

Christ-Centred Pursuit

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Philippians, starting in chapter 3, verse 2. Please follow along on the screen or your Bible.

Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also, if anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to the righteousness under the law, blameless.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and kind them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[1 : 40] Not that I have already obtained this, or I am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it on my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lines behind and straining forward to what lines ahead, I press on to what to go for the price of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and their glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

[3 : 05] Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm, thus in the Lord, my beloved. Amen. Great.

Thanks, Joanne and Mandy. Good morning, everybody. Great to be back with you again. If you are new or joining us for the first time, my name is Kevin, and it's wonderful to join you and have you join us this morning.

We are continuing to work through the book of Philippians, and last week we started this chapter, which Joanne and Mandy read to us, and Paul starts off with this warning.

He says, Watch out for the dogs. Watch out for the evildoers. And he's talking about these religious people that have come to the church in Philippi, and they are trying to undermine the confidence that the Philippian Christians have in Jesus Christ and in the gospel.

And they are trying to distract them away from Christ and the gospel to urging them to have a confidence in themselves, to find their assurance before God in a do-it-yourself kind of religion, in their own pedigree, their resume, their religious achievements, and their moral performance.

[4 : 23] And Paul says to them, That's not genuine faith. Genuine faith are those who glory in Christ Jesus and not in our own do-it-yourself religion.

He says, Genuine followers of Jesus are those who worship by the Spirit of God, not by tradition or formula or structure. And Paul then goes on to share his own story, and he uses this accounting analogy.

And he says, The thing that I previously considered to be a liability, faith in Christ Jesus, I've now come to see as the thing of all surpassing worth.

There is nothing more important than that. And the things in my life that I previously considered to be really important, the things I'd put a lot of stock in, the things I'd really valued in my life, which was my track record, my spiritual performance, the fact that I did the things I was meant to do, and I didn't do the things I wasn't meant to do, my previous track record, which I previously had put so much hope and confidence in, I've now considered to be, I've disregarded it.

It's utterly meaningless, compared to the all-surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

And so that's what we looked at last week. But now what I want us to do is to go and look at the last two verses of that section of Scripture.

[5 : 45] And look, because Paul says something very interesting. And we need to understand what he's saying here in order to understand the next section. Now I've got to warn you, today's going to be a little bit theological.

So you're going to have to stick with me for the first half, and then hopefully we'll get a little bit more practical after that. So let's just remind ourselves, the book of Philippians, Paul is painting this picture of what the Christ-centered, gospel-shaped life looks like.

And he is saying that the Christ-centered, gospel-shaped life is one where we are learning to imitate Christ, to know Him and become like Him, becoming like Him in His death, which leads to abundant life.

It's that J-curve that Chris spoke about a few weeks ago. And we're going to see much of those same themes coming through again. today. And so we've got a couple of points today.

The first one is this. The Christian's strength, or maybe a better way of saying it is, the Christian's life. Firstly, the Christian's life. Look at verse 8 with me.

[6 : 51] Paul says this. For His sake, sake of Jesus, I've suffered the loss of all things. I count them as rubbish. In order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.

That's what we spoke about last week. And then he says this really interesting thing in verse 10. He says, In the Bible, to know something has a couple of different dimensions.

You know something intellectually. You understand the facts and how this thing works. But to know something is also deeper than that. You also know something practically.

In other words, in the Bible, if it doesn't have a practical outworking in your life, you don't really know it. You can know it in your head, but if it doesn't actually become part of your daily conduct, you don't really know it.

But thirdly, in the Bible, to know something is to know something in a deeply intimate and personal way. There's intellectual way. There's practical conduct.

[8 : 05] But there's also the personal aspect of knowing something. Which is why so often the Bible actually talks about sexual intimacy as knowing someone. The Bible says that Adam knew Eve. And that's not Hebrew euphemism, because the Bible is a bit shy about talking about sex.

No, it's a way of talking about how when you really know somebody, you know them deeply and intimately like a married couple. In this passage that we looked at last week, Paul says he has abandoned self-confidence, self-assurance, do-it-yourself religion, in order that he may know Christ.

In order that he may experience Him. What does it mean to know God? What does it mean to actually experience God? Look at what he says.

Look at what it involves. It means knowing Christ and becoming like Him in suffering. Look what he says here. He says, I've given up self-righteousness, I've given up my self-religion, in order that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.

Alec Mottier was one of the great Bible theologians. He died about five years ago. He's one of the great, great theologians of the last century.

[9 : 22] Look at what he writes. He says this, We are often surprised when suffering comes our way.

But what did we expect? Do we want to be made like Christ or not? Christ-likeness must lead to Calvary. We must be ready for, and we cannot hope to avoid, the downward path of the crucified. This is the way of the Lord Jesus. This is the way of Christ-likeness for Paul. This is the way of Christ-likeness for us. Friends, in the Bible, God tells us again and again that we will never really know God.

We'll never get to experience God deeply and intimately. We never get to know the depth and the richness and the power and the beauty of the gospel until we go through some measure of suffering.

C.S. Lewis famously said that God often whispers to us in our pleasure, but He shouts to us. He gets our attention in our pain. But it's not just the way that God gets our attention.

[10:33] It's the way that we get to know God and actually really experience Him is through the hardships in life. The way we get to know the infinite worth of God and the beauty of God is through the difficulties of life, which is why Paul says not only does he not avoid suffering, but actually he rejoices in it because in it he gets to experience this deep intimacy and closeness with God.

Friends, we've spoken about it so often at Watermark and we'll say it again into the future, no doubt, that because we live in a broken world, suffering is part of our world.

It may come in the form of sickness or cancer or the loss of a loved one. It may come in the form of retrenchment or just the hardship in life.

It may also come in the form of persecution or opposition for your faith. And when you're vocal and you speak out about the fact that you're a follower of Jesus, that will certainly attract opposition. But when it comes, the Bible promises we will be richer for it because we will know Christ in a way that we would never have known him before.

But you might have noticed we actually skipped over something here because look at what Paul says. He doesn't just say, I want to know him in his sufferings. Look at what he says. He says, I want to know him and the power of his resurrection and share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by all means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[12:00] Now, what on earth is Paul going on about there? In the New Testament, Christ's resurrection from the dead is one of the most significant and important events in the entire New Testament and in fact, the entire Bible.

Christ's resurrection from the dead does many things for us and for our Christian faith. On the one hand, it validates Christ's claim that he's not just a good man or a good moral teacher. He's nothing less than the Son of God himself.

Christ's death on the cross deals a death blow to our most significant enemy, which is death itself. Christ's resurrection neutralizes or disarms our enemy, death.

Christ's resurrection also means that if you're a follower of Jesus, your eternal resurrection, your resurrection after you die, the fact that when we die, we pass from life into death and back into life again, Christ's resurrection guarantees that.

It makes it absolutely certain. We don't just live hoping that maybe one day we'll attain resurrection of the dead. Christ's resurrection guarantees it. It's absolutely certain for us.

[13:11] And that's why Paul speaks about this resurrection from the dead with such certainty. He says, I want to know Christ through suffering, through the power of the resurrection, even as I long for and await that day.

But in the New Testament, the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection are not just for that day when we die and go to heaven.

The benefit of Christ's resurrection for believers is not just at Christ's return that one day we will be in eternal glory with Him. Actually, through the work of the Spirit, followers of Jesus get to experience a measure of that resurrection power and life in our lives right here today and this very week.

Look at what Paul says here. He says, I want to know Christ and I want to know the power of His resurrection even as I share in His sufferings, becoming like Him unto death.

For the Christian, that promised new creation, that promised eternal glory, that promised life with Christ, our new resurrection bodies, which Christ's resurrection guarantees, doesn't just begin when we die and go to heaven.

[14:31] It actually starts now, the day that you become a follower of Jesus. Because of Jesus' resurrection, our own resurrection of glory is not only guaranteed, it's a measure of it is given to us in this lifetime now.

We get to experience the power of Christ's resurrection. Gordon Fee, who's this amazing theologian, says it like this, To know Christ now means first of all to know the power of His resurrection, which is the power that comes to believers on the basis of Christ's resurrection. And Paul says the same thing in Ephesians chapter 1. He says, As believers, the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is now at work within us in our lives.

That spirit is at work within us as followers of Jesus. So, for the disciples of Jesus, for followers of Jesus in 21st century Hong Kong, the Christian life is empowered by the resurrection life and power the same resurrection that raised Jesus from the dead through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Okay, I told you this was going to be a little theological, right? For the Christian, a Christian is not just someone who looks back at Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross, believes that fact in history, and one day hopes that when we die, we'll get to be with God in heaven.

[15:57] Though that is true, a Christian is someone who because of our faith in Jesus and his death and his resurrection, gets to experience something of the power and the resurrection life in our lives now, in Christ, and we get to walk with him even as we walk towards our eternal destiny.

Friends, a Christian is not just someone who needs to battle out in life, try and hold on to our faith and hope that we make it through at the end. No, if you're a disciple of Jesus, God the Holy Spirit is at work in your life now, helping you give the power of his resurrection, helping you to fight sin, overcome temptation, giving you faith in the midst of difficulty, helping you to live obediently, helping you to smash your idols, helping you to trust God in the midst of your day-to-day trenches of life.

But, and this is Paul's point, this only happens as we forsake self-confidence, do-it-yourself religion, and we bank our hope and our confidence in Jesus and his death on the cross.

And in many ways, this dual nature and tension of the Christian life, one in which we get to suffer with God in his life, but we're also empowered with his life, it's this tension in the Christian life in which we find that we get to know God deeply.

We walk with God and we know him through both the trials and the suffering, but also in his resurrection power. Look again at how Gordon Fee talks about this tension.

[17:30] This is quite a long quote, but it's amazing. Listen up and pay attention. Gordon Fee says this, often in the church, we find Christians are uncertain about this tension, this tension between walking with Christ through suffering, but also experiencing his power and his life.

We tend to think of it either as a matter of either or rather than both and. To know Christ through the power of his resurrection doesn't not mean participating in his sufferings, but the two go together hand in hand.

Therefore, there is no sense of triumphalism, but neither does Paul emphasize suffering in such a way as to diminish the power of Christ's resurrection as genuinely present for us.

Paul knows nothing of the gloomy stoicism we often see in Christians, where the lot of the believer is basically just that of battling it out in the trenches with little or no sense of Christ's presence and power.

No, for Paul, the power of Christ's resurrection was the greater reality. In fact, so certain was Paul that Christ's resurrection did in fact happen and that Christ's resurrection guaranteed his own that he could throw himself into the present with a kind of holy abandon, full of rejoicing and thanksgiving, even in the midst of his sufferings.

[18:55] Not because he enjoyed suffering, but because Christ's resurrection had given him a unique perspective on present suffering, as well as an empowering presence so that the suffering was transformed into intimate fellowship with Christ himself.

Okay, I hope you got what he's saying. What Gordon Fee is saying here is that the gospel gives us this amazing perspective on life. We know that suffering is going to be part of our journey because it is part of Christ's journey and we are learning to become like Christ.

We're learning to imitate him. So we're not triumphalistic. We're not overly confident. We don't feel like, yeah, I've got Jesus on my side. I've got this thing sorted. Nothing can touch me.

No, we know that part of becoming like Christ is joining him in his suffering. We're not surprised or deflated when difficulty comes our way as if something strange or unexpected were happening to us.

When something goes wrong, we don't think, God, where are you? How have you abandoned me? Don't you love me anymore? We know this is part of the Christian life. But we're also not morose. We also don't feel like real Christians or those that are miserable because if you really love Jesus, you've just got to suffer through this life.

[20 : 08] No, no, no. If you walk with Jesus, you experience something of his resurrection power, his joy, his life, in the midst of even the hardship and the difficulty that comes our way.

Friends, to walk with Christ means experiencing his triumph over the grave even as we live in a broken world because we live knowing that this is not the final journey.

We are making our way to eternal glory where there will one day be no more tears, no more suffering, no more pain. And part of that resurrection life is our experience now in this world.

This is what it means to know Jesus. Paul says, I've abandoned self-righteousness. I've abandoned confidence in myself. I want to hold on to Christ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection but also his sufferings as I make my way towards eternal glory.

this is the Christian life. This is the Christian strength. This is the Christian's confidence. Friends, a few weeks ago we spoke about in our sermon about missionaries and I must confess I caught myself off guard.

[21 : 19] I got a little excited during that sermon. I didn't expect to get so excited. But I've been thinking about it the last two weeks since then. We spoke about I said I hope in Watermark we can send missionaries off to Afghanistan and North Africa and the Middle East and North Korea and some of us won't get to do that.

Some of us will be missionaries into Hong Kong. And I've thought about that a lot the last two weeks. I really hope that that is the case. Friends, I really hope that as Watermark we become this radically missional church where some of our young people are men and our women really do sign up to give their lives away to the mission of Christ in foreign nations and difficult nations.

Friends, I hope that all of us as church sign up to spend our lives for the glory of God in this city in Hong Kong. And as we do it we will know God deeply.

We will know the power of His resurrection. Suffering with Him becoming like Him in His death but you will know something of the resurrection life and power of God as we walk with God in this city.

Friends, that's only going to happen as we abandon self-confidence. As we count our self-righteousness as loss as we hold on to Christ and the gospel like Paul.

[22 : 35] Paul says that for His sake I have suffered the loss of all things. I count them as rubbish in order that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. I may share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death that by all means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Friends, maybe I can just ask if you consider yourself a Christian, that's good. what does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to know God? Do you experience His life and His power? Do you walk with Him through difficulty and suffering and hardship? Do you know God like this? Or do you just know the gospel in your head? Do you know the Bible stories and the theology? You know how the theology works.

Jesus died for our sins but do you know Him experientially? Is He a part of your life? Do you know Him intimately and deeply? Paul says this is the Christian life. Now, secondly, the Christian's ambition.

Look at what Gordon Fee said here. At the end of this long quote, he said, because of the gospel, Paul is able to throw himself into God's call with a kind of holy abandon, full of rejoicing and thanksgiving, knowing that whatever he faces, he will do so empowered by Christ.

[23 : 47] Well, look at how Paul lived this out. Look at verses 12 to 14 with me. Paul says this, he's just spoken about his followership of Jesus and his goal is to know God deeply and then he says this, not that I've already obtained this perfectly or that I am perfect, in other words, that I am complete, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me His own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

What's Paul talking about here? For Paul, being a Christian isn't the goal of life. His goal is to know Jesus deeply. And look at what he says here.

He's just explained how his conversion to Christ radically reorientated his life. It changed him. It gave him this overwhelming desire to know Christ more fully and deeply.

But he doesn't want to be misunderstood. He doesn't want to say, listen, just because I'm this radical follower of Jesus, I've ticked the box and I'm all done and now I just am waiting to die. He says, for the rest of my life, I'm going to keep on pursuing Christ, pressing on to know Him ever

more deeply, more powerfully, more experientially.

[25 : 12] For Paul, this is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This is Paul's life. That whatever he's doing, whether he's making tents, whether he's traveling, whether he's preaching the gospel, whatever he's doing, his life revolves around this wholehearted pursuit and ambition to know Christ more deeply and more intimately.

You know, in the first century, a disciple of Jesus was somebody who gave up their life in order to learn from their master and become like Him.

That was the definition of a disciple. Friends, in the 21st century, nothing's changed. A Christian is not just someone who prayed a prayer once upon a time, who gave their heart to Jesus, whatever that means, and now gets on with their own life.

A disciple of Jesus is somebody who's giving their life, learning from their master, Jesus, and learning to become like Him, learning to know Him intimately and deeply.

And so look at how Paul says it here. Notice how many times he speaks of this determined pursuit. He says, I press on to make it my own because Christ has made me His own.

[26 : 24] Brothers, I do not consider that I've already got there, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal of the upward prize of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

I'm sure we've all seen pictures of athletes, those who, they are running towards the finishing line and they are straining their entire bodies, throwing themselves over the finish line in order to win the prize.

No Olympic athlete that ever wants to win the prize just ambles or just kind of strolls over the finish line. With everything within them, they throw themselves over the line in order that they may win the prize.

That's the picture that Paul's got here. He's saying that his pursuit, his ambition to follow Jesus is he's pressing on, he's straining forward, he's throwing himself at this goal to know Christ and to know Him more deeply, which means that following Jesus is not a casual affair.

Following Jesus doesn't happen casually. To know God doesn't happen casually. It's this wholehearted pursuit, this laser sharp determination to participate in the story, to become like Him even in His death, to experience the power of God in order that we may know Him.

[27 : 49] That we may know Him. This is the Christian's ambition, to know God deeply. Thirdly and finally, the Christian's need. Now, in verse 17, Paul is going to show us what we need in order to do this.

But let's first look at verse 18. Because in verse 18, Paul actually gives us a warning. He's using this analogy of somebody running the race and pursuing the goal.

They've got their mind set on the finish line, on the goal. The goal of knowing Christ deeply. But Paul says that sometimes some people have got distracted along the way.

Look at what he says here in verse 18. For many, of whom I've often told you, and he's talking here about believers, maybe some of Paul's traveling companions. Maybe there were people in the church that Paul wrote about in his letters.

He says, many of whom I've often previously told you, but now I tell you with tears in my eyes, are now walking as enemies of the cross of Christ.

[28 : 55] they've abandoned Christ. They've been distracted from the goal of knowing Christ and they've walked off on another tangent. They've given up on the race and they're now enemies of the gospel.

Paul says, their God is their belly. In other words, rather than worshipping the beauty of Jesus, they now worship their own desires, their own appetites.

There are things that have distracted them and caught them off guard and they now have been distracted by these other desires. They are slaves of what grabs their attention in the immediate, here and now.

They've become seduced by the things around them. Paul says, their God has become their belly, their desires, their appetites. Their glory and their shame. The things that they boast and the things that they're proud of are actually their shame.

They boast of their yacht and their 17 houses and how well they've done in their careers. But actually, those things, Paul says, are actually their shame because they've traded insipid, worthless, dead idols for the living God.

[30 : 06] That's not something to boast in. That's something to be embarrassed about. Their minds are set on earthly things and their end is destruction. Friend, what a description of the wasted life.

their God is their belly, their glory and their shame. Their end is destruction. I remember many years ago in South Africa, there was an advert on TV.

I can't even remember what the advert was for. But it's the advert of a guy, he starts out the first of January, he's got a bit of a belly and he wants to lose some weight and so he decides I'm going to start running and jogging.

So he wakes up early in the mornings and he's jogging along the road and on the first morning while he's jogging and he's huffing and puffing and he's sweating, this beautiful lady jogs across the road in the opposite direction and his mind gets distracted and he's looking at this lady and he runs straight into a tree and he kind of like falls over flat and that's the end of his goal.

Some of us, friends, as followers of Jesus, we have said I want to know Christ deeply. Yes, I want to follow him. And we've usually become distracted by other things.

[31 : 21] Our God has become rather than the infinite all-surpassing worth of Christ, the maker of heaven and earth, the one who put the cosmos and the galaxies and the stars into space rather than worshipping him, we've become distracted by insipid and worthless and useless things.

Our God has become our appetites, our gadgets, our temporary things, material wealth. We've traded the infinite worth of God for man-made objects.

We start to glory in our shame and our minds are set on earthly things and we are wasting our lives. But Paul gives and he gives us some help here.

He says that there's something that can help us from being distracted. Look at what he says in verse 17. He says, brothers join in imitating me. Keep your eyes rather on earthly things, rather on the beautiful lady that's running past, rather than the gadgets and material gain.

Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example that you have in us. He's talking about surround yourself with brothers and sisters, those who will glory not in their self-confidence but in Christ.

[32 : 34] Those who will worship not according to tradition or ritual but who glory in Christ. He's talking about those who because they've seen the infinite worth of Christ will consider all things as rubbish compared to the all-surpassing worth of Christ.

He says, find some brothers and sisters like that and set your mind on them. Imitate them. Let them speak into your life. Let them help you fix your eyes on Jesus. Don't get distracted by the things around you.

Find brothers and sisters that will help you keep your eyes fixed on Christ to glory in Jesus, to worship Christ, to be those who who walk by the power of the resurrection, those who join Christ in His sufferings but do it gladly because we're walking with Jesus.

Find friends around us who will help our eyes be fixed on Jesus, who will help us to know Him and to not waste our lives.

Friends, this is why Christian community is so important. The Christian journey is a communal project, not an individual project. It's a communal affair as we walk with those who can suffer with us but who can rejoice with us, who can pray with us and be with us.

[33 : 46] Friends, as we come to a close, let me ask you, what's going to stop us wasting our life? Friends, if you're a young person this morning, you're 18 years old, you're just finishing high school, you're a university student or maybe you're a fresh graduate, you've got your whole life ahead of you, what's going to stop you wasting your life?

Friends, maybe you're 70 years old, you've retired from work, you've lived a good life. What's going to stop you just sliding into retirement and gradually slipping into the grave? Friends, do you still have a goal?

Do you still have a vision? Are you still pursuing Christ with wholehearted ambition and pursuit? Are you still pressing on and running into Jesus even at 70 years old? Friends, what's going to stop you wasting the final years of your life?

Do you have people around you that can encourage you to do that? As we come to a close, I want to tell you the story of a man by the name of William Carey. William Carey was a British man.

He didn't grow up in a Christian family. He was born around 1770, 250 years ago or so. And he became a follower of Jesus.

[34 : 55] When he finished school, he was a young man. He was working as an apprentice in a shoe-making shop. And there was another apprentice with him, his colleague, that told him about the wonder of Jesus.

And William Carey became a believer. He discovered the all-surpassing worth of Christ. And Christ grew in his heart more and more. And he wanted to give his life to the things of God.

And so, he eventually decided with a bunch of friends, they started this missionary society called the Baptist Missionary Society. And William Carey was one of the first people in the modern era to become a missionary to Asia.

And so, in 1793, he leaves London with his wife and his three children. His wife is pregnant and they catch a ship to go to Kolkata in India.

And for the next 40 years, William Carey becomes this incredible missionary to India. He buries some of his children there. But while he's there, he starts orphanages, he starts hospitals, he starts schools, he starts universities.

[36 : 02] He was just this incredible man. And one of the things he was passionate about was translating the Bible into the local languages. And so, he translated the Bible. He himself translated the Bible into six languages.

Translated into Bengali, into Hindi, into the ancient language of Sanskrit, into Assamese, into a bunch of other Indian languages. And he oversaw the translation of another 26 languages of the Bible.

Just this incredible, incredible man. When he was in his 70s, he wrote this letter to his son. And this is what he writes.

Listen to this letter. He says, to his son Jabez. He says, I am this day 70 years old, which alone is God's mercy and goodness. Though on reflection upon my life, I find much, very much, for which I ought to be humbled to the dust.

My sins are innumerable. My neglect of the Lord's work has been great. I have not promoted his cause or sought his glory or his honor as I ought to have done.

[37 : 11] Thus, my only confidence is the blood of Christ alone. And through him, I hope to receive that divine favor. Still, I hope to be more entirely devoted to his service, becoming more like him, demonstrating more of his grace in my life, bringing forth more of the fruits of righteousness to the praise and the honor of that Savior who gave his life as sacrifice for my sins.

Friends, in many ways, part of the reason why the gospel is in Asia is because of this man, William Carey. The man who spent his life, who poured out his life for the advance of the gospel.

Friends, here is a man that did more than probably most of us could ever dream to do in ten lifetimes. He poured out his life like a drink offering. He ran this race wholeheartedly.

And yet, did you notice how humble he was? Did you know the appeal to the gospel? He speaks about how at 70 years old, he reflects on his life and he says, I'm so aware of my shortcomings. I'm so aware of my sin. And yet, I'm so aware of God's grace and his mercy and his love to me. And yet, even at seven years old, he's not just sitting back and riding it out into glory.

[38 : 28] With an athlete's determination, with focus and attention, he's still pressing on. He's straining. He's throwing himself into the call of God with a holy abandon, knowing that Christ is with him and that Christ's resurrection power is at work in his life.

But did you see the motivation? It was the gospel. Here's this man who had zero confidence in himself, zero confidence in his achievements for God.

Like Paul, he could look back at this long list of resumes and say, I counted all as nothing, as loss, compared to the all-surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, of knowing him and his sufferings, but knowing the power and the resurrection life in my life.

William Carey, the Apostle Paul, hundreds of others have spent their life in pursuit of knowing Christ and knowing him deeply. Friends, let's join them in this endeavor as well.

Let's pray. Amen. Heavenly Father, loving Christ, Holy Spirit, God, when we look at the Apostle Paul, we look at men like William Carey and countless others, God, in some ways, feel so embarrassed what we've done with our lives.

[39 : 53] God, we have not embraced suffering or hardship like these men, but God, we in many ways have not experienced the resurrection life and power like them either.

Oh God, we want to know you deeply. We want to know you, God. Christ, I pray, won't you do a work of the Spirit in our hearts, won't you pour out your Spirit in us, that God, we will suffer with you,

that we will learn to learn from you and become like you, becoming even like you in your death and your suffering, but even more than that, becoming like you in your wholehearted pursuit of the glory of God.

Jesus, help us, we pray. Help us to know you more deeply, more intimately, to love you more. We pray these things in your wonderful and your powerful name.