

**Sunday 19th July, 2026**

**Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church**

**Welcome & Prayer**

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth & the mountain peaks belong to him. 5 The sea is his, for he made it & his hands formed the dry land. 6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.*

Let's Pray. Sovereign Lord, what a great privilege it is to come into your presence this morning. To be able to sing to the rock of our salvation. To be able to come before you in thanksgiving and to praise you with music and song. To be able to humble ourselves in worship, to pray to our maker & to place ourselves under your sovereign care.

We admit that we don't come to you often enough, and we don't thank you enough, nor are we humble enough, dependent enough, passionate enough. Please forgive us. Forgive us because for everything we have done wrong, whether we have done or said or acted in the wrong way or failed to do, say or act in the right way, that wrongdoing meant that your Son Jesus had to die on the cross to forgive us that sin. So we thank you for Jesus. May he become more and more real to us today as we sing, listen, pray, reflect and commit this time to you now. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

**Song – How Great Thou Art**

[How Great Thou Art with lyrics performed by chris rice - YouTube](#)

- |                                          |                                                   |                           |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Oh Lord, my God                       | 2. And when I think that God, His Son not sparing | When I, in awesome wonder |
| Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in | Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made       | That on the cross,        |
| my burden gladly bearing                 | I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder       | He bled and died to take  |
| away my sin                              | Thy power throughout the universe displayed       |                           |

Chorus

Chorus 3. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee                      And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art                      Then I shall bow, in humble adoration  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee                      And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Chorus

## **Bible Reading – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-14 (NIV)**

*Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. 11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **Announcements**

**School Holidays.** All regular activities of the Church are currently in recess for the NSW public school holidays. But most will start back this week! So, get involved in some aspect of serving others. And the start of the term is a great time to begin!

**Kids church** will be back on the 26th of July. All other activities will start in the week beginning Monday 20th July.

**Focus for the month:** Spiritual Growth. Have you thought how you can affect the spiritual growth of others in the Church? And how they can affect your spiritual growth? You see your prayers, your encouragement, your hospitality, your interest in them, your modelling can make a big difference to how others are going spiritually. And likewise, these same factors can also help you and I grow in our spiritual growth. That's why church and small groups are so important. For in the words of John Donne "No man is an island." We all need each other. So, let's make the most of the mature Christians that are all around us today.

**Next preaching programme – Swansea/Charlestown AM.**

Next week Stephen will be starting a new sermon series on 2 Thessalonians – Stand Firm.

19/72 Thessalonians 1 When life gets hard

26/72 Thessalonians 2 When the ends seems confusing

2/82 Thessalonians 3 As we wait

**A Taste of Africa** – Join us for delicious food and entertainment celebrating African culture and to raise money for the Mogra Children's Rescue Centre in Kenya. Sat 15 August at 6.30pm at church. \$20 adults, \$10 kids under 12 yrs and kids under 3 yrs free (includes a 3-course meal. Please chat to one of the organisers listed on the flyer if info is required about the menu). Tickets can be purchased via [charlestownpresbyterian.square.site](http://charlestownpresbyterian.square.site) - Limited seats so don't miss out!

**NSW General Assembly.** Stephen, Ross and Jo have spent the week in Sydney representing the church at its annual meetings. Hopefully we will be able to report back what happened in the next week or so.

**Vanuatu Mission.** Interested in going on a two-week mission trip to Vanuatu in January 2027? If so Stephen T and Cheryl G are taking applications in the next month or two. If you want some more details just ask either one of them in the next couple of weeks.

**Audric is on leave.** Audric, Elise and the family will be on leave for another week. If you need pastoral assistance please see either Stephen or Jannah.

**Sam Wilson is also on leave** for another two weeks. All enquires to Stephen.

**Grandparents Conference** <https://ngmlegacy.com.au/2026-conference/> Early bird in person \$78/pp closes 13/7/26 (\$98 thereafter). Online \$30 pp Come join us as we seek to encourage grandparents to grab hold of the possibilities that exist for seeing the generations that follow us, grow in health both spiritually and emotionally. Interested? See Logans 0438435991 or Smalls. Speakers: Rev Ian Barnett, Leigh Hatcher, Dr Bill Anscombe, Dr Leisa Aitken, Rev Dr Glenn Davies, Mark McCrindall

**RECHARGE Men's Conference.** Saturday 12th September 7:30 (for breakfast) to 1pm. Futureproof Men: Living now with the end in mind. With Steve McAlpine. Early bird \$40. Under 25 \$20. For more details see Grew W or go to <https://www.hgm.org.au/recharge>

**Next Monthly Matters** sewing day is on this Saturday 25th July. See Julie for more details.

**Song – O Church Arise** [Keith & Kristyn Getty - O Church Arise \(Arise, Shine\) \(Lyric Video\) ft. Chris Tomlin - YouTube](#)

1. O Church Arise and put your armour on  
call of Christ our Captain  
As the Son of God is stricken  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet  
In the strength that God has given  
For the Conqueror has risen  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
And as the stone is rolled away  
We'll stand against the devil's
3. Come see the cross where love & mercy meet  
Hear the call of Christ our Captain  
As the Son of God is stricken  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet  
In the strength that God has given  
For the Conqueror has risen  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
And as the stone is rolled away  
We'll stand against the devil's

lies  
And Christ emerges from the grave  
An army bold whose battle-cry is Love  
This victory march continues  
till the day  
Reaching out to those in darkness  
Every eye and heart shall see Him

1. Our call to war to love the captive soul  
4. So Spirit come put strength in every stride  
But to rage against the captor  
Give grace for every hurdle  
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole  
That we may run with faith to win the prize  
We will fight with faith and valour  
Of a servant good and faithful  
When faced with trials on every side  
As saints of old still line the way  
We know the outcome is secure  
Retelling triumphs of His grace  
And Christ will have the prize for which He died  
We hear their calls and hunger for the day  
An inheritance of nations  
When with Christ we stand in glory

## Pastoral Prayer Points

**Pray for Central African Republic (Population 6 million, Christians 4.4million).** Escalating violence has displaced thousands of believers, forcing them into camps. The Central African Republic has been embroiled in conflict for over a decade. Pray that God brings peace.

Pray for the victims of sexual violence. Ask God to bind up their wounds. Pray for complete healing from this horrific crime. Pray that God comforts those who mourn the loss of loved ones.

**Pray for Church planting in our nation.** We pray that you would raise up faithful, Bible-believing church planters across Australia who will boldly proclaim Christ crucified and risen. Strengthen existing churches to pray, give generously, and send workers into your harvest, so that God's name may be glorified throughout our nation.

**Pray for Webbs (CMS, Broome, Indigenous Ministries) Kathryn O'C to provide**

**Pray for our denomination's annual meetings.** Pray for Stephen T and Ross L who will be in attendance, pray that they will come prepared and ready to fellowship with one another as we seek the greater good of the Presbyterian Church in NSW, and with a desire to see the church grow. Pray for healthy and collegiate debate on all the issues before the Assembly.

**Pray for us to be a welcoming Church.** Heavenly Father, make our church a welcoming home where people of every age, background, culture, and circumstance encounter the grace and truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to love one another sincerely, show genuine hospitality, and reflect the unity of your gospel, so that many may find both a spiritual family and the hope of eternal life in Christ.

## **Bible Reading – 2 Thessalonians 1:1-14**

*Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and*

*faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. 11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Sermon: Standing firm: When life gets hard (Stephen T)

Many of you will remember the film *Saving Private Ryan*, set during the Second World War. After the D-Day landings, a squad of American soldiers is given a dangerous mission: find one man, Private James Ryan, and bring him home. Ryan's three brothers have already been killed in the war & military leaders decide that no family should lose all of their sons in war. But the mission to save Private Ryan comes at a tremendous cost. One by one, members of the rescue team are killed. Finally, Captain John Miller, played by Tom Hanks, is mortally wounded. As he lies dying, he looks at Ryan and speaks two simple words: **"Earn this."**

Years later, the film ends with an elderly Ryan standing before Miller's grave. Surrounded by his family, he turns to his wife and asks, *"Tell me I've led a good life. Tell me I'm a good man."* He has spent decades wondering whether he has been worthy of the sacrifice that saved him.

Slide 2

That question resonates deeply with us. If someone gave their life so that we could live, wouldn't we want to honour that sacrifice? Wouldn't we want our lives to reflect the cost that was paid? Well, that's the big idea in 2 Thessalonians 1, where Paul prays that believers would be made **"worthy of God's calling."** The sacrifice Jesus made for us was incredible and through his death on the cross he calls us to follow him. We don't earn God's salvation; it's a gift of grace but the lives we live should reflect the grace we have received. In that way you and I need to live lives of gratitude that are worthy of our God's call on our lives.

Slide 3

### 1. God's Grace: In present suffering (verses 1-4)

And that's where the book of 2 Thessalonians begins with, God's grace. *"Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

***Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."***

Paul is writing his second letter to the Thessalonians in short succession. In and around 50AD he had preached the gospel to the people of Thessalonica. They had accepted this good news; they had turned from idols to follow the true and living God. But then Paul had been driven out of town, only just escaping with his life. He has to leave these young, defenceless Christians at the mercy of extreme persecution.

Slide 4

Paul then wrote his first letter, 1 Thessalonians almost immediately to try and encourage them to stick with their faith. But then a rumour circulated that Jesus had already come back. And that means that the Thessalonian Christians had been left behind. Now who on earth would start a rumour like that? So, the Thessalonians began asking themselves have we been forgotten by God. Is it all worth it? Do we stick with the Christian gospel?

So, here Paul puts pen to paper again and writes his second letter to the Church at Thessalonica. Yes, it is worth it, you can be certain of that. Look back at God's grace. Look forward to God's justice. Look up to God's calling! Everywhere you look backwards, forwards, upwards, God is doing something in your midst. So, stand firm, hang in there. Besides

Slide 5

*3 "We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your **faith is growing** more & more, and **the love** all of you have for one another **is increasing**. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about **your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials** you are enduring."*

Paul begins with thanksgiving. "*We ought always to thank God for you...*" Notice what he doesn't thank God for. He doesn't thank God because life is easy. He thanks God because their faith is growing and their love is increasing **despite suffering**. Paul is showing these new believers a surprising measure of success.

Now many churches measure success by: attendance, budget, buildings, programs. Paul measures success differently. He asks: Is our faith growing? Is our love increasing? Are we persevering? Those are the marks of spiritual health. And that is what success is all about.

For these three qualities—faith, love, and perseverance—work together. Firstly, faith trusts God. It believes that God is sovereign, Christ is Lord, and his promises are true even when circumstances are difficult. So, when difficult times come, faith says: "I don't understand what God is doing, but I will still trust Him."

Growing faith, flourishing, fruitful, lively faith. Did you know that faith grows? It's not static. Christian faith is a living thing. It grows like a tree, and like a tree, it needs to be tended, cultivated, cared for, trained and developed and matured by actively trusting God in hard places, by looking to Christ in the small things as well

as in the big things. It grows as we meet together in worship, as we read God's word, as we pray, & as we lean on each other for support.

If we neglect these things, our faith will be stunted and may wither, become fragile and fleeting. But Paul can see, in the case of the Thessalonians at least, the faith that God had given to them was flourishing. And as well as that their love was also increasing. You see our love is the outward expression of faith. As believers trust God's love for them, they become increasingly free to love others sacrificially. For love says: "Because Christ has loved me, I will love my brothers and sisters." Genuine faith always bears the fruit of love.

Even through the tough times, faith and love will persevere over time. For perseverance says: "I will keep trusting Christ and loving others, even when it is costly." You see anyone can follow Jesus when life is easy. But perseverance is what happens when faith remains firm and love remain active, through suffering.

Slide 6

Imagine a marathon runner. Faith is confidence that the finish line is worth reaching. Love is helping fellow runners along the way. Perseverance is continuing to put one foot in front of the other despite exhaustion. Or to put it another way: Faith looks upward to God. Love looks outward to others. Perseverance keeps us moving forward.

You see when faith deepens, love expands. When faith and love are tested, perseverance develops. And as perseverance grows, faith becomes stronger and love becomes richer. That is why Paul thanks God for all three. Together they are evidence that God is maturing his people. And when I think about it, that's been my experience.

It isn't in the good times that I grow in my faith, it is the tough times. It isn't when people are patting me in the back when I really need God it is when they are stabbing me in the back. When all is dark around me, God's light, God's love, God's grace comes right to the fore. And that is why Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians faith, hope and perseverance. For God's grace has changed them. On the outside they have their hurts and their scars but on the inside their spirits are soaring, their faith is growing, their love is overflowing.

This is how Paul is encouraging his fellow believers and it is a good model for us to follow as well. Notice Paul doesn't give them a pat on the back. "You guys are legends, I'm so proud of you." No that might lead to pride and self-reliance. Instead, he sees what the hand of God is doing within them & he overflows in praise to God for them. Maybe that's a lesson for us as well. To see what God is doing in others & point out to them what God is doing in their lives.

Slide 7

1. God's grace, then **God's justice** will come sometime in the future.

We can stand firm in tough times when we see God's grace at work in our lives and when we remember that God's judgement will come again in the future. 5 *"All this is evidence that **God's judgment is right**, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering."*

The believer's endurance demonstrates that God is already at work in them and that they truly belong to his kingdom. You see suffering does not make them worthy of salvation; rather, their faithful response to suffering reveals the reality of God's saving grace in their lives. Their perseverance is evidence of genuine faith and a foretaste of God's final verdict. On the last day, God will publicly declare them righteous in Christ, showing that his judgment concerning them has always been just and right.

But what does God's justice actually look like? 6 *"God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well."*

Slide 8

Paul says: "God is just." That simple statement changes everything. The universe is not governed by chaos. History is not random. God is not indifferent. God is just. One day he will reverse every injustice suffered by his people. You see there is both a positive and negative aspect to God's justice.

Slide 9

Well let's consider what a judge actually does. When he passes judgement, he sometimes gives a guilty verdict that the person has to pay some sort of a punishment. That's the negative side. But sometimes the judge passes a verdict of not guilty and that means the plaintiff is released, and free, nothing now hangs over their head. That's the positive side.

And here in verses 6 and 7 we see how that works when God shows us justice on the final day. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you. He will give back to those, what they have done to others. We might put it this way, they will get an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. They will get exactly what they deserve. But to those who have already been judged and found worthy of the kingdom, they will get relief from their troubles.

Now I don't know how many times you've been wronged or how many ways you've been victimized. I don't know how long you've waited for justice to be served. But I do know that God is not deaf to your cries. Genesis 18:25 asks, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the answer is a resounding "Yes!" But that leads to another question, doesn't it? "When will He make everything right?" When will I experience this justice?

Slide 10

Well not here and now. Verse 7 goes on to say *"that justice will come when the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven in a blazing fire and with his powerful angels."* It is only when Jesus comes again will everything be resolved. And we will all know when that happens because Jesus will come in blazing glory and accompanied by God's own army of angels.

In the same way that someone coming out 10 Downing Street to meet the press has the authority of the British government, so someone coming out of heaven has God's full authority. But how will this judgement be enacted? *8 "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."*

Here we see Paul describes the fate of those who reject Christ with 4 sobering expressions. Together they present a comprehensive picture of God's righteous judgment. First, their punishment is **everlasting**. This judgment is not temporary or corrective but eternal. Just as eternal life lasts forever, so too does eternal punishment. Paul emphasizes the permanence of the final verdict. There will be no second chance beyond the return of Christ.

Second, it involves **destruction**. Paul is not teaching annihilation, as though unbelievers cease to exist. Rather, "destruction" refers to ruin and loss. Human beings were created to know, worship, and enjoy God. Judgment brings the complete destruction of that purpose and blessing. It is existence under God's judgment rather than existence in God's favour.

Third, unbelievers are shut out from **the presence of the Lord**. Throughout Scripture, God's presence is the source of joy, peace, life, and blessing. The greatest tragedy of hell is not physical suffering but separation from the God for whom humanity was made. Every good gift ultimately comes from God's presence; to be excluded from it is a terrible, horrible loss.

Fourth, they are excluded **from the glory of his power**. Believers will one day marvel at Christ's glorious reign and experience the fullness of his saving power. Unbelievers, however, will have no share in that glory. They will witness Christ's triumph not as participants but as those under judgment.

Together, these four descriptions remind us that God's judgment is real, just, eternal, relationally devastating, and entirely avoidable if they just were to have faith in Jesus Christ, who bore all their judgment on behalf of all who trust in him.

Friends, we can't afford to forget that there is a day of reckoning coming to every person in this world. And if they do not put their trust in Jesus' death taking the punishment that they will one day receive, then they are in deep, deep trouble. Let me read how Bill Hybels described what Hell might feel like:

*"The bottomless pit...conjures up dreamlike feelings of falling away -- falling, falling, falling. You've all had dreams like that; where when you woke your heart was beating because you were falling. Picture in your mind hanging over a precipice, and God is hanging onto you, and you're hanging onto him. And you decide you don't need him anymore. So, you let go. But the moment you let go you know you made a mistake. You're falling and every moment you fall further and further away from the only source of help and truth and love, and you realize you made a mistake and you can't get back up and you fall further and faster and further & faster into spiritual oblivion, and you know you're going the wrong direction and you'd give anything to go back but you can't & you fall and you fall and you fall and you fall. How long? Forever & all the while you're falling, you're saying, 'I'm further now; I'm further. I'm further from the only source of hope, truth, and love.' In hell there is never the bliss of annihilation. You'd give anything for annihilation, but it's unavailable, only the conscious continuation of emotional anguish, physical anguish, relational anguish, and spiritual anguish forever."*

Friends when people are not treating you well look forward to the future. God is just. God will repay evil for evil. Which means we can leave it in God's hands. But make sure you yourself are currently in God's hand. For without his grace, without his mercy, without his work in your life, that is your future as well. So don't gloat. Don't feel happy about what is to come. There but for the grace of God goes you and I. So go to him.

Slide 14

Remember, 10 *"on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."* If we believe we will be glorified in him and he will be glorified in us. We will be changed and become completely holy. Which means the work of Christ that began at the cross will be completed at his second coming. And so, we will enjoy his constant presence and we will be transformed and become like him for all eternity.

Slide 15

1. So, what then is **God's purpose** for us as we wait? (verses 11-12)

11 *"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may **make you worthy of his calling** & that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

God's purpose is that we would be "worthy of his calling." By saying this he is not suggesting that Christians earn their salvation. Rather, he prays that their lives would increasingly reflect the gracious calling they have received in Christ. And that will involve at least four things.

Slide 16

Firstly, we fulfill **God's Good Purposes**. Paul prays that God would bring to completion "every desire for goodness." God saves people for a purpose. Christians are called to pursue what is good, pleasing, and honouring to God. A worthy life is not passive but actively seeks to align with God's purposes in the world, whether through service, generosity, evangelism, or godly character.

It is a bit like when I first became a father. When it happened, I couldn't change it, I couldn't reverse it. I couldn't do anything to make myself more of a father or less of a father. I was a dad. But now that I am a dad I need to live like one. I need to be responsible. I need to be a good example. I need live according to this higher calling. And it is the same with our faith. We need to live in a way that God would count us **worthy of our calling**. For our actions can now either glorify him or drag his name through the mud.

Secondly it involves **acts prompted by faith**. Paul also prays that God would empower "*every deed prompted by faith*." Faith is not merely intellectual belief; it produces action. Genuine faith leads believers to obey God, trust his promises, and step forward in service even when circumstances are difficult. Good works are the fruit of faith, not the cause of salvation.

Thirdly Paul prays that we might **Glorify Jesus**. The ultimate goal is "*that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you*." The Christian life is Christ-centred. Our words, decisions, relationships, and service should point people to Jesus rather than ourselves. A worthy life seeks to make much of Christ.

Lastly, Paul prays that we might Live our Lives **in Line with God's Grace**, Paul concludes by grounding everything in "*the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ*." God's calling begins with grace, is sustained by grace, and ends in grace. Believers grow not through self-effort alone but through God's continuing work in them. A worthy life is therefore a grateful response to grace rather than an attempt to earn God's favour.

Slide 17

You see if we take God's grace, if we escape God's justice, if we ignore God's good purposes for our lives and continue to live as we please it is like slapping God again in the face. It is thumbing our noses at his goodness. It really is the ultimate insult. And it shows we aren't really saved. But if we open ourselves up to God's grace, remember God's judgement and seek to live according God's purposes, God's power flows through us and changes us and makes us more and more like Jesus.

Slide 18

In Billy Graham's last book, he tells a story of a son who leaves his father at home in South America and makes a real hash of his life, a bit like a modern-day prodigal son. He is away a long time and then he hears that his dad has died and he comes back just at the time that his dad's belongings are being auctioned off.

Amongst the items for sale is a painting of his father and he decides to make a bid for it, but he is outbid by another woman. He approaches her after the auction and asks why she was willing to pay such a high price for the picture and she explained that the picture frame is very valuable. He tells her his story and asks for the picture itself and she is happy to give it to him but as she removes it from the frame, an envelope with the son's name written on it falls out. And in it is a letter from the father assuring him of his constant love and prayers and telling him that there is a bank draft for him at a certain location. The woman then looks the son in the eye and says "*Go and live a life worthy of your father's name*."

That's what Paul is saying to us today. "Go and live a life worthy of your heavenly father's name." Whatever you do will be nothing compared to the grace that God has given you. Whatever wrong that has come your way will be righted by God's justice on the last day. However, you live needs to be in line with God's purposes for your life. So, rely upon God's grace, open yourself up to God's power, be changed by God's justice and go and live a life worthy of Jesus. Stand firm in his grace, no matter how hard life gets, for it will be worth it. It will be more than worth it. God will see to that.

## Song – Yet not I but Christ in me

[CityAlight ~ Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
3. No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven  
There is no more for heaven now to give  
The future sure, the price it has been paid  
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom  
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon  
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace  
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
To this I hold, my sin has been defeated  
For my life is wholly bound to His  
Jesus now and ever is my plea  
Oh how strange and divine, Oh the chains are released,

I can sing, "All is mine"  
I can sing, "I am free"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

1. The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
4. With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay  
For He has said that He will bring me home  
Labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
And day by day I know He will renew me  
For in my need, His power is displayed  
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me  
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
Through the deepest valley He will lead  
All the glory evermore to Him  
Oh the night has been won, When the race is complete,

and I shall overcome  
till my lips shall repeat

Yet not I, but through Christ in me  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

**Benediction.** *"11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed*

*prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)*