 : 31] And we're told that they are forgiven by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

And what I want to do just for a few moments today is think about that verse in particular, verse 14 there. And in that verse there, you have two images. And both images have to do with a document, a piece of paper.

And it's a piece of paper that's referred to in the, well, it's in different versions. It's got different names. But in the ESV, it's referred to there as the record of debt. So this image, two images, and

both to do with this piece of paper called this record of debt.

And one image is of this record of debt being wiped clean. That's one of the images. And the second image is of this piece of paper, this record of debt, being nailed to the cross.

So that's the two things that you have in verse 14 there. That's the two things I want to look at today. This document, this record of debt wiped clean and this record of debt nailed to the cross.

[36 : 38] Because both these things teach us something about the forgiveness that we have in Christ. So let's look at the first of these then, first of all. This record of debt wiped out.

Now, I want us to go back to that document. This piece of paper that I've tried to get you to visualize almost in your head. What is this document? What is this document?

I mentioned there it's described in the ESV as this record of debt. But what is it? What is that? The Greek, so there's probably different versions in all your Bibles because the Greek is fairly precise in what this document actually is.

And the document is basically, so you imagine a piece of paper. And at the heading of that piece of paper, the top of the piece of paper is a title of what's required of you.

And some people actually refer to this document here as an IOU from us to God. Document on the top it says what we owe God. And what is it?

[37 : 41] What is it that we owe God? What do we require to give to the Lord himself? Well, it's our duty to fulfill the law of God.

That's what's at the top of that document. You are duty bound to fulfill the law of God. That's a requirement. That's not just a requirement on the Lord's people. That's a requirement that everyone has.

Everyone who's born into this world, everyone has given this document. Not literal, obviously, spiritually. Given this document. And at the top of it, it says, I owe God obedience to his law.

And the reason for that is because we are contracted. In fact, it's not even the moment we're born. The very moment we're conceived. We are contracted. Contracted to give obedience to the Lord.

Now, you might respond to that and say, well, wait a second. I didn't sign up to that contract. Why do I have to give? Why does anybody have to give obedience to God and his law?

[38 : 44] Well, the answer is that this is God's creation. Everything. Everything. We are creations of the Lord. We are owned.

We belong to the Lord himself. We're not independent entities who happen to have come into this world. I know that's how a lot of people think of it. But that's not the way it is at all.

We have a God who made us. And that means that we have a God who every single one of us is actually accountable to. So everyone has one of these records. And at the top, a requirement to live according to God's law.

And then in the rest of that document is a list of every time we break God's law. Every time we transgress the law of God. So spiritually speaking, there's a whole list there of all of your sins.

So at the top is what you're meant to give. Obedience. But the list is all your sins, all the different ways in which you've broken that. And all of that is used as evidence against us. It's used as evidence to show that actually we are guilty and we have failed to obey the law of God.

[39 : 49] Now, you imagine that document. You imagine holding that document yourself with a list of all your sins. Every sinful thought, every sinful word, every sinful action.

All of that written on this document. Imagine how long that would be. Imagine how long that list would be. And I guarantee you this, it'll be longer than you even think it is. Because, see, the reality is we don't actually, a lot of our sins we don't even recognize.

We don't even realize actually how great our sin is. And that is a document that you would not want anyone to see, would you? Imagine showing that to someone. Showing that list.

That's this long document. You wouldn't want anyone to see that. And that reminds me of a scene from a, I don't know if any of you have done the, I'm sure some of you have done the Christianity Explored course.

And, you know, you sit through a DVD section, so there'll be a 15 minute video. And in one of the scenes there, the presenter takes you into a room. It's an empty room.

[40 : 51] And he kind of tells you to visualize, like, the record of your life being posted up on the walls. So little notes and pictures of all your thoughts and all your words and all your actions.

And it's all on display. That's the idea. Everything is on display. And some of that you'll be proud of. Some of that may be things that you'll be happy with. But the reality is that much of what is on

display there, you wouldn't want anyone to see.

Imagine if someone saw all your thoughts, all your words, all your actions, all your sins, basically, displayed on that wall. And spiritually speaking, we actually all have a room like that, spiritually. We all have a room like that in our lives. But the thing is, we're not really aware of it. And we're not aware of it until God opens our eyes. And when God opens our eyes, it's like a light goes on. And then all of a sudden we see our sin. And we see the record of our death. We see the record of our sins. And you're taken aback when you come to realize that. You're taken aback at the extent of your sinfulness.

[41 : 53] And you're filled with a sense of deep guilt. And that's what we refer to as conviction. I'm sure you've heard much about conviction. Conviction of sin.

And that's very often, not always actually, but very often conviction of sin is the kind of the first way in which you see that God's spirit is actually working in your life.

You start to see your sin. Now the question is, right, when you're at that point and you see your sinfulness, what do you do? What do you do? What's your options when the Lord shows you your sin, when he shows you this room, as it were, of all your sinful thoughts and words and deeds? What are you going to do? Now, one option would be to close the door on that room. That's one option. Just close the door on it. I'm sure you all have rooms in your houses where you just throw everything in and just close the door and almost pretend like it's not there.

Well, that's one option here. Just close the door. Ignore this room. Ignore the record of death. Ignore this record of sin. Just pretend it's not there and hope that this feeling of conviction and guilt, just hope that it just goes away.

[43 : 01] Maybe over time it'll go away. And that's exactly what some people try and do. Maybe you've tried to do that yourselves in the past. Just try and sort of ignore it and just sort of bury it and hope it goes away.

And actually, some people even go further than that. Some people will actually try and counter this feeling of conviction by actually going deeper into sin. I know that sounds contradictory to think like that, but this does happen.

That people think to themselves, right, to get rid of this conviction, I'm just going to go deeper into sin. And maybe if I go deeper into sin, that'll sort of drown out this feeling of conviction. And these bad feelings of conviction will just disappear.

That's a very real thing, and maybe that's something that you've experienced yourselves as well. But the problem is, with taking that approach, you can't do that. You can't close the door and ignore it.

You can't just ignore it. And the reason we can't ignore it is because the Word of God tells us very clearly that our heavenly judge, he is coming. And he's going to open that door. And he's going to inspect.

[44 : 05] He's going to judge. He's going to see that. So we can't just ignore these things. Some of you will be aware of maybe the free church youth camps.

Maybe some of you have been there, or maybe you've got children or grandchildren who have been to the free church youth camps. A big part of the camp experience is the dreaded dorm inspections. And, you know, as young campers, young campers are probably up late at night, up to probably all sorts of mischief as well, playing games and things like that.

And the next morning, usually, the place is an absolute bombsite, most of the time anyway. And the young ones, they were probably quite happy just to kind of close the door on that and just ignore it and pretend it's not there.

Just ignore the mess, ignore the riot that's inside. But they know there's a dorm inspection coming. They know the leaders are coming to inspect their room. So they can't ignore it. They can't leave it.

[45 : 01] They have to do something about it. And spiritually speaking, with this room which contains a record of sin, a record of debt, we can't close the door and ignore it. Because we know someone's coming.

We know someone's coming to check it. We might forget about it, and that's fine. The Lord won't. And he is coming, and he is coming to inspect it. So you can't ignore it. What else can you do? Well, another option is painting over it.

So if we can't ignore it, what about painting over it? So covering up the record of our sin and the record of our transgressions. And again, that's something that a lot of people try and do. They try

and cover up their record of sin and debt.

And some people will try and do that with their good works. If I do maybe some charity work, and if I'm a good neighbor, and if I do maybe some volunteer work or something like that, maybe if I do these things, I'll sort of cover my sense of conviction and cover my record of sin and record of debt. And, you know, then I'll be okay. But, of course, that's not how it works either. Yes, it's good to be a good neighbor and do charity work and all these things, but that's not going to cover sin.

[46 : 09] That's not going to cover sin. God's going to see right through that. And similarly as well, you can't cover your sin with religious deeds either. And I think this is particularly bad in our culture, where people have this kind of mindset that attending church is sort of a way of sort of covering a record of sin.

And we'll be okay as long as we attend church. Or if we read our Bibles a couple of times a day or say a prayer, that we'll be okay. Or even if I'm a member of the church, if I'm a member of the church, I'll be okay.

If I sit at the Lord's table and if I take the bread and the wine, then I'll be okay. But, again, that's not the case at all. Mere religious practice. Again, that's good things.

I'm not saying these things are bad. But mere religious practice. That is not enough to deal with the issue of our sin, to deal with this issue of the record of our debt and the record of our sin.

Because you can't fool God. You can't fool God with these things by covering it up with activity. God sees right through that. He sees right through our works. And he sees right into that record.

[47 : 12] And he sees every single one of our sins. So, what can we do then? So, we can't ignore it. We've established that. We can't paint over it or cover it up with anything that we can actually do ourselves.

So, what can we do? And that's when the Gospel comes in. And the Gospel tells us that we can't do anything. Maybe not what we expected to hear. That's what the Gospel says. It says you can't actually do anything about it.

But Christ can. Christ can. Because when we put our faith in Christ, what Christ does is he comes. And he takes the record of our debt, the record of our sin. And he washes it.

He cleanses it. He deletes it. He erases it. That's the image that you have there in verse 14. Jesus cancelled the record of debt that stood against us.

It's as though he comes and he takes that long list. And he just deletes the whole thing. You imagine all your sins written there. And he comes and he erases. And he deletes the whole thing.

[48 : 10] He blots it all out so that none of those things are held against us anymore. And we read there that he set it aside. He has taken it out of the way.

And the wording there in the Greek is really strong. It's not just like I moved it to the side a wee bit. He's completely obliterated it. He has utterly destroyed it.

That record of our debt, that record of our sin is utterly destroyed, utterly deleted. To the extent that nobody could come. No one can come and piece that back together again.

No one can come and take the wee bits and build it up again to see your sin. That's impossible. It is utterly destroyed, utterly obliterated. And that means that the devil, he can't come and gather these fragments and accuse us.

He'll try and do that. But he can't gather up these fragments and bring our sins before us again. They're destroyed. That document is completely and utterly destroyed.

[49 : 12] And if your faith is in Christ today, if your trust is in the Lord, then you don't need to worry about your sins being brought before you ever again. Because these sins will never be brought before you and held against us in that way again.

And to go back to that Christianity explored image that I used of that room. Remember that room full of notes and full of pictures of things that we've done, sins that we've committed.

When we put our faith in Christ, it's like he goes into that room and he just crumples it. He takes it all off the walls. He crumples it up and he just discards it.

He gets rid of it. He completely destroys it. And that leads us to the second image. I won't be as long on this point. The second image there is the record of debt nailed to the cross.

So again, verse 14. So having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

[50 : 17] You see, it's true that the record of our debt is wiped away. That's a theological truth. But the thing is as well, sin can't actually just be deleted.

Sin can't just be wiped away. Debt cannot just be erased. And the reason for that is that God is a just God. And because he's a just God, that means that where sin is committed, there has to be a penalty.

There's no choice. There's no choice. If God just forgave sin and ignored sin without any consequences, he would be unjust. He would be unjust.

And he can't be unjust because that would mean he would cease to be who he is. He's a just God. So the implication of all that is that when sin has been committed, there needs to be a penalty.

There has to be some kind of penalty paid. And that's where this image comes into play here.

Because this record of debt, this piece of paper, it is deleted.

[51 : 23] It is destroyed, yes. But it's deleted and destroyed by Jesus taking it and Jesus actually nailing it and nailing it to his own cross.

Think about the name of the document, record of debt. When you think of debt straight away, you think that's something that needs to be paid. Debt needs to be paid. And that's what sin is.

Sin leaves us indebted to God. We owe God. We owe God a penalty charge. We are in debt. All of us are in debt to him because of our sin. And that's what Jesus does on the cross.

He takes our debt. He takes our sin. And he takes that. And he pays the price for it. He actually pays the punishment for our sin by suffering there on the cross.

So you've got basically a transaction taking place there. Our sins. The record of our sins. The record of our debt. He takes that to himself. He nails that to the cross.

[52 : 22] And he pays the price for it. And what's going on there is it's almost like Jesus goes and he gathers all your sins. Gathering all the sins of your thoughts and all the sins of your words and your actions.

And he's taking them. And he gathers them to himself. And he nails them there. He takes them. And bears the very punishment for all of us.

And he pays the price himself in our place. And that means that if you're the Lord today, you can look at the cross and you see Christ nailed there. But you see more than that.

You see our sin. Our sin nailed there. That's part of the wonder of what happened at that hill at Calvary 2,000 years ago. Christ became sin. He doesn't become a sinner.

But he became sin. He bears sin. Our sin. And as he is nailed to that cross, it's like our sin. Our sin is nailed there to that cross. As he endures that suffering.

[53 : 22] As he pays that price. And after all, that's why he came into the world. So, for example, Isaiah tells us that the Messiah would bear the sins of many.

Using that very language. And Paul, in his letter to the Romans, he says something similar in chapter 8. He says, What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did.

By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. On account of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh. So, in the flesh of Christ, our sin is actually condemned.

And he says again in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. Well known words there. For he made him who knew no sin to become sin for us.

That we might become the righteousness of God. So, he becomes sin. Remember, he doesn't become a sinner. But he becomes sin. And as he's nailed there to the cross, it's as though our sin is actually nailed there.

[54 : 23] And when you see the flame of God's divine justice coming down on Jesus there on the cross. Because that's what happens on the cross. The flame of God's divine justice comes down on Jesus.

When you see that, it's not just coming down on Jesus. It's coming down on your sin and mine. If our faith is in Christ today, it's coming down on our sin. And that means that this record, this piece of paper, if you like, that's nailed to the cross.

For the record of all our sin, it's burned up. It's burned up. It's burned up because it's there with Jesus. And the flame of God's wrath comes down. And it's consumed. The debt is paid. And the record itself is destroyed.

Now, that's an amazing thought. You know, when you think about your sin. It's just gone, just like that. Thinking of Jesus paying the price for the sin of all his people.

And, you know, if you think about maths here, it's a wee bit confusing. Because you think to yourself, well, wait a second. How can one person pay the price for the sins of millions of people?

[55 : 31] How does that work out? How can one person take the record of debt, the record of sin from loads and loads of people, all of the Lord's people? How can he take all that to himself and nail it to his cross?

How does that even work? Well, the answer to that is fairly straightforward. The answer is that this was no ordinary man. This was too ordinary man at all.

This was no mere man. We read in verse 9 there that in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. This was not an ordinary man. An ordinary man couldn't have done that for us.

An ordinary man couldn't have nailed all the record of debt of everyone onto the cross. No. But this is not an ordinary man. This is the God-man. Divinity and humanity together there in one person. And that is why. And that is only why he was able to do that. That's why we could have had no other saviour. No other angel could have done this. No new Adam could have done this. No new sinless man could have done this.

[56 : 31] Only the Lord Jesus Christ himself could actually do that. So if your faith is in Christ here today. Look at that picture there. That illustration.

And note how complete and how definitive your forgiveness actually is. And when the devil does come to you. As he will.

And you would have probably experienced this already. But when the devil does come to you. And when the devil does try and put doubts in your mind. And accuse you of all sorts. You say. No. My record of debt.

My record of sin. Has been taken by Jesus. And it has been wiped clean. He has taken it. He has nailed it to the cross himself. And by doing so. He has paid the price.

The flame of the wrath of God has come and burned it up. And now it can never ever be pieced together again. And even when you fall into sin. And that will happen time and time again.

[57 : 29] Even when you find yourself falling into sin. Time and time again. Remember this. Remember. The Lord's forgiveness doesn't run out. All our iniquity.

All our sins washed away. Now yes. To qualify that a wee bit by saying. Remember we still must come in repentance. We still must have that sorrow. For sin.

Seeking forgiveness. But we do so knowing that we will be forgiven. It's a promise. A promise from the Lord himself. And if you're here today.

Outside of Christ. Then. Then. That record of debt. That record of sin. That still burns over you. And that's a debt.

That one day will be called in. It will be called in. And it's a debt you can't ignore. It's a debt you can't paint over. It's a debt you can't cover up.

[58 : 23] In any way. And. If Christ. Hasn't paid that debt for you. Then. Then the reality is that. You must pay it yourself. And then you might respond to that.

And say. Well what's the price? What's the price? What is the price of this debt? And the price. Solemnly. Is. Is nothing less than. The eternal flame of. The wrath of God.

What came down on Christ. That's the price. That's a solemn price. But Jesus comes to us in the gospel. And he says. It doesn't have to be like that. It doesn't have to be like that. Jesus says. Give me your record of debt.

Give me your record of sin. Give it to me. I will pay it. I will pay it. And I will delete it. And I will wipe it clean. And if we want to take that offer.

We simply. Get on our knees. And we put our faith in Christ. We ask for that forgiveness. We ask for that salvation. We come in repentance. We come seeking his face.

[59 : 20] And knowing that if we do so. We will receive that forgiveness. That is a promise. That is a guarantee. And when we do so. We will know ourselves.

The joy. Of forgiveness. That the psalmist. Spoke of. That we sang a few moments ago. My prayer is that. All of us would know that. For ourselves. And that we would share that message.

Of forgiveness. With others as well. There are so many people. In the world today. Crying out for that. Crying out for that sense of relief. Crying out for that sense of. Of forgiveness.

Of belonging. Of purpose. It is there in the gospel. To make sure that we. Go out. And we spread that message. To those who are around us here. In Harris. And wherever it is.

That we are. Amen. And we will. Bow our heads now. And come before the Lord. In prayer. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

[60 : 20] We give thanks for. All that our Lord has done. For us in salvation. And we thought there. About the. The work of our Savior.

On the cross. The way in which. The record of our debt. And the record of our sin. Is wiped away. When we put our faith. And trust. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And we give thanks.

That when we look to the cross. And when we see all that happens. There on the cross. That we don't just see Jesus there. But that we see our sin there too. Our sin as it were being burned up. The record of our sin. With everything that's on it. And we only know a part of what's on it. Like we were thinking about earlier. That list is longer than. Than we can even begin to imagine. Things that we would.

Never want anyone to see. Or hear. Or read. And all of that. Is washed away. On that cross. At Calvary. So help us all.

[61 : 17] To come before you. To seek that forgiveness. To seek that salvation. And as we said as well. Help us to go out with that message to others. And to share this good news of the Lord. Jesus Christ.

So cleanse us now we ask. For Jesus sake. Amen. Well we're going to. Conclude our time of worship now. By returning to the psalm.

We sang at the beginning. In Psalm 51. And we're going to. Pick up. In verse. Seven there. And we'll sing verse seven.

To twelve. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me. I shall be cleansed so. Yea wash thou me. And then I shall be whiter. Than the snow.

A picture of us being washed. By the Lord. And then you have this. This gladness. Of gladness and of joyfulness. Make me to hear the voice. But so these very bones. Which thou hast broken. May rejoice.

[62 : 12] A picture of. Our being in conviction. Our suffering. But then receiving that forgiveness. And that joy and gladness. That come from that. All mine iniquities blot out. Not some.

Not most. Not a portion. All. All of mine iniquities blot out. Thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart. Lord. Renew a right spirit. Me within.

Cast me not from thy sight. Nor take thy holy spirit away. Restore me thy salvation's joy. With thy free spirit. Me stay. So we'll sing those verses.

Psalm 51. Verse 7 to 12. To the praise of God. Do thou with this soft sprinkle me.

I shall be cleansed so. Be whiter than the snow.

[63 : 21] Of kindness and of joyfulness. Make me to hear the voice.

That so these very bones. Which thou hast broken. May rejoice.

For my iniquities blot out. Thy face hide from my sin.

Thy face hide from my sin.

Restore me thy salvation's joy. With thy free spirit.

[64 : 45] Me stay. And now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Continue with you all now. And now may be teaching you all the prophets one. For iniquities blot out. Now may to ■■ and Savior Jesus Christ. Be forgiving you all the Father and Savior Jesus Christ.

etric pudacts we love you all the Lord. dein bisous good belief. Palation of the Spirit. That's the great■ be with you all the Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. What is God saying before me?

That's the great that you all have to do it in your children. And you will be one of us orbring you all. And you will be one again before me. Most people say.