

8.3.24 Friday Evening Preparatory Service

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Date: 08 March 2024

Preacher: Reverend Ronnie Morrison

[0 : 0 0] Good evening everybody, a warm welcome to the service, it's good to see all of you, it's good to see people again from different congregations, different places, some have crossed the border from Lewis tonight and you're especially welcome, but all are welcome in the name of Jesus.

Thanks.

He's the great saviour and that's what we profess when we come to the table, we don't come to make a statement about ourselves, we are professing that we are not worthy and that Jesus is worthy.

So those who are trusting, those who are saved, hear the command to come and remember the Lord Jesus. After the service this evening there's a time of fellowship in the manse, so please come along if you're able to.

And then tomorrow the services are at 7 here and there'll be a fellowship afterwards here in the church and all are welcome to that. As we've met the last two mornings at 8 o'clock in the morning, there's a short time of prayer tomorrow morning at 8 as well for those who are able to join together.

[1 : 3 0] Again, it's great to have Ronnie and Joan with us tonight and there was a great blessing through ministry this morning in the Gaelic service and we pray again that the Lord will bless and use Ronnie as he opens God's word tonight.

So I'll hand over now. Thank you. Thank you for your words of welcome. It's good to be with you.

I've crossed an ocean, not a border to come here, so there's a slight difference. We're going to worship God singing Psalm 98 and sing Psalms. Psalm 98, you have the words on the screen there.

We'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done. His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won. We'll sing down to the end of the verse marked four to God's praise.

Stand and sing. Oh, sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done.

[2 : 4 5] His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won.

The Lord declared his saving word and made it to be known.

To all the nations of the world his righteousness is sure.

His steadfast love and faithfulness he has remembered well.

The covenant he made with them. The house of Israel.

[4 : 0 7] And all the nations of the earth.

The Lord has done. Our God who brings deliverance by his right hand alone.

A clean the Lord, O all the earth. Shout loudly and rejoice.

Make music and be jubilant. Turn and lift up your voice.

Well, let's say, bow our heads in prayer. Let's pray. Settle our minds and our hearts.

[5 : 35] Give us a focus on you as our Lord and our God as we come near to worship. You ask of us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Lord, we pray that you would save us from coming with words only and our hearts far away. We confess that so often we can be found in that state of mind where we even sing the word and read the word.

But our thought and the application of it is not in our hearts and on our minds. We ask, Lord, as we come to worship you this evening, that we would do so with a desire of meeting with you.

That our word would be like that of the others of old who said we want to see Jesus. Help us then as we prepare ourselves for a time of communion.

As the congregation here prepares itself for a time of communion. To have that focus on you. Focusing on Christ. Focusing on what he has done.

[6 : 50] And how he has done it. The nature of our salvation. And the manner in which it is procured. We thank you, Lord, that we can come to you. We thank you that you have made yourself known to us.

We look around the creation. We marvel at the work of your hand. We look into your word. And see the account of the development of life and of society.

We see the development of belief, of faith. And we see also the longing of your people to be at the end of the day with Christ.

Which is far better. And we come this evening, all of us, with different thoughts. With different expectations. Perhaps with different longings.

And yet we marvel at this reality. That all of us and all our differences. That all of our differences and all our different thoughts are known to you.

[7 : 53] And may that be our comfort and our help this evening. Knowing that we come before the living and true God. The one who has searched us and known us.

From we perhaps sing so often, Lord, you have searched me and know me. You know my sitting down. My rising up. You are a familiar, you are a quaint with all my ways.

And such is the nature of our God. And help us to remember that this is so. So no matter our needs this evening. No matter perhaps our hardness, even our coldness.

Perhaps even our indifference. May we come to you. Knowing that you are able to meet us at our point of need. There is no point of need that is not known to you.

And in many instances we know that you have experienced so much. Of what your people experience. And we thank you that you are a saviour who understands.

[8 : 58] And who knows. And who has borne our sins. As we are reminded that he himself bore our sins. In his own body on the tree. And make that to be a focus of remembrance over this weekend.

Bless your servant who is to minister your word over the weekend. Help him and encourage him in his ministry. We pray that you will bless David and the elders.

And the deacons. And all who uphold your cause here. Who give support in many different ways. We ask that you will bless them. We thank you for their witness here.

We pray that you will continue to build up your church. Your people. We are in great need. We are. As a people and as a country.

We have strayed from you. Our rulers and leaders to a great extent. Have no thought of God in their hearts. Yet we plead Lord that you would have mercy.

[10 : 00] And rend the heavens. And come down in our midst. Come into our communities. Into our cities. Into our rural areas. Into our families. And into your church above all else.

Lord make your spirit known. Remember those who are unwell. Those who might have a desire to have been with your people here tonight in worship. But because of various illnesses perhaps or other issues.

They are detained at home. Or perhaps in hospital or in care homes. We ask that you would bless them. And those who attend to them help them too. We realise that there is so much.

And there are so many demands laid upon people. In home. In the workplace. And in all the different aspects of life. We ask Lord that you would help.

We pray that you would continue with us now as we worship. That you would remember your people in different parts of the world. We would remember your church persecuted for righteousness sake.

[11 : 05] In different parts. We ask Lord that you would help. We know that you know all these situations. But we would want to bring them before you in prayer. So many suffering.

Injustices. In so many different ways. Through lack of work. Through lack of even work. And lack of an economic base. To keep their families supplied.

We ask that you would help. We pray that you would have mercy on rulers and leaders. And we look around and we see. Bind into our homes. On a daily basis. The chaos that prevails.

In other parts of the world. And we wonder it. The way in which it is. The direction in which it is going. And we wonder it. The way forward.

And we. We can but plead with you. That you would bring peace in the midst of conflict. That somehow or other you would work. In might and in power.

[12 : 04] So help us Lord. We have so many things that we would. Want to bring before you. Some of them. We would only bring them to you. In the privacy of our own hearts and minds. And the others of them.

Like we have endeavored to do here. We bring them to you in a public sense also. Be with us and bless us. As we sing. As we read. And as we reflect on your word. Send your light forth on your truth.

That they would be our guides. Pardon sin. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Again in saying Psalm.

Psalm 25. Psalm 25. Verses 1 through 2. 6. To God's praise. To you oh Lord. I lift my soul. I trust in you.

Continually. Down to the end of verse 6. And we'll stand again. To you. To you oh Lord.

[13 : 02] I lift my soul. I trust in you.

I lift my soul. I trust in you. Do not let me be put to shame.

Nor let my foes brought over me. No one who sets his hope in you.

Will ever suffer such disgrace. But those who act with treachery.

Humiliating shame will face.

[14 : 16] O Lord. He will to me. Your ways. And all your paths.

Help me to know. Direct and guide me in.

Your truth. Then stop me in the way to go.

You are my Savior and my God.

All day I hope in you alone. Remember Lord your love and grace.

[15 : 22] Which from past ages you have shown. Lord your love and grace.

Amen. God's word.

Now when they had passed through. In Phiphilus and Apollonia. They came to Thessalonica. Where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in.

This was his custom. And on three Sabbath days. He reasoned with them from the scriptures. Explaining and proving. That it was necessary for the Christ to suffer. And to rise from the dead.

And saying. This Jesus. Whom I proclaim to you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded. And joined Paul and Silas. As they digrate many of the devout Greeks.

[16 : 37] Not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous. Taking some wicked men of the rabble. They formed a mob. Set the city in an uproar. And attacked the house of Jason.

Seeking to bring them out to the crowd. When they could not find them. They dragged Jason and some of the brothers. Before the city authorities. Shouting. These men who have turned the world upside down.

Have come here also. And Jason has received them. They are all acting against the decrees of Caesar. Saying that. There is another king. Jesus. And the people in the city authorities.

Were disturbed when they heard these things. And they had taken money as security. From Jason and the rest. They let them go. And so on. We turn to. First Thessalonians.

Now in chapter one. We will read through this chapter. First Thessalonians in chapter one.

[17 : 35] Paul. Silvanus and Timothy. To the church. To the church of the Thessalonians. In God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you.

And peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you. Constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Remembering before our God and Father. Your work of faith.

And labour of love. And steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know brothers. Loved by God. That he has chosen you. Because our gospel came not only in word.

But also in power. And in the Holy Spirit. And with full conviction. You know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and the Lord.

For you received the word in much affliction. With the Holy Spirit. So that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia. And the higher. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and the higher.

[18 : 35] But your faith in God has gone forth everywhere. For that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us. The kind of reception we had among you.

How you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead. Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

And so on. And so on. We ask God to bless to us our reading. From that. These parts of his own holy word. Psalm 139. And from verse 13 to God's praise.

Psalm 139. From verse 13 down to 18. For you O Lord created me. You wove me on your loom. My inmost being. You have formed within my mother's womb.

We'll sing down to 18 to God's praise. We'll stand to sing. For you O Lord created me.

[19 : 42] You wove me on your loom. My inmost being.

- You have formed within my mother's womb. Because I'm wonderfully made.
 With all your praise I tell. Your word man's shed.
 Is marvelous. And this I know full well. When in the secret place my friend.
 Was made before my birth. You saw my body yet unformed.
- [20 : 53] Within the depths of earth. And all the days that I should live.
 Which you ordered for me. Were written in your book.
 For you O Lord. Before they came to thee. O God. How precious are your thoughts.
 I scan them from afar. And as I seek to grasp them o'er.
 How numberless they are. When I should count them.
- [22 : 02] They would be. More than the drains of sand. When I awake.
 I am with you. Still safe within your hand.
 Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. The great words that we were singing there.
 And marvelous to think tonight. That if you are the Lord's. You are safe in his hand. You
 are under his keeping. And what more.
 Would anybody want. Than that. Let's turn. This evening. To first Thessalonians. In
 chapter one. And. We'll be looking at various aspects of this.
- [23 : 01] Verse. This chapter. But. I know some of you like to. To have a text. Something to hang all
 of us on to. And. It's a short text. But we'll read again.
 From verse nine. So. One Corinthians. One Thessalonians. Chapter one. Reading from
 verse nine. For they themselves.
 The poor concerning us. The kind of reception. We had among you. And how you turned
 to God. From idols. To sell a living. And to God.
 And to wait for his son. From heaven. Whom he raised from the dead. Who delivers us.
 From the wrath to come. And.
 As I say. If you want to. Have a text. To take home with you. I would suggest. That we look
 at. Remember. The words there.
- [23 : 56] In the middle of verse nine. How you turned. To God. To God. From idols. How you turned
 to God.
 From idols. From idols. It's always useful for us. When we have. A point of reference. In
 scriptures. We have that clearly. In many of the.
 The letters of the. Epistles. That Paul wrote. And clearly. Acts. Part that we read. Has a
 clear. Has a bearing. And a connection.
 With what is being said here. In first Thessalonians. So you connect. What. And you.
 Some homework for you. When you go home again. Read through. That part of.
 Acts. Chapter 17. One to nine. Only nine verses. And think about. How that connects.
 With what we read here. In this letter. To the same people.
- [24 : 53] The church. At Thessalonica. And there. Acts account. Is the church. In a sense. Being
 established. We know that Paul. Was there for. For three Sabbaths.
 So he was probably there. More than that. Longer than that. Because it would have taken.
 A considerable period of time. For. For the church. To be established. For it to grow.
 And. Again. What is. What is important. For us. To see that. This word. This gospel. This
 message. That. Paul brought.

To the Thessalonians. Was a message. That bore. Fruit. And. You know. Without. Laboring the point. It should be. Our great desire.

As believers. If you are. If you are. A believer. Let me just pause. And ask. I don't know. Many of you here. I know. A few of you.

[25 : 49] Perhaps some of you know me. Because of. The fact that I. As a wee boy. Lived in Scalp. It's a long. Long time ago. But you know. What's important. Is. Do you know.

In Jesus Christ. As your Lord. And your Savior. That is the key. To the entry. To glory. At last. No other way. You see. Of this chapter. In a way.

A very solemn. Warning. And the counsel. Given. By the apostle. So. I want us. To pick up. Three or four thoughts. Four actually. Different words.

That I think. Have a bearing. On what it is. To be turned. To God. Four words. That remind us. Of the significance.

Of turning to God. And. You'll see. Within it. That it's. It's. It's. It's. It's a Godward. Movement.

[26 : 45] Framed within. His own. Purposes. And his own. Divine. Plan. Now. I suppose. You find. Sometimes. The divine plans.

Something difficult. To understand. You know. We were even talking. This afternoon. In the months. When you look at. You look at. You look at your TV. And you see the. The chaos.

For example. In Gaza. And you say. What is God's purpose. What's God's plan. For his chosen people. It's. Mind-blowing. Sometimes. Maybe you have an answer. I certainly don't.

But it's mind-blowing. To sometimes. Establish. What God has. What his purpose is. And it's difficult. In that situation. And it's sometimes difficult. My own life. And a new life.

Maybe young. Or old. It's difficult. To decide. To discover that. But. When you look through. This chapter. I think. There's a couple of words. That help us.

[27 : 40] To establish. What God's purpose. And God's plan is. And the first word. Is in verse four. You keep your Bibles open. And your fingers. On these words.

Verse four. And again. It's one word. Chosen. He has chosen. He has chosen you. I think sometimes.

As believers. We lose sight. Of the reality. Of this. Marvelous truth. That God has chosen. He has selected some. To everlasting life.

I don't want to get into the. The realms of. Of speculation. Or anything like that. But I want us to see. That God chooses. God's divine plan.

Is seen. In our being chosen. So if you're a believer tonight. You're chosen. By God. That's what the apostle says here. We know brothers. Loved by God.

[28 : 35] That he has chosen you. And that itself. Ought to be. Something that. That encourages you. Something that. Strengthens your faith.

That gives you. That desire. To be at his table. On his day. If he has chosen you. That you are chosen. That you are there. Because. He has brought you.

To that particular point. You see something of. The. Attitude of the church. In Thessalonica. In Act 17. You know. There were some. Who wanted.

Nothing. With this. This. God. That Paul. Expounded. To them. They wanted to. Ridicule. They wanted to. Antagonize.

They wanted to. To. To. Malign. Anything. And everything. Concerning the living God. And you know. Perhaps. As you sit here tonight. And perhaps.

[29 : 31] As I stand here tonight. You say to yourself. I was like that once. I was. No better. Perhaps. Than. Thessalonians.

Where. And yet. The wonder of it all. He has taken you. Out of that. The words of the psalmist. Come to mind. He took me from a. Fearful pit. And from a. Mighty clean.

What does he do? He sets my feet. Upon a rock. And what does he do? He establishes. He makes. Purpose. He brings meaning. He brings. Fulfillment.

To my life. He has chosen you. As one of his own people. And it's in that sense. That we see the wonder. Of salvation. You remember. I read this the other day.

I found it in a way amusing. I don't want to. To be here to amuse people. But I found this interesting. Because. The. The. This writer was making a comment. About the fact that.

[30 : 26] Because it was here. In this context that. We. Find the phrase that. They used to have turned the world upside down. Have come amongst. Have come amongst us. And this writer was saying.

You know. The world. Went upside down. At the fall. But Christ. Coming into time. Reversed that order. And brought. Purpose.

And meaning. To. To our lives. Again. You see. That's the reason. Why. You are. One of his. That you are chosen. And as you look at this idea.

This. This. This. This word. You may well ask yourself. What was there in me? What was there in you?

That enabled. Or that. That said. God has chosen. That you can say. God has chosen me. Well. There was nothing.

[31 : 25] And there is nothing. The hymn writer. Puts it. In a very succinct way. Nothing. In my hands. I bring. Nothing. To commend me.

Nothing. To recommend. Except. The wonder. Of his love. Except. The wonder. Of his. Desire.

And purpose. For my life. For my good. And for my spiritual development. So. You are tonight. As a Christian. You are chosen.

Of God. And. Do not lose sight. Of that wonder. And that. In the midst of. The chaos. Perhaps. That was. That was your life.

And mine. He had his hand upon you. We were singing there. One thing. A marvelous psalm. That. Depicts for us something of. Something of.

[32 : 20] The understanding. The insight. God has. In relation. To human. Human beings. Fallen man. A fallen world. A broken world.

And yet. In the midst of it all. He breaks in. And he says. You formed me. When I was even in the womb. You knew me. Isn't it a wonderful thing.

To be chosen of God. Isn't it something that is. Worth. Worth. Holding on to. And to. To develop.

To enable that to. As it were. Develop. Your faith. Bring you on. You say. Increase our faith. Well.

Here is a point. You're chosen. You're. You're his. He has called you. To himself. And he has made you. One of his own. Chosen.

[33 : 15] People. And so it is. That as you look at this. You can be astonished tonight. At the wonder. Of it all. I mean.

When I think to myself. And. Allow me a personal note. You know. I say to myself. How is it. That you're here. How is it.

That you're still. In mercy. On mercy's. Ground. Why didn't God. Break you off. And. And cut you off.

Because. Because. He has chosen. And you might. Say to yourself. I'm just. Astounded. That I'm sitting. In Harris. Free church. Tonight.

Because. Perhaps. Five years ago. Three years ago. One year. Year ago. Nothing would have been. Further. From your mind. And yet. Here you are.

[34 : 10] How. Amazing grace. How sweet. The sound. What did it do. It saved. The wretch. Like me. He has chosen us. To be. His own people.

And. When he says that. He's saying. When I have chosen you. He's saying. I'm putting you. On a new path. I'm sending you. In a different direction.

A new direction. If you. You allow that term. To be used. And he's doing that. Because. He has called you.

To be his own. You come. You come. Most freely. Being made. Most willing. You come. Most freely.

Being made. Most willing. He makes you. And me. Willing. In a day of his power. He makes up people willing.

[35 : 09] In a day of his power. God. Never. Ever. Forget. The preciousness. Of what it is. To be chosen. Of God.

To be made. A new. And living creation. In his image. Bearing his image. Because he. Bore. Your sin. And my sin.

In his own body. On the tree. Chosen of God. Second word. Is in verse five. It's a. Middle of the verse again.

We read the verse. Our gospel. Our gospel. Came to you. Not only in word. But also in power. And in the Holy Spirit. And with full conviction.

Conviction. Interesting terminology. It's not just conviction. It's full conviction. Now. I was thinking about the word conviction.

[36 : 07] And. There are so many different images. It creates. And portrays. In our minds. You know. Some will be convicted. Of some misdemeanor.

You might get a. Parking ticket. Or still you get a speeding ticket. Or some other ticket. You have a conviction. There is something.

Against you. That's one way of looking at it. But there's another way. I think. That you want to apply here. And it is this idea. Of this conviction.

Being something. That is. Making such. An impact. Upon you. It's again. You see. What he says. In the verse. By the. Pro.

A. The power. The Holy Spirit. It. Convince. It. Convicts. And it. Converts. The soul. That lies in sin.

[37 : 03] Sometimes. We have. We have. Deliberations. Over. The nature of conviction. And so on. What's important. I think. Is not to. Not to.

As it were. Divert. From. From. God. I think. Here. The apostle. Is. Showing. This is.

Something. That really. Was being chosen. Of course. That impacted. Upon their lives. Something. That was. So.

Powerfully. Enforced. Upon. Them. That they couldn't. Resist it. It. Come. Most. Feely. Being made.

Most. Willing. And so. In your life. And in mine. You come. To this point. It might be gradual. This is the wonder.

[37:58] Of. Conversing. You know. Some people. Can. Can. Can. Can. Want to say. Oh. I need a. A verse. A time. And an hour. I think. What we need. Is an understanding. Of. Of the fact. I was blind. Now. I see.

Once. I was blind. Now. I see. And out of that. Comes this. Us again. We see. And. Mysteriously.

Try and. Understand. The work. Of the spirit. In our lives. Turning us. Changing us.
Altering. Our. Sense. Of direction.

Altering. Our. Our. Our. Our. Our. Hearts. What was our. Hearts. Desire. And.

[38 : 53] Bringing us. To call. On his name. So. When you see. Here. That. There. There. Was this.
Picture. Of. Of. Of. Correction. He's saying. Was. A. Definite. And. A doubt.

A. A. A. An event. That. Had no doubt. I'm not saying. That we don't doubt sometimes.

Perhaps you're here tonight and you're full of doubts. I don't know. But you know. How do you. Counter that.

When you come to the word. It's not as we say. It's not rocket science. You come to the word. And you find in the word there.

[39 : 49] That which will convince you. And will. Show you. In a positive way. That you are indeed. Chosen of the Lord. That you are not your own. That you are bought.

With a price. And it's. I think. Suggesting to us. This idea. Of full conviction. That there are. There was. In the minds.

Of these Thessalonians. No doubts. No questioning. About their. Their. Their salvation. They were. They were convinced. Within their minds.

[illegible]

This conviction, this full conviction, gave the strengthening for them to turn. And the whole idea of turning, of course, surely is saying, well, there was a time when the direction was different.

[41 : 21] There was a time when the direction was different. And again, you can follow that tonight, I suppose, perhaps all of you.

You and me. No, believers have a lot in common. And they have one singular thing in common. If you're a believer, you're chosen of God.

No matter what method, or how, or when, or where, or why, or what were the circumstances, if you're a believer, you worship and you come to the same Christ.

And that's, in a sense, by way of reminding yourself of this being a service of preparation. That is the reason why, since you are chosen and have been brought to him, that it is your responsibility and your joy to sit at the Lord's table.

To come and to participate in the sacrament. To take of the broken body and the shed blood. And to see there, and to say there, as you take these symbols, you are able to say, he has chosen me, he has convicted me, and therefore I have every privilege to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

[42 : 53] No excuses. No get-out clauses. It's an order, it's a command, I should say, that he has given to us.

So you've got these ideas, you've got the idea of being chosen, you've got the idea of conviction. But I want us just to face some realities, you know, next, and I never thought, until I started to write this together, we had three words beginning with C, because the third one is conflict.

You see there in verse 6. You became emittators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction.

So there was conflict in the midst of it all. Now I suppose that you don't go far. If you're a young Christian here tonight, perhaps you've already discovered that sometimes you don't go far before there's a battle raging.

And, you know, if you're an old Christian, and if you're as old as me, and perhaps some of you are even a wee bit older than me, I don't know, but, you know, if you're as old as me, you go the whole journey knowing by and large it's been a battle.

[44 : 22] Spirit warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. A battle all the way. And, you know, this is the reality of living out the Christian life, not just in 21st century Britain or wherever.

It was the case from the beginning. It was the case with our Lord. It was the case with Saul of Tarsus.

It was like the case with Peter. You can go through the whole flow of Scripture, and you'll find the conflict after conflict.

But there's one or two things, perhaps, that we need to think about in relation to conflict. First of all, perhaps, we think, well, this is a challenge for us.

To keep going. There was a slogan, I don't know where it came from. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. It might not sound very, in the way, as it were, but nevertheless, you know, there's a lot of truth in it.

[45 : 40] And, you know, as the going gets tough, so the challenge is there for us to remain as a people chosen of God who have experienced conviction, and that conviction is so strong that it gives us enabling strength in conflict to continue, to go on.

Now, the psalmist said it long ago, but I will constantly go on. It wasn't just now and then when things were going well. I says, I will constantly go on.

And he tells us the key to that. I says, in the strength of God the Lord. Those of you in Gaelic, it's me and myggie, I'm in yashting here.

I will go on constantly in the strength of God the Lord. And there you see, it's the challenge in a sense of the conflict. That I don't give up.

That I keep going. That I have a goal. I have, come to this in a moment. We have a goal in view. We have an end plan as it were for us to strike out towards.

[46 : 55] You see, Paul himself was, was, was, well, he wasn't, I shouldn't say he wasn't faced, I'm sure he was, but he, he, he, he realises it's going to be a battle.

And, going to chapter 2 there in, in verse 2. Though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, notice what he says there.

This is in conflict. We had boldness in our God. You see, that's the plus side of being chosen.

That's the plus side of full conviction. He says, we had boldness in our God. And what do they do in the midst of that conflict? Ah, he says, to declare to you the gospel of our God in the midst of much conflict.

You see, he doesn't sidestep the issue. And I think it's important for us not to sidestep the issue. There will be conflict. And there will be, there will be war.

[48 : 07] And there will be sometimes days when I feel that, that the adversary has gained the ascendancy. And you feel that you've failed so much.

Perhaps sometimes that is your experience. That you've failed in, in, in, in, in, in, in the role of being chosen.

That you've failed in the role of witness and testimony. That you've failed perhaps perhaps tonight you feel you've failed because you've never professed faith in Christ.

I don't know. But it's a service of preparation. And you know, what is, what is important for us to come to one, the reality of being chosen and being fully convicted is that you will enter into conflict.

But the other side of it is this, and I want to label this point, but the other side of it is this, that in spite of the conflict he delivers, yet at length out of them all the Lord has set them free.

[49 : 25] You remember down through biblical history, well we were this morning briefly looking, we alluded to Israel before the Ten Commandments were given to them.

And all along it looked as if they were going to be on the losing side, but all along they were on the winning side, so long as they gave place, due place, and due reverence, and due worship to the one only living and true God.

And you know, our victory is assured because Christ has overcome. Be of good cheer, he says. It's interesting that when you think about in the midst of what he's describing and defining us as conflict.

in this world, he says, you'll have trials and tribulations, and then he says, be of good cheer. Why? Why should you be of good cheer if we're having trials and tribulations?

I said, because I have overcome, and we can overcome through the strength that he gives. It's difficult. The trials, the struggles, the sins that so easily be set can so overpower us at times.

[50 : 43] They can be so powerful. They can be so persuasive. And sometimes we give in to them. We sin daily in thought, in word, in deed.

Sometimes we give in to them. But then you see, what does he say? If you confess your sin, he is faithful and just to forgive your sin.

and remember this, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin. Such is the Savior who has chosen us.

Such is the Spirit that has come to indwell us, that he gives enabling grace, and although he sees our frailty and our fragility.

I often think of these words that probably you've heard them spoken often. When the Lord is speaking to the disciples, he says, he said to the woman, he says, go and tell my disciples, but there's an added name to remember, I'm Peter.

[52 : 03] Why is he singling Peter out? To show them something of his majesty, to show them something of his power, but more and much more than that, he wants to show them the spirit of love that is his, the spirit of forgiveness that is his, the spirit of mercy that is his, and it belongs to him and him alone.

And so, yes, there will be conflict, despite our being chosen, there will be conflict. I was thinking too about the words of Isaiah, and I think of how the Old Testament tells us about going through the waters.

There is the conflict. Conflict can develop all kinds of different scenarios. of course, it might be something so very personal in your life that it's left you wondering.

It might be something so personal that it's left you bewildered, wondering why. We have a lot of why's in our lives, and there's a sense in which there will never be answered this side of glory.

And perhaps sometimes we're best to leave the wise alone. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the floods, they will not overflow you.

[53 : 37] And Isaiah tells us something else, the reason for that. He says, because you are precious in my eyes. In the midst of the conflict, he says, you are precious in my eyes.

Then finally, just briefly, I want us to speak about just the last words of the verse. Verse 10, and to wait for a son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the rest to come.

You read this chapter again, maybe you're very familiar with it. It's one that that I'm familiar with myself. But you know, when you think of the way that he spreads out the whole message here, and he takes us, he soars beyond this earthly scene to that which lies ahead.

We wait for a son from heaven. It's a marvelous thought, isn't it? I know you young folk will be saying, that's all right for him, he's old, but we want to live a life.

Yes, of course you do. But nevertheless, our lives are but a vapor. They appear for a moment, and then vanish away.

[55 : 11] And as I heard someone else say at another time, we try and grasp the vapor. We try and grasp the vapor. But you know, as you flood your mind with the thought of Christ and the thought of the cross, as you wait for this great transition, for the time when my Redeemer will stand on the earth, and when I will see him face to face, it will all have been worthwhile.

The journey, with all its difficulties, with all its challenges, will be such that you will wonder at it all, and the splendor and the glory that lies ahead will so capture your mind that you will be evermore singing his praises.

And where did it all begin? Well, for the Thessalonians it began with their turning. Where did it begin for you?

You say to yourself sometimes, I don't know where it began. And you know, sometimes as we get older, it's more difficult perhaps to think of where it all began.

But you know what's important, and what's mattering is this for you and me, is that he takes us on, that he keeps us on, until eventually he presents us faultless before his throne with exceeding joy.

[57 : 04] I have chosen you. You have turned, you turn from idols to serve the living God, and remembering that he is the one that takes you on a journey, and he is the one that says to you, as you look towards the communion, you do this in remembrance of me.

Can I just say a word in closing? There's another element in this verse too. Perhaps it's a warning signal to those of you who perhaps are in the room.

You are here tonight because you always come on Friday night to come into church, so you just come along tonight too. Well, that's good, I'm glad you're here. But you know, there's a way in which it's couched within the framework of waiting for the sun from heaven, and it's set against what Jesus does.

He delivers us from the wrath to come. Now, there's a danger perhaps in missing that phrase out, but it's a crucial phrase, and it's a solemn phrase, sometimes it's difficult for us to speak about, because we don't want anyone to suffer the wrath that is to come.

I wouldn't wish that on anyone, because it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But he's warning us here, and he's saying to us, here is the importance of it all.

[58 : 54] And I was thinking about it in relation to Psalm 2. You know, it's a brilliant psalm. Why do the eathen rage? Why do the people get so steamed up about all these things?

Kings of the earth who set themselves, and princes are combined to plot against the Lord and his anointed saying, let us asunder, break the bands, and cast the court from us. You know there's a marvelous response within the words of the psalmist.

He that in heaven sits shall laugh, the Lord shall scorn them all. And it finishes on this note too.

Kiss the sun, lest in his ire ye perish from the way. If once his wrath begin to burn, lest all are on him stay.

Ah, the key is in this. They turned from idols. They turned their back, and they turned their fist towards Zion, and they kept their fist towards Zion, till at last they and we will be united, and the new world, and the new heavens, and new earth, where righteousness dwells.

[60 : 16] So there was this chosenness, there was this conviction, there was this conflict, I am not waiting, waiting for a better day, waiting for a better country, waiting to see the Savior face to face, me and my Lord.

Let's pray. Amen. We thank you Lord for your word. we thank you for the way in which it encourages us and takes us on the journey.

We thank you for the way it warns us to kiss the sun, to lay hold on Jesus, and how it tells us to come and join with his people at his table on his day, till one day we shall sit at the table above, where there will be no more arise, let us go hence.

So keep us, be near to us, and bless us. In your name, Amen. Amen. We're going to close singing the hymn Amazing Grace.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. Now this is a testimony of a man who was extraordinary, and if you've never read the history of John Newton, you've probably listened to this hymn, like some of the psalms, you listen to them often.

[61 : 54] But familiarize yourself with the testimony of John Newton, it's an extraordinary story, and you can see how he comes to write these words. Let's stand and sing Amazing Grace.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found, was mine, but now I see.

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear.

How precious did the grace appear, how precious did the grace appear, the I firstNING!

[63 : 27] Through many dangers, soils, and snares, I have already come.

This grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, light shining as the sun, we know less days to sing God's praise than when we first began.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest on and remain with you, now and always. Amen.