

Sunday 11th October, 2026

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." That's how the writer of Psalm 90 begins his song. Looking back. He says, when I look back, God has been with me from the beginning. And because of that God is worth of our praise. And that is a good enough reason to come and worship him this morning.

But the writer ends his Psalm by looking forward. *"May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us— yes, establish the work of our hands."* He asks that God and his favour would rest on him & that God would continue to do his work within us. And that is something we can ask as well. May your favour rest on us. Complete the good work that you have started in our lives. And that would also would be another good reason to come to worship God this morning. To ask that he would be with us in the days to come. So, worship and prayer. Thanks, and supplication. Singing and reflection. All things God is calling us to do as we meet together in person or in spirit, this day. Let's us pray.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Thank you for that. We praise you that you are completely rock solid. Not changing in love, justice, compassion, judgement or holiness. Help us to learn more about you as we meet together today. We ask that your favour would rest upon us today. That you would work in us through your Holy Spirit, as we listen to your word, as we open ourselves up to you in prayer, as we admit that we are again sinners in your midst, as we have fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Forgive us. Change us. Mould us. Make us. So that we can be the people of God in this place going forward. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Song – Grace Alone [The Modern Post | Grace Alone | \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

1. I was an orphan lost at the fall
I was in darkness all of my life
Running away when I'd hear your call
I never knew the day from the night
But Father, you worked your will
But Spirit, you made me see

I had no righteousness of my own
I swore I knew the way on my own
I had no right to draw near your throne
Head full of rocks, a heart made of stone
But Father, you loved me still
But Spirit, you moved in me

And in love before you laid the world's foundation
At your touch my sleeping spirit was awakened
You predestined to adopt me as your own
On my darkened heart the light of Christ has shone
You have raised me so high
u above my station
Called into a kingdom that cannot be shaken
I'm a child of God by grace and grace alone
Heaven's citizen by grace and grace alone

1. You left your home to seek out the lost
So I'll stand in faith by grace and grace alone
You knew the great and terrible cost
I will run the race by grace and grace alone
But Jesus, your face was set
I will slay my sin by grace and grace alone

I worked my fingers down to the bone
I will reach the end by grace and grace alone
Nothing I did could ever atone
But Jesus, you paid my debt

By your blood I have redemption and salvation
Lord, you died that I might reap what you have sown
And you rose that I might be a new creation
I am born again by grace and grace alone

Bible Reading –Romans 9:1-18(NIV)

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. 6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 8 In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." 10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Announcements

Focus for the month: God's Word. If God's word is so important to the believer, it should be placed at the very centre of the Churches ministry. Not just the centrepiece of our worship services, but what we will study in our small groups, youth groups, kids Church, SPARKLERS. How older men and women should mentor younger men

and women. And it should direct how we speak and encourage one another as well. How often do you see God's word at play in what we do together?

School Holidays. NSW schools will be going back for term 4 this week. That means all our regular activities (Creche, kids Church, SPARKLERS, IMPACT, Bible Study etc) will start back again this coming week. TODAY our kids will stay in the services but there will be kids packs for all those in primary school if required.

Big Topics. We are hoping to provide a chance to get together and discuss some big topics. These will not be seminars but round table discussions where those who are interested will read (or watch) something in preparation, before meeting up to pool ideas. The first of these topics will be AI and Us and will be held at the Charlestown Church from 11:45-12:45 on Sunday 25th October. There will be some pre-reading to help stimulate this discussion so if you are interested in this please contact Stephen.

Next preaching programme – Swansea/Charlestown AM.

Romans 9-16 "In view of God's mercy."

18/10 Romans 10 The wind and the sailor

25/10 Romans 11 God's great mission

1/11 Romans 12:1-8 Your (whole) self!

Church Administrator. As we work through the process of filling this position, please note that things might be a bit clunky for a while! The bulk of that administration will go back to Stephen but he is committed to responding in a timely manner. Please note that he will be away this coming week. Please keep sending your questions and requests to the admin@cpres.org email – what you have to say is extremely important to us.

Swansea Coffee Mornings. Will be on tomorrow (both men's and women's) from 10am. See Terry for more details.

Resource. Every year Hunter Gospel Ministries runs a Bible teaching workshop for both men and women Bible teachers. The aim is to get to grips with a book of the Bible, think through its theology and big issues and get an idea of how to teach it to their church or small group. This year the book is Isaiah and it will run by Kirk Patston from SMBC (and a previous minister of this Church!) It will be on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th November at Grace Evangelical. See Stephen for more details.

David Long It is of great sadness to hear of the death of one of our regulars David Long. His funeral service will be on this Wednesday at 10:30am at St Augustine's Anglican Church, Merewether. Please keep Marion, Meredith and the family in your prayers.

Bulletin Printing Marilyn has printed the Sunday bulletin without any fuss for the last few years and we really appreciate her faithful service. Her circumstances have changed and she is unable to do this vital task. If you have a spare 60-90 minutes on a Friday or Saturday could you please see Stephen or Marilyn.

Song – Rock of Ages [Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me with lyrics - YouTube](#)

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, 3. Nothing in my hand I bring, let me hide myself in thee; simply to the cross I cling; let the water and the blood, naked, come to thee for dress; from thy wounded side which flowed, helpless,

look to thee for grace; be of sin the double cure; foul, I to the fountain fly; save from wrath and make me pure. wash me, Savior, or I die.

2 Not the labors of my hands
4. While I draw this fleeting breath, can fulfill thy law's demands; when mine eyes shall close in death, could my zeal no respite know, when I soar to worlds unknown, could my tears forever flow, see thee on thy judgment throne, all for sin could not atone; Rock of Ages, cleft for me, thou must save, and thou alone. let me hide myself in the

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for Bangladesh (Population 176 million. Christians 1 million). Christian converts face severe restrictions, discrimination, and attacks. Some extremists took advantage of 2025's political turmoil to violently persecute Christians. Pray for healing for these believers. Pray that Christians who convert to follow Jesus and face pressure from both family and community will know they are not alone. Thank God for the brave, resilient faith of many believers in Bangladesh, who continue to walk with Jesus despite the risks.

Pray for Cath Read (NCS). Give thanks for the opportunities NCS has had over the past 4 weeks to share with students about Jesus at daily outreach stalls and through the 3 evening events in collaboration with the Philosophy club. Please pray that "D" will be willing to read a gospel with ncs students. Please pray we'll be able to follow up other students interested to talk more. Please pray that God will raise up a new campus director.

Pray for school's return. Pray for our children and young people as they return to school, that God would give them confidence, joy in learning, good friendships and opportunities to live openly and faithfully for Jesus.

Pray for teachers and school staff, that God would give them wisdom, patience and energy as they care for and educate young people, often under significant pressures and responsibilities. **Pray for parents,** that God would give them wisdom and grace as they support their children through another school term, and that our families would use the opportunities God gives them to point their children to Christ.

Pray for those who came to our invitation services, our Discover studies and our Taste and See evenings. That God would write the good news of Jesus onto their hearts and draw them to himself by faith. That they would find in us a Church family that cares and supports them in their walk with Jesus. Pray that their presence will encourage us to continue to share our faith and to grow in our own faith.

Bible Reading – Romans 9:19-29 (NIV)

19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? 22 What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance

for glory— 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” 26 and, “In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’” 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. 28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.” 29 It is just as Isaiah said previously: “Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

Sermon: God's Sovereign Plan (Stephen T)

Imagine being a parent and having this difficult conversation with one of your children. “Mum, Dad, I’ve decided I’m not going to church anymore.” “Why?” “I just don’t believe it anymore. I’ve come to church all my life, heard what the Bible says, but now I’m out in the workforce there’s a whole new world out there. That’s real. And this God stuff just isn’t real. I know it’s important to you, but there are so many more important things for me to do with my life than go to church.”

That would be one of the most devastating conversations you could ever have with your child. And sadly, it is a conversation more and more Christian parents are having. Around **one in eight Australian young adults attends church at least monthly**. And you might think the figures would be much better for those raised in Christian households, brought up going regularly to church, hearing the Bible and being taught to pray. And they are better, but not nearly as good as we would hope. Around 70% of those who attended church at age 11 have left the church by their mid-to-late twenties. Seven out of ten. And if you're a Christian parent, those seven aren't statistics. They're sons & daughters.

Slide 2

Our faithfulness is not a guarantee that our children will have faith. They may return later in life & we should pray that they do. But all the privileges and blessings we have as Christians don't automatically pass down to our children. And when we come to Romans 9, it is that sort of heartbreak that the apostle Paul is feeling. Not for his children—we don't know whether he had any—but for his countrymen and women, his Jewish brothers and sisters.

Slide 3

And listen to what he says: “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people.” Paul would be willing to go to hell and miss out on eternity with Jesus if somehow that would guarantee his people's salvation. But of course, it wouldn't.

And that raises the question: **Have God's promises failed? Can we really trust God's Word?** Because Paul has just concluded Romans 8 with these incredible words: “Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If God's promises are so certain, why are so many of God's own people

walking away from the Lord? Has something gone terribly wrong? Has God lost control? That is the issue Paul now addresses in Romans 9–11. And he begins by looking at

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1. God and Israel (verses 3-18)

*“Theirs is the **adoption to sonship**; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”*

Slide 5

Paul wants to highlight 8 privileges, 8 unique, incredible blessings that the people of Israel have been given by God. And it all begins with being children of adoption. The God who made the entire work, actually the entire universe, adopted Abraham’s descendants to be his very own children. Wow. That’s mind blowing, isn’t it? As God’s sons and daughters, they get to inherit all that their heavenly father has. Amazing.

Plus, access to the divine glory, throughout the OT they got to stand in God’s presence and see the glory of the one and only God. On top of that God gave them covenants through Abraham, Moses, David and Jeremiah, promising that he was their God and they were his people. Add to that the receiving of the law, so they might know how to live in fellowship with the Lord. As well as that they got to worship him in the temple, trust in his awesome promises, see the example of the Patriarchs and get this, trace their ancestry to the Christ.

For Jesus was Jewish, he chose to come to the Jewish race and be one of them. And notice what Paul is saying here. Jesus, the Messiah, **who is God over all**, is to be forever praised. God himself took on flesh and walked among them. That’s more than the cherry on top; it is also a gracious serving of chocolate topping as well. What great privileges Israel has had. Things that no other nation have been given. But like any good Demtel ad, there is more.

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*6 “It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Slide 78 In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is **the children of the promise** who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. 9 For this was how **the promise** was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”*

Adopted as children as well as children of the promise. For when God was talking to Abraham & promising his favour upon him, he didn’t have to do that through Isaac, he could have done it through Ishmael, Abraham’s first born. But the promise is to Israel. Can you imagine that, the God of the whole world lowers himself to come to a mere man & promises blessing and privileges to him through the son he and Sarah will be given in their old age.

You see right from the beginning not all of Abraham's children will be favoured like this. **For it is not by race you receive God's favour but by grace.** There is a distinction being made here. Let me put it this way, there is the Jew and there is the true Jew. There are children of promise related to Abraham and there are children who will not get those promises related to Abraham. Within this family are those who will be saved and those who won't be saved.

Now let's think about that for a moment. Not everyone living in Australia are Australians, only those who have citizenship. And not all Muslims are real Muslims; some are cultural Muslims who don't practice their religion and others are dedicated to the cause of Allah. Likewise, not all Israel is Israel. That's going to be important as Paul continues his argument.

10 "Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

You see when we go to the next generation and move from Israel to Jacob, we see that Jacob's line is elected and Esau's line is not selected. Before they were even borne, before they had shown their true colours and have done anything good or bad, God elected Jacob (who was renamed Israel) and rejected Esau.

Here's the first mention in this passage of this dreaded word, **election** where we get the term predestination. I wonder, if that could just mean that God looked into the future and chose the best one? Well, if he was to do that, he wouldn't have chosen either of them. For really Jacob is no better than Esau. If I was God I doubt I would have chosen either.

But God has a plan. The whole world is his, but out of all the people of the earth he will choose one family, one nation, one group of people whom he will bless and so through them the whole world will be blessed. Yes, he has elected Israel. Doesn't that make God unfair? If he chooses Israel, and not Egypt for example, isn't God showing favouritism? Isn't he unjust? Don't the non-Israelites have a case in the court of law for being unfairly treated?

No way! God isn't unjust. Hasn't Paul been saying again and again in the book of Romans, that all men and women are sinners. All have fallen short of God's standards. All deserve God's judgment. So, if God doesn't choose someone, they still get what they deserve. They get justice. It's just that the Israelites get their justice sweetened with God's mercy as well.

I remember reading of a man who visited his minister one time, greatly concerned with this very passage. He said, "I just don't understand, God loves Jacob and hates Esau. Why would God do that?" The minister nodded his head in agreement, "I agree, I don't fully understand that either", he replied. Then the minister stopped. "What part don't you really understand?" The man said with a look of disbelief, "the part where it says God hates Esau." The minister thought for a moment. "I can understand that part, He was just getting what he deserved. What I don't understand is how God could love Jacob."

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How can God possible choose Jacob/Israel? Its only because he now becomes a child of God's mercy. 14 *"What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy & I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy."*

No human being has any claim on God whatsoever. Which means any relationship with him, any sonship, is not based on human effort but on God's grace and mercy. God's justice means everyone deserves their condemnation but God's mercy says some will still be allowed to be his treasured sons and daughters.

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Preacher James Kennedy gives this illustration. *"There are 5 people who are planning to hold up a bank. They are friends of mine. I find out about it and I plead with them not to do it. But they push me out of the way to go and do the deed. But I tackle one of them and wrestle him to ground, the others go ahead, rob the bank, someone is killed, they are captured, convicted and sentenced. The one not involved goes free. All those who are condemned deserve their sentence and it was only because of mercy that the other man doesn't join them. That's why those who go to hell have no one to blame but themselves. And those who go to heaven are the ones who have been tackled by God's grace and mercy."*

Predestination is based on God's sovereignty, on his mercy. Pharaoh, Paul says, is another example. God's messenger, Moses spoke that word to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh resisted the truth and hardened his heart. And God is so powerful that He used that rebellion to judge Pharaoh and to save Israel. As a wise man once said, "The same sunlight that melts the ice hardens the clay."

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Let's just pause for a moment or two and reflect on what we have seen in this passage so far. Paul is wrestling with the tragedy of the Jews, in the past they have received so much from Gods' hand – his privileges, his promises, his election and his mercy, how come so many of them are currently outside the kingdom? Is it God's fault? That his word was not strong enough to keep them close to their heavenly father?

No, it's because not all Jews are true Jews. Even amongst ethnic Israel, God has chosen some to be his children, while other have continued their merry way trying to get right with him in other ways. Which means that God

is not antisemitic, actually the Jews have a special place in God's plans for the world.

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Now there has been lots in the news recently about antisemitism. Where people pick on the nation of Israel for one reason or another. And if we do that, we are not behaving like how God would want us to behave & in the next two chapters we will tease that out even more.

But it also has implications for our children. Not all Church goers are Christians. Not all people raised in Christian homes & who come along regularly to Church are God's chosen children. Only those who have received his privileges, his promises, his election and his mercy are truly part of the family of God. There will always be in any Church a subset of true believers and those who just attend. Only time will tell between those two groups.

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1. Romans 9 begins with God and Israel & then moves onto **God and the Clay** (v 19-21)

19 "One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?"

If God is sovereign, what responsibility do I now have? Paul doesn't give us a philosophical explanation, instead he gives us a humbling question: "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?" Then comes a discussion about the potter and the clay. The potter has authority over the clay. He can make one vessel for honourable use, another for common usage.

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Imagine walking into a pottery studio. You see a potter shaping a lump of clay. The clay doesn't stand up and say: "Excuse me, I'd prefer to be a vase rather than a bowl." For the potter is the creator. The clay is the creature. Paul's point isn't that human beings are meaningless lumps of dirt. It's that God is God and we are not.

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Friends on the subject of election and free will we need to be careful what we say to God. For just as the clay doesn't talk back to the potter, so we need to be careful how we talk back to God. For just as the **gardener** has the right to move his plants around, as the **farmer** has the right to send some cattle to slaughter & keep others at home, as the **house wife** has the right to kill a fly that comes into their kitchen, so, God has the right to exercise his sovereignty in any way he determines. He is able to elect people into the kingdom by his mercy if that is what he so desires to do. In fact, that is the way he has always worked.

For you see the tragedy of Israel leads to the triumph of the nations. Because so many Jews have hardened their hearts, God then sends his good news to the nations. In the first part of our passage, we see this

narrowing where not all Israel is saved but here, we see a widening, where the grace of God overflows from just going to Israel & heads out to the whole world.

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1. God and the Nations (verses 22-29)

22 "What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory, 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?"

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You see God's ultimate plan is not to just have children from one nation but from every nation. Not just from the Jew but also for the Gentile. And Paul sees that plan was clearly laid out in the Old Testament. For example, in the book of Hosea. *25 "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," 26 and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"*

God's word said this would happen all along. It seemed that the Gentiles were not God's loved one. They missed out on the adoption, on the promises, on election, on God's mercy. **But they hadn't!** There is enough mercy for Israel & for the nations. Enough grace for the whole world. Jesus death on the cross is enough to forgive the sins of everyone who ever lived. That means everyone, everyone has the opportunity to be children of the living God.

Slide 20

But at the same time, the Jews are not completely forgotten. Because now that Jesus has come, a remnant of the Jewish nation will still be saved. Not all Jews, but the true Jews, they too get to remain in God's family. For that's what Isaiah said.

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"Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. 28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality." 29 It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."

Friends God has a greater vision than you and I can ever imagine. Of Jew and Gentile becoming part of the family of God. The things that have divided us in the past, those walls, have now been knocked down. And in their place is a bridge, a bridge that takes us to eternal life. God's purposes have not been blocked off that bridge, instead extra lanes have been built on that bridge so that more and more can come back to God. So that the Jew cannot claim that the only way to God is through them and the rest of us cannot claim that the only way to God is through them. For the only way to the Lord is through Jesus.

I was listening recently to an interview with Ian Duguid and he put in a way that I had never heard before but for me was immensely helpful. The Church doesn't simply take Israel's place, as though God abandoned Israel and started again with a new people called the Church. **The story is centred on Jesus.** Jesus is the true and faithful Israelite—the Son who perfectly trusted and obeyed God where Israel had failed. And now, everyone who is united to Jesus by faith, Jew and Gentile together, becomes part of God's people. The privileges that belonged to Israel—being God's people, knowing his presence, receiving his promises, being a light to the nations—are now found in Christ and shared by all who belong to him.

I think that is really helpful. All the promises concerning the Jewish nation are fulfilled in Jesus. So, when we start looking at the prophecies around the second coming, we don't need to look for events happening in the Middle East, either now or sometime in the future, instead we need to look to Christ and those who are now in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, what we would call today the Church, as the ones who have now stepped into Israel's place.

And that brings us back to the heartbreak we began with. If you have a child who has walked away from Jesus, you cannot place your ultimate hope in the fact that they were raised in a Christian home. You cannot guarantee their salvation by giving them the right upbringing, the right schooling or the right church. Those things are precious privileges, but they cannot save them. Our hope has to be bigger than that. Our hope has to be in Christ.

Because God's Word has not failed. God's purposes have not failed & the God who saved us is still sovereign over those we love. So, we pray, we plead, we proclaim Christ, & we entrust our children to the God whose mercy is greater than ours; & whose purposes can never fail.

Friends, remember the amazing privileges that the Christian has today through their relationship with Jesus. We have been adopted into the family of God, we have his precious promises, he has chosen us and give us his grace and mercy. They are immense privileges. But don't strut around with a sense of entitlement, because you didn't earn any of them. They were given to you by a loving father who wanted to extend to you his wonderful mercy

And that should humble us. Like Isaac and Israel there was nothing about us that was worthy. It is only Christ that was worthy. So don't think you are any better than anyone else. There but for the grace of God goes I. Let that grace and mercy sweep over us. Overflow from us. To our family, friends, workmates and neighbours. As we plead with God to give them the mercy that they don't deserve but which will join them eternally to Christ also.

And remember the potter has shaped you and I in just the right shape and way to achieve his purposes. For some it's a special purpose and for others it's a common purpose. But there is a purpose given to every life. There is a goal he wants you to achieve each day. Find it in his word and then draw on his Spirit each day as you attempt to live out that purpose

For the key thing for our kids, whether they are walking with the Lord right now or not, the key thing for our friends and family and neighbours whether they are walking with the Lord or not, is being joined to Christ. So, point them to him. Show them the privileges attached to him. And pray that one day God would draw them to him. Don't argue with God about how he might do it, just ask him to do it & leave them in his own, wonderful, cross scarred hands.

Song– In Christ Alone [In Christ Alone \(Official Lyric Video\) - Keith & Kristyn Getty, Alison Krauss - YouTube](#)

1. In Christ alone my hope is found
3. There in the ground His body lay
He is my light, my strength, my song
Light of the world by darkness slain
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
Up from the grave He rose again
What heights of love, what depths of peace
And as He stands in victory
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
My comforter, my all in all
For I am His and He is mine
Here in the love of Christ I stand
Bought with the precious blood of Christ
1. In Christ alone who took on flesh
4. No guilt in life, no fear in death
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This is the power of Christ in me
This gift of love and righteousness
From life's first cry to final breath
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Jesus commands my destiny
Till on that cross as Jesus died
No power of hell, no scheme of man
The wrath of God was satisfied
Can ever pluck me from His hand
For every sin on Him was laid
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the death of Christ I live
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Closing. *For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy & I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*