

## 2 Corinthians (Quality: Average)

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Date: 23 October 1983

Preacher: Ashworth, David

- [ 0 : 00 ] I shall fear, and mortal I shall see, I shall lose this in the air.  
I shall have joy and peace.  
The earth shall soon be of my snow, the sun for me.  
I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace.  
I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace.
- [ 1 : 22 ] I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace. I shall have joy and peace.  
I shall have joy and peace. And there are two verses in that chapter which we want to base our remarks on this afternoon. And that is the eighth and the ninth verses.  
The eighth and the ninth verses of the twelfth chapter of the second of the Corinthians. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.  
And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness.  
Most gladly, most gladly, most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- [ 2 : 24 ] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. For those of you who were here this morning, if you will remember, we spoke of the Apostle Paul speaking to the church at Rome concerning everything that happens to the believers, whether it is an individual or a collective number of people happens for their good.  
And we did say that the only people upon this earth, where everything works together for God, are the church of God, and none besides the believers.  
And Paul said in that eighth chapter there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And now this afternoon we want to go further on with this man and his ministry and how it affected those that he preached to.  
You see, this afternoon the word of God has two effects. It is either a savor of life unto life, or it is either a savor of death unto death.  
And what the Lord Jesus said before he entered into heaven, still applies this afternoon in the world. Jesus had finished his earthly ministry.
- [ 3 : 50 ] He had died that death on the cross. He led his disciples out towards Bethany. He lifted up his hands and he blessed them. And then he gave them the blueprint, the commission whereby they had to go out and evangelize in the world.  
And if you remember, these were the last words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.  
My friends, the gospel this afternoon, it is good news to those who are in need of a saviour. It is good news this afternoon for the sinner who realises that he has no hope apart from the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we mentioned this morning the simplicity of the preaching of the Lord himself. We mentioned how Paul was a simple preacher, although he was an highly educated man, although he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

Yet he presented the gospel in a wonderful, simple way whereby the people understood the message. That is all important.

[ 5 : 09 ] If anything needs to be presented today, it is the gospel. And it has to be presented so that men and women and young people can understand the word of God.

That is one thing I am thankful for with being in sales. If anything needs presenting today, brethren, it is the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the apostle Paul, he was a man who had had a great experience. He had been into the third heavens.

He had been with Jesus Christ. And my friends, he had been into the third heavens with Christ. Of course, the apostle Paul is speaking of himself.

It is not expedient for me to glory. I will come to visions. I knew a man in Christ. Of course it was Paul. Paul had a great conversion.

[ 6 : 14 ] He had a wonderful time with the Lord. How long has it since you and I had a wonderful time with the Lord?

Now friends, when the apostle Paul wrote this wonderful letter to the church at Corinth, he was speaking to believers.

Of course he was. When he wrote to the church at Rome, the church at Corinth, the church at Galatia, the church at Philadelphia. And it wasn't all my friends blessing.

Sometimes it was a word of rebuke. Sometimes it was a word of exhortation. It's not always my friends to lift us up. Sometimes we need rebuking.

God's servants need rebuking. Of course they do. God's people need rebuking. God's people need exhorting.

[ 7 : 14 ] You don't want to be lifted up in a false position, do you? My friends, when Paul was writing to Timothy, he said, preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season.

You may be an in season or an out of season here this afternoon. Your pastor may be in season or out of season. I may be an out of season preacher this afternoon or I may be in season.

But my friends, as no one knows that you're an out of season here. You come and take your place at the appointed time and you're an out of season here.

What about the pastor or the minister or the servants of God that have to preach the word? Well, how do we preach the word? Paul said, I preach not myself but Jesus Christ the Lord.

We do not preach friends and feelings and darks and fears. That has been one of the faults in the ministry. There's no use me preaching darks and fears week in and week out, is it?

[ 8 : 24 ] And driving everybody to utter despair. Paul didn't preach like that. He preached of a suitability in Christ. He preached that there was no other foundation saving Jesus.

And I say this afternoon to each and every one of you and myself that apart from knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from having an interest in his finished work, we are bound for a lost eternity.

Hell is before us, our heaven. My friends, it is so. The old gospel truths would never alter. Because we live in the years of the microchip and all the commerce today, it doesn't alter the gospel.

The gospel has never altered since Christ, my friends, preached by the seas of Galilee. Of course things have speeded up today. Of course I can get from here to Landershyn about two hours now.

Used to take our forefathers five and six days, didn't it? But my friends, what is all this? That the gospel of Christ must be preached in all its glorious suitability to hell-deserving men and women in 1983.

[ 9 : 36 ] And what is the message that Paul preached to these people? He preached the necessity of repentance. The necessity of repentance.

Of course it is the gift of God. Of course it is God that gives repentance. Jesus gives us true repentance. But my friends, we must link with repentance.

Faith and the Saviour. John the Baptist, who was the greatest minister apart from Christ, he came from the wilderness preaching repentance.

Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It isn't the responsibility of any pastor or any minister whether you repent or you don't repent. But my friends, the ministry must preach repentance.

Absolutely so, except we repent, we go to hell. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[ 10 : 41 ] And Paul was no exception to the rule. Of course he had a wonderful revelation. And now he had been brought down into the debt. Except, you see friends, he was exalted above measure.

And God knew this. God had given him a wonderful revelation. He had been with the Saviour. My friends, if Paul was here this afternoon, he would have told you of his experience.

Paul wouldn't have minded whether he lived or died. He was in the Lord. You know, he said on more than one occasion, he had that desire to die to be with Christ, which was far better.

Not because he didn't want to leave his family. He didn't want to leave his brethren. He loved his brethren. But he loved his Saviour more. He said, I am in a strait betwixt two.

He wanted to depart this life and be with Christ. Because he loved the Lord Jesus. And my friends, this afternoon, that is the most vital thing.

[ 11 : 45 ] Not how many times you have attended a service. But I will say this. That if you are a hungry sick seeker, you will go where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached.

You will be there unless there is some reason why you are not there, which is best known to you. My friends, the Lord has been pleased.

Not only a hundred years ago, he is pleased today to bless where believers gather together in union of heart, in union of spirit. Peter, my friends, also reminds the church of what can stop the growth of the church.

Laying aside what we have read about this afternoon. All malice, all guile, all hypocrisies, all evil speaking. They fester, they canker, they suffer the wells of salvation.

Peter says, put them down, lay them aside. Do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Believers have been freed by the Lord Jesus.

[ 12 : 54 ] If the Son shall make you free, you are free indeed. You are free to serve the Lord. You are not free to live the life that you please. You are not free, my friends, to live a life of sin.

The doctrines of grace do not lead to a life of licentiousness. They do not live to a life of sin. They live a life of service in the Lord's work.

You know, Paul, reminding this church of Corinth further off, he says, Now you be steadfast and unmovable. Now that does not mean to be dogmatic and stubborn. It means this simply.

My friends, contend, yes, for the faith once delivered, yes. But not in a dogmatic way. My friends, it's got to be in a spirit of love.

It is love from Genesis to Revelations. You see, Jesus Christ has said this. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him.

[ 14 : 00 ] You know, it's human nature that is hard. My friends, the gospel of Christ is not hard. Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And yet the apostle Paul, although he preached the word of God, although he counseled, although he went from church to church and he preached wherever God opened the door.

He had a thorn in the flesh. He had a messenger of Satan. Just imagine. A messenger of Satan to buffet him. Oh, my friends, we'll have a messenger of Satan to buffet him as if we're in the Lord's army.

We'll have to know what it is, my friends, to be pricked by the evil one. If we're in the service of the king, you see the dead. The dead in sin know not anything. The dead professors don't have anything like this.

But God's people, friends, the quickened family of God, those who have been made alive by the Holy Spirit of God, read the second of Ephesians, and you have he quickened who were dead.

[ 15 : 13 ] Or you look back in your life, yes, Lord, I was dead. Dead and trespassed on him and said, yes, I came to the house of God. Yes, I heard the servants preach. I heard the ministry.

It had no effect. Of course it didn't. It was dead. It had no effect upon me. For many years I was dead. I didn't want it. I wanted the world and all the pleasures of it, and I went in it for many years.

My friends, I know what it is to go out and have a good time in the world. But, friends, the thing is this afternoon, can you say, and you have he quickened.

You see, friends, when God quits us by his Holy Spirit, he convicts us. He convicts us of our sin.

Now, the apostle Paul was convicted and he was transformed in a moment of time. Of course he was. He was called to the ministry and he was called by grace on the Damascus Road.

[ 16 : 15 ] He preached Christ in the synagogues immediately. He didn't wait another 20 years to be baptized. He followed the Savior. How many people today are waiting for a word?

How many people are dictating to God what he will do? My friends, the word of the Lord is with us this afternoon. And you know, you have a remarkable illustration of it in the parables and in Jesus' teachings.

There was a rich man and he died, an unbeliever. Unspeakably solemn. In hell he lifted up his eyes. In torment.

It's a place, brethren. Hell is a real place. And heaven is a real place. And you know, he even said, Oh, he said, send someone back from the dead.

And tell them of the torment that I am in. They will repent if you send them. Oh, my friends, listen. What the word of God says. They have Abraham. They have the prophets.

[ 17 : 24 ] They have the ministers of Christ. If they will not believe their teachings, neither will they believe if I send one back from the dead. Isn't that what is happening today?

How many today receive the word of God? How many submit to the word of God? How many act upon the word of God? Read the 13th of Hebrews, friends.

Submit yourselves one to another. And there will be great blessings from it. You see, the reason, one of the reasons today that the church is not being blessed with converts is there isn't the submitting of the word of God one towards another.

My friends, there has to be that fellowship one towards another. It's not them, they that feared the Lord and they spake about one another. It's they that feared the Lord's sake often one towards another.

They spoke of the Lord's goodness. Jesus is in the midst of that conversation. Christ is not in the midst of the other conversation at all. Not a bit of it. That comes from hell, friends.

[ 18 : 28 ] But this conversation where Jesus is in the midst. Now the apostle Paul was no exception to this. Of course he had communion when he went down by the riverside.

The churches had shut their doors to the apostle Paul. But friends, Paul was a man of grace. He was a man of God. He goes down by the riverside.

And remember, he had this thorn in the flesh. And it wasn't the blinding of his eyes, as many people have said. Many people have tried to interpret what the thorn in the flesh was. We don't know what it was. The word of God doesn't tell us.

Some people have said, of course, it may have been he was blinded when he was on the Damascus road. Other people have said he had this, that and the other. My friends, he had a thorn in the flesh. And if you have a thorn in the flesh, it hurts.

If we have a thorn this afternoon, it will prick. And when God gives us a thorn in the flesh, it is intended to do its job. Oh, the apostle Paul said, Lord, remove it.

[ 19 : 29 ] I can't stand it anymore. And the Lord gave him a promise. My grace is sufficient. Now, as Paul went out to preach the word of God, of course, friends, he met with opposition.

Of course, he persecuted. Of course, his back was bleeding from the stripes that they gave unto him. But my friends, what was all this? All Paul wanted was this, that Christ would be exalted.

The man of sorrows who had saved him on the Damascus road. The man of sorrows who hung upon the tree for his salvation. He wanted these men and women to know the Lord.

And that is the whole essence of the preaching of the gospel this afternoon. If Christ be lifted up, he's going to draw men unto him. If Christ is not lifted up, there will be no drawing, there will be no effect.

You want the sweet simplicity of the gospel, and I do. And I need to come back to that little hymn. Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

[ 20 : 35 ] That's what we've got to come back to. You know, the Lord showed the disciples what he wanted. He took the smallest child from the midst of them. And he set that child in the midst of the disciples.

And he said, now you see that child there? Unless you become as a little child, you shall no wise enter the kingdom. And what does God say about it all?

Except ye be converted, and become as a little child, you shall no wise enter the kingdom of God. You see, friends, we've got to come back to the word of God.

We've got to return to this glorious gospel that we have before us this afternoon. We do not want, friends, mysterious things that men and women cannot understand.

We want a simple gospel. And Jesus Christ came into the world to perform this. And he has given unto us his word.

[ 21 : 37 ] He has given unto us his holy Bible. This is the gospel by which we stand this afternoon. Whether we are persecuted, it doesn't matter.

The Lord was persecuted. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. God's servants will know what it is not to be received, as well as to be received.

The common people heard him gladly. God's servants, and the Lord was persecuted. And the Lord was by the sea of Garnelai, walking with his disciples.

Friends, how was the church built up? How was it built up? When the Lord called Philip, Philip called Nathanael. And Nathanael said, come and see. The Lord said unto Philip, follow me.

And Philip followed him. And Philip told his friend Nathanael. And Nathanael said, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said, come and see. Read.

[ 22 : 38 ] There's no special way to evangelize, is there? It's word of mouth all the time. It is word of mouth from believers. Then will I tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour I have found.

Friends, we sing it. Do we believe it? I'll point to thy redeeming blood, and say, behold, the way to God. You see, friends, of course he had a thorn in the flesh. Of course, my friends, he had his crosses, and his losses, and his trials, and his afflictions.

But you know, at midnight, he sang praises unto God. A most unlikely place to sing praises in the prisoners, isn't it? Remember, the prisons in the days of Paul were not like they are today.

With all the mud comes, my friends, it's probably better in prison than some of the hotels today. But not in the days of the apostle Paul. There were awful places. They were in the stocks.

Their backs had been beaten by the Roman soldiers. And at midnight, he had the thorn in the flesh. He had the cross to bear. At midnight, he sang praises unto God. You know, Paul was never happier than when he was seeing conversions.

[ 23 : 47 ] Of course he wasn't. He was a man of God. That's what the Lord had sent him to do, friends, to preach the word of God. Paul couldn't convert them. Apollos couldn't convert them.

John the Baptist could not convert them. There's no minister could convert a sinner. But friends, the power of the Holy Spirit alone can do it. Oh, the power of the Spirit.

The dynamic power of the Spirit. I saw a remarkable thing in Manchester not long ago. So much so, I stopped and looped.

And there was a dorm-a-ville being driven by a black man. And on the side of the van was this. The power of the Holy Spirit drives this vehicle.

My friends, it's remarkable, isn't it? The power of the Spirit. Now, how did the Spirit come down on the Saviour's head? You know, the Spirit is a very tender Spirit.

[ 24 : 48 ] We can grieve that Spirit with our own traditions. Be careful, brethren, that you don't grieve the Spirit. It came upon the Saviour's head in the form of a dove.

Now, what does a dove signify? Tenderness. Friends, if there is no tenderness and no love in our fellowships, we might as well forget it. Remember, the fruits of the Spirit are love.

There's no Christian has joy and long-suffering if he hasn't the love of Christ in him. My friends, the tender Spirit of God. Remember what Paul says to the church at Ephesus in the third chapter.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption. God's people cannot lose the Spirit, but they can grieve the Spirit.

And they can lose the felt presence of the Spirit by their own sins. And my friends, it is a very dangerous thing when we grieve the Spirit of God. You know, there is such a thing as resisting the Spirit of God.

[ 25 : 51 ] And I'll give you a marked example in the Word of God. And that was when Agrippa came before the Apostle Paul. He was almost persuaded to be a Christian.

How many people this afternoon are standing on the church line? They are almost committed. My friends, you are not committed at all. Unless you are fully committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His work.

You know, he trembled when he reasoned with him of judgment to come. That is no sign of conversion, friends. The devils believe and tremble.

And Agrippa was almost persuaded to be there. Almost persuaded. I get a lot of that in my life when I meet people.

They are almost persuaded. But they are not really persuaded at all. You see, friends, you have got to come with that old lovely head.

[ 26 : 54 ] Just as I am. Without wantly. But that thy blood was shed for me. So many people today are like Naaman the Syrian.

You see, friends, when Elijah the prophet went to him. Naaman thought that Elijah would come down and meet him with all his prophets.

And Elijah gave him a commandment. Go and wash in Jordan seven times. All the other rivers are muck. Go and wash in Jordan seven times.

My friends, it was only when Naaman came down. Then Naaman went down and washed in the river. And his flesh came unto him like a little child. Oh, the humiliation of it.

Naaman the Syrian was a leper. How many of us this afternoon have come down to the feet of the Lord Jesus. And said, do with me as thou seemest right.

[ 27 : 53 ] Here I am, Lord. Here is my heart, Lord. Take and seal it. Seal it from thy courts above. Friends, that is the only way to come. How many people this afternoon, they say, but I am such a sinner.

But I am such this. Friends, what about the blood? The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

You see, it is in the word of God. You ever look through the great cloud of witnesses in the 12th of Hebrews when you go home. And see some of the characters who are in heaven this afternoon. Friends, just think of them.

Just think of Mary Magdalene. Just think of Raya the harlot. She walked the streets of Jericho. But she had a scarlet thread hanging from the window.

She had the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son. And David also, they worked a nice crowd really well.

[ 29 : 05 ] By grace, you see. The whole friends have the grace of God. Now what is the grace of God? A young person asked me, the other. What is the grace of God? Well, my friends, we should be able to answer them, shouldn't we?

The grace of God is the free favour of God to his children. Unmerited and asked for and leaped for. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. My grace is sufficient.

My grace is sufficient. Maybe this afternoon there is someone seeking. Someone really and truly seeking after the Lord. My grace is sufficient.

Maybe you're wondering how you can carry on in your life. My friends, you will carry on with the sufficiency of grace that God gives you. What a wonderful thing was it in David's day in the 71st Psalm.

There was David with all his enemies. There was David wondering where the scene would end. But he said, I will go in the strength of the Lord my God. How do we follow the Lord Jesus Christ?

[ 30 : 09 ] How do we put on the all armour of God? By my friends, following him. In all his ways, I will go in the strength of the Lord. How do God's servant preach the word of God?

How do the deacons and how do the church members follow the Saviour? You see, friends, it's not just at baptism. It's forever. When we put on the all armour of God and we are identified with the blessed Lord.

And friends, baptism. The outward sign of baptism. You know, it's those who have been baptised by the Holy Spirit of God. If there are any here this afternoon who have been baptised by the Holy Spirit of God.

And they have not put on the whole armour of God. Why? Why? They are not. Why? Why? Why? Why?

Why? Why? Why?

[ 31 : 14 ] Why? Why? Why? But follow him. Hear the blessed Redeemer call you. Listen to his gracious voice.

Dread no ills that come before you. While you make his ways your choice. I will go in the strength of the Lord my God. That is how to follow the Lord. The strength of the church my friends.

Is within the fellowship. You take a natural example this afternoon. Where do plants grow best? In the greenhouse.

Where is the greenhouse? The church of God. It's inside the fellowship. Oh my friends. When I was out there in the big wide world. Without hope and without God in the world.

I had fellowship. With the man in the street. Where did we go to fellowship? We went out friends to the places of amusement. The places where we had fellowship.

[ 32 : 15 ] We told them another hour trials. That was in a worldly way. How much more so in the church of God. We bring our troubles. Yes friends.

If you are in a trial. You should tell your brother. You should tell your sister. It could be the key that unlocks this trial. Then they that fear God. They speak often.

They speak often one towards another. And the Lord hearkened. And a book of remembrance was made. Now friends. Paul had a trial. He had a cross.

He had a thorn. He was a better man for it. He said. I have glory in infirmities. There's no natural man with glory in afflictions and infirmities.

And they weren't all bodily afflictions. You must never think that when Moses said that he chose rather to suffer the affliction with the people of God.

[ 33 : 08 ] That they were all bodily afflictions. They were spiritual afflictions. Which are only known to the church of God and the believers. And friends.

God made that choice for him. When he was come to years. He was 40 years of age. He chose rather. He chose rather to suffer. With the people of God.

Than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. You may think this afternoon that the big wide world is offering all sorts of pleasures. Remember this word.

For a season. It has an end. Whether we live to be 40, 50, 60 or 100 years. We have an end. And friends. This world.

Is drawing nigh to the time. When the Lord will send his angel again. He will put one foot on the land. One foot on the sea. And time shall be no more.

[ 34 : 05 ] What a solemn day that will be. For all those outside of Jesus. My friends. There will be no missing links on that day. There will be no one missing there.

And the apostle Paul. Although he had this thorn in the flag. He had a messenger of Satan to buffet him. He was brought back into the valley from the mountain top.



If you want to spiritualize his experience. He was brought down from that height that he had been in. He was brought down, friends. Into the valley. For God's people.

How do you think he could preach the word of God? Friends. We have to experience these things first.

To bring them before the people. The husband and man in every respect must be first partaker of the fruit. The apostle Paul loved his people.

[ 35 : 05 ] He loved his ministry. He loved my friends. The Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, you know, I often think of that scene by the riverside. If ever the fruits of the spirit are manifested, it is in Lydia's conversion.

You know what Lydia was by her? You know, the Lord doesn't. He's told us what she was. She was a sales executive, wasn't she? She was a seller of purple. And to sell purple, it was a royal color.

Oh, my friend, she had a high position with Lydia. She was in the sales field. Of course she was. And a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, whose name was in the Lamb's book of life.

Amen to that. She attended to the things spoken by Paul. She loved Paul because he was the servant of God. She loved the servants of God.

Oh, she loved Paul, you know, in a special way, do you, do you? You know, friends, we read this. And when she was baptized, she said unto the brethren, here is the fruit of the Spirit.

[ 36 : 18 ] Come into my house if you will judge me to be faithful unto Paul. No. Unto Silas. No. Unto the brethren. No. If you will judge me to be faithful to the Lord. Come into my house.

They sat down and they had a four-swear meal together. And they had fellowship. You know that word, fellowship. It has been hung, drawn, and quoted in many places.

Fellowship. How sweet and heavenly is the sight when those that love the Lord in one another's peace, delight, and so fulfill his will. Come all you that love God, and I will tell you what he hath done.

Of course, it's a blessed time when believers gather together. It doesn't matter what age you are, whether you are a young person or you are an old person. When we gather together and we speak of the Lord Jesus.

And you know, Paul and Silas, they both have crosses. They both have forms. Of course they did. They were ministers of the gospel. So every believer in measure has his cross. And then if you remember, they went into the prison house.

[ 37 : 26 ] And there was another wonderful event going to happen. The most hardened man in the Philippian jailhouse. He was the next convict for baptism. Oh, my friends, God moves in a mysterious way.

His wonders true before. We may have been looking at one, a certain person. A Mr. So-and-so, or a Mr. So-and-so, or a Mr. So-and-so. And the Lord works in another way. I often remember of God's day of Manchester years and years ago.

He was preaching, my friends, on baptism. And he thought he was preaching to two young men in the gallery. But he was preaching to two young men who were underneath, friends, in the stairs.

And there were the next two friends that followed their master. You see, friends, this afternoon, as he preached in that Philippian jailhouse, he preached unto him Jesus.

And what did Philip preach down in the Gaza Strip? Did he preach dreams and feelings? Did he preach experience? Did he preach doubts and fears? And he planned it. He preached Christ.

[ 38 : 34 ] We preach Christ crucified. People today don't want sermons, do they? They want sermonettes. People today, after 20 minutes, they've had enough of the gospel.

Friends, why is it? Why is this? Well, the word of God says that in the last days there shall be a falling away. And the love of many shall wax cold.

You know, I think of one of the seven churches in Asia, and that was the church at Ephesus. There was nothing wrong with the formality. There was nothing wrong with the truth.

Friends, they had the truth. But the love of many have waxed cold. The Lord said, you have forgotten the time of your first love.

Could it be this afternoon that we have forgotten the time of our first love? It's a lovely thing, you know, it's the time of our first love, the time of our rest of the world.

[ 39 : 36 ] One man knew it in this little hymn book. He said, where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul's refreshing view of Jesus and his word? Look back to the time when the Lord first blessed you.

My friend, many are favoured in the early days to be really blessed with a full assurance of faith. Not all, but many are. And they have that desire that they would depart and be with the Lord.

Such is the love in their heart, the preciousness of Christ. To you that believe he is precious, is Christ precious this afternoon. If he is precious to you, he will be precious to a never ending eternity.

You see friends, I want to live and I hope you do in the light of eternity. You see it's going to be a tremendous day, isn't it? When the dead in Christ will rise first.

And all the dead from every age will stand before the judge. You know friends, my human mind cannot comprehend this. He said, I beheld the dead, small and great, stand before God.

[ 40 : 50 ] And the books were opened. And they were judged out of those books. Now there is another book. And there is one dear saint of God we have mentioned this afternoon by the name of Lydia.

Whose name was in the book of life. There is another book and that is the Lamb's book of life. And in that book is every name of every believer from Adam's day to the end of time.

And brethren, those that have died in Christ, they are faultless before the throne. Isn't it a solemn thing and a sad thing that many couldn't sit down together on earth?

And they are faultless before the throne. I was only speaking to our sisters in the lunch hour. And I may have told this tale many, but once or twice before.

That one minister died. And he was called to administer the funeral. And they had differed over various things. And he was asked whether he would see his brother in heaven.

[ 41 : 48 ] He said, no sir. He said, oh why not? He said, he'll be too near the throne. That sums it up, doesn't it? He'll be too near Christ. Christ is all the glory in Emmanuel's land.

Friends, at times God gives us a little view. We don't hear a lot today of the glory land, do we? What must it be to be there? Oh my friends.

That dear man from Scotland who penned that lovely hymn. He said, the bride eyes, not her garments, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze on glory, but on the King of grace.

Not on the crown he giveth, but on his nail pierced hands. The Lamb. You see, the Lamb. Is all the glory in Emmanuel's land. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.

They shall mourn for me like an only son. Oh friends, that's repentance. That needs no repenting of. To have a view of the crucified Saviour upon the tree.

- [ 42 : 55 ] To be taken there by the eyes of faith. And don't come away from Calvary until you have your passport sealed. A second Luke he gave.
- Which said, I freely all forgive. If this blood is for thy ransom, fear I died. That thou might live. That is how the church gets to heaven. That is how an individual believer goes to heaven.
- That is why the dying thief is there. That is why Paul is there this afternoon. That is why the great cloud of witnesses are there. Not because of anything of themselves.
- Because of what Jesus is. He's the Lamb. He has all the glory. And you know there's a song that's been sung throughout eternity. It's a new song.
- And every believer on the moment they die. They sing that new song forever and ever. Oh friends. Yes, and he does go on doesn't he?
- [ 43 : 54 ] And he speaks about the rose of Sharon. Friends, the rose of Sharon is Jesus. Oh, what a rare perfume does the Lord give. And when he draws near, friends.
- You know, we may be this afternoon in a specific trial. Yes, and the special grace is given for special trials. Oh friends. You know Daniel had to go into that game.
- And you know his enemy said. Excuse me. Is thy God able to deliver thee? Listen, friends. Each one of God's children can write this over their life.
- My God has set his angels and has shut the lion's mouth. It's a wonderful thing, isn't it? My God.
- Isn't that what Paul says? My God shall supply all your needs. Friends, we may have many things this afternoon in our lives that we just can't understand.
- [ 44 : 56 ] You know what God said to Simon Peter. He says to us many times. What I do now thou knowest not. But thou shalt know hereafter.
- And I believe many times it's hereafter we have gone through that particular experience. And God shows us the reason. With mercy and with judgment, says Rutherford.
- The tarp my web of time he walked. And all the Jews of sorrow were softened in his love. You see, friends. God brings us to that place of submission.
- Oh, it's a wonderful thing to be brought there. It's a wonderful thing to follow him. You know, Peter was no different than you and I. He was concerned about the church, rightly so.
- You know, Peter really thought that he would build the church. And the Lord said, you are Peter. Upon this rock I will build my church. Not upon you, Peter. Upon my rock. My rock, Christ Jesus.
- [ 45 : 56 ] And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But Peter, you know, friends, he was so concerned. And the Lord gently but firmly rebuked him. What did he say to him?
- What is that to thee? Follow thou me. You know, it's a lovely word, isn't it? Follow me. Sometimes I have attended baptisms and they have sung that as they have come up.
- I will follow. I will follow. Jesus. Everywhere. Anywhere. Oh, my friends. To follow him. To follow that lovely Lamb of God.
- Which taketh away the sin. You know, John beheld him. He said, behold the Lamb of God. Which taketh away the sin of the world. You know, and then John was in prison after.
- And he said, aren't thou he, Lord, or do we look for another? Go and tell John. Go and tell the church this afternoon. The things that I am doing. Ah, the things that Christ is doing.
- [ 46 : 57 ] What is happening today in 1983? Shall I tell you? The blind are receiving the sight. The deaf are having their ears to stop. You say, well, it's not happening here. It's happening in the church.

It's happening in the world. It's happening in the church of God. And the poor of the gospel preached unto them. My friends. The Lord is saving his children.

He died for them upon Calvary. Their names were engraved in his heart. And the Lord will use all the means that are at his disposal.

To bring his elect home to glory. He'll use all the means of his disposal. The Lord has used many. A crooked snake.

To bring his elect in. Of course. You know, friends. He's not confined to churches. I know the Lord blesses in the ministry.

[ 47 : 55 ] He does. But he's not confined. He's not confined to the church. He can bless you if you were driving at 80 or 90 miles on the motorway.

And you broke the law, haven't you? My friends. I know. In whom I am believed. And I say to you this afternoon. That Jesus Christ.

Is still doing just that. In 1983. And he will do it to the end of time. And God will still send laborers into his vineyard.

And when the laborers do not go into the vineyard. The end of time must be drawing near. But you know what God has said.

The harvest is great. Pray ye to the Lord of the harvest. That he would thrust out more laborers into his vineyard.

[ 48 : 52 ] You know, that's a wonderful word. And I don't know why. It hasn't been on my mind. But I'll close with it this afternoon. You, son, go today and work in my vineyard.

Friends, it's his vineyard. It's his church. And we are the instruments that God uses. May the Lord add his blessing.

Amen. And your collection will now be taken. Thanks God.

He's in the other side of God's grace.

He's the thunder, O you huh?

[ 50 : 13 ] My faith■ you know, all right. looking great wonder of love dear I Here is thy name, Lord Jesus. Here are I, thy help I come.

And my hope I lie to pleasures in the world.

I ride at home. Jesus sold me where a stranger wandering from the fall of God.

He to save my soul from danger.

He to save my soul from danger. He to save my soul from danger.

[ 52 : 12 ] All to grace the great and earth.

Let her daily life have strength to lead.

Let the graceful light have changed.

Let her daily life have changed.

From to under the light. I feel it from to thee above.

[ 53 : 18 ] Let her daily life. Platz. Go, also. Lord, cem. That wine.

■.. them. Spirit. Know.

Come. Gracious God, we would desire to thank thee and bless thee this afternoon for the finished work of Jesus.

And Lord, as we have sung together in our closing head, may that be the portion of each one that is gathered, and many more yet, Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, he to save my soul from danger, interpose his precious blood, oh the preciousness of that effect of that cleansing blood, and Lord, may we know much of it in our lives upon this earth.

Now may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion of thy gracious Spirit be with us all.

[ 54 : 40 ]    Amen.