

Endurance ■ How to Keep Going

by John Piper

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living by faith in future grace, focusing on the concept of God working for those who wait for Him. It challenges the idea of a debtor's ethic, highlighting the impossibility of repaying God for His grace and the need to trust in specific promises from the Bible. The acronym APTAT is introduced, encouraging listeners to Admit their need, Pray for help, Trust in promises, Act in faith, and Thank God for His provision.

Scripture: Isaiah 64:4, Psalms 50:15, Psalms 116:12, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 8:31, Psalms 34:19, Isaiah 46:4, Romans 14:7

Topics: "Living by Faith", "Trusting God's Promises"

Description

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Transcript

Just a word about that CD over there. Some of you have asked about sermons and stuff. This is an interactive CD that either works in the CD player, but mainly on your computer.

It's got audio sermons on it that you can listen to. It's got written sermons, and it's got links to the web and other places. It's basically an introduction to Desiring God ministries.

If you have access to a computer where you are, everything I preach is listenable and readable online, free. So anywhere in the world, if you want a dose of this, you can have it without any charge. You can find out about that ministry there by getting the CD.

I think there's 50 or 60 left. We brought 250, thinking one per family or household. If you see any there later this afternoon, take them, because we're not taking any home.

We'll just leave them there. I want to say thank you, since this is my last time, to Sam and the group that invited me. This has been a real treat for me and Noel.

We thank you for being such good listeners and such absorbent people. It makes my life a lot easier and more happy when people are drawing it out of you rather than pushing it away from themselves. So thank you for being a great help to me.

Now, this last banner doesn't have the word endurance at the top, but it has the word until at the top, which means there's some time lapse here between what we're about and when it happens. And the question is, how do you make it through that time lapse? If the price is sacrifice and the price is high and the life is long and the ministry is long, how do you endure? So the focus is on endurance until the great goal of His renown among the nations comes. And so, as I was pondering how to approach this, I think where I want to approach it is at the foundational level.

I haven't given too many foundations this week, assuming a lot here, but some foundations are just so precious they should not be assumed and should be spoken. The foundation I'm going to start with and then move on is justification by faith alone on the basis of Christ alone. The reason for starting there is that I'm not here to try to enable you to live at a level of constant and uninterrupted soaring to glory, simply because I don't think it has been ordained by God that Christians be enabled in this fallen age to live like that.

There are some groups that think you can. They tend to be more perfectionistic than others. But my graph of the Christian life is not like this, but like this, like that.

And therefore, I'm very eager to help you handle these, because I think normal Christian living is not a steady state soaring, but rather a coping with, a fighting against, a triumphant making your way through dark seasons back up to where you wanted to be and maybe even a little higher. Now the doctrine of justification by faith is glorious, not just because it is the most precious truth about how to move from being under the wrath of God as a sinner to being in the favor of God in an instant by faith alone at conversion. It is precious because it is the means by which we make it through the worst times of our lives.

The doctrine of justification by faith is precious as an ongoing weapon in our mouths and in our hearts against the devil and against our own conscience and against the accusations of people who will put us down. We must have a massive truth-based weapon against the accusations of the devil and the accusations of our own conscience and the accusations of people, lest we just cash it in and say, there's no hope in living the Christian life, and so I give it up. You may know some people like I know.

We had a missionary, one of the most gifted missionaries I think we ever sent out. And he went to Bangkok, learned the language like that, was pouring himself out, was gathering people, was a great communicator. And suddenly the discovery is that he slept with 18 prostitutes.

His wife comes home. She's been in my church with two little children for seven years waiting for him. He would never come home.

He gave himself up totally to the licentious life. We've sent people after him. We had a person on the plane within 24 hours to Bangkok, my associate Tom Steller, pleading, doing everything we could.

Numerous people have gone. We excommunicated him from the church after about a year of trying. He's still there.

One time he came back and I met with him. And I said, let's call him Pete. I said, Pete, why? Why? You know what he said? The Christian life was unlivable in Bangkok.

I just got tired of fighting. Now I don't know whether there was underneath there enough grasp of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but let me start in an unusual place. I don't even know if you can find this book.

Let's go to Micah. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. You ever memorize them? Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi.

There are 12 minor prophets. This is number six. Let's see if I can find it.

In fact, I was so scared I couldn't, I put a marker in here. Micah. This is an unusual place to start for the doctrine of justification by faith, but you will see why.

I preached a sermon on this about 17 years ago, one of the favorite sermons I ever preached. I don't know whether anybody else liked it, but I loved it. I called it gutsy guilt.

Gutsy guilt. Now see if you get that as I read verses 7 to 9 of chapter 7. It's easy to remember because it's 7-7. So if you ever get in a terrible time of darkness, remember 7-7, and what was that book? Oh yeah, it was Micah.

It was the sixth minor prophet. As for me, chapter 7, verse 7. As for me, I will look to the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation.

My God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. You know, there's a situation.

Something terrible has happened here. There's been a stumbling. There's been a sin by the believer.

The enemies are exalting over the fall of the believer. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. When I fall, I will rise.

When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him. Now just stop there and get this picture.

This is amazing. This is gutsy guilt. This man knows he's sinned.

He knows he's under the indignation of God. God's angry at his child, not with a punitive anger. We'll get to this in a minute.

But he's angry. God gets angry at us. But it's a fatherly anger that results in discipline and it can be very severe.

Read Hebrews 12, 1-14. See whether or not God ever spans His children with blood. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy.

Yes, I've fallen. I'm going to rise. That's gutsy guilt.

I sit in darkness. Sure I'm in darkness right now. The Lord has ordained for there to be a dark season in my life.

I've sinned against Him. I insulted Him. I didn't trust Him.

I walked against Him. And I'm going to bear this indignation. I will bear it.

I'm not going to leave my father because he's disciplining me. He loves me. He will bring me... Oh, I skipped a phrase.

Because I have sinned against Him until... I'm going to sit here in darkness... until He pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. For me. Imagine.

He will bring me out into light and I shall look upon His vindication. So there's a paradigm for how to handle failure. A paradigm for how to take the doctrine of justification by faith.

My judge who has me in darkness under his indignation will execute judgment for me. I am not going to give you an overly simplistic way to relate to an almighty, holy, just God as though it's all roses, it's all sweets, it's all smiles, it's all tenderness, it's all warm. It isn't all warm.

It isn't all tender. It isn't all smiles. There are dark frowns on the face of God towards His disobedient and wayfaring children.

Not because He's going to damn them, but because He's going to assign them a season of darkness so that they learn to wait upon the Lord and then He will execute justice for them. He will wipe their enemies off the scene and exalt them to His right hand. It happened over and over again to Israel.

Do you remember how He sent His Assyrians and His Babylonians against His people for judgment? And then when the enemy got uppity and proud, He smashed Nebuchadnezzar. Smashed Sennacherib. Sure, you're my rod against my people in discipline.

You get uppity and begin to exalt yourself as the rod in my hand, I will break you in pieces. There is a gutsy guilt for those who know justification by faith alone, based on Christ alone. So let's go to Romans and get the picture before us.

That was a foretaste of justification and a paradigm of how to turn it for your own good in times of defeat. But now we need to see the glorious New Testament foundation of it. Let's go to Romans 3 and get the whole thing under our feet here before we talk about using it to endure.

Let's start with Romans 3, verse 21. Now, now, this glorious breaking in of the kingdom in the eschatological now of Christ's coming. Now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

What is that? What has been manifested apart from law? What is that? And he explains. Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, here it is, verse 22, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. Now there's the statement in a nutshell.

God's righteousness, Martin Luther was scared to death of the righteousness of God because all he conceived of is the righteousness of God crashing down on sinners like him and us because the law made such demands upon us. We could never live up to them perfectly and therefore an all-holy God could only smash us in His justice. And then this sentence and the one in chapter 1, verse 17 landed on Luther and he said, the gates opened to paradise and I saw in a moment that the righteousness of God was a gift provided by Jesus Christ to be received by faith alone and it isn't my own righteousness, it's the righteousness of God.

That's the beginning and the dawning of the discovery that broke the Reformation on the world. Verse 23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Yes, we all have sinned.

And here's 24 putting it in the word justified. And are justified by grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation. Now, most of your versions don't have that.

I'm glad this one does because that's a very important word. And to translate it, atoning sacrifice or expiation loses something. Propitiation means wrath was coming at you.

It was on you like an unbearable weight. And now because Jesus Christ has absorbed the wrath of God and taken it all on Himself, our sins being accounted to Him, we are, or God is, propitiated. Meaning His wrath is satisfied and removed.

There is therefore now no condemnation. Chapter 8, verse 1. Not because we have a kind of a namby-pamby God who has no lightning and no power and no justice and no fierce wrath. No, He does.

We ought to tremble. Our teenagers ought to tremble. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

There should be a trembling in CRM because without a trembling, you don't know what grace is. This is a grace-filled organization, the video says. You can't know grace until you've trembled.

If you think you have a God that isn't to be trembled in front of, you will never taste the sweetness of grace. You remember those times when you were a little child? I remember two or three times. Daytona Beach, Florida.

1953. So how old would I have been? Seven? In the beach, and the undertow knocks my legs out from under me. And I go down.

It's not deep water, but I can't get my foot on the ground. I don't know where the ground is. And in these split seconds, your whole being is one colossal fear as a seven-year-old.

This is a huge ocean. I could be in the middle of it as far as I know. And at that moment, a father's hand.

Up. Now if it hadn't been for the undertow, if it hadn't been for the fear, my daddy's neck would not have felt nearly as good. I'd hug his neck a hundred times.

That hug was grace. That hug, I experienced it. And if you've never tasted the undertow of sin and the wrath of God justly sweeping you into everlasting hell, how can you taste grace for what it is? Jesus absorbed it, and God's wrath was propitiated by the blood of Jesus.

This was to show, I'm in verse 25, this was to show God's righteousness. Because in His divine forbearance, He had passed over former sins. Now get this.

You've got to have this. This is the most important paragraph in the Bible, in my judgment. And this is close to the most important sentences.

24, 25, 26. If you want the heart of the Bible, the heart of Christianity, this is it. This is what you exist to proclaim everywhere.

The cross is the center. The wrath of God being poured out on Jesus. Him absorbing it all, turning it away.

And what's the point of it? To demonstrate God's righteousness. So that brings us back to our passion for God's God-centeredness. The cross is all about the vindication of the righteousness of God, not just about the salvation of sinners.

And until we feel that, we'll start to think we're sort of deserving of the cross. Why, we're in the image of God. Why, we're chips off the old block.

Why, we are worth saving. Why else would He give His own Son? We must be like diamonds in the rough. That's the way people start to talk about the cross, until they feel the force of, to demonstrate the righteousness of God, He put His Son to death.

Because He had passed over former sins, and He's still passing over sins. That's why we're alive in this room, and not cinders. You remember one example of the sin He passed over? David.

He sleeps with Bathsheba. He tries to get her pregnant with her husband. I mean, look that way.

And then He kills him. And Nathan shows up, the prophet. Incredibly bold prophet.

He tells this little story about the man who had one lamb, and a rich man who had lots of sheep. And to have a banquet, he stole the lamb from the poor man, put him to death, fed his guests. David gets so angry, says, where's that man? We'll put him to death, who stole the one lamb.

And Nathan says, you're the man. You're the man? Why did you despise the Word of God? And David, being a truly indwelt saint, was broken. And the next word out of Nathan's mouth is, the Lord has taken away your sin.

I tell you, if I were Uriah's father, I'd say, don't you dare talk to him like that. He deserves some punishment. This is not just.

You can't just say to an adulterer and a murderer, I take away your sin. Go and sin no more. You can't talk like that.

Any judge on the bench of Hennepin County who says to a rapist and a murderer, are you sorry? I'm sorry. Okay, good enough. See you later.

Don't do it again. Any judge that does that in Hennepin County is off the bench, because the Bible says it's an abomination to justify the wicked. Proverbs 17, 17.

And Romans 4, 5 says, God justifies the wicked. God's an abomination. Do you see what had to be dealt with in the coming of Christ? God looks abominable in his own standards.

That's what's got to be dealt with. Your forgiveness is the biggest problem for God in the universe. Hardly any Americans think that way.

Americans think they deserve forgiveness. And when God does anything but forgive, they get mad at God and call him to account. You know what Paul's main problem was? How can God be just and forgive me? Ever wrestle with that? Ever lost any sleep over the fact that you're forgiven? Paul did.

Which is why this paragraph is in the Bible. He put his son forward to demonstrate that he doesn't sweep sin under the rug. He hates sin.

He vindicates his holiness. He kills his son to show that he doesn't take sin lightly. That's not an overstatement, by the way.

Not if you read Isaiah 53. It was the will of the Lord to bruise him. I remember one time a friend of mine was in a jail talking to prisoners.

And it was Good Friday. And he gave them a little quiz. Okay, let's see if you guys know any Bible.

Who killed Jesus? And they thought they knew Bibles. One of them said, soldiers killed Jesus. No, no.

Pilate killed Jesus. No, no. It was the crowds of Jews.

Crucify him, crucify him. No, no. It was Judas.

Judas killed Jesus. And he waited until all their answers were given. And then very quietly he said, that's not right.

His father killed him. They were absolutely stunned. Because the link up was that's the way they felt about their father, most of these guys.

They didn't even know who their father was. That's how much he cares about me. So we can empathize with this.

His father killed him. And then he opened the gospel. You know why he killed him? So he wouldn't have to kill you.

But if you don't believe him, he will kill you forever. But you don't have to go to hell. You can take Jesus as a substitute for your sins.

Justification, verse 24, justification is grounded on one thing, Jesus' blood and righteousness. Oh my. I've got to stop talking about justification.

I'll never get to endurance. Let's look at two other verses. Chapter 5, verse 19.

Chapter 5 begins with, Therefore having been justified by faith. That is faith, faith, faith. Oh, I shouldn't skip over chapter 4, verses 4 and 5. Let's go back there.

Now to the one who works. Watch out here. Don't be this person.

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. Let me give you a literal translation. Now to the one who works, his wages are not reckoned according to grace but according to debt.

That's the literal translation. If you work for God, if you try to get fixed by working for God, even on the mission field, you will not have grace. You will have debt.

You say, okay, pay me wages, God, because I'm working for you and you'll get wages. And the wages from God are one thing, death. The only good thing you can get from God is a gift.

If you want wages, you die. If you want a gift, you can have it. If you believe Him for it, which is why he goes on in verse 5 of chapter 4, to the one who does not work, but, here's the alternative, trusts Him who

justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

That's why I say, and that's why the Protestant Reformation has always said, justified by faith alone, apart from works of the law. In fact, chapter 3, verse 28 said that. See, I'm backing it up and doing it all backwards anyway.

Chapter 3, verse 28, we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. You cannot improve your standing with God by works of the law, because Christ is your standing with God. When you trust Jesus, you're united to Jesus, and Jesus' righteousness becomes your righteousness, and your sin becomes His sin.

Two verses to show that. Romans 5.19 As by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. One man's obedience constitutes your righteousness.

Jesus. Two things by way of application here. John Bunyan, at about age 25, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, was walking one day, distressed and torn with lack of assurance that he was saved, in the woods.

And God brought to his mind 1 Corinthians 1.30 Christ is your righteousness. And the way he put it to himself was, my righteousness cannot be any better or worse than it is now, because my righteousness is in heaven, where Christ is. Christ is my righteousness.

God beholds Christ, and in Christ sees me, and He sees His Son perfectly having obeyed the law. And therefore, I have fulfilled the whole law as I'm united to Jesus by faith alone. That's a warfare against the devil that will work.

All the devil's accusations will fall before that claim. Here's one other application. And you're missionaries, so I'll mention this one.

Now, there's a lot to be said for contextualization, etc. And some things not to be said for contextualization. When I preached through Romans 5 several years ago, it hit me like a ton of bricks that Adam is the father of every person in every people group in every culture in the world.

And the main problem to be solved for every person everywhere in the world as the child of Adam is the sin of Adam. That's chapter 5. Let's just go back to 5:19. For as by one man... That's Adam.

And you can go to any people group in Venezuela, Siberia, Thailand, any country in Africa, any Muslim people group, any Hindu people group, any Buddhist people group, any animist people group, and this verse is absolutely true of them. Namely, they are the children of Adam, and according to verse 19, as by one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners. Chapter 5, verses 1 to 12 are written to solve the problem of my original sin.

You don't have to understand this. You better believe it. Every place you go, people are sinners because they are the heirs of Adam.

Adam sinned, and in Adam we all fell. That's got to be fixed, or we all die. The way it's fixed is with a second Adam, Jesus Christ.

And as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, by one man's obedience many are constituted righteous. And you know what you lose if you lose original sin? You lose justification. Because justification in Romans 5 is built on the analogy of how did I become a sinner in Adam? His sin was imputed to me because I was corporately in Him.

How then do I become righteous in Christ? His righteousness is imputed to me because I am incorporated into Christ. If you lose original sin, you break the parallel and you lose the glory of justification by faith alone. Your righteousness is not your behavior.

Your righteousness is Christ's behavior. And it was perfect righteousness. And when you get into one of those dark seasons, say, I have fallen, and there is a cloud over my life, and God in His fatherly indignation, because He has removed all wrath from me that is punitive, is now punishing, no, let us use the word, disciplining me.

When I fall, I will rise. The one who has the darkness over me will execute justice for me because I am in Christ and He is my righteousness. I don't know any other way to get out of the dark than that.

This is a precious, precious doctrine. Well, I could talk forever on justification. Let me go here.

If it's true that justification is by faith alone, apart from works of the law, how do you live this out? How do you endure until that happens? How do you serve in such a way as to make God look great and not you? How do you live by the faith that you were justified by? Or put it like this, how do you get sanctified? That's the other biblical word that is the process of becoming like Jesus. By faith. Because I don't want to start working for God.

But now right here, there's a lot of misunderstanding, so maybe I can spend the rest of my time trying to help you see what it is to live by the same faith that you were justified by. Let's put it like this. I warn you, CRM, not to serve God.

Why do I say it that way? Why do I put it in that offensive, provocative, controversial, unbiblical, or is it way? Acts 17.25 God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything. For from him and through him and to him are all things. He gives all men life and breath and everything.

God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything. Acts 17.25 Or take another verse. The Incarnation.

Jesus said in, was it Mark 10.45 The Son of Man came not to be served. Stop right there. The Son of Man came not to be served.

Therefore, I feel warranted by the Bible to say CRM, don't serve Jesus. He said he didn't come to be served. Acts 17.25 says God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything.

He came not to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many. I call what I'm against that so many Christians have fallen into, I call it the debtor's ethic. Or if you're a baby boomer, you could call it the Tonto ethic.

Raise your hand if you've ever heard of the Lone Ranger. Well, the Lone Ranger, 45 years ago, was on television. And he had an Indian sidekick named Tonto and there was one episode where the origin of the relationship between the Lone Ranger and Tonto was explained.

And it had to do with the Indian culture. One time, this Indian Tonto, as a boy, was in trouble and the Lone Ranger saved his life. In that culture, if somebody saves your life, you bond yourself to them and serve them the rest of your life and get them out of all kinds of escapes.

So every issue, every show on television for who knows how many years was all about the Lone Ranger with his silver bullet and his white horse doing justice and getting himself into a pickle. And Tonto, getting him out of the pickle. That's every show.

That's the way a lot of people, blaspheming, live their Christian life. God save me! I will now unite myself to him and serve him and work for him the rest of my days. Now, they never quite say get him out of pickles.

But they say things like, you gave, you gave his life for me. What have you given for him? I call it the debtor's ethic and I want to warn you against it and tell you why. Because it's not the way to live out justification by faith.

There are three reasons why I want you to forsake the debtor's ethic. The alternative to the debtor's ethic is what I've tried to call living by faith in future grace. I have a big fat 400 page book called *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace*.

And that's what I want to explain in these last few minutes. Because I think if you can catch on to what it means to live by faith in future grace, you will be the happiest mission in the world and very fruitful. Three reasons why not to embrace the debtor's ethic which says God gave this to me, I better work hard for God now and try to pay Him back the debtor's ethic.

Number one, given the reality of future grace, the debtor's ethic is impossible. Let me explain. What I mean by future grace is God didn't just give you grace in the cross.

He bought with the cross all future experiences of grace. And by future, I mean five seconds from now and five million years from now. You will live totally by grace five seconds from now.

If you breathe, it's grace. If your heart beats, it's grace. If you can think without going crazy, it's grace.

If you still believe in five minutes, it's grace. That's what I call future grace. Grace to live by, grace to die by, grace to escape hell from, grace to have eternity.

It's all grace and it's future from this point on. And now four seconds of that future grace is past grace. Grace is like a river flowing to me from God, from the future.

It crashes over the waterfall of my present. It accumulates in a reservoir of the past. And I stand here on this waterfall looking back to get encouragement for how much grace he's shown me, especially in the cross.

But I live my life this way. And every step I take, I take in you, Jesus. Every step is grace.

Now if that's true, the debtor's ethic is impossible. Because if you take a step on the basis of grace and you're drawing down more grace for that step, if you take another step into a hard place and do a hard thing by grace, leaning on grace, you're not paying anything back. You're going deeper into debt.

Every minute of your life, you're going deeper into debt if you live by grace. The whole mindset of I've had grace shown to me, I've got to pay something back now, is so flawed, it's an offense to God. Now, let me

put a Bible verse or two under that.

Let's say 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15 says, By the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I worked harder than any of them.

Ooh, ooh, ooh, starts to sound like the debtor's ethic. I worked harder than any of them because He showed me grace. And then He adds, Nevertheless, it is not I but the grace of God which is with me.

It means every step I take, I take in grace, which means I go deeper into debt, which is where I want to be for the rest of eternity, in debt to grace. Oh, I don't ever want to pay this back. I don't ever want to be on a tit-for-tat relationship where God says, Okay, I paid my mortgage, now we're equal.

You get from me, I get from you, we exchange. God forbid that anybody would ever go there. So first reason why you can't live the debtor's ethic is because it's impossible if you understand future grace.

Or take another verse before I give you another reason. 2 Corinthians 9.8 says, God is able to supply all grace to you so that you may have a sufficiency in all things at all times for every good deed. Now let's shorten that down.

God is able to make all grace abound to you for every good deed. Which means every deed you do, relying upon grace, by faith in future grace, you're a deeper debtor. He gives you more and more and more.

My bottom line is, God gets renown in the lives of His people by being the giver, not the getter. The giver gets the glory. Keep yourself in the position of a getter, not a giver.

Let God always be the fountain, you be the drinker. Let God always be the bread, you be the eater. Let God always be strong, you be weak.

Reason number two. If it were possible to play the debtor's ethic, grace would no longer be grace. If you could pay him back, it'd be a financial transaction.

It wouldn't be grace, it would be debt. And the third reason is because it minimizes future grace, which is what I've been trying to say. Now there's an objection that people have raised at this point in my church, when I've tried to stress this, be a getter, so that God gets the glory and you get the help.

And the objection came from Psalm 116, verse 12, where it says, What shall I render to the Lord for all of His benefits to me? And they said, see, Piper, the psalmist thinks that way. He thinks in terms of render back, render back. So what are you going to make of that? What shall I render to the Lord? That's Psalm 116, verse 12.

What shall I render to the Lord for all of His benefits to me? And as with most objections, I always answer the same way. I say, read the rest of the verse. Or read the next verse.

What's the answer to that question? Does anybody know the answer to that question? What shall I render to the Lord for all of His benefits to me? You know what the answer is? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. See, I've got something for you. He will not be pleased.

He will not be pleased. He wants empty cups. I will lift up the cup of salvation and call, call, call upon the name of the Lord.

Fill my cup, Lord. Prayer is the key. Prayer is the key.

Psalm 50. This is Robinson Crusoe's text. You ever read Robinson Crusoe? This is the text he lived by.

Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon one time called Robinson Crusoe's text. And it was Psalm 50, 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you and you will glorify me.

What a deal. What a deal! We call. He comes and delivers.

He gets the glory. We get the help. That's my whole theology.

God gets glory by being a giver. I give Him glory by being a thankful, happy, satisfied receiver that doesn't turn to idols. Oh, how eager God is to work for you, CRM.

How eager He is to work for you. Let me close with a few verses to underline that. Psalm 64, 4. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear.

No one has seen a God besides you who work for those who wait for Him. Missionaries, this text says there's no God like that anywhere. Allah of Islam is not like that.

The 700 million gods of the Hindus are not like that. Buddha is not like that. The gods in rocks and stones are not like that.

Even the God of Israel, minus Jesus, is not like that. Let's read it again so you hear that. From of old no one has heard or perceived with the ear.

No eye has seen a God besides you like this. What? What is unique about our God who works for those who wait for Him? That's Isaiah 64, 4. He gives a picture of it in Isaiah 46, 1-4 where he says, Bel, the Babylonian god bows down. Nebo bows down.

They are carried on carts. So now picture this. The gods of the nations have to be worked for.

We work for our God and we show how great He is by working for them. And so they put them on carts and they pull the carts to get their God where they want Him to be. And you know what Isaiah puts as a contrast to that? He says, From your birth I have carried you.

I will carry and will save. I will carry and redeem. To your gray hairs I am He and there is no other.

I carry and I save. You don't work for God, He works for you. Our job is to discover how to live by faith in future grace.

So I'm going to close with a very, very practical acronym. How do I, John Piper, preach by faith in future grace? How do I get on the bus this afternoon at 2 o'clock by faith in future grace? How do I be in the hotel? How do I get on the plane? How do I go home? How do I greet my little six year old by faith in future grace? How do you talk to the person beside you on the plane and give them something by faith in future grace? Here's my acronym and I leave this with you. APTAT.

Aptat, I call it. I've used it for years and years. Probably 15.

I sit in my chair there before I come up here. This is just one example of thousands. I know I'm about to stand here before you and I'm supposed to speak the Word of God.

I'm supposed to be anointed by the Holy Spirit. I'm supposed to be carried and helped and strengthened and not be my own self. Be strong in the strength that God supplies, that in everything God may get the glory.

I hear that. So, A, I admit, admit I can do nothing without you of any spiritual or lasting significance. I admit it.

I am bankrupt. I am helpless. My hands are empty.

My lips are tainted. I have nothing that I can do here that will cause anybody to be saved, anybody to be spiritually strengthened, anybody to endure in ministry for Christ's sake. All I can do is attract attention to myself if left to myself.

So, that's number one. A, admit. P, I pray for help.

Sometimes it's just, Oh, God, help me. Sometimes it's, Give me a prophetic anointing. Sometimes it's, Fill me with your Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it's, Help me to remember what's in my notes. Sometimes it's, Help me not to think about my back. Sometimes it's, Or whatever.

And I hadn't been thinking about my back until I just said that. P, pray for whatever you need. A, P, T. Second, first T. Aptat.

A, P, T. Trust a particular promise. I stress particular promise because I don't want to just say, Trust Jesus. I want to say, Trust something that he said.

This is why you got to do devotions in the morning. I'm not a legalist. I just think everybody should do devotions every morning without fail.

Motivated by desperation. And when you do devotions, Demand from the Bible a promise. I got to have a promise for my life today.

And I, I wrote down a whole slew of them in here and I'm going to get killed for taking so long here. But, Okay, okay, okay. I know, I know.

There's going to be an uprising. Okay. Particular examples of how I do this.

If I'm fearing that I'm lacking in something, I bring to mind the promise, My God will supply all your needs. If I'm fearing that I'm useless in life, I bring to mind the promise, Nothing done for Christ will be in vain. 1 Corinthians 15 and 58.

If I fear weakness, I go to 2 Corinthians 12 and 9. My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in weakness. If I'm fearing some decision that I have to make and I need help, I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you will go.

If I'm fearing opponents, I go to Romans 8.31. If God is for us, who can be against us? If I'm fearing affliction, I go to Psalm 34.19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous and the Lord brings them out of them all. If I'm fearing getting old and wondering if my mind will keep working, wondering if I'll be able to remember what to say, and wondering if I'll get arthritis and won't be able to move and travel, and if I'm

fearing those kinds of things, then I go back to my good friend in Isaiah 46.4. Even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made you and I will bear.

Or if I fear dying, I go to Romans 14.7. None of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord. And if we die, we die to the Lord.

Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. And so what I mean when I get to the T in Aptat, A-P-T, trust the particular promises, keep those promises or one of them, just one of them, in a pocket or in your head, and when you have to do something that's challenging, bow and say, I can't do it, Lord. I pray for Your help.

And then read the promise and say, I trust You. And what do you think the A is? A-P-T-A Act. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you.

We've got to act. You've got to use your will. You've got to do things.

You lie in bed in the morning saying, Oh Lord God, I want to get out of bed by faith and future grace, so just get me out. Get me out. Do it.

Well, I guess it's not your will. Wrong. Say, say, get me out.

Trust, I'll help you. I'll strengthen you. I'll support you.

And then, get up with your willpower. But, once you've gotten up and you're over your Bible, with your eyes drooping, an elbow on one side, an elbow on the other, doing your devotions non-legalistically, the last T, A-P-T-A-T, is thank Him. You didn't get there on your own.

Felt like you did. I feel like I'm preaching. Time and God will tell whether God has preached here.

But, you thank Him. So, why don't we just do that. Let's just pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZCQsjUYKUEw.mp4>
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