

God's love for us

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[0 : 00] Thank you, well it is a privilege to be with you. I wish I could be here tomorrow night because I have no idea what a wedding dress tea or something is that we just announced.

Some strange Harris custom, probably. But it is, it's great to be with you and others who are visiting here, I'm sure you feel as welcome as we do.

And we are here to worship God and we're going to begin by singing Psalm 103. We're going to sing verses 1 to 11 and I believe the tune is before the throne. Let's stand and sing these words to God's face.

Praise God my soul with all my heart. Let me exalt His holy name. Forget not all His benefits. His grace my soul in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

[1 : 16] Your life He rescues from the grave and grant you in His tenderness.

And grant you in His tenderness. He satisfies your deep desires from His unending stores of good. So that just like the eagles spend, your youthful vigor is renewed.

The Lord is known for righteous acts and justice to the trodden ones. To Moses He made known His ways.

His mighty deeds to Israel's sons. His mighty deeds to Israel's sons. The Lord is merciful and kind. The Lord is merciful and kind. To anger slow and full of grace. He will not constantly reprove.

[2 : 34] Or in His anger hide His face. He does not punish our misdeeds. Or give our sins their just reward.

And with His love as high as heaven. Towards all those who fear the Lord. Towards all those who fear the Lord.

Amen. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Amen. Let's bow our heads in prayer. O Lord our God we bless you that you are gracious and kind.

We bless you that you are almighty and sovereign. We bless you that you are pure and holy. And we bless you that you enable us to come into your presence. Into the presence of a holy God. Because of Jesus. Because of Jesus. That we can come sinners as we are. Knowing that we are forgiven. Knowing that we are healed. That we are ransomed.

[3 : 42] That we are restored. We bless you Lord for every blessing we receive from your hand. Even in the midst of sorrow and suffering. And doubt and fear and questioning.

We can look to your blessings. We bless you our God for each person here. And we ask that you would be with those who are unable to be here. We pray for the sick.

We pray for those who are discouraged. We pray O Lord for those who have turned away from you. We pray for those who have no interest in you. We ask that you would even now as they are at home or wherever they are.

That you would by your spirit work within them. We pray our God that you would draw people to hear your word this evening. And we pray for Roger.

And ask for. We thank you for him. And ask for your hand and anointing to be on him. Lord bless you for the young people who are here from the camp. We ask that you would encourage and bless them.

[4 : 44] We pray O Lord for the children here. That you would be with them. And that each would grow up knowing and loving and serving you. And our God as each of us come this morning.

Some of us joyful. Some of us discouraged. Some of us certain of our faith. And some of us uncertain. We ask our God that whatever our particular needs.

We would lift our eyes beyond our own circumstances. And see Jesus. The author and perfecter of our faith. And that we would be able to say. It was good for us.

To be in the house of the Lord. In your name we ask it. Amen. Right. Let me say something to the boys and girls. I was told to ask you to come to the front. But you're already at the front. So. Let me. Oh. Excuse me. Right. Do any of you ask questions at all? So. Usually. People bring stuff. Like the minister.

[5 : 41] And they. We fill it out. And they. Yeah. To tell them what it is. Alright. So the minister brings you stuff. This is good to know. He brings you stuff. What's your name?

Michael. Michael. Thank you. Cool glasses by the way. He brings you stuff. And then he asks you about it. Well I have. I am. Well I've got this. You know what that is.

Don't you? No. I. I'm. I'm not going to. Well maybe I am going to ask you questions. But do you ever ask questions? Yes. Like do you ever ask questions at home? What kind of question would you ever ask?

When would you ask this one? How about this one? Are we nearly there yet? No. You would never ask that one. You ask that one don't you? That's the only in the car. That's the only in the car. Yeah exactly.

And you're going on holiday. And like. You might go on holiday. And where do you go to on holiday here? You go across in the ferry. You go somewhere on holiday. And let's say you were going all the way down to France.

[6 : 38] And imagine you get on the ferry. And the first question after five minutes in the car is. Are we nearly there yet? No. We've got another 20 hours to go. No. People ask.

Are you nearly there yet? Other questions that people might ask. One of my favourites was. What are we having for tea? That's a question. What other questions might you ask? I like.

What's we having for dinner? Like that. Because you say. What do you have for tea? What do you have for dinner? OK. You're pushing the door. So. What are you having for dinner? What are you having for dinner?

What are you having for dinner? And then there's questions that sometimes. Do you know who asked a lot of questions when he was a boy? And that's Jesus. I've got a story here. It's in the Bible. And Jesus was 12 years old. And he went up to the temple with his parents. And I think this is an amazing story. His parents started going home. And guess what?

[7 : 33] They left Jesus behind. I'm not saying they forgot about him. But they thought. Has that ever happened to you? You've been left behind by your parents. You're saying yes. Well.

We'll do that later. OK. But. I actually. I know of a minister in this island. That he went away. To do some shopping in Stornoway. I'll not say where he's from.

Because everyone would know who he was. But. He went away to do some shopping in Stornoway. And his wife. He kept forgetting things. So. His wife wrote them stuff. And. He went away.

And he got all the shopping. He was so pleased with himself. He got back. And he brought the bags in. And he said. I've got all this. And she looked at him and said. You have forgotten something. He said. What's that? The kids.

He'd taken them up. And he left them behind in the shop. And he stole it. So. He had to go all the way back. And. But. This is what happened with Jesus. His parents. I think. There would have been a whole bunch of them.

[8 : 29] They would have thought. Oh. So they weren't too bothered. And then they found he wasn't there. And they went for a whole day. Without him there. And then they began looking for him. Among their relatives and friends.

That's what it says. And they didn't find him. They went back to Jerusalem. And it took them three days. They found him. In the. The last place they were expecting to find him. Was in the temple. And they found him in the temple.

And do you know what he was doing there? It says. He was. Among the teachers. Listening to them. And asking. Them questions. So he was there. He was asking questions.

By the way. He was also. Teaching. His parents were astonished. And they said. You know. Why do you treat us like this? Basically. They gave Jesus around. Your father and I have been searching for you.

Why were you searching for me? He said. Didn't you know I have to be in my father's house? But they didn't understand what he was saying. I like the idea that Jesus asked questions. Because although he's a true father. He's human like us as well.

[9 : 25] And it says in the bible. That he learned things. And one of the best ways to learn things. Is to ask questions. So. I suspect that one of you. Two of you here. Are good at asking.

I suspect you're good at asking questions. Aren't you? Yeah. Well you keep asking questions. Sometimes parents can get a wee bit tired. You know. Especially if you keep asking. Are we nearly there yet? But you keep asking questions.

And the best thing is. You can ask God questions. And. God answers. Through this. Through. His word. Through the bible. But when you go through a Sunday school.

You'll be asked questions. And you can ask questions as well. One thing to remember though is. If you ask a question. Listen. For the answer. Because if you're talking all the time.

You never hear. The answer. So I think it's. I think it's great. I think it's great. You're part of the church. I think it's great. You can ask Jesus. I think you've got questions. You say. Jesus.

[10 : 21] What does this mean? And what about this? And you can ask your minister. And you can ask your parents. And you can ask. Other people. Just keep asking. I've been asking questions all my life. And sometimes you get answers. And it's wonderful.

Guys. Let me pray for you. Lord. Thank you for these children. We pray your blessing upon them. We pray that you would help them. To grow up in your love. And in your faith. We pray your blessing upon their families.

And we ask our God. That as they go through to Sunday school. That you would teach them from your word. And most of all. That they would know you. And that they would know you. Are a God of great patience.

And great love. And we ask our God. That each. Would grow. In your faith. And in your knowledge. Amen. Amen. Thank you guys.

And if you've got any questions at the end. Come up and talk to us. And I get to ask my wife questions this afternoon. Which is even better. So. Can we turn to read in God's word.

[11 : 26] In Romans chapter. Eight. We're going to be looking at verses. Thirty one to thirty eight. But. I'll maybe read from verse twenty eight.

Romans chapter eight. And we know. That in all things. God works for the good of those who love him. Who've been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew.

He also predestined. To be conformed to the likeness of his son. That he might be the firstborn. Among many brothers. And those he predestined. He also called. Those he called.

He also justified. Those he justified. He also glorified. What then shall we say in response to this. If God is for us. Who can be against us. He who did not spare his own son.

But gave him up for us all. How will he not also along with him. Graciously give us all things. Who will bring any charge. Against those whom God has chosen. It is God who justifies.

[12 : 24] Who is he that condemns. Christ Jesus who died. More than that. Who was raised to life. Is at the right hand of God. And is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us.

From the love of Christ. Shall trouble or hardship. Or persecution. Or famine. Or nakedness. Or danger. Or sword. As it is written. For your sake. We face death. All day long.

We are considered. As sheep to be slaughtered. No. In all these things. We are more than conquerors. Through him who loved us. For I am convinced. That neither death nor life. Neither angels nor demons.

Neither the present. Nor the future. Nor any powers. Neither height nor depth. Or anything else. In all creation. Will be able to separate us. From the love of God. That is in Christ Jesus.

Our Lord. Amen. This is the word. Of the Lord. Let's again. Bow our heads in prayer. And let's pray for the Lord's church. Throughout the world.

[13 : 21] Lord we thank you. That we come. And here. In this place. We are able. To be at one. With our brothers and sisters. Throughout the world.

We come to pray. To pray for your people. To pray for your cause. We come oh Lord. Remembering those Christians. In Sudan. And in Nigeria. And in North Korea.

And in many other countries. Who face enormous persecution. We come oh Lord. To pray. For those Christians. Who feel beleaguered. And.

Who feel that they are just. Very small. Feel perhaps that they are in decline. We pray oh Lord. For you. Places where your church is growing. Enormously.

In Africa. And in China. And in South America. And in South America. We ask. Oh Lord. That you would continue. To build up your church. We thank you for. The fact that Jesus.

[14:17] Is still seeing. The fruit of the travails. Of his soul. That people are still. Being brought into the kingdom. And that more people. Believe today. In the world. Than ever have before.

We bless you for that. Before that. We come oh Lord. And pray for our own nation. A confused nation. Particularly. The nation of Scotland. The land.

Where we were once known. As the people of the book. And now people. Don't even know. What that book is. We pray our God. That you would renew. And revive. Your cause. In this land. We bless you.

For. Churches. Where your word. Is faithfully proclaimed. And your people. Seek to follow you. We bless you. Our God. That even in this day. A day of small things. That you are continually. Adding to your church here. We pray that you would raise up. More. To. Live. And love. And serve. The Lord Jesus Christ. Oh Lord.

[15:14] We pray for this island. We thank you. For. Your goodness to it. In so many ways. In the past. And we are deeply conscious. That there is. An assault upon the church. At this time.

That. We are. Aware of. Of. Of. Forces. Attacking. And we are aware. Oh Lord. Of.

Deep discouragements. As well as. Encouragements. That you would. Renew. And revive. Pray that you would. Unity. Unity. Amongst those. Who are truly believers.

And we ask. Oh Lord. That you would grant. Repentance. And. And confession. And that we would. Seek your face. And grant us. Humility. Oh Lord.

To the congregation. We bless you. For the provision. That has been made. Even in terms. Of this building. But our God. We. We ask. That you would. Deliver from.

[16:09] Any sense. Of complacency. Or having arrived. We. Have such. A responsibility. To live. And proclaim. Your word. To all. In this place.

And grant. Oh God. We do pray. For those. Who are. Struggling. We do pray. For those. Who have many. Doubts. And fears.

And we ask. For. Your people. Here. As. They seek. To minister. And to share. Pray. Especially. For David.

The minister. And his family. And for the elders. And deacons. And everyone. Who is involved. In the life. We pray. For the Sunday school. Teachers. As they teach.

Just now. Lord. We bless you. For your glory. So help us. As we continue. To worship. And as we turn. To your word. And I pray again. Especially for.

[17:04] The campers. We ask. Our God. That. Even. Maybe being here. Tired. Yet still. We would hear. Your word. And it would apply it.

To our own lives. Lord. You are the sovereign Lord. You know. Each person's heart. You know. Each of our sins. You know. Everything about us. Your infinite wisdom. And knowledge.

We come to realize. You have brought us here. At this place. At this time. To hear your word. To us. In your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing.

The Gaelic Psalm. Number 20. Verses. Four. To six. If you're here visiting. And. You don't speak Gaelic. Gaelic.

You're like. The lady. Who told me. Once. When I visited. In her home. She said to me. In Gaelic. Do you have the Gaelic. I understood enough. To understand.

[17:59] And I said. No. And she went. Oh well. You're like. A preacher without Gaelic. Is like a bird. Without a wing. So. This wingless bird. Will.

Will. Listen to you sing. And we'll read the psalm. Join in. And sing. Let's worship God. Singing. Psalm 20. Verses. 4 to 6. At his children.

Of. He. At his children. Of. He. At. He. At. He.

At. He. To. The. At. The. At. He. He.

At. He. He. At. The. At. He. He. His. The. He.

[19:00] Was. He. The. He. And. He. He. A. The End The End

The End The End The End

The End The End The End

You know, sometimes you hear singing or you hear a prayer that makes you thankful that you belong to Jesus and that indeed does.

And the passage that we look at today in Romans chapter 8 is also something that makes us just enormously thankful if we are Christians.

[23 : 31] Now, what we've been doing at the end of the day, we've been doing at the end of the day, we've been doing at the end of the day, we've been doing a little bit where the church is at as well.

And then yesterday we've been doing a lot of things that we've been doing a lot of the day, we've been doing a lot of things that we've been doing.

It's just a marvelous reassurance.

A space you're doing a lot of things that we've been putting a long time...

for us which helps us with all the issues that we have to face now paul has just been saying we know that in all things god works for the good of those who love him he's given five affirmations god for you people he predestined people uh he called people he justified he glorified and then from verse 31 onwards in giving this response he asks five questions so i'll say to the children about questions we're going to look at these five uh questions and each of them could take a sermon but i won't do that um and i think there are questions that many of us have asked as christians and if you're not a christian it may be that you would you would ask and here in verse 31 is just a key question what if i can't continue so someone will say you know i want to be a christian but what if i can't continue we think we're not good enough we think we can't make it or there are those of us who are christians and we started off really really well and then things to be honest it's not that anything major has happened but we've just become really tired and we've become worn down and so we we we sometimes feel like giving up and then sometimes it appears as though there are just these enormous forces against us there are these enormous pressures and it's as if we can hardly cope there there's so many things that seem to be uh against us i um had a poster for a while which i just i i thought was quite amusing but i put it away because it turned out to be too true and it was a poster that said on it um i felt down and depressed something like that and they told me to cheer up to smile and to cheer up because things could get worse so i did smile i did cheer up and things did get worse um and sometimes we do feel like that but notice here with this in this verse the question is not who is against you i always i always think it's interesting who's against you that's what that's how i would read this and then you know i'm i can read and i've been a minister for a long time and then somebody i was reading about this somebody actually the question is if god is for you if god is for you who can be against you and the immediate answer is actually a lot of people can be against you not saying no one's against you not saying if you love god suddenly you're going to be popular you're going to have absolutely everything that you want you know sometimes the gospel is presented in that way if you love god then that broken relationship will be restored that broken body will be healed you will get a job you will get lots of money everyone will think that you're great he's not saying that because we know from the bible we know from experience that the devil and hell and the powers of this world and our own sin are against us ephesians 6 12 is so important for us our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms it's kind of really hard to explain what evil is isn't it but you you sense it you know that you're in the presence of sometimes of something evil sometimes that can happen anyway many of you know i was seriously ill in 2011 and in many it was an experience in different ways but one of the things undoubtedly was it was a spiritual experience and there was a sense of evil a sense of something darkness a sense of something wrong and so who's against us well yes there's lots

[28 : 53] against us but it's who is for us that matters even more so we can say though i walk through the valley of the shadow of death i will fear no evil not because evil doesn't exist or has been taken away because it's the valley of the shadow of death but you are with me your rod and your staff comfort me or psalm 27 the lord is my light and my salvation whom shall i fear the lord is my strength is my life of whom shall i be afraid you know people worry about many many different things at a personal level and at a national at an international level and what does the lord tell us isaiah 40 the nations are as a drop in the bucket and are counted as small dust in the balance now israel may say and that truly psalm 124 if that the lord had not been on our side but if god is for us who can be against us so the first thing in in this that's a great question for us a great how do we continue we only continue because god is and let me say this to you and those of you who are here on the camp i remember being at a camp thinking i'd actually quite like to be a christian but it's easy enough at camp but what when i get home that's not going to be so easy and i remember being told god will be with you and if god is with you then you need not fear anything and i do believe that that

is something that all of us need to grasp and to recognize that that it's the presence of god if god is with us we can walk through fire and that is so important for us in this day and age that that we go with the lord i did a debate a while ago on the da vinci code when it came out and as we were going into the cinema to do the debate the man who was chairing it was a bbc journalist from dundee he's a sports journalist and he uh as we're going he said david i'm really sorry he says but the other two people on this panel he says they're they're like atheists they don't believe in god they're like me he said it's kind of like three against one and he said i'm sorry about that and i said no i said i'm not worried and he looked at me he said why not i said have a think jim and he went i said yeah you got it you got it and it's it's that is just so important all the time you may feel that you're on your own you may feel you're really really struggling but to know that the lord is with you verse 32 can i lose god's love he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things now notice again the question the answer isn't god's going to give you give you all things it actually begins if he didn't spare his own son what paul does always is he moves from the greater to the lesser so he's saying if god gave you his son then why would he not give you everything else that you absolutely need sometimes we can live in fear of losing someone's love some of you here are old enough maybe some of you were wise enough not to to listen to this but you would know uh the beatles song when i'm 64 when i get older losing my hair many years from now will you still be sending me a valentine birthday greetings bottle of wine and then the ultimate will you still need me will you still feed me when i'm 64 that's only a man could say that really but um you know the thought it's lovely when you meet a couple who've been together for 40 50 60 years it's wonderful and there is a fear i think that sometimes people have of losing someone's love what if you don't love me you know that your children are great and uh i think one of

the most important things for children is to grow up in an environment where they know that they are loved and they can't lose that love it'd be a really bad parent who said if you don't do this i won't love you anymore but we can sometimes there are parents who are like that and we can sometimes be like that or we can perceive that god is like that well paul is saying if you want to know does god continue to love you and how do you know that god loves you the answer is always the cross the cross is not just a great doctrine the cross happened and it's important that we understand what it means and i just want to mention there are so many verses i want to mention just one isaiah 53 verse 4 he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed he bore our griefs and he carried our sorrows see it's hard to bear someone else's grief i mean i have enough coping with my own but the idea that jesus carried our sorrows that jesus was wounded for our transgressions that jesus was bruised for our iniquities that our punishment that brought us peace was upon him by his stripes we are healed that that really is utterly phenomenal i loved um i love what octavius winslow says who delivered jesus up to die not judas for money not pilot for fear not the jews for envy envy but the father for love you know there's a teaching that goes around in the christian church just now which denies the the what we call penal substitutionary atonement and just simply means jesus dying on the cross for our sins and it denies that because it is not good and it's not nice and god is it shows god is a wrathful god you know you take that away you're taking away the very basis of our assurance because it shows the opposite it shows that god is love who delivered jesus up to die the father for love he gave his own son and if he gave his own son how will he not also give us all things when the fullness of time was come god sent his son born under of a woman made under the law it's a phenomenal cost in gethsemane jesus sweated as it were great drops of blood on the cross he cried my god my god why have you forsaken me he did that and that's why when we take communion that's why when we hear god's word that's why in this church we will preach christ crucified he who did not spare his own son for it but gave him up for us all it's on that basis that we then know that god is going to provide everything else that we need how do you know if god loves you well how do you show your love to somebody else it's valentine's day coming up i know we don't celebrate saint's days and i don't know who's uh if any of you will be sending valentine's i used to hate valentine's day because you never get a card it's pretty desperate when the card comes from your mom you know so just so you don't feel too bad you know you recognize your handwriting you know mom come on um but i i used to hate you know the sort of valentine's day but i remember i do remember one valentine's day i did get something that did appear to me to be really real uh and oh wow who's this i never found out by the way it

wasn't much point in showing their love if they didn't tell me who they were but um i think that what we when we try if we wanted to show someone our love well what would we do i guess on valentine's day well you buy a card that's pretty cheap big box of chocolates that's a bit better you know ferrero roche or whatever it is big bunch of flowers now you're getting serious you know there's there's lots of things i guess that you could do to try and show your love what would god do to show his love for us it's interesting isn't it people kind of have this idea well god loves me because i prayed for healing and i got it that shows that god loves me or god loves me because i prayed to pass this exam or i prayed to get this job or whatever and that shows that god loves me do you know what's wrong with that what if you pray for healing and you don't get it does that mean that god hates you what if you pray for the job when you don't get it does that mean that god doesn't love you no that's an appalling theology it's an appalling way of thinking about things here's the way you know that god loves you it's through the fact that he gave you his son and he cannot give you anything greater than that everything else i'm not saying that god isn't interested in the smaller things and god richly gives us all things to enjoy but everything else is tiny compared with that how do i know that god loves me how do i know that god will keep me because he gave his son and if he gave his son he's not going to be able to give you anything more verse 33 who shall bring any charge against those whom god has chosen it is god who justifies those whom god has chosen martin luy jones says do not think do you think of yourself as one of god's elect as one of god's chosen people many of our troubles arise from the fact that we do not think of ourselves in this way and that we think of the christian as one who's decided for jesus the emphasis should be the other way around the christian is one who's been chosen of god and precious for that reason this is these are those who shall not have any charge brought against them now of course we decide to follow jesus of course we commit ourselves to follow jesus and that's what you should do but we do so because god has chosen us and that can be a teaching which disturbs a lot of people it causes a lot of questions and it causes doubts and fears it's meant to do the opposite the teaching is meant to be simply this we're not saying well i chose god and as long as i hang on to god i'm going to be fine what we're saying is god is hanging on to us and he's not going to let us go no one's going to bring a charge against us we're cleared of every charge sometimes if you've ever had to go to court i hope you don't but you go to court and there's something against you and you're found guilty you can appeal to a higher court then you appeal to a higher court and then you appeal to a higher court there is no higher court than god i appeal to god god is the judge and god is the law giver but if god has chosen if god sent his son to die for us then who is going to bring any charge against those whom god has chosen you may be deeply conscious of your own sin conscious of how weak you are conscious of how much you have failed conscious of the darkness within i know that i have failed but i rely totally on the lord jesus christ nothing in my hands i bring simply to thy cross i cling fourth question what has christ done how can i be condemned who is he that condemns christ jesus who died more than that who was raised to life is at the right hand of god and is interceding for us he died we saw that he came for our sins it is finished what was finished his work of redemption god is just you know once you become a believer it's a really interesting thing to think this is through god cannot punish you again because it would just be wrong there are things that god cannot do he cannot make a square circle he cannot lie he cannot do things that are contrary to his own nature and having punished our sins in christ on the cross he doesn't punish them again he is just we cannot come under condemnation that's why verse 1 of chapter 8 says therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in christ jesus that's an incredible experience to have there is no condemnation do you know many many christians do not live that out because the devil keeps coming to us and accusing us and accusing us and our consciences accuse us and our hearts accuse us and we forget that god is greater than our hearts so i feel condemned i feel rotten i feel awful and the cross tells us that we are forgiven there is no condemnation he dies more than that it says he was raised we won't read it but the whole of 1st corinthians 15 is marvellous if christ is not raised our faith is in vain he was declared with power says paul earlier in romans 1 to be the son of god by his resurrection from the dead he's at the right hand of god interceding for us jesus is alive we do not worship a dead saviour he's at the right hand of god interceding for us i may want to say to the kids by the way you can go as a child and ask jesus questions you can we're a living faith you know sometimes christians say oh well you know there are people who believe in a god who speaks today and then there are people who believe you know in a book and they they are so misunderstand that god speaks to us today through his word

when we come to worship it's an encounter with the living god and we can ask and we can pray and he's there he's there at the right hand of god interceding for us the great high priest goes into the temple the holiest of holies read the whole book of hebrews if you like given you plenty reading to do when you go home but it just god exalted him to his right hand acts 5 31 to be a prince and savior in order to give repentance to israel and forgiveness of sins jesus intercedes for us what does that mean does it mean that every time we sin jesus goes and like a lawyer presents our defense no hodge says this the language is figurative the meaning is this that christ continues his resurrection and exaltation to secure for his people the benefits of his death everything comes from god through him and for his sake it's really important teaching to grasp that the cross is once and for all when we take communion we're not reenacting the cross the cross is not happening again jesus doesn't need to die for you again every time you sin doesn't mean jesus needs to go and die for you again jesus has died for you once for all what he did on the cross is sufficient to cover for all your sin past present and future it is finished it is done i do think it's so important for us to grasp and understand that that christ has done it all we sometimes sing a song it's a beautiful song jesus paid it all all to him i own sin had left a crimson stain he washed it white as snow and it's not a promise just in the future there are promises for the future the redemption of the body and so on but there is a sense in which you will never be more saved than you are now you believe in jesus in the sense of your sin being taken care of and being forgiven the cross and resurrection free us from our great enemies sin and death disease and everything that comes from that i love what donald gray barnhouse says about this you do not have a problem too great for the power of christ you do not have a problem too complicated for the wisdom of christ you do not have a problem too small for the love of christ you do not have a sin too deep for the atoning love of christ that's it it's not don't worry be happy it's rejoice with joy unspeakable because you come to see this and then the last question and i'll try and do this as quickly as i can because it's the one it's the one that just stuns me who shall separate us from the love of christ and he says shall trouble hardship and persecution trouble is the word that's used for really strong pressure it comes from the latin word tribulum which was a threshing sledge which was where the corn was brought to a threshing floor and there was a wooden threshing instrument a sledge with strips of metal that was dragged across it and this is talking about extreme circumstances betrayal violence severe depression severe illness the worst possible things in your life thinking they cannot get worse and they do and it's talking about this and he's saying shall this kind of trouble ever separate us from the love of christ hardship hardship indicates the outward affliction plus the inward distress carries this idea of being confined and trapped persecution is someone trying to give us harm there's direct persecutions there's subtle persecutions in this world says Jesus you will have trouble but take heart

[46 : 47] I have overcome the world famine and nakedness therefore I tell you do not worry about your life what you will eat or drink or about your body what you will wear is not life more than food and the body more than clothes look at the birds of the air they do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them are you not much more valuable than they can any of you by worrying add a single error to your life it's interesting you know the problems of today's christian are no different from the problem of christians in different eras maybe expressed differently but i'm reading a guy called chrysostom just now he's a 4th century Greek preacher and he's just amazed and he says to the wealthy people in his congregation he says why do you want to acquire wealth because with wealth you acquire care and you acquire troubles you're always worrying about how am i going to look after this how am i going to look after that you know you've got an old beat up phone you don't worry about it so much as if you've got a brand new iphone 10 or whatever it is you've got a brand new bmw and it does kind of concern you that someone might scratch it if you've got a 20 year old ford fiesta scratch it who cares you know and there's a sense in which i'm not saying it's wrong and the bible is not saying it's wrong to have good things but it's just telling us you know we have a lot of troubles a lot of difficulties and God will provide and God will clothe for us nakedness is not about indecency of course here it's just about having the money to clothe yourself danger or sword he quotes from Psalm 44 verse 2 you know of course that the Psalms are quoted extensively all the time by the New Testament Christians but there if you read Hebrews 11 you'll see that some faced stoning some were tortured some had chains and imprisonment some were put to death by being sawed in two some were killed by the sword some went about in sheepskins and goatskins destituted persecuted and mistreated the world was not

worthy of them they wandered in deserts and mountains living in caves and in holes in the ground these were all commended for their faith yet none of them received what had been promised interesting isn't it we think we present the gospel well if we're saying to people come to Jesus and all these wonderful things will happen to you and the new testament gospel is take up your cross you know when you baptize somebody who's a muslim and you know that when they go and tell their parents their life can be in danger you realise what a serious thing it is that you are doing and I think in our own culture more and more following christ is going there are dangers involved in that I know people in the city of London who meet in secret they're business people and bankers they meet in secret to do bible study because they're scared in case they may lose their jobs it's interesting utterly fascinating and horrific the way that our culture is going in some ways and yet Jesus says that's the way it is that's what's going to happen between a hundred thousand and half a million Christians are killed every year for their faith this is not a comfortable world in which to profess your faith and what are we told here can pain misery and loss separate christ's people from his love not at all it's interesting this list by the way that's here Paul experienced every single one of these things he's not writing some theory the only one he hadn't experienced was execution and who's he writing this letter to the romans where was he executed eventually in rome he came to rome as a prisoner he taught in rome under house arrest and eventually he was executed in rome every single one of these things

Paul said nothing will separate us from the love of christ and he experienced them all we are he says like sheep to be slaughtered but here's the astonishing thing we are sheep that conquer now I'm sure you're quite well aware of sheep my grandad was a shepherd my dad has sheep there are many many things we can say about sheep I don't know any conquering king who has a sheep as his banner because they're not well they can be aggressive by the way they can be really aggressive sometimes I've been head batted by sheep but you know a conquering sheep doesn't make a great deal of sense but that's what's being said here we are more than conquerors it's not just that we bear the sufferings but we triumph over them in fact Paul even invented a new word here we are more than conquerors through him who loved us he used a word that never didn't exist here it reminds me of my old professor in the free church college Donald Macleod who just used to if he couldn't think of a word in

English or Gaelic he just made it up and we would think oh that's profound where did he get that he just made it up and this is what Paul does here they're hyper conquerors we're in a spiritual battle which involves every aspect of our being but because of him who loved us we are conquerors John Stolt says this Paul says that since Christ proved his love for us by his suffering so our sufferings cannot possibly separate us from his love Luther says we did not love him first but he first loved us and he still loves us first it is not because we love that he loves but he loves therefore we love and you see the difference with that people say if only I love God then he will love me no no no wrong way around he loves you therefore you can love him that's why we always preach the love of God we are to love God it's a command but we can't do it unless he first loved us but he did first love us what love is this we take the love of God too much for granted in many ways it's astounding this is love not that we love

[53 : 03] God says John but that he loved us and sent his son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins he loved us he died for the church not just that we would be forgiven but that we should arrive at absolute perfection perfection is the church here in Lewis absolute perfection not at all but it will be because together with the whole church throughout the world Christ died for that church to remove every spot wrinkle or any such thing Paul's not asking can our love to Christ stand these tests but he's asking can the love of Christ to us stand these tests and yes it can it has done and it will do and he says he's convicted and he's persuaded look verse 38 I'm convinced and again it's here he's thinking he's thought it through it's rational it's reasonable it's not just that he feels it in his heart because some days you feel it in your heart some days you come into church and you just have that real deep sense of the love of God and it's wonderful and other times you're sitting there and it's as black as can be does the first mean that God loves you and the second mean that he doesn't no it doesn't he thinks it through

I'm not ashamed of the gospel he says because the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes first to the Jew then to the Gentile and then he lists these things that can separate us death or life many are afraid of death some are afraid of life but nothing in death or life can stop God from loving us Francis Bacon says that men fear death as children fear the dark Paul says

where oh death is your victory death has been swallowed up in victory Jesus Christ has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel fear of death is a deep thing and it's a profound thing but to be with a Christian who who knows what's happening to them and who knows where they're going it's so reassuring you know I've had the privilege of being that I've been at deathbeds where people are very afraid and very scared but I've also been at deathbeds where in between some you know often people are in between but there's just a there's a sense of peace and I mentioned this in the conference earlier we have a couple in our congregation just now and one man is a retired Church of Scotland minister and he's probably near the end and he's not been well and

I phoned his wife up and I asked her how things were and she said he's in the vestibule he's in the waiting room and he's probably going home soon and there wasn't a trace of bitterness or false piety in her at all it's just real so real and it's that's an astonishing thing death can't separate us what about life some people have a hard life some people are enticed by the world we don't need to be afraid of life neither death nor life will separate you from the love of Christ there's an enormous freedom that you can have if you grasp this what's going to happen to me tomorrow what's going to happen the next day what's going to happen the next day and we worry and we worry and we worry and we worry and then if you grasp that neither death nor life can separate you from Christ there's a tremendous assurance in that angels or demons Jesus disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them the devil can't get you neither the present nor the future time time is powerless against believers what will it be like in a year's time what will happen in five years time I don't know but Jesus will still have died for me and Jesus will still reign and the gates of hell will never prevail against the church so time does not take away our hope Henry talks about the present with its temptations or the future with its uncertainties neither of those separate us from the love of Christ height nor depth space have you ever thought about the enormity of space I used to the things that freaked me out as a teenager were the idea of eternity but walking along the the morick moor near tain in Easter Ross going home from a school dance or something looking up at the stars and just staring at the stars walking thankfully it was a very straight road and no ditches walking just staring at the stars and just trying to get my head round the amount of space that there is we live and we can feel very small in such a vast environment but God's love is greater than the universe I love it in Job he stares at the outer stars and he says these are just but the fringe of your power they're just the fringe where can I go from your spirit says the psalmist where can I flee from your presence if I go up to the heavens you are there if I make my bed in the depths you are there not these not the powers the powers there in that culture with the astrological powers he says not at all anything else in all creation he says there's nothing nothing nothing in all creation is able to separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord so we have great confidence I had a friend in our church who liked to do free climbing you know what free climbing is it's that crazy sport where you climb up sheer cliffs and rocks without any rope and he did that when he got married his wife had a say that made him use ropes at least do you know what the Christian life the Christian life is not free climbing there's always a rope that's around us and that's the rope of [58 : 47] God's love whatever happens to us we cannot lose that we can lose virtually everything but we cannot lose that our confidence says Stott is not in our love for him which is frail fickle and faltering but in his love for us which is steadfast faithful and persevering you know the doctrine about the perseverance of the saints doesn't mean the saints perseveres it means that God perseveres with the saints that's why we persevere we keep going because he keeps going our sufferings do not speak of God's rejection or the great power of the devil when you suffer it's not God saying I don't love you and it's not the devil saying I've got you or if he is he's lying God's love is greater than all as I said there's a great confusion about the love of God many people say they believe in the love of God because it sounds nice but they don't believe in the cross or the sin or the wrath of God so really they don't believe in the love of God they believe in their own philosophical conception of the love of God not the concrete reality but we have the concrete reality because it's the cross that shows what divine love is

Romans 5 8 God demonstrates his own love for this while we were still sinners Christ died for us at the cross at the cross where I first saw the lights and there's just that glory of knowing Christ in this again Christ's time now I know indeed that many tremble only at hell but I affirm the loss of that glory is a far greater punishment than hell see what he's saying he's saying not to know Jesus not to know the love of God not to experience that it's just such a horrendous punishment again back to

Barnhouse the love of Christ was eternal for it was that love which moved him to leave heaven's throne and come down to the earth to redeem us that love was deep for it was that love which urged him on to the end of the road as he humbled himself to death even the death of the cross that love was broad for it was love which opened the arms of God to all the world of sinners and made it possible for there were very ones who nailed him to the cross to be forgiven and come back to the father's heart and that love is unchanging for it is that love which comes to us today in the midst of our need whatever it may be and takes us out of our darkness and into light and from doubt to certainty and from death to life

I love there's a a wonderful hymn how firm a foundation you saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word and I want to finish just by reading that I couldn't sing it I couldn't match your singing but what more can he say to you than he has said to all who for refuge to Jesus have fled in every condition in sickness in health in poverty's grip or abounding in wealth at home or abroad on the land on the sea as days may demand shall your strength ever be since Jesus is with you do not be afraid since he is your God you need not be dismayed he'll strengthen you guard you and help you to stand upheld by his righteous omnipotent hand when through the deep waters he calls you to go you will not be drowned in the rivers of woe for he will be with you in trouble to bless and work for your good through your deepest distress when through fiery trials your pathway shall lie his grace all sufficient shall be your supply the flames shall not harm you his only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine that's just an extraordinary promise the devil will tell you that God lets things happen to you because

God is cruel and capricious and maybe you deserve it and he's playing with you and what the Bible tells you as the hymn writer put it is God's intention is always to refine all things work for the good of those who love God the soul that in Jesus has found its repose he will not he cannot desert to its foes that soul though all hell should endeavor to shake he'll never no never no never forsake amen Lord we bless you for your word we bless you that you call your people to you we bless you that each one of us here is invited to come to Jesus and may it be that we would do so may each of us confess our sin and may we give our lives to you Lord we pray that nobody would walk out of this building without having come to know

Jesus and we bless you that those of us who do continually it seems as though the forces against us are overwhelming and overwhelming because we are so weak and overwhelming because of the hurt and the pain and the confusion and the darkness and yet help us to see we can never be separated from your love ever you will never forsake your people you will never leave your people you will never desert your people you are the faithful shepherd the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep it's the the thief the false shepherd who comes in to steal and kill and destroy but you come to save and to save to the uttermost Lord help us to see that and help us to have confidence in you and to believe that you mean what you say and that you will carry out your promises that none who come to you are turned away and none who come to you are lost help us oh God in the midst of this world with all its troubles to rejoice in your goodness and to delight in the love of God and may we come to know that love which is beyond knowledge how high how deep and how wide it is for we ask it in your name amen and now may the grace of our Lord

[65 : 06] Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore amen Alejandra how deep and how deep and believe in the Lord of God was please thank you for continue to the work of my team of marvelous and work of and this is about a really boatpathorie and time build well how deep say