

Romans 3:21-31

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[0 : 00] Come back with me please to the second reading, that is to Romans chapter 3, and reading again in verse 21.

So Romans 3, verse 21, where we read, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and all who believe, for there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Especially the words in verse 24, being justified freely by his grace to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In 1998, a Derek Bentley had his conviction overturned in the Court of Appeal in England.

It might not be much news, you might think, even in 1998, 18 years ago. Derek Bentley, however, had been hanged in 1953 at the age of 19.

It's quite a famous story, I remember reading about it, a book written, I think it was by David Gallop as a teenager, I read it. He was in Croydon, with a guy who we would now say could not be named for legal reasons, because of his age, Chris Craig.

[1 : 48] And Chris Craig and Derek Bentley were carrying out a robbery in a warehouse, and they were on a roof, and the police were chasing them.

And Craig had a gun. And one of the policemen, DC Miles, called out Craig to give him the gun, to hand it over it.

And Bentley said, give it to him, Craig. And it was widely believed at the time, and certainly has been since, that he meant to hand him over the gun.

But in their wisdom, the prosecutors at the time, and the jury and the judge, and along with it, made out that he was saying, shoot him.

So Chris Craig wounded at PC Fairfax and killed, murdered PC Miles. Chris Craig was too young to have.

[2 : 47] Derek Bentley, who had no gun. Derek Bentley, who had a very minuscule mental age, a very low IQ, was hanged.

And his sister Iris won for him, finally, 40 years later, a royal pardon. But she wasn't happy with the royal pardon. Because a royal pardon simply says, you've been found guilty, but I, the sovereign, didn't decide to give you my pardon.

I'm not going to punish you. It was a pure victory anyway, of course, because Derek Bentley was long since dead. But even so, Iris carried on campaigning, till she died in 1997.

And the following year, finally, the conviction was overturned. In other words, he was no longer guilty. Not only had he been pardoned, but more importantly, he was not guilty.

He was justified. So that's just a little illustration from not very distant history about justification, the difference between justification and pardon.

[3 : 54] Pardon is important, but justification is greater. So justification is not the same as forgiveness. It's not the same as pardon. What is justification?

If in doubt, go back to the short of the Catechism. Great little book. What is justification? Question 33. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight.

Only for the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and received by faith alone. That's what we've been reading in Romans. That's what Paul's talking about. He's talking about the righteousness of Christ.

It's one of his great themes, isn't it? Especially in Romans. The righteousness of Christ. The righteousness that we all need. The righteousness that each one of us needs.

And how is that received? Well, question 86 is the question. And answer 86 is the answer to that. Shorthand, of course, in the Catechism. A good summary of doctrine.

[4 : 58] What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is not some sort of mystical, strange thing. It's a saving grace. Yes, faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest on him alone for salvation, as is offered to us in the Gospel.

An easier way of putting it would even be to say, faith is taking God at his word. Receiving what he says and accepting it that's true. Accepting the bare meaning of it.

Accepting that what he says is true and can be relied upon. Talking this morning about God is the inviter to be giving the invitation.

Come to me, all you are labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. He said he was trustworthy. Well, he is trustworthy. He can be relied upon.

So the question for us, though, if we're looking at this, these verses in Romans 3, having said it's a restatement really of the Gospel, sometimes it's called the First Gospel, it's the most full treatise on theology in the Bible.

[6 : 10] It's Paul's masterwork. How can I be right with God we have in this chapter? How can we be right with God? No one is righteous. They've never told that.

Not one. So we can't get any help from man. No human being can help us. No human being can give us his righteousness because he needs it all for himself.

And even then he hasn't got enough. We've all offended God. It's very clear. If you go back to the beginning of Romans and Paul is setting out his stall. He's setting out what he's talking about.

He's giving a justification, used in a different sense, for what he's about to say about the Gospel. He's saying why we need the Gospel. So Romans 1, literally, he makes that very clear.

All are offended. Sorry, all are not offended. God is offended. All have offended God. How can we get help from God? He's been offended by us.

[7 : 10] His right is to be angry with us, to have wrath. So how can we expect help from God?

If we're condemned by him. But there is good news. Because if there weren't good news, there'd be no Gospel. And there would be nothing to talk about. There is, however, an unexpected answer.

We don't know what the answer is until we're told. The answer is the righteousness of God. And it's revealed. It's revealed here. It's revealed in the world. It's revealed right before us.

God came down to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. God came to be a man as well as God. God came, first of all, in the Garden of Eden, to Adam and Eve, after they'd sinned, after they'd fallen, when in us, in them, we have fallen, he came to them and he said, I am going to send a Saviour.

He didn't say it in so many words, but it's there. The Saviour, the one who's going to crush the head of the serpent. And this was to be Jesus. He said he would deal with it.

[8 : 23] And he has dealt with it. But everybody doesn't accept that he's dealt with it. Why not?

Well, some people don't accept God as a God of wrath. They don't think he's got the right to be angry. They don't think he should be angry. They think he should be a God of love. And they forget he's a God of justice and a God of truth.

And he cannot be untrue to himself. He cannot just let people off. Because it suits them. Or even because it suits him. Because that's not what God is. Some people don't see the need then to be rescued from wrath.

Or that it needs to be God. Maybe we can do it ourselves. Homespun religion. But it's been revealed here in the word. That's what Paul keeps saying.

It's revealed now. It's before us. It's revealed here. Right in these words. God's own righteousness is revealed here.

[9 : 26] That's in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ the righteous one. It's revealed apart from the law. The law will not save. We're told that. The law cannot save.

The law brings condemnation. Because anyone who tries to fulfill the works of the law will fall short. It's impossible to perfectly keep the law. There is no way of salvation through the law.

The only one who could keep the law is the only one who has kept the law. Jesus Christ. Only he could keep it. Only he has kept it. But that's not for any human to keep.

Not for any of these not divine. Not for any of us. Not for any of us who fall in an habit. Not for any of us who have original sin. Not for any of us who do sin daily.

So the law will not save. The law will condemn. The law will teach us about sin. It will teach us to fear. But it will not save us.

[10 : 29] It cannot save us. It's not there to save us. God never intended the law to save us. The law is to show us where we are wrong.

The law is to drive us to Christ. The law is to, so we will recognize that we are needy. As Paul said, if he didn't have the law, he wouldn't know he was a sinner.

He wouldn't know he had a need. He wouldn't know he needed Jesus Christ. Do you have Jesus Christ tonight? If you do, it's because you know you need him. And you have come to him.

If you don't have Jesus Christ tonight, why is that? Is it because you don't recognize the need for him? Is it because you don't think he can meet your need? Is it because you don't think you need him enough?

Is it because you don't think you're a big enough sinner? Is it because you think you're too big a sinner? Is it because you don't think there's such a thing as sin? There could be all sorts of reasons. None of them are good reasons.

[11 : 25] But they might be the reasons you're relying upon. God in his word, and especially here in the world, reveals Jesus Christ.

He reveals his righteousness. He reveals something about his righteousness everywhere through the scriptures. And this righteousness of God, it comes to Jesus.

I've said that already. It comes, therefore, to those who believe in Jesus Christ. No, not just that he believes that he existed. There are many who don't even believe that. There are many who don't believe in Jesus Christ.

In the words that other people have written, for the existence, for the life of Jesus Christ, than there is that Julius Caesar came to Britain. And who do you find in the streets of this country who would deny that Julius Caesar ever came to Britain?

Just accept it, isn't it? There's not as much evidence for him doing that as for the fact that Jesus Christ lived in Palestine at this time. And then he died. And then he rose again.

[12 : 41] But nobody cares about Julius Caesar, really, do they? Except some historians, maybe, of the time. Because it doesn't matter.

It doesn't impact on our life. It doesn't matter to me if Julius Caesar ever came to Britain. What practical difference does it make? I don't care. But it does matter if Jesus Christ lived.

Because you take the gambles of what Jesus Christ might not have lived. It might just be a story. It might be made up. It might be the church trying to get inside my head. Whatever it is.

If you think that, that will have an impact on your life. And that will have an impact on eternity for you as well. So this righteousness, it comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

It's not just believe about him, but believe in him. I believe. You must believe. I believe in him. Do you believe in him?

[13 : 38] And when I say I believe in him, I believe in that he is who he says he is. That he is God. That he is the only savior. That he wants to save me.

He doesn't do it grudgingly. He doesn't say, okay then, I guess I'll let you in. That's not Jesus. Jesus is, he's done all these things for his people. For the love that he had.

What love must he have had that he would go to the cross. And he would suffer that death. And he would suffer even the life that he lived. In this world of sinners all around him. In front of him. Behind him.

About him. In his family. Amongst his friends. They're all sinners. And he was the sinless one. How could he cope with that? He would say. That was part of his humiliation.

That was part of him putting himself down. Putting himself below. Under the persecution, as it were. Or under the wrath of God. He made himself of no reputation.

[14 : 36] And as for all those who've sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This morning. Talked about. Who is the invitation to? It's to all who labor and are heavy laden. If you don't put yourself in that category.

You're the only person who's not putting yourself in that category. Well. If you say. I haven't sinned. And I haven't fallen short of the glory of God. Then I'm afraid, friend.

You're wrong in that. Because the word of God says it. And the word of God is never wrong. It doesn't matter what I say. It doesn't matter what anybody else says. It doesn't matter what we think. There's a bumper sticker in the States.

I don't think it was. It would have to be in the States. I can say that. Because I was born there myself. But it's the kind of thing that Americans would say. God says it.

I believe it. And that settles it. That's rubbish. It should be. God says it. And that settles it. It doesn't matter if I believe it.

[15 : 32] It's got nothing to do with it. I might believe in me as cheese. It doesn't make it so. It doesn't matter what I think about this. It's of no relevance. It's of no relevance to you.

It's relevant to me. So. It doesn't matter what I think. It matters what God says. God says it here.

He says it in many other places also. We have all sinned. There's none there, which is. That's the word of God. This isn't doom and gloom. This is reality.

And this is there. So we will recognize ourselves in the pages of this book. Anybody who refuses to worship the creator.

How many are there? How many of us have been there? We might worship the creature instead. That's what we do, isn't it? In many, many different ways. There's all sorts of ways of doing that.

[16 : 30] Worshiping the creature can be anything. Our own thing. Whether it's sport. Whether it's religion. Well, all sorts of things. Whether it's music. Whether it's education. Whatever.

It can be. Any. Any number of interests can be. Things that we really worship. Some people do worship them. See them. For example. The Euros. There's some people.

Or football generally, for example. I think it's football. I like football. I enjoy watching the Euros and so on. Hasn't been a great competition. But it's been okay. But it's not life and death.

Bill Shankly was so wrong when he said it's not life and death. It's more important than that. It's not more important than that. It's a lot less important than that. This is life and death.

God offers us life. We have death. Death is available to us. Death is there. Death is where we're going. Eternal death is where we're all going. Unless we receive the life that's me offered.

[17 : 29] And it's offered here. It's offered in the scriptures. It's offered here every Lord's Day. It's offered in many other pulpits. It's offered in the Word of God. Anytime you open it.

Anytime you consider it. It's there. Jesus Christ is here. In his Word. He speaks to us. He speaks to us by his Spirit. He speaks to us by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit takes this Word of Truth. And it makes it meaningful to us. And that's what we need to seek. And if you haven't received the Holy Spirit yet. If you haven't received the truth of the Gospel.

That's what you should be seeking. And if you have. That's what you should be seeking for other people. And I don't speak to you only. I'm one of the you's there.

That's what I should be thinking. That's what we all should be thinking. That we want others to come to faith. To come to know this Jesus. Because it's not by our deserving it. None of us could deserve it.

[18 : 25] It's all of grace. And that's not an empty word. Grace. Grace here. Talking about undeserved favour. The undeserved favour of God. It cannot be earned. It cannot be merited.

There is no way that anyone can say. I am worthy. I deserve this. Pulling on the sword. Saying it that way. That's what I think.

It might just let me off. I know these other people. Well. Maybe they're not so bad. You know. You know what. I don't know what Mother Teresa's.

Condition before God was. Whether she's trusting in Jesus alone. Or not. But she did a lot of good works. She was widely thought of as a great Christian. And I think. Something like.

Shortly. Maybe around the time of her death. People were asked. It was a survey. And I think it was a survey. They said. Is Mother Teresa a Christian? Or was she in heaven? Does she deserve to go to heaven?

[19 : 20] Maybe it was. Or was she? And it was something like. 97% of people said she did. You know. The only person. Who was more deserving of heaven. Than Mother Teresa. The person that answered the question.

Each person that answered the question. Said. Well. I'm more deserving of heaven. Than Mother Teresa. And then Mother Teresa. And then everybody else. Well. That's mankind. Isn't it?

We put ourselves up there. We think we're something special. Each of us. That's not the natural man. That's the man. Who is in his own sin. That's the man. Who doesn't recognize. What sin is.

That sin is an affront. An offense to God. It's not a joke. It's not some funny thing. It's not to people. Some of the people. That laugh. And joke. I'm a sinner. No.

I'm the black sheep of the family. I was quite proud. To be the black sheep of the family. At one time. In my foolishness. In my ignorance. But by God's grace. He rescued me from that.

[20 : 17] Paul was proud to be a persecutor of the church of Jesus Christ. But he did it ignorantly and unbelieving. And he was forgiven. And he became the greatest gospel missionary of all time.

So it's not by our deserving. It's all grace. Freely by his grace. He couldn't be forced to give. To give the salvation. He couldn't be required to. He couldn't be.

Hitting on into it. He couldn't be blackmailed into it. There's no handle you can have on God. You can't work things out in a way of him. You can't bar him with him. He does it freely.

He does it by his own free will. Because he's God. He does everything well. And he does it so much better than we could possibly even imagine him doing it.

He knows everything. I think it was John Piper that said. He knows every movement.

[21 : 17] And I'm not a scientist. This has been quite apparent. But he knows every movement of every proton and neuron. He knows all the molecules. Where they go. And what they're going to hit.

And when they're going to collide. And all this. At every moment. At every moment through history. He's done all that. And the only sentence is. And he does it without effort. Because that's what it is to be God.

God is just too great for us to understand. But he's gracious. That he is exposed enough of himself. In Jesus Christ. That he would understand something about God.

About his goodness. About his loveliness. About his graciousness. About his mercy. About his righteousness. And about his judgment as well. Everything there is of God.

Is holy and good. And those that say. I don't believe in God. And if I did believe in God. I wouldn't be in this God. Because I don't like the way this God does things.

[22 : 16] Well this is the only God there is. He is God. And there is no other. He says that of himself. He says. I am God. And there is no other.

I mentioned this morning as well. Shaper says. He is God. He is there. And he is not silent. He speaks of himself. He does not hide. He does not pretend.

He does not live behind. As it were. Closed doors. So we don't know where he is. He reveals enough of himself. Enough for salvation.

Enough that we would know. All that we need to know. He does that. By his. Because of his grace. So our salvation. Is of grace. It is despite.

It is despite. What we are. Not because of who we are. Not because of the way we live. Not because that he thought. He saw that we were going to be good. Not because he saw that we were going to believe. But because he.

[23 : 11] Of his own good pleasure. He chose to bless us with salvation. And that does not in any way. Take away from our requirement. Our responsibility. To respond to the gospel. It is our responsibility.

To do that. To do that. To do that. To do that. He says. Believe on Jesus Christ. You should be saved. That's the command. That's the answer as well.

To do that. To do that. So. It's not by our power either. We are redeemed by God. It's not through our own strength.

It's not through our own righteousness. We don't have any. God's love. Had to be satisfied.

God's wrath. Had to be satisfied. God's wrath. God's wrath. Had to be satisfied. God's justice. Had to be satisfied. As well. As his love. To operate. Because God is holy. And his holiness.

[24 : 09] Is all in his character. And he can only rescue us. From the wrath. That is to come. In accordance. With that character. He can't be untrue to himself. So his wrath.

Is to be dealt with. But this is the good news. Of the gospel. Because that wrath. Has been dealt with. That's been propitiated. That word. That means. Jesus Christ.

Took the wrath of God. Upon himself. And he absorbed it. He absorbed it. Through all his people. You know what absorbed means. He took it all in. There's none left over. To come hit us.

He is God. Is honest. And true. And he will not require. Of our hand. The punishment. That he's laid upon. His own. Jesus Christ. His own son.

His only begotten son. The one whom he poured out. His wrath. For our sakes. Now how much love is that? Propitiation.

[25 : 08] And is God dealing with that wrath? He's angry. We have sinners in the hands of an angry boy. Jonathan Edwards. A great sermon. But it frightened many people.

But it's not necessarily fright. That's going to be the good thing. That happened to you. Maybe fright is not what you need. But Jesus might be what you need.

I don't know what you need. Except you need Jesus. If you haven't gone already. I know we all need Jesus. Whoever we are.

And whenever we have come to him. We all need to keep on in the faith. I'm going to move on to say.

That this is a great result for us. Two great results really. God is seen to be righteous. We see that here. Sin has been dealt with in Jesus Christ.

[26 : 12] Human beings have sinned against God. But Jesus Christ has come to pay the penalty. And God therefore is justified himself. In justifying us.

On account of Jesus Christ. It's not cosmic child abuse. As the Reverend Stephen Chalk famously said some years ago.

Foolishly said. No. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. That he took the punishment. That none of us could bear. That none of us could deal with.

That none of us could cope with. That none of us could survive. That not all the whole world could have absorbed. But Jesus absorbed it. You know Jesus was on the cross.

And remember it was dark for three hours. When he was on that cross. When he was in the pit of hell. When he was absorbing all that wrath of God.

[27 : 08] And those three hours must have been like an eternity. You know how it is. When something is really painful. Or really sore. The time just seems to stand still. Doesn't it? The time does.

Maybe it seems when you're sitting in church. I remember myself. He's looking at that. He's not finished yet. And it's really difficult. Sometimes you think. Oh you're squirming. I want to get out of here. I've got to go. People think that way sometimes.

I thought that way. That time can just seem to dwell so long. Whereas some of you. If you're in a good place. Some of you. It's happening. You're enjoying it. Flips by. Isn't it?

The weekend. Flips by. Back to Monday again. All sorts of. All sorts of these are like that. Aren't they? But when things are really painful. Unbelievably.

Indescribably. Beyond imagining painful. As it was for Jesus on that cross. Because he was not just like any person on the cross. The thieves were on the cross. They suffered the physical stuff.

[28 : 05] At least some of it. They didn't have all the scourging and flogging that he had. But they didn't have the sins of the world on their soul. They didn't have the wrath of God to deal with. But one of them.

As far as we know. Anyway. Did have the wrath of God to deal with after that. Because he did not receive the saviour. But the other one. Thankfully. Came to Christ. At that last minute.

And heard the greatest words. Anybody in the world. I would argue. Has ever heard. From any other person. Jesus Christ. Said. To him. Today. You will be with me in paradise.

Now how about that. Throw out a promise. And a promise that was kept. Sin has been passed by. By Christ.

Taking over that sin. But if we do not have Christ. Then there's nothing to take the sins. Except ourselves. And we can't cope with it. Because sacrifice just didn't deal with sins.

[29 : 05] We know that. It's not possible. For the blood of bulls and goats. To satisfy for human sin. How can they? They don't have souls. They're not worthless. But they are eternally.

As far as eternity is concerned. They are worthless. All those billions of animals. That were sacrificed. It was just. Pointing to Christ. Pointing to the fact. There was one who had come. Whose blood was infinitely worthy.

Of infinite worth. And that was when the death of Jesus. The death of sin was dealt with. In Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Dealt that blow to sin.

The power of Satan. The power. Of the evil one. Was dealt with. In a fundamental way. And if he is our Lord.

If he is our savior. Then that wrath is taken for us. The good news. The good news. We always talk about the gospel. The good news. And then people say.

[30 : 04] Oh it's full of doom and gloom. Isn't it? We're all sinners. And all that stuff. Yes we're sinners. But there's a savior. That's the good news. The good news is that. Jesus Christ. The righteous. He's the savior of the world.

He's the only savior. He's the only one that can save us. Don't care what anybody else says. Don't care whether they wear a collar. Whether they preach from a Christian pulpit.

Whatever they say. If they say that Jesus Christ is not the only savior. They're wrong. They're misguided. And they may be false prophets. We have to believe what the scripture says.

Not what any other person says. If they do not agree with the word of God. That we should not be listening to them. Whoever they are. There are many in the Christian who say.

I'm not talking about our own denomination. There are many in the Christian who say. No idea of the truth of the gospel. But that's not something we should be too worried about right now. Because we can't do anything about that.

[31 : 05] What we can do about. What we can do. Is receive Jesus Christ for ourselves. And we can do that. Because God does not ask us to do anything.

He does not enable us to do. Because God is offering Jesus Christ to us freely. You can't pay for it. You don't need to pay for it.

Even if you wanted to pay for it. You couldn't pay for it. If you had all the money in the world. You could not pay for it. If you had all the good works in the world. You could not pay for it.

It's a gift. It's a gift of God's free grace. And it's freely offered. It's a genuine offer. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the believer is then declared to be righteous.

When he really, ultimately, really isn't righteous. But yes he is. Because he receives the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. So it becomes our righteousness. So justification.

[32 : 06] What's justification? Justification. Like we heard about Derek Bentley. He was declared to be not guilty. After all that time. Not just the pardon. But no, you're not actually guilty.

The justification is declaring that person to be righteous in God's sight. It's a legal definition. It's a legal outcome.

Justification. It's the opposite of condemnation. So justification is there for the believer. What is justification?

We read it at the beginning. What is justification? It's an act of God's free grace. Wherein he pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight. And it's only for the righteousness of Christ.

As that's imputed to us. And it's freely offered here. Right here. Right in the gospel. That's where it is. Justification.

[33 : 04] It's received by faith alone. It's received through faith alone. It's justification by God's grace. For we've all sinned. You've heard all of that before. You've probably heard it a hundred times or more.

You might think you've heard it a hundred times tonight. But it's here. This is what we have. You know when Charles Spurgeon was converted.

Charles Spurgeon was an extraordinary person. He was converted in his teens. And he never really had any formal theological education. But he was a genius. Theologically.

He was a mob. He was just someone you couldn't repeat him. And he's still being read today. Around the world. In many languages. But when he was converted.

He went into a little chapel. And the guy that was preaching. Did very little more than I do. He repeated the text. All the world. And you know what Spurgeon said. As only Spurgeon could say.

[34 : 04] Spurgeon said. I don't even know who he was. I don't know who the man was. He must have been a very stupid man. He said. Because all he could do.

Is repeat the text. But Spurgeon was saved. And that's the most important thing. Isn't it? Because that man. Who was a very stupid man. In Spurgeon's estimation.

I'm sure he loved him as a brother. But that man. May have never been used to convert. Anybody else. But Charles Haddon Spurgeon. And how many people. Has he been used to convert?

I guess millions probably. But anyway. More important than Spurgeon. Jesus Christ. The righteous. The good news.

Jesus. Is the good news. And his righteousness. Is what we need. And the consequences are this. There's no room for me. Or for you.

[34 : 59] Or for anyone else. Who loves the Lord. To boast. We've got no room to boast. Because all we've got. Is by God's grace. It's not mostly him. And I leave it me.

It's all him. It's all his grace. There's no room for discrimination. God saves all who believe.

Whoever they are. They might not be our friends. They might not be who we choose. Who we choose to spend time with normally. But it's amazing. How we come together. With brothers and sisters in Christ. Once we have this in common.

And once we overcome. Other difficulties. And there's no room. For what we would call. Antinomianism. For saying. Okay. I don't really have to.

Keep the law. Because Jesus Christ did it for me. Yeah. Fine. Very good. We don't know. I'm not saved by keeping the law. But on the other hand. We are. Supposed. To follow his commands.

[35 : 54] That's how we show. We love him. Do we love him? Do you love him? That's for you to know.

And if you know that you do. Rejoice. Rejoice. And be glad. And be thankful. And if you don't know. Make sure you get to know.

Now. Don't leave it for another day. Don't leave it for a Monday morning. Don't leave it for another Lord's Day. There may not be another one. You might not want to come to church next week.

You might not be able to come to church next week. You might not be in a position to do that. Who knows? We don't know. But we do know. That we have the gospel here.

And we do know. That if we take Jesus Christ at his word. He will receive us. He will never turn us away. If you have Jesus. I'm sure you're praying for that.

[36 : 51] For your own family. For your own congregation. For your own friends. And whoever they are. Wherever they are. If you don't know that. For yourself. Don't just ask others to pray for you.

Pray for yourself. Come to God. And say. You don't have to fancy words. Just come to him. He's here. He's in the gospel. He's freely offered. Let's all close in the same.

That would be the greatest thing we ever do in our life. Whatever we do. We may do many things. And we may do not very many things in our lives. Who knows? But there's only one thing needful that we need to do.

We need to ensure the salvation of our own soul. I can't do it for you. You can't do it for me. You can't do it for your husband, wife, child. Pay or do whatever it is.

You can only do it for yourself. But if you know the Lord already. You can pray for the others. Maybe so. That's it.