

Loved With Everlasting Love - Part 1

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the sovereignty of God and how it is compatible with his love for us, emphasizing that God's choice is based on his good pleasure and that he welcomes everyone who comes to him on his terms.

Duration: 49:48

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-7, Ephesians 1:11-12

Topics: "Everlasting Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of delivering the message that God has specifically instructed. He highlights that Jesus was careful to only say what the Father told him to say, as it determined who would come to him. The preacher also explains that although we may know God as our loving Father, we must not forget that he is also the sovereign ruler of the universe. The sermon further discusses how God's plan of salvation is intricately connected to his sovereign choice of recipients for his grace.

Transcript

The gift of thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, with whom, through whom, thou hast given us all things. We ask that the eyes of our understanding may be opened, that we may see the things that thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Speak to our hearts today, show us where we are, where thou dost want us to be, the provisions thou hast made so that we can be where and what thou dost want us to be.

And then incline our hearts with that firm unfaltering purpose, that we'll not be content with ourselves until the Lord Jesus is satisfied with us. We know that one day we'll awaken his likeness, but today we realize that we're not, thou art not through with us, there's still more. And we welcome everything that thou dost do because we know thy purpose is to conform us to the image of thy Son.

We worship thee, we adore thee, thou God of all grace. And may these meditations in today and in these ensuing days and this month cause our hearts to be filled with praise and adoration, love and thanksgiving. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ephesians, we're there again. Two years ago when I came with you, we were in to the epistle of the Colossians and we learned a little bit about Colossae. Last year we were considering the epistle to the Philippians and we learned a bit about Philippi.

Now today we are going to go to the epistle to the Ephesians but with a very specific purpose, to see in it that which sets forth our God in his sovereignty. Now, the Bible does not teach systematic theology. Did you know that? No, it doesn't.

Men systematize theology. The Bible teaches responsibility. The Bible teaches us how to worship, how to pray, how to praise, how to adore, how to obey, how to serve.

But it doesn't teach systematic theology. That which we call systematized theology is man's effort to bring together all that the Scripture has to say about a particular aspect of truth. Now, when we say, therefore, we are considering the sovereignty of God, we are not doing it from the standpoint of Hodges or Strong or Burkow or any of the theologians.

We are doing it from the standpoint of the apostle who gave to us the truth and the testimony and the witness and the revelation, but he did it in the stream of responsibility and worship and adoration, service. That's where we find the teaching. And we begin with the first verse of the first chapter of Ephesians.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. So right at the very outset, we're seeing the sovereignty of God introduced in the text. He's an apostle by the will of God, not by the will of his parents, who undoubtedly dedicated him to that highest of service, namely to be a religious teacher, for he had been born into a Roman, a Jewish family, but with Roman citizenship, thus entitling him to the highest privileges of education and opportunity of acquaintance with leaders.

And as a Pharisee, of course, he was given privilege of being associated again with these teachers whose theology was fundamental and orthodox, as in contrast to the Sadducees, who were liberal in every aspect. And Paul had committed himself to Judaism to such a degree that when Christ appeared on the scene after his resurrection and there was this testimony that he was alive from the dead, Saul of Tarsus considered this a major threat to the security of Judaism and devoted his energy to the extermination of this heretical sect that dared to say that a man had come back from the dead. And it was in this zeal and in this dedication that he had stood by, holding the garments and thus approving as a Pharisee and as a Roman the breaking of the law, which said that all execution had to be by the Romans, couldn't be by the Jews.

And yet he there consented because of the horrendous nature in his eyes of the affirmation of Stephen that Jesus Christ was alive and standing in the right hand of the throne of God and that he could see him and talk to him, which, if all of which were true, meant that indeed this heretical sect wasn't heretical and Christ had risen from the dead. So here's a man totally dedicated to the extermination of Christianity who says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. And you recall there on the road to Damascus when he, with his jaw jutting and his teeth clenched and his will fixed, was proceeding to Damascus there to arrest and condemn and have executed all who followed Christ.

And he's overshadowed by that bright light and he hears a voice from the midst of the light saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who art thou, one to be held in awe and reverence and worship? Who art thou, Lord? For that's the meaning in that use of it. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Arise, stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. Here you see at the very first words of this epistle this introduction to a sovereign God, a God who reigns, a God who rules, a God who controls, a God who

directs, a God who's in charge, who's never abdicated government, never relinquished the throne, never put down the scepter of his authority. There he is, an apostle by the will of God.

To the saints which are at Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us under the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace.

Now, Ephesians begins with the doxology. So does 2 Corinthians, so does 1 Peter. But this is the most sublime, the most complete, has the most profound insight, and therefore it is probably to be viewed by us as more than just a few verses, from verse 3 through verse 14.

I will endeavor to bring to you the next Lord's Day a setting forth of these verses that will show you how they might be viewed as a doxology, as a peon of praise, as a hymn of worship. For such it is. That's what it is.

As I said, there's a profound insight here that our salvation is the whole work of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Salvation is the work of God. That's what this doxology tells us.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The source of all blessing is God. God the Father, who is also God the Sovereign.

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means that he is the head of all things. All things are under him.

All spiritual blessings are from him, and all time is overshadowed by his grace. You've got to feel somehow what the Apostle is saying to these poor, ignorant, virtually illiterate, uneducated, Ephesian, Gentile converts, who are a few months or at the most a few years out of dreadful paganism, groveling before the shrine of Diana in the most voluptuous, immoral, salacious worship of which we have any record. And they haven't had a great deal of teaching.

A group of Ephesians, Jew, had met, a group of Ephesians rather, had been at Jerusalem, and the day of, or prior to actually, they'd heard of John's baptism unto repentance. They had heard of the one who was to come. Then they met Paul, and you'll recall he was satisfied with the genuineness of their faith, and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

He accepted them into that fellowship of the saints. Then he spent a bit of time with them. Later he said that he was with them house to house, day by day, teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

They'd had some teaching, but not a great deal. Nothing like you've been privileged to have. They didn't have the Scripture in their language.

Scripture of the Old Testament was all in Hebrew, and they wouldn't have known Hebrew, nor would they have had any access to the Old Testament teachings about Christ. But here they are, a company of believers, meeting together, worshiping together, serving together, and he's addressing now a letter to them, and he is saying, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Human love, which they would have known, of course, is

but a faint glimpse or light shadow of God's eternal love.

That's what he is telling them, that from eternity past, God the Father has loved them, and he's loved us. That this love is from his heart. It didn't have a beginning.

It won't have an ending. As earthly parents provide good things for their children, try to protect their children, try to prepare their children to live fruitfully and effectively, how much more does God infinitely prepare for his children? We deal with a father. That's what he's telling them.

We're dealing with someone who has a father's heart, a father's concern, a father's love. He's a sovereign, he reigns, he rules, but he's a father. And how to join together the fact that God is sovereign, and God is father, without diminishing his sovereignty, without diluting his authority, and still can be the God of all grace, the author of our salvation.

The source, therefore, of all blessing, verse 3 discloses to us, is the Father. Blessed be the God and Father who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Understand that.

Now why? Well, Paul is going to talk to them about this God who is sovereign, but he first wants them to understand that he's father. You see, he's not teaching systematic theology. He's introducing them to their father, telling them about their father.

And because they understand his love, and they understand his grace, and they understand his mercy, and they understand the peace that he's brought into their hearts, and into their lives, they're not going to draw back when they discover something else, like some child born into the home of a king. And all he knows, does that babe, as he begins to become aware of those about him, is that there's a certain person that comes at a certain hour of the day, and takes this little one in his hands, and cuddles him, and plays with him, and tickles him, and laughs, and coos at him, and makes all the silly sounds that fathers and grandfathers make toward little children. And then he gets a little older, and he discovers that when his father speaks, people move.

And then sometime he comes in, and he finds that his father's sitting above the others on a very important-looking chair. And then there comes a moment when he's aware that his father is the king, and has the power of life and death over his subjects. Now, he knows this king as father, but he isn't any less king because he's father.

And so, we who once were the children of the God of this world, who once obeyed him, are now being taught by the apostle that the one into whose family we have been born, the one who has, by his grace, washed us from our sin, and removed that great weight of guilt and condemnation, whom we have called Abba, Father, is none other than the sovereign of the universe. That's what he wants them to understand, and that's what he wants us to understand. So, the next verse, I'm going to skip to the fifth verse, and we'll come back in a moment to the fourth.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, there's a sovereign speaking, or the word spoken of by the Holy Spirit concerning a sovereign. We're in his family. We're in his family according to the good pleasure of his will.

But what is the teaching? The rule of blessing is the good pleasure of his will. It is the good pleasure of his will to bless all those who come to him as he has prescribed and as he has invited. The sovereign God is the sovereign ruler of all blessing.

Now, we view this from Earth with narrow, bigoted little minds, and it may be troublesome to think that someone is somewhere because someone decided that that one should be somewhere can be a little bit reprehensible to those of us that have been so associated with democracy that we do not hold to the divine right of anything by birth or by the choice of others. We would like to think we live in a world where only merit prevails and only ability is recognized and honored. Perhaps reaching the age that we have as an average in the group, we may conclude that there are often other factors that enter into promotion and demotion other than just merit alone, but be that as it may, there's still something about us, in us, that says, I don't particularly like the idea that somebody has predestinated us under the adoption of children to himself by the good pleasure of his will.

Well, I can understand how, from this point of view, that might have a problem or two. But as viewed from the heavenlies, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, viewed from there, we can see the truth, we can see the propriety of this arrangement. And why? Well, in heaven, everyone acquiesces to the Sovereign Father's rule and government.

There isn't any challenge to it there. The angels cover their faces and cry, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. And there is, in heaven, no challenge to his authority.

There once was, but the ones who challenged were cast out. And now, in heaven, there is no challenge to his authority, and all acquiesce to it. And since all he wills is good, those who are in heaven are content to abide by his rule.

And they find no problem with it. But you see, on earth, we have another situation. Do you remember what it was that the God of this world, the serpent Lucifer in that form, said to our Mother Eve? Yea, hath God said thou shalt not eat? God knows that when you're going to do this, you'll be as God.

And he doesn't want you to be as God. He's trying to rob you and to cheat you. This is good to eat, and it'll make you wise.

See, God doesn't love you. He's not on your side. He's not interested in your happiness.

To the contrary, he's trying to take away from you all that would make you happy. You thought God loved you? No. In essence, he said God only loves himself, and he's using you.

That was the argument. So that's the atmosphere. That's the atmosphere of the world in which we live.

The God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel should shine unto them. Now, there are some to whom the light of the gospel has shined. Who are they? They're the ones that have been awakened by the Spirit of God, convicted of their crime of playing God, and usurping authority in their lives, and turning to their own way.

And they have renounced that crime. They've changed their mind about insisting on being God in their own lives. They've ceased their warfare against God.

And they've, in that repentance, that change of mind, they have embraced God in the person of Jesus Christ as the rightful ruler of their life. They've confessed him to be Lord, King, Sovereign, Boss. Having heretofore been Lord, King, Sovereign, Boss in their own lives.

And by that renunciation of their crime of sin, they have been pardoned from their past, forgiven of their crimes, had a new heart, a new spirit imparted by God's Spirit, and have had certified to them that they have been put into God's family because God the Holy Spirit enables them to cry when thinking of and addressing this one who is sovereign, before whom a little while ago they may have cringed in terror because of their crime. Now they can cry, Abba, Father. And what do they find? Well, what happened? All that the sinner knows is that he saw himself.

All that the sinner knows is that he hated what he saw. All that he knows is that he renounced what he hated. He knows that he embraced the one that was shown to him.

He knows that he did what was presented to him to do, and as a result, now, he also knows that he has been born into the family of God and he can call God Father. So from the sinner's point of view, he doesn't know anything at all about this having been predestinated unto adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. All he knows is that what he saw, he hated, namely his crimes against God.

And what he hated, he renounced. And having renounced sin, he embraced Jesus Christ as the sovereign of his life and the one who died for his crimes. And then he has this inner certainty, the witness of the Spirit, that he's been born of God.

That's all the sinner knows. Because he's looking at it on an experiential level. He's seeing it now in terms of what's happened to him.

But what does the third verse say? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Now, looking down on it, looking down on it, is what the apostle is doing. He discovers that there's no surprise in all of this, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

In other words, there's two aspects to it. The area of responsibility of the sinner, doing what he's supposed to do with what he's seen about himself and about God, and then the overview of God. So what Paul is doing is taking these decisions with him so that they can look down on this whole experience and understand that their God indeed is sovereign, that the rule of blessing is the good pleasure of his will.

God is so good that he cannot even will anything that is not good. Justice is willed by him because it is good, and injustice is evil. Vengeance in punishing sin is willed by him because vengeance is better than impunity in respect to the law.

And therefore, everything that God wills has to come out of his character, out of all that he is, and therefore, when they see it in retrospect, afterward, as we are, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Now, suppose someone were to truly be convicted of his sin, truly repent, truly receive Christ, whom God hadn't predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. Well, it isn't really a question.

It's not a question. Because, you see, the essence of it is, as the Lord Jesus said, all that the Father has given me will come unto me, and whosoever will may come. So the essence isn't that somebody will come whom he didn't adopt or see as one that would come.

No. Everyone who comes is welcome. Outside this gate is whosoever will may come.

There it is. A sovereign God said it. A sovereign God declared it.

Whosoever will may come. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live, turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? So what has he done? He has predestinated to be adopted as children all who will come on his terms. Now we come to another, come to another element, another question.

And that is, did he choose who would come? Well, I have, we have six children, Marjorie and I. We know them pretty well. We know our children well enough to know that if we were to establish certain conditions, certain children, certain of them would respond. We just know how our children are made.

We don't know how it came about that they were so much like us, but that's the way they are. We know them. We know what they will do, what they won't do.

Some are born, you know, some are born in the negative mood, and some are born like little grandsons, like Adam. I say, if I, I'd never say, Adam, come and sit on my lap and hug me. I'd say, Adam, you can't sit on my lap or hug me.

And he's right over that. I just know how he works. He's put together that way.

Now, the moment that God, or when God decided how people would be saved, okay, when God determined the means of grace, he also determined those who would be the recipients of grace. For instance, suppose that the plan of salvation, other than what it is, had been that an angel comes down and picks somebody up by the scruff of the neck, takes them up 5,000 feet, and says, if you don't repent, I'm going to drop you. No parachute.

Now, sensible people in that situation would do something like repent. I have a feeling. There would be a whole different class of people that responded to that kind of a gospel presentation than the one that is.

In other words, the determination of the method or the means determines the response. I mean, you know how excited the disciples were there in John 6 when the Lord was with that group of people, and they had that great multitude. Want to make him king? I can just hear the disciples saying, you know, we've had, boy, it's been meager so far.

We left that fishing business, but at least we had something regular to eat. If we couldn't sell our fish, we could eat them. But since we've been out here with him, I thought we were going to get something worthwhile.

And they said, well, look at that crowd. Now, there's a couple of good offerings there, I'll tell you. So what's he do? He tells them, he ends up by telling them, you are your father the devil.

Well, that's not how to win friends and influence a big offering. I mean, you know, it's not how you're going to get it done. And they go away and leave him.

And as they drift off, he turns to the disciples and said, are you going to go? And they said, Lord, we've been thinking about it. But the fact is, only you have the words of eternal life. We don't know where to go.

We're committed in this thing. But you sure, that's a hard saying you have. You sure know how to lose an audience in a hurry.

And the Lord Jesus said, look, I'm not afraid I won't get them. I'm afraid I'll get the wrong ones. You see? Because if I get that devil's crowd, what in the world am I going to do with it? I can't nurture them in the

admonition of the Lord till they grow up into Christ and all things under a perfect man.

That's not what they want. So I get a bunch of them, what am I going to do with them? I'm not afraid of that. I won't get them.

I'm afraid I will get the wrong ones. And then I won't know what in the world to do with them. Previously he said, I'm going to war against an enemy with 20,000.

I only got 10,000. But I'll tell you one thing. I'm going to be real careful who I got for my 10,000 because he doesn't care who he puts in his crowd.

I'm going to be real careful about those who get in mine. But we've forgotten all about that. And we figured that the Lord didn't know what he was doing.

The numbers were the thing. And the more the better. But that day when he had a crowd, he wasn't trying to get them all in.

He was hoping he'd get them all out, all those that would go. Because he said, all that the Father has given me will come to me. When he left heaven, the Father said, Son, you go and you say exactly what I told you to say and all that I've given you will come to you.

But if you say anything else, you're going to get a crowd and even you won't know what to do with them. So he was awful careful to say just what the Father told him to say. Why? Because what the Father told him to say determined who would come.

You see? That was the condition. That was the screening. That was the way by which he would get them.

So what's the message? Repent, said he. Repent. Throw down the arms of your warfare.

Climb down off that little false throne you've built in your hearts and crawl up on and thrust your fist in the face of God and say, I'll do what I want to do. Get down. Get down.

Tell Jesus Christ from the day on he's to be in charge. He's to rule. He's to govern.

He's to control. Receive him as your Lord, to rule and govern as king and sovereign and boss and as your Savior who died, shed his blood, pay for your mountainous mountain of crime. Then that message, that message unto as many as received him the way the Father said he was to present it to them, and only to them did he give the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

So what we have then here is, yes, having predestinated us under the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. But what's the good pleasure of his will? The message, the method of salvation. That's how.

That's the way he chose. It was his way as that message that was to go out. And every time we change it, we are saying God is no longer sovereign.

We're sovereign. We'll determine what the plan of salvation is and what should be preached and how it should be presented. We aren't going to trust him anymore.

I was a few years ago down in Memphis, and a man, a pastor said, when I started we had about 100 people that loved the Lord. Then we had a big evangelist come in. We got 300.

It got more difficult than last year. I had another big evangelist come in. We got 300 more.

We got 700 people, and even God himself doesn't know what to do with them. One more meeting like that and the church is ruined. What was he saying? He was saying he had evangelists who made their living by the result of results, numbers.

And so they had altered the message to such a way that people could get in who had never met the condition so clearly established in the Word of God. So, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, the Father told the Son what to say, and the Son told us what to say. And that's the whole essence of it, that we do what the Father said because it's the good pleasure of his will.

Now verse 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. The Father planned this blessing of his adopted children before the foundation of the world. Before the world began, the Father made this full and complete and perfect plan.

Everything starts from the sovereignty of God as the rule of all blessing. Now, the blessing of his adopted children was deliberately planned from eternity past, before the foundation of the world. What was this blessing of his children? That they should glorify him.

How would they glorify him? These who had by the fall been made in the image and likeness of their father the devil, such were you, such was I. Now, because God in his grace has made this perfect plan of salvation, we're to come back to him on his terms, his conditions, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love. Before the foundation of the world, the Father decided that. Now, who are we to change it? Who are we to alter it? Who are we to say something other than what the Father said? Can't do it.

What would you think of an earthly father who raises his children to be thugs and criminals? To live in lawlessness. What would you think of a heavenly father that has a plan of salvation, that lets people go on after they've professed to be bought out of death and into life and into relation, who go on living the same kind of lives they did when they were under the God of this world and controlled by him? What would you think of such a father? Why you'd say he's reprehensible, he's a beast, if he trains his children to be thugs and criminals? What would you think of a heavenly father that has a family, that he's gathering together, where he has no intention while they're alive in time to do anything about their character, but sometime when they die, it's all going to happen in an instant, between now and then they can go on living as though they were still the children of the dead. What would you think of such a father? I remember years ago, I had a copy of, I don't have it anymore, maybe it was borrowed then, of the Sovereign Grace Conference at Park Street Church in London, of which Charles Haddon Spurgeon was the pastor.

Park Street preceded the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which was the great center of Spurgeon's ministry, seated 5,000 people. But there at Park Street, in the introductory remarks, it was the Sovereign Grace Conference, he said, we are dealing with the subject of election, he said, there are those in London and in other parts of Britain who have been so rash as to say that we, who hold to the teachings of the scripture in regard to the sovereignty of our God, teach that men can receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and continue to live in sin. I declare to you today, and I wish the reporters from the London and the country papers to take this down and publish it widely, anyone who says that Charles Spurgeon or those who fellowship with him in this Sovereign Grace Fellowship believe that a person can receive Jesus Christ and

continue to live in sin, anyone I say who so affirms that we believe is either criminal or crazy, nor I will enlarge it, said he, anyone who so teaches, be he here elsewhere, that one can have partaken of the election unto holiness and continue to live in known sin deliberately is either criminal or crazy.

This is an election unto holiness and not escape from justice. So what do we see here? He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. For what? That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

That's what he's chosen. Then as the God of all grace, he is going to provide everything necessary for us to be everything he purposed. Do you see? Now we're talking about the sovereignty of God in relation to the salvation of men.

Yes, it's an election to holiness and blamelessness before him in love. Holiness is the end aimed at in his love. When this is lost sight of, confusion reigns.

As long as a professor of religion, as long as one who claims to be a Christian, loves sin and hates holiness and righteousness and godliness of life, he has no warrant to affirm faith in Christ. Men are not called because they are holy. Men are not drawn because they are holy.

God came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance. It is a call to become holy, to repent. The essence of sin is I'll do what I want to do.

The essence of change is Lord, what do you want me to do? So we get to the essence, the edge of it then. What is it? Well, the Lord knoweth them that are his and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. It's so important, therefore, for us to realize that he's predestinated us to adoption through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of his will.

Now in verse 6, just in closing, why? That we might be to the praise of the glory of his grace. That's what it's all about. This sovereign God, before the foundation of the world, prepared and planned and provided a salvation that would have as its end result that we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Now we begin to see how the sovereignty of God is taught not in systematic theology, but when the apostle is writing to a company of redeemed people, Gentile believers up in a little place called Ephesus. And I think he's also saying something to us in a little place called Bethesda in Maryland. And he's telling us that we are to be to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Shall we then turn our hearts in prayer? How grateful we are to thee, our Father, that thou and thy great grace and sovereign love are still calling men out of death into life and out of rebellion. We would ask thee that somehow we might recognize that that call has been effectual and true in our own hearts and lives. That we do indeed with all there is in us long to please thee and honor thee and to glorify thee in everything.

That we might in every way and in everything do only that, say, think only that, which will glorify thee. So to that end, Father, we would give ourselves afresh to thee today. And we pray for in this land of ours, in this world of which we're a part, with so many voices, so many different accents and emphases, that we might again hear that sweet, simple, clarion message of the Lord Jesus Christ sounded to our day and to our generation.

Repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, that will result in men indeed being brought out of death into life and brought out of rebellion into submission, brought out of uncleanness into holiness. Lord God of grace, bless us to that end ourselves before thee now. In Jesus' name.

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