

Praise God!

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[0 : 0 0] Today, the scripture comes from Ephesians chapter 1 verses 1 to 14.! I invite you to follow along in your own Bibles or on the screen above. There are also Bibles around, so feel free to grab one of those.

The passage is on page 917. Ephesians 1 verse 1 to 14. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[1 : 3 6] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who are the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you heard of the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

This is the word of God. Let's pray together. Oh, Father God, this scripture calls us to praise you and to glorify you, and we join with saints throughout the ages, throughout the world in doing that this morning.

God, all praise to you, to the praise of your glory and your grace. God, thank you for all that you are. You are, God, the king of everything. You are the king of the mountain peaks, you're the king of the valleys, the king of the countryside, you're the king of the cities, you're the king of our hearts, you're the king, God, of summer seasons and winter seasons, of spring and autumn.

You, God, are the Lord of all creation, of gigantic beasts and, God, tiny insects, of the best things in life and the difficult seasons.

[3 : 0 1] God, this morning we've come to acknowledge that you are king and Lord. To you be the praise and the glory. God, why don't you speak to us from your word, from this passage. Help us, God, as a church to, for you to be big in our hearts and for us to be small.

God, help us, God, to live lives that are centered and surrounded on you. God, we pray that, as EJ shared, Lord, you really will be the pillar of this church.

You'll be the strength, the core, God, that everything that is a watermark, if there's anything good about this church, it'll be you, God. We pray, God, make that true of us. Come speak to us, Spirit of God.

In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, today is obviously a day of great celebration. We have so much to celebrate and be joyful about.

Milestones in life are a great time to celebrate. Whenever you reach a milestone, whether it's the birth of a new child, think of Walter and Jaya had a baby girl this week, what an occasion to celebrate.

[4 : 03] Maybe graduating from high school or university, maybe saying your wedding vows or getting a promotion. Milestones, it's fitting and it's good and it's right to celebrate these occasions.

And for us as a church family, as we move into this venue, what a milestone for us as a church. And it's good and right that we celebrate God's goodness to us. Today I am celebrating, as Oscar said, our venue search team, Bernard, Colin, Oscar forgot to mention himself, all the amount of work he's done, Oscar as well.

Our finance team, Karen and Ed, our elders, Dan and Simon, and all your hard work. Thank you, guys. I'm celebrating our amazing staff team. I know I'm repeating what Oscar said, but our team that have worked so long.

This week I got an email and I saw when it was sent at 3 a.m. in the morning, our staff team still finishing and finalizing everything to move in here. Today we celebrate Raymond and his team for they've worked so hard to get this venue right, the contractors and the builders.

Today we celebrate you, the Watermark family, for your contribution, your service, your coming and serving, your giving, your patience with delays, your patience when there's no parking at Ebenezer, coming to church in the rain because there was no parking.

[5 : 19] Thank you, Watermark, for being an amazing church. Just this week I was thinking, so grateful to God for the privilege that I and my family have. This is the most remarkable church I've ever been a part of.

And it's a great joy to be part of this church family. But today, more than anything, more than anything else, we celebrate God's goodness and his grace to us as a church family. For all the ways that he's carried us through, not just the last six months or 18 months, but the last 15 years, from October the 10th, 2010, when Watermark started, God's goodness and grace, all praise to him, to God be the glory, great things he has done.

In Psalm 122, David writes and says, I was very glad when they said to me, come, let us go to the house of the Lord. Today, I am very glad and exceedingly joyful to gather with you, fellow members, fellow pilgrims on this journey of faith, to gather in this place and worship our great God and King together.

This week, as I was thinking, praying for our time, the scripture kept on coming to my mind. And I want to share it with us is, um, there's a story in the gospels. Uh, I think it's in Luke 10, where Jesus sends his disciples, his followers out on a mission.

And he commissions them in his name to go and do mighty works, to cast out demons, to push back darkness, to be agents of grace and healing in the city of Jerusalem.

[6 : 41] And he sends them out. And they come back a few days later, rejoicing at all the great things that they've done. And this is what they say, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

But Jesus responds, do not rejoice in this, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Friends, this move to watermark has been a wonderful and a challenging journey of faith for our entire congregation.

Praise God. But as we gather here this morning, we gather not to rejoice in this. We gather not to celebrate ourselves. We rejoice in something far more wonderful, something far more profound, something far more deep and glorious.

This morning, we've come to celebrate our God and our King, our Lord and our Savior, the one who upholds and sustains this church, the one who upholds and sustains our faith.

We've come to celebrate the depth of his riches, of his grace and his kindness towards us. Friends, today, we are not the victors. We are not the champions of the story. We are not the overcomers.

[7 : 45] The story is not about us. This morning, we gather, as we will do for many years to come, all of us, pastors, leaders, staff, congregation, we gather empty handed.

We gather with nothing in our hands. We gather this morning to receive from Christ, our King, what only he can give us, which is his grace and his mercy, to the praise of his glorious grace.

And so in Hebrews five, it says, this says, let us draw near to his throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need. And so this morning, all I want to do for us is to remind us where the throne of grace is.

I want to remind us who it is that we come to worship and adore this morning, the center and the substance of our church, so that we can come and receive the grace that we need. And if you're not a follower of Jesus this morning, I want to simply tell you what Jesus offers you when he invites you to trust in him.

So let's look at this passage that Zoe read to us. Open it up in your Bibles with you. If we're going to look at this passage again, Ephesians chapter one, and look at verse three with me.

[8 : 49] The apostle Paul writes this. He says, blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So another translation says, praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what we've come to do this morning. We've come to praise him, to bless him for who he is. We've come to lift our eyes off of the temporary, off of the fleeting, off of the mundane, off of something like as fleeting as a building onto him and praise and glorify him.

But why? Why should we do that? Why should we praise God? Well, this passage tells us, look at what verse three says, blessed be or praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. I don't know if you've ever been in a position where you weigh out of your depth or beyond your pay grade, but because you're with someone special, you're able to get to do things that you wouldn't normally get to do.

Do you know what I mean? When I was growing up, my father was the CEO of a big reinsurance company, Africa's biggest reinsurance company. And so I could go into his office and I could go places and do things and eat things out of the kitchen that nobody else was allowed to do.

[10 : 09] I was able to experience privileges that people that were way more qualified than me, way better than me, way more deserving than me, maybe not able to do. And if anyone ever questioned me or asked me, Hey, what are you doing in there?

I just needed to say, I'm with him, right? I'm with him. The new Testament's favorite phrase to describe followers of Jesus is not the word Christian.

The word Christian actually hardly appears in the new Testament at all. In fact, it only appears three times. And every time it appears, it's, it's probably used as an insult. It's a derogatory term. It's, it's a term of mocking.

The phrase that the Bible uses to describe followers of Jesus are those who are in Christ, those who are in Christ. And what that means is that when the Bible says followers of Jesus are in Christ, it means that we are so united with him, so joined with him, so one with him, that what is true of Jesus is in a sense true of us.

Now we're not divine. We don't become God, but all the blessings, all the privileges, all the benefits of Christ are, we so unite with him that it's almost like we're with him and we get the blessings that are associated with him.

[11 : 22] And so Paul writes here and he says, because those of us that are followers of Jesus are in Christ, we are blessed beyond we can possibly imagine. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Friends, that's what we've come to celebrate the blessings of being in Christ. And so what does that mean? Well, three things for us to think about this morning. Just very simply, Christ gives us a new start, a new life, a new hope.

Let's look at those things together. Firstly, a new start. Look at verse seven with me. Verse seven, eight. He says this in him or in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins or trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us.

In him, we have redemption. When we use the word redemption in Hong Kong, we don't use that word very often, but the way that we sometimes use it is like redemption of a shopping coupon, right?

Or a voucher. Somebody gives you a voucher and you go and redeem the voucher. And what that means is you given the voucher and somebody gives you something in return. But in the ancient world, the word redeem or redemption actually meant to pay a payment and release somebody from slavery or their financial debt or their servitude through the payment of a ransom price or redemption price.

[12 : 50] So you pay a redemption price to someone. You give somebody money and you set them free. You absorb their debt as your own. You, um, in order to set them free from their bondage or their debt or their servitude.

So maybe some of us here have, uh, student loans, or maybe you've got some other debt. You got a credit card debt, or you owe somebody some money and you know, the weight on your shoulders, right?

It feels like you're a slave to that person. You are not free until your debt is paid. In your ancient world to set somebody free from the debt that they owed was to redeem them through price of redemption.

The Bible says that all of us are moral beings and we live in a moral universe. I think we all know that, right? It's why we feel injustice.

So bad. It's why we get so rage when things are wrong in our world. When we read the news and read about wars and, and invasions and innocent people dying and suffering in our world, it riles us.

[13 : 49] Why? Because we're not just animals. We're not just atoms floating around in a meaningless world. We are moral beings in a moral world. Okay. But the Bible says it's not just warlords and criminals and murderers and rapists out there that have fallen short of this moral universe.

Actually, all of us have. All of us have fallen short in this moral universe. All of us. Our sin is real. Our guilt is genuine. Our moral debt is true.

Our spiritual bondage is real. And Jesus says, for this purpose, I came for this reason. I lived and died and rose again.

Remember when Jesus was asked, why are you spending so much time with immoral people with, with those people? Why don't you come spend time with the religious people, the good people? And Jesus says, this is why I came to give my life as a ransom, a redemption price for many to save us from our sins.

Friends, what the new Testament tells us again and again is that Jesus Christ, the son of God has come to deal with our moral debt, to absolve our guilt, to cover our shame, to give us a fresh start.

[14 : 59] How so? Through his blood. The passage tells us Jesus redeemed us through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus Christ, fully God, fully man, our perfect representative, our flawless substitute went to the cross, dying for our sin, rising for our exoneration, that we may be set free from our moral debt, from our sin, from our shame, from our guilt.

Listen to the wonderful words of Ephesians chapter two, just the very next page in your Bible. Verse one says, as for us, as for you, as for us, we were dead in our trespasses and sins, in which we once walked, following the ways of this world, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and the heart.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, this God has made us alive with Christ.

By grace, we have been saved. Friends, this is why Jesus has come, to give us a fresh start, to wipe away the past. Remember, John Stott's famous words, describing Jesus' redemption.

This is what he said. The essence of sin, is man substituting himself for God. The essence of salvation, is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God, and puts himself where only God deserves to be.

[16 : 21] God sacrifices himself for man, and puts himself where man deserves to be. Man claims prerogative, that belong to God alone. God accepts penalties, that belong to man alone.

Friends, Jesus Christ, a wonderful savior. And we must be careful to remember, that Jesus isn't just a therapeutic savior. He hasn't come just to make us feel better.

He's an actual savior, that's come to deal with actual moral failure. Jesus hasn't come just to tell us, don't worry about your sin, don't worry about your shame, it's okay, just forget it.

Jesus has come to assume it, to bear it, to take it as his own, to ransom us. In him we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace, which he has lavished upon us.

Friends, why the apostle Paul writes elsewhere, in the New Testament, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone, behold all things are new.

[17 : 23] It's why when people get baptized, they go down in the water, as a symbol that the old life, is dead and buried, it is gone, and raised to new life, Jesus has come to give us, a new start.

Friends, it's why when the Israelites, left Egypt, they were ransomed, and redeemed, by the blood of the lambs, and the sheep. When they left Egypt, and went into promised land, God said to them, this is the first day, of the new year for you.

From now on, your calendar, your diary, your whole life, as a nation, starts again. I'm giving you, a new start. Friends, wouldn't we all like, a chance to start again?

To start this year again? To start our studies again? To start our relationships again? To start our marriage again? To start our parenting again?

Friends, wouldn't we all love to know, that our words, our thoughts, our actions, our guilt, and our shame, have been dealt with? Friends, is there anything in your story, that you wish you could undo, delete, or remove?

[18 : 29] Jesus Christ, has come to deal, with our sin, and our shame, so that those who are in Christ, can be truly renewed. In him, we have redemption, a fresh start, through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, which he has lavished upon, according to riches of his grace, that he's lavished upon us.

A new start. Secondly, a new life. Now, one of the things we must, constantly be aware of, and guard against, is the idea that Jesus, is simply the entrance, into the Christian life.

Jesus is somehow, the golden ticket, to get, that gets us into, Willy Wonka's chocolate factory, right? And if you get the golden ticket, you're in. And then you just live as you please. Actually, those that are followers of Jesus, know that Jesus, isn't just the entry, into the Christian life, he is the life.

He is our entire life. Jesus hasn't just dealt, with our past, he's come to reframe our entire existence, and give us a new identity, altogether. And so look at verse 4, to 6 with me.

Reading from verse 3, actually, he says, Blessed be the God and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ, with every spiritual blessing. The end of verse 4, A few years ago, I was talking with a friend of mine, who, the last 10 years or so, has bounced around from job, to job, to job.

[19 : 54] And he would get a new job, dive in 200%, expend all his energy, for a year or two, and then very quickly leave, and then move to the next job.

And then you dive in 200%, and then quickly leave. And he's bounced around, after job, job, career, career, never feeling settled, never really finding his feet.

And on the phone to me, two years ago, he said this, he said, So much of my life and identity, has been shaped, by an orphan mentality. The sense that I never feel secure, I'm never quite good enough, always needing to hustle, to justify to myself, why I'm not a failure.

Orphan mentality. Friends, look at Paul's words to us here, this morning. Look what he says. These promises of God. In love, he has predestined us, for adoption, to himself, through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose, of his will.

Friends, the God we've come to worship, and adore, and praise this morning, from whom we receive grace today, invites us to leave, our orphan mentality behind. To leave aside, the hustling, and the restlessness, the fighting, and the striving, and to rest, and to collapse, into his arms, of everlasting love.

[21 : 12] Friends, God is not a social worker, and we are not his projects. God is not a teacher, and we are his students. The God we've come to worship, this morning, is the kind of father, we all wish that we had had, and many of us in this room, wish that we could be.

He is the most caring, and kind, the most immeasurably loving, and infinitely patient. The father who will bring us, into his family of love, who will bring us, into him very self.

And the Bible says, that before the world began, before you had done, a single thing, good or bad, to qualify, or disqualify yourself, this father of creation, set his love upon you, and chose you, if you're in Christ, to bring you, into his heart, into his love, into his family.

Not because of what he saw in us, but because of what's in him. That we might know him, and rest secure in him. You know, many of us know Jesus' famous parable, of the prodigal son, right?

His two sons, the youngest son goes to his dad, and says, dad, give me my money, I want to flee. And he takes his share, of the inheritance, and he flees to another city, and he lives it up, in lavish living, and he wastes all his money, and he comes back, empty handed, shame faced, with his head bowed down.

[22 : 29] He says, father, I'm not worthy, to be called your son. And the father sees him, from a long way off, and runs towards him, and throws his arms around him, and says, my son, welcome home. And, but as many commentators, have pointed out, in recent years, what's maybe even more important, is the story, of the second son, the older brother.

And the story, of the prodigal son, ends like this. The older brother, refuses to go into the house, and welcome his brother. And the dad goes out to him, and says, what's wrong? And this is what he says, look, all these years, I've served you, I've never disobeyed your commands.

But when this son of yours, who has devoured your property, with disgraceful living, when he comes home, you welcome him lavishly. And the story just ends there, and Jesus leaves us hanging.

Why is he doing that? Friends, what Jesus is wanting us to see, is that even though the elder son, has excelled in filial piety, he has been a faithful, obedient son, relationally, he is much further away, than the younger son.

He might live in the home, of the father, but he's an orphan. He has an orphan mentality, because he thinks, he always needs to justify himself, why he should be loved. He needs to prove, that he's not a nobody.

[23 : 42] Friends, the God that we've come to worship, this morning, invites us to a whole new life, a whole new identity, identity, an identity that is not achieved, or is not earned, is not hustled, an identity that is received by grace.

J.I. Packer famously wrote in his book, if you want to know, how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much they make, of the thought of being God's child, of having God as his or her father.

If this is not the thought, that prompts, and controls our worship, our prayer, our entire outlook on life, it means we do not understand, Christianity very well. For father, is the Christian name for God.

Friends, we live in a city, that thrives, of those that have an orphan mentality. Because, those who need to prove to themselves, why they are good enough, make very good employees.

And are often very successful, right? If you want someone to work hard, just find somebody, that has an orphan mentality, and just dangle that carrot, and they will work incredibly hard. They'll burn themselves into the ground.

[24 : 42] And so this city, thrives off people like that, right? Those who need to prove, that we're not a failure. But underneath the shine, underneath the success, underneath the titles, and the promotion, there's a deep, dark, lingering question.

Am I good enough? Am I good enough? Friends, Jesus Christ, gives us a different story, for our lives. He gives us a new life. And Jesus Christ, gives us a lasting identity.

One that isn't achieved, through back-breaking effort. One that isn't earned, through filial piety, or religious performance, or industry accolades. One that is received, by bringing nothing. By coming empty-handed.

By stepping out, of the orphan mentality, and say, Christ, give me your grace. Jesus gives us a new life. And finally, Jesus gives us, a new hope. Look at verse 11 to 14, with me.

Paul writes this, In him, there's our phrase, in Christ. In Christ, we have obtained, an inheritance. Having been predestined, according to the purpose of him, who works all things, according to the counsel, of his will.

[25 : 44] So that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be to the praise, of his glory. In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed, with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee, of our inheritance, until we acquire, the possession of it, to the praise, of his glory.

Friends, imagine one day, you receive a letter in the post, and it's got an official stamp on it. You open up the envelope, and there's a letter inside, and the letter says, your long lost relative, has died.

I'm so sorry to tell you. But, the good news is, they've left you an inheritance, of a hundred million dollars. Praise God. And, this inheritance, is only due, it's locked up investments, it'll come your way, in about ten years time.

Okay. But, as a guarantee, as a foretaste, as a little deposit, just to make you, just to make you know, that this is for certain, and for real, attached as a check, for ten million dollars, in the meantime.

Right. I don't know if you've ever received, a letter like that. I have not. But if anyone wants to add me, to your will, you can come and chat to me afterwards, and I will gladly receive. The Apostle Paul tells us, that those of us, that are in Christ, have received an inheritance.

[27 : 01] What's an inheritance? Inheritance is a gift of grace, that is allocated to you, that is set aside for you. It's not something you earn, it's not something you achieve, it's not something that is deserved, or merited.

It's a gift of grace, that is allocated, and set aside for you. And Paul tells us here, that we have received inheritance. What is this gift of grace, that we've received?

Well, it's not a hundred million dollars, it's not a house in the Maldives, or a Swiss bank account. Those things will all perish, or fade one day. Friends, what is the greatest gift, that God, the God of the universe, the one who brought the cosmos, into being, what is the greatest gift, that he could give us?

A gift that won't perish, or fade? A gift that won't corrupt us, or be corrupted? A gift that will still, satisfy our hearts, in a hundred billion years from now? You know what that gift is?

It's himself. God has given us himself. And in this fallen and broken world, corrupted and incomplete, God steps into our world, and he says, I want to give you a gift, that will never be corrupted, or never perish, or fade.

[28 : 09] A gift that will never be fallen, or broken. I will give you myself. And God comes in, and he steps in, and he makes a promise to us, that one day, he is making the whole world new again.

He is making all things new. And in that world to come, friends, there will be no suffering. There will be no more tears. There will be no more agony. There will be no more disappointments. There will be no more pain.

There will be no more burglaries, and stealing. There will be no more shaming. That world will be perfect forever, and it will be perfect, because God himself is there, and we will be delighting in him, forever and ever.

And Christ our King is coming to us, and he promises that he's going to take us there. But in the meantime, he gives us a down payment. He gives us a guarantee, a full taste of heaven, a promise that what he has said is true.

And so what does God give us? Well, it's not a \$10 million check. He gives us himself. He gives us the Holy Spirit, the very presence of the eternal God, uncreated, awesome, sovereign, magnificent, invisible, mysterious, uncontrollable.

[29 : 12] God himself, he gives him to us, so that he will lead us home. In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit, a guarantee that our inheritance will come, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

As we come to close, you know, the Ephesian church, was a very small church. It was probably only 20 or 30 people. It was pretty small. And I met in the great big city of Ephesus. Ephesus was an amazing city.

It was a center of culture, a center of commerce, a center of worship. And in the great big city of Ephesus, 300,000 people, here in somebody's little home, gathered the small church of 20 or 30 people.

They probably didn't feel very important. They didn't feel very significant. They certainly didn't feel very powerful, compared to the might of the powerful Roman Empire. And they probably didn't feel very blessed either.

But here Paul writes them, it says, because they are in Jesus, they are more blessed, than anything they can imagine. More privileged, more favored, they could ever hope to be true.

[30 : 18] Why? Because they are in Christ. And being in Christ, means they are blessed, with everything that is true of Christ himself. Blessed be the God and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, in Christ, with every spiritual blessing, in the heavenly places.

Friends, these blessings, are not in watermark. They are in Christ. Friends, the blessings are not earned, or merited. They are not achieved, or deserved. They are gifts of grace.

They are not given to the brilliant, the smart, the powerful, the privileged. They are given to those, who come empty handed, and say, Jesus, I need you. A few weeks ago, Scotty Scheffler, the number one golfer in the world, caused a real stir.

You know why? It's a few days, before the British Open, the most prestigious, and oldest golf competition, in the world. Right? He's the number one golfer, in the world. He's earned 100 million US dollars, in his 10 year career.

He's been number one, for a couple of years. And two days, before the competition, he's at a press conference, and this is what he says. He says, being number one in the world, winning all this money, winning all these competitions, this is not a very fulfilling life.

[31 : 25] Everyone's like, what? He says, well yes, it's fulfilling, in the sense of a, accomplishing a couple of things, but it's not fulfilling, in the deepest places, of your heart. If I win this competition, which he did win, it's going to be awesome, for two whole minutes.

But next week, I'm going to have to get up, and do it all over again. Scotty Scheffler, is a Christian, and he knows, where real fulfillment is found. Friends, in six months time, this building, is going to feel, ordinary and familiar.

And in 20 years time, this venue, is going to feel, old and tired. And 200 years time, nobody's going to remember, and nobody's going to care, about Viva Place. But friends, in 100 billion years from now, those of us, that have come to know, the Lord Jesus Christ, and experience his grace, will still be celebrating, will still be rejoicing, will still be delighting, in the love of the Father, the joy of the Spirit, and the grace of the Son.

As I come to close, in 1861, London, a church, called New Park Street Church, moved into a new building, 5,000 seater auditorium, a little bigger than ours. And, at the very first service, at this new church, the young preacher, his name was Charles Spurgeon, he said this.

He said, I propose, that the subject, of the ministry of this house, as long as this church shall stand, and as long as this house, is frequented by worshipers, the subject must be, the person of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 48] I'm not ashamed, to call myself a Calvinist, I do not hesitate, to take the name Baptist, but if I'm asked, what is your creed, this is my reply, it is Jesus Christ. The legacy, to which we must pin, and bind ourselves forever, is Jesus Christ.

He is the arm, and the substance of the gospel, he is himself, all theology, the incarnation, of every precious truth. Friends, may that be true of us. We're not quite 5,000 people, and that's not necessarily, our goal or our aim, but whatever the future may hold, and all the ups and downs, in the winter months, and the season, and the summer months, in the goods and the bad, may this be our overriding joy, and the reason for this church.

Do not rejoice in this, that the demons listen to you, or if you fancy building, rejoice in this, that your name is written in heaven, that you've been given a new start, a new life, a new hope, because of Jesus, our King and our Lord, to him be glory forever and ever.

Let's pray. Father God, this morning we do, we celebrate you. God, so many things are changing, but you are unchanged. And so God, our hope, our delight, our joy this morning is you.

God, in a hundred billion years from now, those of us that are followers of Jesus, will still be rejoicing and delighting. This building will be long gone, but you God will be unchanged, and we delight in that, or praise to you this morning.

[34 : 08] Amen. Amen. Amen.