Cornhill Scotland 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service

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Date: 27 September 2026

Preacher: Craig Dyer

`[0:00]` Well, good evening, everybody, and welcome. Welcome to our service here at the Tron Church,! and welcome particularly to this special occasion in which we are giving thanks to God! for 20 years of the Cornhill Training Course here in Scotland. This is a special weekend of celebration.

Yesterday, we had many students from the past and staff from the past coming back to join us as we celebrated our thanks to God for these things. But tonight is an opportunity for all of us. Many churches in Scotland, particularly those in the beginning near here, but now all over Scotland, have been partners in the work of Cornhill, training people for Bible teaching ministries of the future, and it's lovely for us to have an opportunity this evening together to thank God for these things.

We're going to hear from various different folk who've been involved with Cornhill and hopefully give you a flavor of that. But our great focus tonight, above all, is to give thanks to God. Let me begin then by reading some words from the Apostle Paul.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Well, let's begin by doing that together as we sing.

`[1:36]` Now, thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices. may With hearts and hearts and voices Such wonders he has come In him will rejoice in Through all our other tribes

And bless us on our way With countless dreams of God And still in time to reign So in his ever's home Through all our life He is here To heal our hearts and hope And bring his peace to Jesus Through the hearts and his dreams Through may may may may may

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Well, do sit and we join our hearts together in prayer. Let us pray. Amen. may

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may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may majesty and your glory.
[5:21] Above all, to create us in your image. So to do above all other creatures. And yet, Lord, we acknowledge the sinfulness of our own hearts and indeed of all the human race from earliest days, turning our backs upon that glorious purpose.

And yet, instead of departing from us, abandoning us, annihilating, your abundant grace and mercy sought us.
Your word broke into the silence and the darkness and the lostness to call out a people for yourself through a great and precious promise of a Redeemer, a Savior, the promised one.
And who at last was revealed in these last days in the person of your own Son, God the Son Himself, come down from the glory of heaven and into this world to seek us and to find us who were lost and to call us heavenward by that mercy and grace through the power of the cross of our great Savior and the wonder of His resurrection glory.
And so, Lord, we are here because of Your power throughout the ages and Your purpose unassailable to gather a people for Yourself and to build a glorious kingdom which shall be forever and ever.
[7:01] And so, we thank You, Lord, for our part in that. We thank You for the glorious gospel that You've entrusted to us as Your church. And tonight especially, Lord, we thank You for the way that in recent times You have blessed us so greatly by enabling us as churches and as believers to join together for the sake of that great gospel, to train many in its message and in its ministry.

So, Lord, tonight we come to You with hearts full of thanksgiving and we pray that as we hear of these things and as we turn to You afresh in Your Word, You would send us on our way full of gladness and full of hope for the future and with a greater desire than ever to serve Your gospel all the days of our lives and to see its wonderful fruitfulness in this, our own nation and indeed to the ends of the earth.
So, hear us tonight, Lord, as we pray with the saints of old saying, Look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of Thy brightness.
Fill us with holy love and open to us the treasures of Thy wisdom. All our desire is known unto Thee. Therefore, perfect what Thou hast begun and what Thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer.
We seek Thy face. Turn Thy face unto us and show us Thy glory. And then shall our longing be satisfied and our peace be perfect.
[8:52] Amen. We're here tonight to give thanks for 20 years of the Cornhill training course here in Scotland, but the story of Cornhill goes back a lot further than that.

In fact, it goes back 35 years because Cornhill was a course which began, first of all, in the city of London. That's what gives its name. It began in a street called Cornhill in the city of London.
And involved in that from the very beginning was David Jackman. And David has been involved with us in Cornhill, Scotland through almost all of these last 20 years. He brought to us his wisdom, his experience from being the first director of Cornhill in London.
And it's a joy, David, to have you and Heather with us this weekend. And I thought it would be lovely for David to come and just very briefly give us a bit of a sense of how it all began way back then in London.
So David, do come and share that with us. Well, good evening, everybody. It's a joy for us to be here and to have this opportunity to share with you this evening as we give thanks to the Lord.
[9:57] As Willie has said, we go back quite a long way. In fact, we need to go back to 1961 when a young man called Dick Lucas became the rector of St. Helens Church, Bishopsgate, in the city of London.

It had a very small congregation. Nobody really wanted to be its minister. After he was inducted, he told me that the bishop said to him, well, good luck.
And for 25 years, he was ministering there, opening the word of God week by week, especially initially to city business people who met on Tuesday lunchtimes in what became hundreds of people, five or six hundred on a Tuesday lunchtime.
Why did they come? To hear the word of God being preached. After 25 years, the warden said, well, we know Dick doesn't want a silver teapot or a silver watch to celebrate this.

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What could we do? I tell you what we'll do, said one of them. We'll set up a trust so that other people can be encouraged to develop this sort of Bible teaching ministry across the country and indeed around the world.
[11:07] And that's what they did. They set up the Proclamation Trust in 1986. And it had a number of conferences helping ministers to preach the word.

You see, those of you who remember the 1980s may recall that there was a sort of tidal wave sweeping over the evangelical churches in the UK which was questioning the centrality of biblical preaching.
Some people were saying, well, what we need now is the now word of God in contemporary prophecy. We don't need all this Bible study. And so the content of what was being done was under threat.
And other people were saying, well, the methodology is out of date. In our schools now, we have everything in group learning and we should just have groups that share together.
We don't need all this proclamation going on. But some of us knew that that was not biblical. That was not God's way. His primary way was the proclaiming of the word.
[12:06] And so in 1986 with these various conferences getting underway, ministers who were helped by them began to say, well, it would be great if we'd had this earlier in our time.

And wouldn't it be wonderful if our young men could come to some sort of longer training for preparation for biblical ministry. ministry. And so in 1991, when I was the minister of a Bubba church in Southampton, Dick Lucas came down one day and said to me, are you going to spend the rest of your life in Southampton?
And I said, well, tell me about it. And he said, well, we'd like to set up a course in London under the Proclamation Trust with which I'd already been involved as a one-year Bible handling, Bible training course for biblical preaching and teaching.
I had been praying for three years that God would show me how I could do that in Southampton. And it didn't work out in Southampton, but in the providence of God, it worked out in London. And so God gave us St. Peter's Church on Cornhill, which is why the course has that name, Cornhill Training Course.
And we began in 1991, 35 years ago this month, with 15 students and the opportunity of spending a year together four days in the week in the class and the other two days with a day off, of course, but the other two days in their church placements.
[13:34] And very quickly as the course developed, people started to say, well, can't we do two days a week and then another two days a week a second year? So although we started with a one-year course, it quickly became a two-year course and people were able to come to us Monday and Tuesday.

Wednesday was a study day. Thursday and Friday was the second year cohort. And they were all in practical ministry placements in all sorts of churches around the London area.
And so that was why we began Cornhill, to try under God to raise up a new generation of Bible teachers and preachers who would rightly handle God's word of truth.
So Cornhill began with lots of practice at doing that, working through books of the Bible, working on how to interpret the Bible, how to read it properly, how it fits into the whole meta-narrative of the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, lots of Bible study, but also lots of practice.
So preaching classes every week where people produce talks, sometimes five, ten minutes, by the end of the course twenty minutes, and ways in which we were able or tried to be able to help them.
[14:48] So loving criticism of what was done, which was in order to help them to improve and to develop their ability to speak the word, because it's not just understanding it, getting it right, but getting it across to the congregation.

And everybody will do that in their own way. There's no sort of one way of doing it. There's no imposition of you must do it this way, but if we're going to be good handlers of the word of truth, then God will work through us.
Someone has said preaching is truth through personality. All the personalities will be different, but the truth is the same. So let's work on the truth, and then everyone will express it according to their personalities, their God-given gifts, and so on.
And in the goodness of God, that's been going on now for thirty-five years and still continues. People from all around the world have come to us. And then twenty years ago, as Willie, came back

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to Scotland, having worked with us in London, it was the right time to start Cornhill, Scotland.
And we thank God for all that's happened over these twenty years, for the many, many faithful brothers and sisters who have been through the training and are serving the Lord all around Scotland and all around the UK and all around the world, and for all those who have been teaching and tutoring and encouraging them.
[16:13] because we always need more gospel laborers. Somebody said to me just yesterday, there are so many opportunities, but where are the workers? And the Lord Jesus said, pray the Lord of the harvest that he'll thrust out workers into the harvest field.

Well, that's what we need to do, but we also need to train them and equip them and help them and encourage them to be able to do this job really well because there's nothing more important for the health of the church and ultimately for the spread of the gospel in our secular culture than well-equipped Bible teachers at every level in our church lives.
So I'm so thrilled that God has blessed us with Cornhill Scotland in these twenty years and it's in such good shape. There's the pastor's training course as well, of course, which is closely connected to it.
And God is raising up new laborers for the harvest field here in Scotland. Thank you for all that you've contributed as churches, as supporters, and thank you for the privilege of just saying these few words today as we look back with thanksgiving and look forward in faith and hope that in the goodness of God, the years to come will be even more effective and glorifying to him.
Thank you, David, so much. And it's great to hear of these things beginning and still going on.
Before John Gemmell, the current director of the Cornhill Training Coast, comes to read the scriptures to us, we're going to sing once again.
[17:45] And boys and girls, normally this is when you go to your classes, but hang on a bit tonight. We're going to keep you a little bit longer so you can see a little bit more and you'll go during the next time.

But we're going to sing, Thank you, Lord, for gifts of teaching so that we might understand all your word and its far-reaching truth for life, for head and heart and hand.
may Amen.
Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[20:20] Amen. Amen. Amen. Please turn with me to Colossians chapter 1.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae, grace to you and peace from God, our father.
We always thank God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.
Of this you have heard before in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you as indeed in the whole world. It is bearing fruit and increasing as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant.
He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the spirit.
And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
[22:01] So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to

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his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things. And in him, all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church.
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might have preeminence. For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
[23:29] And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds. He is now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.
And of which I, Paul, became a minister. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake. And in my flesh, I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body.
That is the church of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you to make the word of God fully known.
The mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
[24:40] Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy, that he powerfully works within me.

This is the perfect word of our gracious God. We're now going to watch a short video with reflections from Cornhillers from down through the ages.
So sit back and watch this together. When I came to this country five years ago, I realised that I don't really know the Bible.
I came to Cornhill initially because I wanted to have a better handle on preaching and teaching the Bible. Although I'd gone through formal training for ministry, I felt a genuine need to know the Bible better.
I wanted to make sure that what people were telling me was the truth. I was doing a ministry training ship in St. Andrews. The director once told me, if I came, it would make me more dangerous for atheists.
[25:45] I wanted to be trained for ministry and learning to teach the Bible was the most important bit of that. I love the way that Cornhill approached the Bible as our ultimate authority. I was sent by my organisation, Delhi Bible Institute, to get trained to come back and teach our students and preach in our church.

I also knew that whatever I did at Cornhill, it would be useful in helping me to be a better equipped church member. Cornhill has been very helpful to me in terms of building my confidence in handling the Bible.
I have loads of material to just kind of take and adapt and use. The confidence I was given to know that God's Word does God's work among His people. For me, Cornhill really provided the perfect toolkit for church ministry as a layperson.
Getting a real grasp of God's Word, going much, much deeper than I'd ever been before. I remember on day one, John Gamble just told us that the Old Testament is about Jesus Christ, and I was almost in tears because I never knew that.
Understanding more about the Old Testament and how it really adds a layer to the New Testament. It helped me to see the big picture of the Bible. It helped to give me confidence in knowing how to teach the Bible to other people. Say what the text says in the way that the text says it, for the purpose for which the text says it.
[27:01] The card of maraudery in the class and the friendships that you get to make, it's absolutely fantastic. We're making friendships with other people in the ministry that have kept me

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going and kept me going forward for years. It's deepened my knowledge of the scriptures, how to work in them, how to apply them, how to interpret them.

Helping me come to some pastoral convictions about what faithful ministry is all about. We can really know God truly by reading the Bible, and I'm eager to teach more people to do that.
I'm no longer afraid to pick up the likes of Jeremiah or something mental on Ezekiel or something. Knowing that it's teachable is going to be helpful for God's people. To handle God's truth in a way in which it would be engaging and captivating for folks to hear about.
For all the learning that we did, there was an almost equal amount of laughing. As we take God's word seriously, we don't have to take ourselves too seriously. In the five years that I've been a Christian, I feel like I've been on a booster crash course that has been so beneficial for my learning and understanding of the Lord Jesus.
I am a bi-vocational church worker, so I work at Hope City Church, Edinburgh, and I'm also a doctor working in Malovians. I'm the assistant minister at St Peter's Free Church in Dundee.
[28:16] Now I am a ministry trainee at Woodhill Evangelical Church, training for full-time pastoral ministry on the pastor's training course. I now live in Melbourne, Australia, and I'm an English teacher, but I still use what I learned at Cornhill every day, whether it's through reading my Bible personally, reading the Bible with other women at church, or teaching the Bible to kids and youth.

We've just moved to the West Coast, where Callum is about to start working for Eucharist Whit Baptist Church as the pastor. I work here at Cornerstone Community Church in Stirling, where I lead the youth ministry team.
I now serve as the minister of Grace Church Montrose. I'm currently a pastor in training at Charlotte Chapel, working at Bones Baptist. I'm a pastor in training at a church in Glasgow called Yoker Evangelical Church.
Now I'm moving on to become a staff worker with Friends International. Currently the acting pastor at Gourke Baptist Community Church, which is a church for vitalisation, done and unverplayed. I'm currently with the C.S. Lewis Institute, establishing a branch in Edinburgh and running a discipleship programme.
Now I work for Greenview Church in South Centre Plasby as an outreach and women's worker. As it happens now, 17 years later, I'm actually training for full-time ministry, and I believe that Cornhill at the time laid the groundwork for that.
[29:31] I am the minister of Conlegational Church in deepest, darkest, Eucharist. I'm now serving as the ministry associate for pastoral care and women's discipleship over at Cornerstone Community Church.

I'm currently at Gilcomson Church in Aberdeen. Now I am working as a family's minister for a church outside of Belfast. I returned and am continuing to teach and preach what we learned from Cornhill.
We are using the same syllabus to teach our students here in India. I would encourage anyone who's thinking about local church ministry or mission in any capacity to start by thinking about the Cornhill training course.
You're going to get the best training that's possible in Scotland from the best people. Praise God for another 20 years, perhaps, to come. Well, with all that fresh in our minds, Peter Dixon, who's been involved in Cornhill since the very beginning, is one of the trustees, is going to come and pray and give thanks for, particularly for the Cornhill staff and the team and all that's been done in these past years.
Peter. And we're going to ask the Cornhill team to come and stand up at the front, teachers, administrators, etc., past and present, so that people can see the faces of the current team, trustees.
[30:51] Anyone else who's here? Anyone who wants a job? Great. Well, the students' voices were a great testimony, but so is the work of these folks as well.

So as we give thanks, let's all pray together. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you tonight that our way back in 1961, when that ministry began in St. Helens Church, Bishopsgate, that you foresaw today and the fruitfulness that would flow from those early beginnings.
And we thank you tonight for the long influence and model of London's Proclamation Trust, and especially for the friendship and encouragement of Dick Lucas and David Jackman, and many others who worked hard in London to establish this kind of training for ministry.

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We thank you tonight, Lord, for the generous financial partnership of many churches, especially in the early years when things were not yet established in the Scottish course.
Thank you for their trust and kindness in supporting us as we got going. And we do also thank you as we look back, Heavenly Father, for the steady commitment of Edward and Willie in getting the trust and then the course up and running and functioning with its first group of students.
[32:19] Thank you, Lord, for keeping them focused and true to your word and true to the task in those early weeks and months and years. How grateful we are, Heavenly Father, that year by year and month by month, so the course has been proven to be a good way of preparing men and women for Christian service.

Thank you for the stream of students who would testify to that from the word go, from the first weeks. And thank you, Lord, for the friendships that have been formed over the many years, that the course has been running.
We pause to think of the many hours of work and preparation for teaching that Edward and Bob File and Andy Gemmel, Doug and Willie and then later John and Callum and a host of others have given to teach the students week by week by week, going through books of the Bible and helping them to think and grapple and wrestle with the text.
Thank you, Lord, for their dedicated ministry, for the experience they each have in ministry, and for the humanity and gifts that they bring, making them all so different and yet all handling your word of truth.
We thank you for each of them and for all that they have given. And also, Lord, with the invaluable administrative help and tireless relational encouragement of Anne and Charles, Marion and Graham and Carla, we thank you for those who have come alongside the teachers to equip them to enable the course to function.
[34:06] We thank you as we think of the beautiful building on Bath Street, so appropriately integrated with the Tron Church's site there. And tonight, Lord, we do pause to remember with great gratitude the many, many members of the Tron Church family who have been steadfastly supportive and constantly kind and generous to Cornhill students and staff alike.

Thank you for that valuable partnership and for the partnership of many other churches, indeed, throughout Scotland, the UK, and elsewhere in the world.
Lord, you have answered so many prayers and you have provided all that we have needed every step of the way. And we do thank you tonight in Jesus' name.
We thank you for the constant unity of mind and vision that you have given the trustees over these 20 years, the time and energy given by Richard and David when they served in this capacity, but also for pastors all over Scotland who have sent students to the course and to the pastor's training course and cared deeply for them and helped them think about their gifts and their future, helped them through difficult times and nurtured their faith in your son, the Lord Jesus.
And most of all, Lord, for many, many students who have wrestled in learning and worked hard to grow and prepare for future Christian service, for the friendships that have forged and been so invaluable, and for the men who have since become church leaders and ministers of the gospel.
[36:01] Tonight, Lord, with full and grateful hearts, we come to you with all the worship and the praise for you are the one who has done this, enabled it, and made it to be so fruitful.

We bring you our thanks, Heavenly Father, noting these words from Scripture that we stick with this gospel.
In you is the hope of glory. Him, Christ, we proclaim. Thank you, Lord, for keeping us on track, and thank you, Lord, for doing much more than we could ever have envisioned.
In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Together again, and this time, young people, children, it is time for you to go out during this hymn to the groups downstairs and our next hymn to sing how sure the Scriptures are.
We stand to sing. may

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may may may may may God bless you.
[38:14] God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you.
God bless you. God bless you. What a fantastic evening we've had so far and a great day yesterday.
And it's obviously an immense privilege now for me to ask you to turn with me back to Colossians chapter 1. I don't know if you've noticed, you probably have, that all summer long the BBC have been inviting their viewers to ask the question, what has the BBC ever done for me?
And if you want to have a chat with me at the end, I have a list of sadly rather sarcastic answers to that question. And you may be able to add your own. But I've been asking myself as I got ready for tonight, what has the CTC ever done for me?
[39:49] The Cornhill training course. I'm grateful beyond words for what the Lord has done. I've never been on the staff team.

I've never actually ever been a student at Cornhill and had that privilege. But the whole enterprise has been a tremendous enrichment in my own life and ministry.
I stumbled across the Proclamation Trust in the early 1990s as a young pastor, desperate as I was for help, working away as a solo pastor.
And I began to attend the EMA in London and also joined the residential program. And my brother and I went down to London for a memorable day to London Cornhill when it was in Plantation House.
So not St. Peter's Cornhill, but I think their home immediately after that. And what happened over that period of time for me was not only had I found the training I was looking for, I felt I'd found the tribe I was looking for.
[40:52] And honestly, these two things are equally important and equally precious. And they certainly were in my life. Some of the richest relationships that I have had and have endured over the years were forged and strengthened through the PT.

And back in these distant days, I had the audacity to write to Piers Bickersteth, who was a predecessor of Willie as the PT conference secretary, and asked him, would you come to Scotland? And would you come and help us here? Would you come and do something here? And he very kindly telephoned me. And one of his questions was, well, Craig, do you have much of a network? And I didn't know anybody and nobody knew me. My wife barely knew me and what she did know about me wasn't all that encouraging. So network, I didn't even have a net, never mind a network. And Piers felt that PT coming to Scotland would be like bringing coals to Newcastle. And it's true that there were some marvelous exponents of expository Bible ministry in Scotland.
[41:59] And I sat at their feet, certainly, in these years. But it seemed to me that we didn't have, at that point, the training opportunities that I was getting further south with the Proclamation Trust.

And really, that was as far as it went. That was the end of my initiative. So can you imagine my joy when a decade or more later, the Lord brought Willie back to Scotland, and he brought Edward, and the rest, as we've been rejoicing in this weekend, is history.
So 20 years of a fully-fledged, blossoming Cornhill, Scotland later, my cup overflows. With thankfulness to God, and I'm just overjoyed with the wonder of what he's done.
And why is that? Why are we excited? Why would we be grateful for and excited by and supportive of the Cornhill, Scotland initiative?
Well, I want to draw from Colossians 1 three very obvious—you'll have heard this a million times— I have nothing new to say to you this evening—three essentials from Paul's ministry for the health of every church and every believer and every ministry.
[43:09] They're certainly not universally present. We wish they were. But these are three that Cornhill, Scotland, exists to encourage and enable. Have a look at them with me.

First of all, Cornhill, Scotland stands for being anchored by the Word of God. Paul began his letter, as John read it, for his verse 3.
We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ and the love you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in

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heaven.
And then these key words, of this you have heard before, in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you. Of this you have heard.
So a life-changing message had been proclaimed to these believers in the churches of the Lycus Valley. And they had been given grace to receive that message of the gospel.
[44:09] And now they had faith in the Lord Jesus. Now they had hope beyond whatever this life held for them, good or bad. And they had love for each other.

And then at the end of chapter 1, Paul enlarges on the miracle that had happened as the gospel had come. Verse 21, You who were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order—and notice here how He begins to look to a future day— in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting.
From the hope of the gospel that you heard. It is a thrilling summary of the impact of the historic gospel as it comes by the proclaimed word, isn't it?
But that's a big if in verse 23. Paul is now focusing not on what they'd heard in the past, not even on the impact the gospel had made, but he's now telling them how this connects in preparing them for that coming day, the final judgment when the Lord Jesus returns.
And his message is that if we have turned to Christ for salvation, and if we, as we've just been praying, if we stick to the gospel, if we stay with the life-saving truth of the Lord Jesus that we have heard, then no matter what happens to us in life, no matter what life holds for us, we can live with total confidence that we will be presented one day without fear of reproach to God on the last day.
[46:01] That is a very thrilling thing. But it all depends on that big if—if you remain. If you continue in the faith.

If you don't shift. If you remain anchored by the word of God. I think of the need for this anchorage. I guess most organizations have vision statements about where they're going, how they're moving, how much ground they've covered and are going to cover. And we've been rejoicing in that as we've celebrated 20 years of Cornhill this weekend.
But Cornhill, Scotland and gospel churches treasure the opposite value, the value of not going places, the value of not being moved.
We are very perverse. We make progress by not shifting. And the flow of verse 21 to 23 shows us how practical and how glorious and how joyful the outcome of being anchored in the word of God is.
[47:07] It means, as I've tried to outline, that nothing can rob us of the calm certainty that it will be well for us, in spite of us, when we see the Lord Jesus, if we continue in the faith stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.

So this anchorage is essential because having begun by hearing and responding to the gospel, we are kept safe in all the vagaries of life by continuing to hear and respond to the gospel in all the scriptures.
And of course, when we talk about the gospel, we don't just mean the punchlines like John 3.16. That certainly is the gospel, but we mean the whole revelation of God, the whole truth of Jesus is Lord.
But we're not to take this anchorage for granted. Paul later says in verse 28, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching with all wisdom. And here's an example of that warning ministry of the apostle Paul as he proclaims Christ.
He puts it negatively in verse 23. He doesn't just tell us what to do, he tells us what not to do. He says, don't shift from the hope of the gospel that you heard.
[48:30] I wonder if any of you men were ever in the BB, in the boys' brigade, and perhaps you'll remember the lines from the famous anthem that go like this, when the strong tides lift and the cables strain, will your anchor drift or firm remain?

And actually, these are questions not just for boys in the BB, these are questions for churches and church leaders and seminary leaders across the world throughout history. And we need this anchor, don't we?
We need this anchorage in the Word of God because there were strong tides threatening the security and the stability of all the New Testament churches. That's why the letters were written. And still among the churches today, there are strong tides.

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David talked about the 1980s. I was just in my teens, coming into my 20s and the 80s. And I lived through the chaos of the 1980s that he described, strong tides, taking us away from the gospel. And as we celebrate this weekend and look back with great joy and look forward with great joy and optimism, it's sad to see that there is a parallel story. We're surrounded, aren't we, by the evidence all down through history, but across these 20 years, I think particularly in Scotland, that churches which and individuals who were originally founded on the gospel have shifted from it because they were not careful to be anchored by it.
[50:03] They just took it for granted that that would happen. I'm so thankful to the Lord for Cornhill, Scotland, because here we're all about understanding the indispensability of that anchorage without which we will shift.

The need for this anchorage, and just a word on the nature of this anchorage, why do people and churches shift from the gospel? Why does that happen? Well, it's pretty obvious, really, isn't it? Because being anchored to God's Word means protection, but inevitably, when you're anchored, it also means restriction. It means that the Word of God always comes to us and cuts across what we think is best.
And even in Colossians, when you get to chapter 4, we come to what is considered to be reckless and offensive nowadays, as Paul outlines the relationships within marriage, as he talks to wives and he talks to husbands.
And even in this letter, and even in this day, that's where the strong tides lift and the cables strain. And we all know church leaders whose instinct, when they come to these verses, is to weigh anchor, to say, oh, that's too dodgy for this day and age.
[51:28] Cornhill, Scotland, stands for being anchored in the Word of God. But, just saying that won't make it happen. We actually, at Hamilton Baptist, and it reminds me to say that I bring the very warm greetings of HBC to the Tron Church and to all involved in Cornhill this evening.

We pray for the work here regularly, and the folks are praying for us tonight. But we have actually taken Colossians 1, and these three headings, I've applied them differently there, but we've taken them as our mission statement.
And one of the things I said as we did that in this last year is that it's all right to say we should be a church anchored by the Word of God, but saying it doesn't make it happen.
And as we kind of laid that out as a mission statement, I did say to the church family, well, time will tell. We'll see the extent to which we are personally and corporately as a church family anchored to God's Word.
Because God's Word not only protects our hope and directs our paths, it also restricts our moves. Because this is the Word of the Sovereign Lord.
[52:42] This is the Word of the One who is the head of all rule and authority for us. And for some, when they feel the anchor chafing, they want to shift.

Cornhill, Scotland, stands for the anchor, for being anchored by the Word of God. Secondly, it stands for being aligned to the will of God. I love the way Paul links his preaching to them and his praying for them.
The two great aspects of prayer and the ministry of the Word that always go together or ought always to go together. So back to verse 9 just for a moment.
So Paul says, From the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.
I love the way he links his proclamation ministry and his prayerful ministry for them. And then do you see the link between God's will and our walk, as it were, our way of living?
[54:04] Paul prays for his readers to know God's will so that they can walk God's way. Or to put it another way, he prays that they will increasingly grow to know God so that they can increasingly live to please God.

If you can remember back to your days in the YF, in which if you were saved at that time and grew up in a gospel church, what were the things that we always wanted teaching on?
I think it was always relationships, that was always a hot favorite, and the will of God. And I think it's a lovely thing, particularly among younger people, when they have a concern to know, what is God's will for my life?

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And it tends to come down to the particular issues they're facing at that point. But whatever stage we're at in life, we all want to know how to tackle a difficult situation, what's God's will in this situation.
Or whether to marry, or whether to move job, or whether to retrain, or whether to fix the mortgage, or whether to fix the boiler, or whether to undergo surgery, or whatever it may be.
[55:08] And of course, it's lovely, isn't it? Because our gracious God and Heavenly Father He has purposes for us in all the microscopic details of our lives, and He is interested in all these details of our lives.

But He's not primarily committed to allowing us to page Him as the oracle. What we tend to want is that. What we tend to want is the Lord to give us specific answers to all the questions we have. What's your will, Lord? Just tell me, and I'll go and do it. But as the years have gone by in my own life, and as I've looked at the reaction of my own heart, I think, if the Lord had done that for me, I would have come to Him, got the answer I needed, and then I would have gone away again and done the thing without Him.
I would have headed off and cracked on with life without Him, really, as my Lord and Savior. So the Lord set up the universe in such a way that all spiritual wisdom and understanding is there for us and is to be found, but it's to be found not in us downloading specific answers to the questions we have, but it's to be found in our knowledge of Him.
And knowing God's will doesn't primarily mean that to my satisfaction I know everything that's going to happen, and I know how to handle it when it does. Rather, it means that I have what I need so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.
[56:49] And there are some, aren't there, who may say that being anchored by His Word is to tie us hopelessly to an ancient truth that makes it impossible for us to know how to cope with the challenges of modernity.

Fine for a foundation, but useless for the issues of modern life. But it's the complete opposite. I don't know where you are in the AI debate.
No doubt AI has great usefulness along with the terrors that it's striking globally at the moment. But here is, and this is very corny, but here is UI, here is ultimate intelligence.
Look what Paul prays for them. All the wisdom of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. For all the complexities of your life.
Brothers and sisters, they are to be found in being filled with the knowledge of His will. Everything in us tells us, no, that wisdom is to be found in knowing precisely what to do in my situation.
[58:01] The Lord says, no, it's not. That wisdom is to be found in knowing me and being filled with the knowledge of my will. And the access point to all that remarkable knowledge is not, as we persuade the Lord, to become aligned to our ways, but it is in us proclaiming the Lord so as to be aligned to His will by ever-increasing knowledge of Him.

And it keeps us safe, doesn't it? So often in my daily Bible readings in the morning or as I sit under ministry or as I prepare to preach to others, there's that conflict between the way I see things and the way God sees things.
And then, after the initial battle, there's that lovely sense of, there's real safety for me in moving under the authority of His Word, in aligning myself with His will.
So, Cornhill, Scotland, and its training in expository Bible ministry opens a way in the 21st century with all its complexity for people of every age and in every circumstances to be able to access all the prudence and all the shrewdness and all the insight and all the foresight and all the calculation and the necessary caution and all the confidence that you and I need to live without regret with fruitful joy for God's glory as we're aligned to His Word by our ever-increasing knowledge of Him.
What a gift to the culture that is. Cornhill, Scotland stands for being anchored by the Word of God, aligned to the will of God, and finally active in the work of God, very briefly.
[60:06] And this has been like Blackpool Rock. This has run through Cornhill from the very beginning. Paul summarizes his life's work in a remarkably comprehensive and thrilling way.

In verse 25, he speaks of the stewardship from God that was given to me for you. It's a beautiful picture there, isn't it?
It wasn't given to Paul to build him up. It wasn't given to Paul to have everybody in awe of him. It was given to Paul for them. And that's always true in gospel ministry with God's gifts.

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And here it was to make the Word of God fully known. And that points to making known all of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation to all of God's world.
And that's the Word and the work to which the Lord Jesus risen and ascended in His Father's right hand tonight in our time. That's the thing that He is committed to by His Spirit through His church today, making the Word of God fully known to all of the world.
[61:16] And the result of that careful global word work is obviously verse 28, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.

And we see where Paul got that, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. So there is the graft and there is the goal. The graft is the hard work, the exhausting work, the commitment in getting the Word of God open and working on it and getting it clear and staying anchored to all its beauty and its contours and the emphasis and all of these things that we've spoken about this evening and over 20 years.
That is a demanding work, the whole word to the whole world. That's the graft. And the goal of our work is not depleted, exhausted, and bittered Christians.
But the very opposite, mature, steadfast, stable churches. And there is a scarcity of them still in Scotland.
And the vision of Cornhill, Scotland is to see multiplied, healthy, happy, Christ-exalting, word-proclaiming church families that are anchored to His Word, aligned to His will, and active in His work.
[62:43] And that's why I'm sure I'm not the only one who is grateful for and excited by and supportive of the work of Cornhill, Scotland.

Shall we pray briefly before we sing again? So, our gracious Heavenly Father, we are so grateful to You for all that You have been doing over all these years in London and in Glasgow and in Belfast and around the world in many different ways.
Thank You for that wonderful rediscovery of the power of Your Word in every generation. And we do not take it for granted that we will be anchored tomorrow, so we humbly ask You for Your grace to prevail in our lives.
We thank You, Heavenly Father, for the incalculable tonnage of gospel seed that has been sown in the nations of the world even today. And we pray that it will land in good soil and produce an abundant harvest to the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus.
And we pray that we, as we think of these things tonight, may be able to say with Paul, for this we toil, struggling with all his energy, that he powerfully works within us for the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus, we pray.
[64:16] Amen. Well, we're going to stand and sing together a very appropriate hymn about that work, Go Labour On, Spend and Be Spent, and then we're going to be led and he's going to come and pray for the future of the work of Cornhill, Scotland.

Thank you. may Amen.
Amen. Please do sit down and let's pray together.
Some words from Psalm 115. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.
For the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness, why should the nation say, where is their God? Amen. Father in heaven, we thank you that we can come to you in the name of your son this evening and present our thanks to you.
[67:00] We thank you for your many kindnesses towards us. And thank you that we can present our requests to you. We're so grateful for the mercy that you've shown to us as individuals, for your kindness towards the churches represented here this evening, for the many believers and churches

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who are laboring for the gospel all over Scotland today.

Today, we thank you so much for your continuing mercy to this country. And we are so grateful for all that has been accomplished through the Cornell program over these last 20 years.
We thank you for the students who've come to learn and what you've done in their lives and for what they've been able to do, for the ministries they're involved in, for the gospel seed that they've sown, for the many in the room this evening who are here to praise you because of this.
But we look to the future and we humbly pray, Heavenly Father, that you will please continue to bless the work of Cornhill.
We ask that you will keep the trustees and staff faithful to your gospel and full of confidence that your word is living and active and that it thoroughly equips your servants for the work you intend them to do.
[68:23] We pray that you will lead us not into temptation, that you'll deliver us from evil. Keep us pleased from scandalous sins.

We pray that the evil one may not gain a foothold in this work. We pray that Cornhill will remain committed to equipping people to speak your words in the way that you've spoken them for the purposes for which you have spoken them.
We pray that you will please provide the resources for this work, not least the right people at the right time to enable this work to continue and to prosper.
And we pray, Heavenly Father, not merely that Cornhill will continue, but that you will be pleased to make this work grow in usefulness and in reach.
We pray that many more churches will embrace the need to train the next generation of Christian laborers. We pray that you will please send many students eager to learn.
[69:29] And we do not pray this so that we can boast, but rather because we long for your mercy to extend to many, many people in Scotland, in this generation and beyond.

Please raise up many, many laborers for your harvest field. Please make it that churches that love your word will be able to have pastors in the next generation.
Please may many churches that do not yet exist begin and grow through the teaching of your word.
And please make the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ grow and bear fruit all over this land.
Heavenly Father, please will you make this work grow and prosper and bring glory to your name.
Why should Scotland be ignorant of you and your son?
Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.
[70:38] Amen. Thank you, Andy, and thank you, Craig. It was on this very Sunday, 20 years ago, that we had our service of dedication and commissioning for the new Cornhill Training Course.

A young Craig Dyer was the preacher on that day. It doesn't look any different today to me. But even more importantly, he's still preaching the same gospel today. And that is a great thing, isn't it?
I'm so struck by these words. If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.
Who is able to keep us for the next 20 years? Not shifting, stable, steadfast. Well, only the grace of God, but his power is able.
So as we conclude this evening, let's sing together that doxology. Now to him whose power is able to protect our stumbling feet and prepare our souls for glory.
[71:43] There with joy, our King to meet. may

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may may

God bless you.
Amen. Forever and ever.
Amen. Do stay behind. There's plenty of time to meet and to greet and chat with one another. It's lovely to have folks from various other churches here with us this evening.
It's a lovely time to spend together and give thanks around God's Word and all that He's doing. So thank you for joining us and be with us again in 20 years when we'll be doing it once again.

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