

Christian Assurance: Its Author and Behaviour

by J. Glyn Owen

Christian assurance is a deep and personal confidence in God's plan of salvation, which is rooted in the Holy Spirit and grows through our relationship with God.

Duration: 57:19

Scripture: Exodus 20:1, 2 Corinthians 5:9

Topics: "Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of living a life that pleases God, as there will be a judgment day when we will have to answer for our actions. The preacher emphasizes that our ultimate goal should be to bring pleasure to God, rather than seeking our own pleasure in this life. He highlights the fact that God is just and holy, and on the day of judgment, we will be rewarded or held accountable for our actions. The preacher encourages the audience to treat their hope in eternal and unseen things genuinely and realistically, keeping in mind the judgment that awaits them.

Transcript

It is indeed a joy to have you all present this evening, and among those who regularly worship with us, I see quite a number of visiting friends. We trust that you will feel at home with us, and that as we come to meditate upon the Word of God, we shall find that it comes through with power and with clarity. May I say to visitors here that we base all that we try to preach on the Word of Scripture.

We believe that God has spoken finally in His Son, that He has caused the Word of His revelation to be put into Scripture for our eternal profit, and so in all our gatherings this is our main means of worshiping God. We sing our praises, we offer our prayers, but we very especially come to hear what He has to say to us, and in response to His inerrant Word, we seek to offer continued and glad and grateful worship. May we therefore come to the passage before us tonight in that spirit, and I trust we shall all be able to enter into the spirit of continued worship as we meditate upon these very remarkable words.

Now we've done something today which we do not normally do. We are continuing with a theme that was occupying us in the morning hour. That means that those who are not with us tonight are missing half of what we had in mind.

We pray for them, but it's good to have you who are here. For those who are not with us this morning, may I say to you that we were trying to expound the first few verses of chapter 5. Really we got as far as verse

4. And we were thinking particularly of an aspect of the Christians' assurance. One aspect, really, though there are many facets to that one aspect, and that aspect is described very particularly in the first verse.

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we know that we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. This is a blessed assurance, a glorious assurance, which God has made possible for sinners such as we are to have, not because of any merit in ourselves or any hope that we may attain to such merit. On the contrary, this is given us because Christ has died.

As we see at the end of this chapter, he has died an atoning death. And he has procured for us an eternal redemption. And included in that eternal redemption is not simply the renewing of our spirit, that is indeed a part.

We may be born again because Jesus died and rose again. We may have a new spirit, the spirit of God dwelling in us. But the redemption that he procured is not confined to that.

He doesn't simply renew our spirit, but he promises us a new body. And that is the particular theme here. So Paul is very bold in these early verses to say, if this earthly tent, if this tent in which we now live, passes out, withers, and cracks up, well, we are not left to be utterly naked.

He uses that very term. Now he says we have another house, and this is not a tent, it's a house. And it's eternal.

It'll never wear out. And it's in the heavens. And human hands have had nothing whatsoever to do in the making of it, in the composition of it.

It is entirely the work of God. Now that is a main aspect or facet of the Christian's assurance. So that if you are a genuine believer in the grace of God and in the God of grace, if you are, as I trust you are, one who has turned from sin to Christ as your Savior, and worship him in the fellowship of his people, then this is your privilege.

You and I may know this, says the Apostle Paul, know it not because we're clever, not indeed because we're better than people who may not know, but simply because of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has died to procure this for us, and because he deserves it, and he's made it possible, we may know that we have it, because we have him. Now we turn to the next main thread in this very, very precious passage.

And Paul now pinpoints the author of the Christian's assurance. Verse 5, Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose, and has given us the spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Now, this assurance grows and develops to something which is massive and should be overwhelming to all of us, eliciting worship from our spirits and gladness in our hearts and joy as we ponder its amazing significance.

Now correct though the New International Version is, I prefer the Revised Standard Version because it is more literally coincidental with the Greek here. And it goes quite simply like this, he who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the spirit as a guarantee. Having expressed the Christian's certainty of ultimately inheriting and inhabiting the new body, the Apostle now immediately says, all right, I've made a tremendous claim, now look away from me.

You've been listening to me or you've been reading my words, now look away from me. The source of all this is not in me, either as an individual Christian, ordinary Christian, or indeed as an Apostle. I as an

Apostle or as a Christian, I am not responsible for this.

Not all the saints of the ages nor the angels together acting in concert could procure such a boon for any man as this. He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing, to quote the King James, is God. This boon, this blessing, is the blessing that comes from the grace of God.

I want to stress that. If you are to have the kind of assurance that the Apostle had here, the place to go to is immediately to God. It is God who gives it.

It is God who confirms it. It is God who assures us. Now there is a ministry of encouraging one another, and I'm always thrilled when I come across somebody in the congregation who is given that gift of standing alongside of other people and encouraging them.

It's a wonderful ministry. But to impart this really deep and personal assurance of salvation and of our ultimately inhabiting this new body that God has prepared for His own is something that only God can do. So it says, pour all eyes on God, as God who has done it.

And I want you to notice that He has two things in this statement. The divine action responsible, He who has prepared us for this very thing is God. Now first of all, He talks about the action of preparing us.

He who has prepared us. And then He speaks about the intention. God has prepared us for this very thing.

Now let's take the latter half first, the intention, the divine intention. God He says has prepared us, that's the word, for this very thing. Now what's He talking about? What's He referring to? Well I trust it's clear already, but if it isn't, let me make it as clear as I can.

You may answer that question first of all generally, or then more particularly. Generally speaking, Paul is referring to the plan of salvation. God's plan of salvation includes the redemption of the soul from death, eternal death, spiritual death, separation from God in this life and in the life that is to come.

The redemption wrought by Jesus Christ is a redemption from the tyranny of death, temporal and eternal. It includes that, but it doesn't merely include that. The redemption wrought by Christ is such that it includes the resurrection of our bodies from the dead at last and our glorification in that there will be given us a new body like unto His own glorious body in which we shall dwell to serve Him forever and ever in the courts of the inner sanctuary of the heaven of the heavens.

Now speaking generally, that's what Paul has in mind. And he says, God has prepared us, His people. If you are redeemed, if you are a Christian tonight, God has been preparing you for this and is continuing to do it.

You're in the mold. You're in process of being made into something. God's doing something with you.

He's working to plan. He has an intention and the intention will not even conclude with this, though this is involved in it. Putting off this old body and ultimately putting on the new, capacitated as it is, not for a temporal period or for labor in the sphere of time and sense, but for eternity.

Speaking more specifically, that is what specifically what Paul has in mind. He says, God has been working upon us to this end. He's been doing something to this very end for this very purpose.

In other words, God is serious about this. He really is serious and He wants us believers to know that He has this in mind. He has not only procured the possibility of our inhabiting this new body, but He's actually working upon the hearts and lives of His people in order to prepare us.

Now later on in this great letter, second letter to the Corinthians, He will be telling us how to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord so that we may be capacitated spiritually to dwell in the spiritual body for the heavenlies and to serve our God there acceptably into eternity. You notice the action here that, as Paul puts it, he uses a word which one of the translations gives us preparing. He who has prepared us, that is the new international version.

Or is it the revised standard version, I'm not quite sure. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God. Now this is a strong word.

It is a word that describes something that is going on and there's a measure of difficulty involved in proceeding. God is doing something, and if you may say so very humbly, even God is not finding the work without difficulty. God is molding us and preparing us like a vase to beautify His palace or like an instrument to serve His purpose.

But He's not giving up. He is intent on going on and He will go on, it's involved in the compound verb that we have here, that the work is going on continuously, toilsome though it may be, and wearisome and effortful. Our God, says the Apostle Paul, is working even though He is conscious of opposition to Himself in doing this, but He's preparing us.

One of the commentators has a little comment like this which is very revealing, like some sculptor with a hard bit of marble or some metallurgist who has to work the rough ore till it become tractable. So the loving, patient, divine artificer is here represented as laboring long and earnestly with a somewhat obstinate material. That's the picture.

Not discouraged when He comes upon a black vein in the white marble, nor even when the hard stone blunts the edge of His chisels, God carries on with a business of preparation. I trust we all know something about that, of God refusing to give up in our lives. When we've fallen and when we've stumbled and when we've rebelled, of God coming after us, putting His hand upon us and shaking us a little and telling us, look mate, look child of mine, look son or daughter of mine, I will not let you go.

I have something big and large and great for you. Something that is so momentarily wonderful, I cannot give you up. Behind the production of the robust Christian certainty that we have here in this context then there lies a persistent divine action.

He who has made us or prepared us for this very thing is God. You do not come into real Christian certainty all at once. Now I'm afraid that this cuts across much evangelical thinking.

We expect that a young Christian who has only just trusted Christ can have the deepest kind and quality of Christian assurance that is possible. I suggest to you that that is not possible. The deepest assurance that a Christian can have comes after God has long worked upon him.

And when God has been working upon him, molding him, shaping him, trying him, testing him, correcting him, chastising him, and continues to do the work, it is then that a man becomes sure, I'm in God's hands, He'll never let me go. Of course, there is an assurance that the youngest convert may have when the moment he knows his sins are forgiven him and he has peace with God. Of course there is, but there is

nothing in comparison with this.

That's only but the foreglim of Christian certainty, properly so called. There is a depth of certainty which makes you ready to die. Indeed, yearning to put off this house of clay, to be clothed with your house which is in heaven.

And there are not many of us that have such an assurance. Now let's be honest. I don't know whether I've ever told you of the doctor who was a skeptic and he had so many Christians on his panel.

And they were very rich people, most of them. And when they used to go with one trouble or another, they were very serious, he used to, with his tongue in his cheek, give them an alternative. Now the thing for you to do is to pack up your job and go for a world trip or go to heaven.

And he would have great glee in saying most of them chose a world trip. Few of them had that certainty of heaven that it was an attraction. And they were ready and they were waiting, straining at the leash for the vision glorious of their Lord.

Brothers and sisters, we talk about assurance. Few of us have that, you know. Now I'm sorry to disabuse you, but very few Christians have this quality of assurance that heaven is as real and as precious as precious can be.

So that to me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Now that brings us further. Further.

Now you see we're actually moving into the deepest, into the bowels of Christian certainty as it were. And we'll see something more as we proceed. Because the next thing that we look at at the end of verse 5 is the divine confirmation of all this.

The confirmation of the divine assurance. God confirms Himself as He goes along. He gives something to give us assurance.

Then He confirms that assurance again. And it goes on like that. And life is like that with God.

He confirms one thing after another so that you can always have assurance. Now the one who has made us, or who has prepared us for this particular thing, this self-same thing is God. And He doesn't stop there.

And He's also given us the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. Now if this doesn't make the saints of God sing, well I tell you there's something wrong. There's something wrong.

Though that is unquestionably the meaning of the underlying Greek, I think that the RSV, the Revised Standard Version, is closer to the original when it puts it like this. Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. Simply that.

Because that's all you have in the Greek. It means, it means that He's given us the Spirit as an earnest of what is to come. A deposit corresponding to the reality that is to come.

But He's given us as a guarantee. Now there's a little Greek word here. I must show off my little bit of Greek again tonight.

You'll forgive me. I don't often do that. But it has to be done every now and again.

There's a word in the Greek, araban. Simple little word. But it's so rich.

And that's the word that we have here. And you notice that it's so rich that some of the translators use four or five words to bring out the meaning of it. You encounter it in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 22.

And it's translated there exactly the same as it is here in the NIV or in the RSV. God has set His seal of ownership on us, says Paul there. And put His Spirit in our hearts.

In the New International Version says, as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. Now instead of all those words, what the Greek says, as an arabon. You have it again in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 13 to 14.

You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed you were marked in Him with a seal. The promised Holy Spirit.

Now here it is. Who is a deposit. The Holy Spirit is a deposit.

Guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession. To the praise of His glory. You were given the Holy Spirit.

How? Who is the deposit or as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. The simple word in the Greek is arabon again. Just one word.

Now what does it mean? Well let's just get two or three of the main strands in it. First of all the arabon, the earnest or deposit or guarantee, was the first installment of something. We still have this concept in buying things we'll pay down.

We'll have a down payment, a deposit. And we'll give the down payment. But that means of course when you put the down payment, you virtually symbolically promise that you're going to pay for the whole thing.

The Holy Spirit says the Apostle Paul, is the down payment that God has given. It's the first gift. He says I'm giving you my spirit and I mean to give you much much else.

And even though you may be filled with a spirit, you still don't have everything that I have to give you. But I will give you more. I will give you the whole inheritance.

Again the arabon was a guarantee of full payment. Not just symbolic of it, but it was a guarantee of it. Now it's difficult to have any illustration of this from common life.

I don't know that there is one. But in Greek legal documents it comes in very often. A Greek person would be asked to give, to make an arabon which meant that he was going on oath.

And he was guaranteed to do something or to go somewhere or to pay something. It was a guarantee. It was a pled.

The third element in this word arabon is this. The arabon was of the same nature or texture as the full inheritance. Or whatever was going to be paid.

Let me illustrate. Assuming that you were coming to me to buy a plot of land on my farm. We strike the bargain.

And I give you a handful of the soil. Indicating thereby that I was giving you the arabon of the total fullness that was to come. What I had promised.

But now the point is this. The arabon would be a little bit of the very land that you had bought and that you will ultimately inherit. Not a handful of dust.

Or even of dirt from another field or whatever. It would be exactly from the same place. So that ultimately your inheritance would be of the same nature as the little bit of earth that you'd already got.

Now can you see the significance of this? When God gives his people the Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts. He gives them an assurance that there's more to come. It is the down payment of something that he will fulfill.

It is the pledge of something. But the point is this. What he's going to give in all its massive and eternal fullness by and by.

Is of the same nature as the down payment he has given us. Which in unmistakably clear words means this. Whatever heaven is like.

It will be of the same, the life will be of the same texture and of the same quality as the life that is given us by the Holy Spirit. Here and now. No man, no woman who has the Holy Spirit in his heart or her heart will find heaven a strange place.

Because the life of the heavens is the very life that we have now by the Holy Spirit. We have it now as an arabon. A foretaste of glory divine.

We have it in as much as we can take it. Indeed Paul tells the Ephesians that they should always be being filled with the Spirit. We should never miss that present participle there.

Because it means this. It's like a cup always under the tap. Being filled all the time and there's always an overflow.

Not just going to the tap turning it on and filling my cup and drinking it up and then coming back for a refill. It's not that. Keeping the cup under the tap and the tap is running all the time.

And the cup is full all the time. And it's overflowing all the time. What Paul is saying to the Ephesians is this.

The fullness of the life of God is such you can never come to the bottom of it. You can never come to the end of it. And you should be filled all the time.

In this world. But when you are filled all the time in this life. The fullness of this life is as nothing.

In comparison with a harvest that will follow. The first fruits that we can only enjoy here. Now Paul actually uses that word.

In Romans 8.23. Not only so he says. But we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit. Grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption of sons.

The redemption of our bodies. We have the first fruits. And the first fruit of the harvest is a sheaf from the harvest field.

The whole of the harvest will be of the same quality. Of the same kind. But much more of it.

There the apostle affirms then that the Christians already possess the first fruits of the spirit. Now in the words before us in 2 Corinthians 5.5. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to be viewed as a God given deposit. Guaranteeing a full inheritance in due course.

Now in the words before us in 2 Corinthians 5.5. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to be viewed as a God given deposit. Guaranteeing a full inheritance in due course. As far as our spirits are concerned.

As far as the body is concerned. God is guaranteeing. God is confirming his own promise.

So that we may say with Paul. We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved. We have a building of God.

A house not made with hands. Eternal in the heavens. How can we say that? Just because we believe God.

The God of all grace. And the God of all mercy. And the God of pardoning mercy.

The God of sustaining grace. The God who never begins what he doesn't mean to end. We believe God.

Now that brings me to the last point tonight. In this very rich passage. There are many things that might have called our attention.

In the verses that we have been looking at. But we must pass on. I want to say a word about the attributes.

Of the assurance which God gives. Or better still perhaps the behavior of this kind of assurance. Verse 10.

Verses 9 and 10 I should say. So we make it our goal. To please him.

Whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That each one may receive what is due him.

For the things done while in the body. Whether good or bad. Now there is a false assurance as well as a genuine one.

You may discern the true. And distinguish it from the false by its behavior. You say you have assurance.

Then very well. You will show it. And the quality of it in your behavior.

The characteristic of the quality of assurance. That Paul is speaking of here. The characteristic features or attributes are laid bare.

And he mentions two things. First of all the intention that dominates. And then the incentive that determines.

The intention that dominates. Do you have this quality of assurance? Well says Paul. Very well.

You may have your choice as I have my choice. I really says Paul. I hope I'm not misunderstanding him or misstating his case.

I don't want to die. But I want to be alive when the Lord Jesus returns with the clouds of heaven. So that what is mortal may be swallowed up of mortality.

And he uses a Greek word which is just like this. It's putting one garment over another. And the concept apparently that he has.

Is that of the Lord Jesus Christ coming. And presenting him as the dead are raised from their graves. Presenting those who are alive at his coming.

As those who are raised from their graves. With this new body. It's a very remarkable.

It's a very, very remarkable statement there. He is looking forward to that. He is so full of it.

And he so believes it. Now he says alright. I'm expecting that.

How do I show. How do I manifest to the world. That my assurance is genuine.

Well in this way he says. We are always confident and we know. That as long as we are at home in the body.

We are away from the Lord. We live by faith not by sight. We are confident I say.

And would prefer to be away from the body. And at home with the Lord. Now notice.

We may not be able to dwell with those verses. They have difficulties. But we must come to this last statement.

So we make it our goal to please him. Whether we are at home in the body or away from it. I suggest to you that what Paul has in mind is this.

He didn't find any attraction in death. But what was attractive to him was to be with his Lord. Oh he had mastered death.

He is the one who in 1 Corinthians 15 as we saw this morning. Challenged death. Oh death where is your sting.

Oh grave where is your victory. It's gone he says. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Even so death was no attractiveness. Had no attractiveness to him.

What really attracted Paul was this. Was the thought that perhaps he would be alive when the Lord Jesus returned. So that he wouldn't have to live in an intermediate state.

As he calls it naked. Not in this physical body. Not yet inhabiting the new body.

But spiritually naked. I don't want that says Paul in effect. I want the Lord to come so that I can receive my new body.

Now he says. Alright. I have my preferences.

But he says whether I am in this body or in that. Or whether I am in the body or out of the body. It makes no difference.

This is the intention that dominates my life. And should dominate all of ours. We make it our goal to please him.

Whether we are at home in the body. Or away from it. It matters not.

The thing that really matters is that we bring pleasure to our Lord. Oh my good friends. I find so much that I would like to say about this.

That I really do not know where to start. You see we were hearing here on Wednesday evening. About the law of God embodied in the ten commandments.

And we have so many ethical injunctions in the new testament. We have the sermon on the mount. We have the ethics outlined in all the epistles.

Telling us what to do. And it is very possible for us to think of these things in purely legal terms. But behind all these injunctions.

There is a more basic and fundamental factor that we need to get hold of. And here it is. Do you want to please your Lord? Do you want to give pleasure to him who took the pain of your condemnation on the cross of Calvary? Or are you more concerned about your own pleasure here in this life.

Than giving pleasure to him. Who counts most? Him or yourself. That is the issue.

And it says Paul. I exhibit the reality of my assurance of the body of glory. I exhibit the assurance that God has given me in this way.

By making it my priority. Whether I am in the body or out of the body. Whether I go home via the way of death.

Or whether I go home via the skies. I make it my priority to please him. Oh that the spirit of God would catch the sails of our lives here tonight.

And just give us this tremendous propelling sense that the apostle has. Oh to please him. To me to live is Christ.

That has the priority. And the verb that he uses is rather a strong one. He implies a verb which really says that it is his consuming ambition.

Not just a little desire. But it is his consuming ambition. It is the controlling motive force behind everything he does.

But now you notice there is also here something to be said about the consistency of it all. The consistency of it all. We must note Paul's consistency.

In vain do we say that we desire to be at home with the Lord. Unless we are equally concerned to serve and please our Lord here and now. One has met people who had a lot to say about the heaven they expected to see at last.

But strange, strange, strange to relate. They had very little concern to serve their Lord here and now. Or to please him.

And when heaven will be taken up and the eternities will be taken up. With pleasing him and serving him day and night in his temple. My dear friend, if you've got the hope of that and the assurance of that.

And you're sure that's where you're heading for. Surely we should be a little bit concerned about it here and now. Paul is consistent.

And he would have us exhibit something of that same kind of consistency. If we know we're going to heaven to serve our blessed Lord. The Father through him by the Spirit.

And let us set about the business of pleasing him here and now. In doing what he requires of us. And in becoming what he has made it possible for us to be.

Is it your priority? But now I must say a word to close about the incentive that determines the same end. With verse 10 Paul passes to something else. This is a very staggering verse.

For he says adding another reason. For what he's already said. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

That each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body. Whether good, whether bad. Now I've no doubt it is a legitimate thing to preach on this verse in and of itself.

To wrench it from its context and to expound the truth that it contains. Separate from its context in scripture. But nevertheless the real significance of this verse.

Can only be appreciated when we see it in its context. And I think it has to be taken very closely in connection with the preceding verse. That the priority in our lives should be to please our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether we're in the body, whether we're out of the body. In verse 10 then the apostle clearly implies. That the coming judgment of all Christians by Jesus Christ.

Should actually be a further incentive to please him. And that's how I understand it. The implication is that the believer should carefully make his choices.

And his decision in life. So that Jesus Christ is pleased. He does so out of love for him and gratitude to him.

But he also does so because he wants the judge to be pleased with him. At the day of judgment. In other words he doesn't simply want to give pleasure to his Lord Jesus Christ in this life.

He wants to give pleasure to his Lord at the day of judgment. It's the kind of thing that you have when a trainer is satisfied with his trainee. You have it in the world of sports.

You have it with your football teams. You have it in other areas of life. But when the person who has been training the team.

Or training the individual for whatever it is. Sees him finally functioning just as he was taught to. Working to the maximum of his capacity.

And speeding along or whatever it is. Finally doing more than he could a few years ago. And achieving what he was meant to achieve.

And you can see the trainer with a sense of satisfaction. And a sense of pleasure. If I understand the meaning of the apostle Paul.

That is the main thought here. It's to bring pleasure to him in this life. But to remember this.

Our Lord and Savior is not a soft one. He is just. And he is holy.

And he is concerned. And at the day of judgment. He will want us to answer for the things done in the body.

Whatever they are. And as we shall be brought to account. And will have to answer.

He will reward us exactly as we deserve. Exactly as we deserve. There will be such a perfect correspondence.

Between that which we shall receive by way of reward. And that which we have done in the body. There will be no one who will be able to say.

You've exaggerated my downcomings or my sins or my faults. You've not done me justice. Not a soul.

There will be an exact correspondence. Between the reward that will follow. Or the loss as the case may be.

And what we have done in the body. Now. Let me say.

It's very necessary for us to remember here. That the purpose of this tribunal. Or this judgment.

The judgment seat of Christ. Is not positively penal. As theologians would say.

But retributive. Involving the disclosure. Not only of what has been worthless.

But also of what has been good and valuable in life. Let me give you a comment from one of the best commentators that I've been able to find. The judgment pronounced is not a declaration of doom.

But an assessment of worth. With the assignments of rewards. To those who because of their faithfulness deserve them.

And the loss. Or withholding of rewards in the case of those who do not deserve them. The question of this judgment is not whether a man is saved or lost.

That has been settled out of court. That's settled in a service like this. That is settled in this life.

Whether a man is to be saved or lost. By whether or not he repents of his sin. And turns in faith to the only Savior.

You read on to the end of the chapter and you will see how true that is. Jesus Christ was made sin for us on the cross. In order that we should be made the righteousness of God in him.

He changed positions with us. He took our positions as condemned men and women. He became a condemned person instead of us.

In order that we should become the accepted person in his place. He took our place that we should take his. And we are saved when we accept him as such.

The one who died for us and gives us pardon and righteousness. What then is this judgment? It's to determine the worth of the life you have lived as a saved man or a saved woman. Now if you want the best comment that I can give you upon this.

It's way back in 1 Corinthians 3. I can do it hurriedly as we close. You remember how the apostle Paul says there that. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid.

We do not lay the foundation of our own salvation. The church can't do that for you. A preacher can't do that for you.

No one can do that for you. That foundation is laid by God and it is Christ. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

As they sing in Ireland all other rocks are shamrocks. There is no other rock. There is only one rock and that is Christ Jesus our Lord.

He's been laid there by God. He's been placed there for you to build your life's hope upon him. But now says our Lord in writing there in the third chapter of 1 Corinthians.

Every man has to build his character upon that foundation. And the kind, the quality that he incorporates into his character may be this or maybe that. The quality of his life and living may be in terms of wood, hay and stubble.

So that when the judgment comes it will all go up in flames. Or the quality of his life on the other hand may be more like those things that are purged by the fire. And come through the fires totally unscathed.

Perhaps the better for it. Gold, silver, precious stones. Now there are some he says whose works will be burned.

They're useless. They will be saved but so as by fire. And if you'll pardon me for putting it in a metaphorical way.

And using the language of common parlance by the skin of their teeth. Because grace is the basis of salvation. They will be saved but by the skin of their teeth.

But they will have nothing to show. They know nothing of what the psalmist sung about. He redeemeth thy life from destruction.

If I understand the word life there it means life and living. The thief on the cross went to be with Jesus in paradise. His soul was saved but his life was lost.

And if I'm not mistaken many another thief and many another person has come to paradise. Without anything to show in terms of living and obedience and character. Duly formed.

But the merits of Jesus Christ was theirs. So they were justified freely by his grace. They were received in Christ.

But they never worked out their own salvation with fear and trembling. There was no character. There was no service.

You and I should so please God in this life. Knowing that there's a judgment day coming. When we shall either hear the deafening silence of our Lord.

And he'll have nothing to say that is good of us. Or his well done. Good and faithful servant.

Enter thou into the joys of your Lord. Now you see what Paul has done and I'm closing with this. You see what Paul has done.

He has told us this. If you really have the hope of things that are eternal and unseen. All right.

Treat them genuinely and realistically. There is a judgment that you haven't seen. It's on the books of God.

It's on the program. It is written. It is revealed.

And you will all have to stand before the judgment seat. Of Christ is his right. Treat that as real.

Let the light of that coming judgment fall upon your every act. And every decision here and now. And make you more and more determined to please your Lord.

In the body, out of the body, before the throne. Christian assurance. It's author, God.

He that has prepared us for this self-same thing is God and God alone. So if you need it, if you desire it, if you haven't got it. The thing to do is to go directly to God.

The behavior of it. Well you can recognize this deep assurance. By the determination to please Jesus Christ.

Out of love for him. Out of a sense of awe. Of the thought of standing before him on that judgment day.

But very especially. Out of the desire to bring pleasure to him who bore your pains. That yours should be the eternal pleasure of glory.

Where do we stand tonight my friends? In relation to these massive, massive truths of divine revelation. I'm not asking where we stand merely in terms of accepting them intellectually. That is one side of the question.

I'm asking where do we stand in terms of our response to them. In terms of life and living and behavior. Oh may the Spirit of God so work upon us.

That a new sobriety will come into our lives. And a new determination to please the one who bore the cross for us. Let us pray.

Almighty God our Father in heaven. We thank you for giving us such a word as this to meditate upon. It solemnizes us most certainly.

And yet our Father at the same time it releases within us a fountain of gratitude. That you have given us a Savior who is qualified to save us in this life. And to keep us into the next.

And has made all provision for us as we pass through the scene of time. Until we arrive in your presence. And there dwell with you for all eternity.

Oh Lord our God we thank you for Jesus Christ. And we pray now directly to your throne. That you will of your mercy enable us to please him more.

More and still more. With greater and ever greater determination. May we set about the task of bringing pleasure.

To the Christ of the cross. And the Christ of our hearts. We ask it in his name.

Amen.

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