

The Grace that guarantees Glory

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 November 2010

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] We'll do turn, if you would, to Romans chapter 5, and we're looking this morning at verses 1 to 11. It's all about the grace that guarantees glory.

I still remember a little poster that my mother used to have stuck to one of her kitchen cupboards when I was young. It's funny what you remember, isn't it? But some of you may have come across it, I'm sure you have.

It's called A Child Learns What It Lives. It has a whole list of things. If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn. If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight and so on.

But if a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence. If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith. If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

There's a great truth in these observations. And I was just thinking as I was recalling it, perhaps I ought to put it up in our own kitchen. Maybe I should have it in my own study. Because if a child grows up with no sense of approval or love from their parents, that will have a very profound effect on their whole life.

[1 : 15] It might make somebody very, very driven, living their life. To show them. I will show my parents that I'm worthy of their love.

As many a self-made man has been driven by that. A desire to show his father that he really is worthy of his esteem and approval. It can lead to that dynamic kind of drivenness.

Or perhaps more often, alas, it can lead to depression and despair. An adult life that's marked by great insecurity, by low self-esteem. Therefore blights many or all of their relationships.

It cripples somebody's whole life. I can think of somebody that I know well. Not here. But whose whole life, whose marriage, whose whole existence is so deeply affected.

And it's all because of a deep-seated lack of love and affection from her father. She had no security ever at all. That she'd ever done enough to impress or to get the approval of her father.

[2 : 23] Whatever it was she did, it could never be enough. Does my father really love me? Really accept me? Is he really proud of me?

Can I be sure I'm not just a huge disappointment to him? Can I be sure that he won't reject me?

There's all the difference in the world, in the psychological security in life, of somebody who can say with great confidence, Yes, I know my father, my parents, I know they're proud of me.

I know they always will be. I know they'll never, ever reject me. All the difference between somebody who can say that, and somebody who can't, who feels they must always be laboring, to prove themselves, to earn the approval, the acceptance, the praise of their father.

And just so in the Christian church. Indeed, all the more so. How assured are we of our Heavenly Father's approval and acceptance and his love?

If we're not secure in that acceptance, then that insecurity is going to manifest itself in all kinds of ways, in our lives and in our fellowship.

[3 : 44] We'll be trying always, won't we, to win approval from God. We'll be constantly looking, therefore, for approval from other people to reassure us that, well, if they accept us, then perhaps God will accept us.

We'll constantly need to feel reassurance ourselves that we're approved by our own performance, by our own piety, whatever it is.

Now, a church full of people like that will inevitably be very turned in upon itself, won't it? Very concerned with our own approval ratings. We'll tend, won't it, to be rather puffed up and proud.

It'll want to point to its heritage, to its distinctives, to its virtues, to reassure itself that it's a church that's in with God, that we're people who are in with God.

Very often, though, such a church will be greatly divided from others outside and very divided among its own people. Because believers who are striving for acceptance tend to be always putting others down in order to prop themselves up.

[4 : 53] Isn't that right? But by contrast, the church and Christian people who grasp the wonderful, absolute security of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ, who know that their acceptance with God is absolutely certain, it's secure, it's utterly permanent, to bask, as it were, in the love of this wonderful Heavenly Father.

Then that'll be a church full of very different people, people liberated to build up others in love, because they're not fearing all the time that perhaps they'll be outperformed in the league tables by others.

And also, a church liberated to reach out with real joy, to share that lavish grace with others, the grace that they have known, because they'll be confident that the wonderful, accepting love of their Heavenly Father, which greeted them with such joy and gladness, and they came to faith, will also greet anyone who calls out with the same faith to that Heavenly Father.

So here's the question, how confident are you and are we about our Heavenly Father's approval of us? Not just his acceptance of us now, but much more importantly, his certain approval on the day that really matters, on the day of his wrath, when God's righteous judgment is going to be revealed. That's what Paul speaks of in chapter 2, verse 5. That's the real question, isn't it? Because the whole issue that Paul's been dealing with in these early chapters of Romans is the wrath of God that is being revealed against all mankind because of sin.

[6 : 39] Because all lack the glory of God that we were created for. So how confident can we be, even as believers, that on that day, it will truly be for us glory and not wrath?

After all, you see, you say you're a Christian and you've been put right with God. But here's the truth. My experience hasn't suddenly become heavenly as yours.

Suffering is still a reality in our world, in our experience. Chapter 5 brings that up. And so is sin. It still rears its ugly head in my life and I expect in yours.

That's what chapter 6 is all about. And so does shame. We feel shame as we read God's Word, His law, and it stirs up within us the reality that, yes, we are still committing sin and we feel wretched.

Paul speaks of that in chapter 7. And ultimately, of course, death is the great shadow that still hangs over every single one of us. Unless the Lord Jesus comes, every one of us in this room, one day will die.

[7 : 58] That's what chapter 8 speaks of. So in the face of all of these things, can we really be sure that on the last day, the great day of judgment, God will accept us?

Can we really be sure that as we sang in that paraphrase, He who loved us from the first of time will love us to the last? Can we be sure of that?

Oh yes, says Paul. Yes. Yes. Yes. It will be, he says, it will be and it must be glory and not wrath for all who are in Christ by grace through faith alone.

Just because you are in Christ by grace alone. Grace guarantees glory. Nothing else could ever guarantee glory.

No human religion could ever guarantee ultimate glory. But the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ does. But, says Paul, because by sheer grace God poured His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that's the wonderful words of verse 5, then nothing, but nothing, can ever separate us from that love that is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[9 : 22] That's how he rounds off the whole section in the very last verse of chapter 8. Grace guarantees glory. Even in the face of our ongoing experiences of suffering and of sin and of shame and even of death itself.

And so, here's something, Paul says, that we are right to boast about. To celebrate with confident joy. Very striking, isn't it? I wonder if you noticed how in chapter 3, verse 27, Paul says to us that the gospel utterly excludes all boasting.

All confidence in our own pedigree, our own performance. to gain God's approval. And yet, here in chapter 5, verses 1 to 11, three times, Paul tells us that we must boast.

It's translated in our ESV Bibles, rejoice. But it's exactly the same word. Perhaps best translated, confidently celebrating. Verse 2, we confidently celebrate the hope of the glory of God.

Verse 11, we confidently celebrate in God himself. Why? Because, verse 1, Paul says, we have been justified by faith. That is, by Christ alone.

[10:40] Verse 9, we've been justified by his blood. That's why we celebrate. Indeed, such is the assurance that we have of the glory to come that we can even, he says in verse 3, confidently celebrate in our present sufferings.

because the glory to come is so surpassingly wonderful that it makes the road to that glory wonderful however hard that might seem at times.

Let's look then at these verses to see the reasons that we're to boast, that we're to rejoice, to celebrate with confident joy. We do so, says Paul, because already we stand in God's grace and one day we will share in God's glory and in the meantime we are being shaped by grace for that glory to come.

Since we've been justified by faith, he says in verse 1, that is 100% by Christ alone, by grace, we celebrate first of all the confidence of a privileged status that's already ours.

Verses 1 and 2 and verse 11 sort of encapsulate this section and they tell us that we've made a great entrance already. We stand, he says, in God's grace already.

[12:11] We stand in the peace, he calls it, the peace of God the Father. Through Christ, Paul says, we have peace with God. That is, God has made peace through the cross as a propitiation, as a turning aside of his righteous anger against our sin.

And therefore, as verse 11 says, we are reconciled. Notice, a reconciliation that we have not participated in, we've received it, says Paul.

It's a free gift of God's grace. And it was done, it was achieved, look at verse 10, once and for all by the death of God's Son.

There's nothing to do with us making peace with God. It's nothing to do with our having once been rebellious and turned around and offered ourselves in peace to God. No, it's the absolute opposite of us.

He has made peace with us. He has stopped being at war with us because of our sin and our rebellion. Paul says in 2 Corinthians, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

[13:22] He was doing it. And therefore, as verse 2 says, through him also, through our Lord Jesus Christ's death on the cross, we have access.

We've gone through a door, like the children in Narnia, from one world into another. Only this is a one-way door and there's no going back. We've gone from a realm of being under sin, as Paul spoke of it in chapter 3, to being in a realm where now we're under grace, as he's going to speak about it in chapter 6.

And we stand forever in that grace. We've been brought back already, says Paul, into the near presence of God. Just like the high priest in the old days had access to the intimate presence of God in the Holy of Holies only through the sacrifice and only temporarily, we now have access through that great sacrifice of Jesus permanently.

And we've got to realize that and realize that it is a fact. It's happened, says Paul, once and for all. We have received it through what Christ has done.

And therefore, we can't un-receive it. And that's why we rejoice. That's why we celebrate confidently in God, our direct access to God. That is to God the Father through Jesus Christ and through him alone.

[14:47] No one else is needed. No one else could bring us access to the Father. And nothing else can ever add to that access that we have. We're already in his presence because we've received that privileged status.

And that's true, friends, if you're a Christian believer, whether you feel it sometimes more than others. And whether sometimes you don't feel it at all.

I was in South Africa recently. I went into the country. I went through passport control. And I was in. I was admitted. I was in a new country. And at first, it was very obvious. You see new places. You see new faces. And it's very clear that you're in a new country. But as I stayed for a whole week there mainly just in the conference center and at a hotel, sometimes, well, I thought I could be anywhere in the world.

But the fact is, even though I didn't feel as though I was in Africa, I was in Africa. If I needed convincing, well, I just had to walk outside, walk along the street and look up and I could see Table Mountain there.

[15:49] And I thought, yes, I'm definitely not in Glasgow. I'm in Cape Town. I didn't have to go back to the airport and come back through passport control just to convince myself that I'd come

back into the country.

I was there. And so it is with our entrance into God's presence and peace by grace. We are there. It's a fact. Even though sometimes we might forget it or we might not feel it.

Jesus has brought us there. We've entered through him and only he can open that door and bring us there. That's very, very important to say that. Because very often Christians rather deny that by their actions.

Christians. And in doing that they therefore deny themselves the joy and the security that Christ died that we might have. Sometimes they don't feel assured of God's peace and acceptance.

We don't feel his presence. And so we think that the answer then is to try and seek a feeling of that through somebody other than Jesus. We might feel that we need to go to some special holy place that gives us more special access to God.

[17:02] I got an email this week about something saying that if you go to Iona you're in a special holy place that's very close to heaven and you get close to God. That's nonsense.

You get close to the Irish Sea. That's all you get close to in Iona. Or some people feel that well you need to go through a priest or through the institution of the church to give you some sort of access to God.

But no, no human being can ever give you access to the peace of God the Father. No institution can possibly do that. Only Jesus Christ can do that.

And if you're a believer in him he's done that. It's done. It can't be undone. If you find that idea of priestly access to God of course in the Catholic church but you also find it very commonly in the charismatic theology that so influences so much of modern day evangelicalism particularly through the music industry.

It is a Christian music industry rather than a ministry. It's a very profitable one. I looked up just the other day the top ten so-called worship albums on Amazon.

[18:16] And I just looked at the top three and the blurb on the back of these things. The first one said this. This worship music will take you to a deeper level with God. The second one said this is a way for God to come into your life.

And the third one said this music will lead you into the presence of God. Now do you see how those claims totally contradict what Paul is saying here in Romans chapter 5 verses 1 and 2.

If you have Christ by faith you have entered already forever into God's nearer presence through Jesus Christ our Lord. You can't get any nearer.

You can't go any deeper. You already stand in his grace. What more could you possibly need? Actually to say things like that that something can take you deeper or nearer into the presence of God that's blasphemy.

It's anti-Christ. It's anti-this gospel. It's the opposite. of the liberating gospel of grace. But we're not justified by singing. Even if you repeat the same song twenty times as some people seem to think is especially effective in leading you into the presence of God.

[19:34] No, not even once. You're there. Our security is that we stand in the grace of God forever because Christ has led us there already into the peace of reconciliation with God the Father.

We have access so we can pray to God. We can draw near to him. It's a fact. If you don't feel it at times, of course we all have times that we don't feel or sense our relationship with God in the same way as we do at other times.

What you need to do is remind yourselves of the landmarks that tell you that you're there. Get your Bible out. Look around you. Read Romans 5 verses 1 and 2. Read verse 11.

And they'll jog your mind. They'll tell you what the truth really is. And they'll tell you that you can celebrate confidently a privileged status that is already yours through Jesus Christ our Lord by grace alone and can never leave you.

It's yours completely. If you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then at the end of verse 2 Paul points us to the main focus really of this whole passage and that focus is on the future.

[20:58] Do you see? We rejoice, he says. We boast in the hope of the glory of God. Since we're justified wholly and completely by God's grace in Christ we can celebrate confidently.

Secondly, says Paul, the certainty of a permanent salvation that will be ours. We have great expectations, he says, of the future.

We will share in God's glory to come. We will share in the perfection of God's Son. Now leave aside the detail of verses 3 to verse 8 for a minute.

We'll come back to that. But I want you to see that the main thrust of verses 2 to 10 here is about the certainty of our future hope. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. That is, in the permanent salvation which is still in the future. That's what God promised Abraham. Remember, we thought about that last week. to be heir of the cosmos, the world, the recreated universe.

[22 : 03] That's what Abraham hoped for. And that's what we hope for because it hasn't happened yet, has it? It's still in the future. Otherwise, if this world was as good as it gets, our salvation wouldn't be worth much, would it?

We'd be, as Paul says to the Corinthians, of all people most to be pitied. But this isn't as good as it gets. In fact, what we have now, says Paul, isn't really salvation at all. I need to grasp this. Very, very important. Let me ask you this morning. How many of you would say here that you've been saved? Nobody.

Well, you're all right. You're correct. None of us here have yet been saved. Look, Paul says in verse 9, it's the future. We have been justified by his blood, he says.

That's happened. Notice, justified by faith in verse 1 and justified by his blood are the same things. It's shorthand for saying justified through Jesus Christ. We have been justified by his blood.

[23 : 09] Therefore, he says, we can be assured that we shall be saved by him from the wrath of God. In verse 10, that we shall be saved in his life.

That is, in his risen life. But it's still the future, isn't it? I know anybody who went to school probably in the last 20 years may not know that there are tenses in things like verbs. You might not even know what a verb is.

But there's past, present and future. This is for the benefit of today's students, a little grammar lesson. Past, present and future in doing words. Well, this is future, isn't it?

You will be saved. He's talking about the great day of judgment, the great day of wrath. The wrath to come. But what he's saying is not only does that day not terrify us, verse 2, the thought of it makes us rejoice.

Celebrate confidently because we hope for glory, not for wrath. you hope. Is that all?

[24 : 19] You hope? You hope it'll be glory and it'll turn out okay on that terrible day? What's so special about that? Everybody hopes that, don't they? I do my best and I hope that God will accept me when it comes to that day.

What's so special about that? Isn't that what all religions say? We hope for the best. No, no, no, no, says Paul. Not that kind of hope at all. Christian hope.

Hope in the Bible is a certain hope. It's an expectation that is sure and certain and that will not, as verse 5 says, put us to shame.

It will not show us up as having been wrong to believe it. Rather, it will vindicate us as having been absolutely right to wait for the certain fulfillment of what God has promised.

That's hope. And our hope, says Paul, is for the certainty of a permanent salvation. Which means not the wrath of God on the coming day of judgment, verse 9, but rather salvation in the life of God's Son, verse 10.

[25 : 28] That is, in the risen life of Jesus who was declared to be, as chapter 1, verse 4 says, the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.

He was declared to be the true and perfect heavenly man by his resurrection from the dead. But, as we saw last week, the end of chapter 4, the last verse, tells us that he was raised for our justification.

So we will be saved in his life. That's how chapter 6, as we'll see, talks all about our salvation. The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord, says Paul.

And that's our glorious expectation, our hope, our certainty. Salvation is vastly, vastly more than just the wonderful privilege of access to God the Father that we have now.

Wonderful as that is. It's more than that. In fact, what we have now, says Paul, is only just the beginning. We're going to share in the glory that is to come, in the bodily perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 36] will be saved in his life, never to die again, and to live in a recreated world as it should be. Can we really be sure of that?

That's an important question, isn't it, especially as you get older, especially as that day for some of us is coming closer. Can we be sure? Yes, we can, says Paul.

We can be as sure as we stand in that grace now. In fact, he says, we can be even more sure. You see, that's what Paul says twice in verse 9 and verse 10.

Much more, he says. If we be now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved from his wrath. If while we were enemies we were reconciled in the death of his son, much more shall we be saved by his life?

See what he's saying? God has already done the extraordinary thing, the unthinkable thing. He sent his own dear son to die for who? For the weak, for the ungodly, for sinners, for enemies.

[27 : 54] He's done that already. How then can he possibly fail to bring those who are now his friends, his family, safe to glory? God demands that he do nothing less than that because his wrath has already fallen on his son.

He can't possibly threaten his beloved ones who are his by faith any longer with that wrath. Moreover, as chapter 8, verse 29 tells us, his purpose before all creation, get this, was that those he foreknew should be conformed to the image of his son, saved in his life to share in the perfection of God's own son.

We shall share in God's glory. It's guaranteed, says Paul, by his grace. That's why we rejoice. That's why we can celebrate confidently in the hope of the glory of God, in the certainty of a permanent salvation.

And that, of course, also explains the third rejoicing, the third celebration that Paul mentions in verse 3, which seems rather different. It seems not to fit with the others, doesn't it?

We rejoice, he says. We celebrate confidently in suffering. What? That must be a misprint, mustn't it? Sufferings.

[29 : 25] Well, we can survive sufferings, we can tolerate suffering, but rejoice? That's some kind of strange religious masochism. What sort of weird thing is that? Well, it's nothing of the sort, says Paul, because everything he's talking about here in our present experience is that experience as the road to the glory that we'll share with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there's only one road to that glory, isn't there? Jesus constantly said that. It's the way he said of the cross. And whoever follows me must take up their cross and follow me on that road.

But Paul says in chapter 8 verse 17, we are fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. But this is not, notice, it's not just that God justifies us and then abandons us and we hold on by the skin of our teeth until he comes in glory, doing the best we can.

No, it's not that at all. What did Jesus say? I won't leave you as orphans. I'll send you another comforter, the Holy Spirit, to dwell in you.

And that's the key to this whole section in verses 3 to 8, if you look at it. We celebrate confidently in suffering, says Paul, thirdly, because we have the comfort of a present spirit who is even now present with us.

[30 : 53] we have a great encouragement now, says Paul. We're being shaped even now by God's grace for glory. And we're being shaped by the presence of God's Holy Spirit in our lives.

See verse 5? Central to this whole section. God's love has been poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit. Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in Christian believers now that links us to the once and for all justifying work of Jesus on the cross.

The work of the Spirit that assures us that it's real, that it's effective for us now, and so that we know that we are justified and have peace with God. And also, who assures us that we will therefore be brought safe to glory, because as Paul says elsewhere, the Holy Spirit is the first fruits.

He's the down payment of the fullness of the resurrection life that is still to come. It's the Spirit in you, says Paul in chapter 8 verse 11.

It's the Spirit in you that assures you that he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also raise to resurrection life your mortal bodies. The Spirit assures us that God's grace to us in Christ is real.

[32 : 23] And he assures us that the glory that we're called to is also real. Friends, let me tell you that there is no more important ministry this side of the Lord Jesus coming than that.

That the Holy Spirit assures beleaguered and weak Christian disciples that you and I that we are certainly on the road to glory.

And that's why we can celebrate, says Paul, even in our sufferings. Because they are evidence of the Spirit's work in us. Our struggles and sufferings are not evidence that God has abandoned us but that through his grace he is shaping us even now for that glory to come.

Let me explain. According to these verses 3 to 8, the ministry of the Spirit is twofold. He's both shaping us in love and he's showing us deeply God's love.

Look at verses 3 to 5. You see what's being described is how the Holy Spirit is shaping us in love to be conformed to the image of his Son, shaping us for the glory of Christ.

[33 : 37] We rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

You see, suffering produces a hope that will be realized because the Holy Spirit has been given to us. A mark of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian believer is not ecstasy, says Paul, it's suffering.

That's why prosperity theology of all kinds that says the mark of the Spirit in your life is glory now, health and wealth and peace and healing and all of these things, that's why it's so dangerous, it's demonic, utterly false to the teaching of Scripture.

But notice also, it's not just that Paul says it's suffering now and glory later. No, he says very clearly it's suffering working glory.

Suffering shaping us for glory as we hope for glory. Suffering works endurance, he says. You think sometimes that to yourself, I wonder if I'll make it to the end of the road in the Christian life.

[35 : 00] I wonder if I'll really be able not to fall away. I feel such a struggle, I feel so unsure at times, I'll really make it to the end and it'll be able to be said of me that I fought the good fight.

Well, God says the very struggle that you have is the evidence of my Spirit at work to make you endure. That's how I'm going to make you endure. Because endurance works character, provenness, testedness.

And that's what produces hope. Stronger and stronger, certain hope of glory. You want assurance. You want assurance that you're going to make it to the end. Well, this is how God assures you, says Paul. This is how he's shaping you for that destiny. I was speaking to somebody recently who said an interesting thing to me.

In the midst of real pain and suffering, he said to me, I'm just so thankful because now I know that I'll never fall away. I always feared I might.

[36 : 05] But you know, God has kept me through all of this. Kept me standing and kept me in faith, although my whole world is falling apart around about me. And now I know that he's kept me through that.

He'll keep me to the very end. Suffering works hope because the Holy Spirit has been given to us. And that's what he's doing in us, shaping us for the hope of glory.

You see the double path that's mapped out there in verses 2 and 3. From justification to the hope of glory. Do you see? On the one hand, verse 2, it's faith and peace and access and hope.

But look at verse 3. It's suffering, endurance, and character and hope. See, they represent the objective and the subjective realities of the gospel.

And the one follows the other as cause and effect. And these things, says Paul, are our subjective experience because we are being shaped by God's love to be conformed to the image of his Son.

[37 : 18] We're being shaped into the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ. He learned obedience through what he suffered, says Hebrews, and he was made perfect through suffering.

Not that Jesus was ever sinful, but the radiance of his glory was forged through the faithfulness of his human life. And his risen life of glory is being worked into our lives even now as we are united to him by the Spirit of holiness.

holiness. That's why Peter in his letter says that we're blessed when we suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ because, he says, the Spirit of glory rests upon you.

The glory of Christ. And that's why we rejoice in suffering. Not because we're masochists. Suffering in and of itself isn't something to rejoice about, of course not.

But suffering that comes because we follow the Lord Jesus Christ in a world that hates the Lord Jesus Christ is evidence that the Spirit's work in us to bring us to that glory.

[38 : 24] He's shaping us in love for his glory. But he's also, says Paul here, very wonderfully and deeply and personally, he's also at work in us, God's Spirit, to show us God's love.

To assure us of that love that will not let us go. That will bring us safe to glory. Because it's already touched us by his grace. How do I know this is real?

How do I know that God can do this for me? I can understand it in principle. I can understand that those he justified by his grace will be brought to glory.

But how do I know that I'm one of them? How do I know that I'm justified? How do I know that I'm right with God? That I've got peace with God?

That I really am reconciled to God? How can I be sure of that for me? The answer, says Paul, is that he has poured his love into my heart by the Holy Spirit to assure me that I am justified by telling me that God can and does love even me, even though I'm the chief of sinners.

[39 : 41] sinners. And he does that the moment that we believe. Because unless the Spirit opens your heart to God's love in that way, you can't be justified.

You can't belong to Christ. Paul says that in Romans 8 verse 9. But when you believe, when you throw everything upon the Lord Jesus Christ, even though you don't understand everything, even though you don't understand all the theology, what you do know is this.

Christ died for me. For me. And you know that that means God loves me.

We sang that, didn't we, in Wesley's hymn. No one can truly say that Jesus is the Lord unless you, Lord, take the veil away and breathe the living word.

Then, only then, we feel our interest in the blood. and cry with joy unspeakable, you are my Lord, my God. We know God loves us when we grasp, when we understand, deep in the heart of our own being, that he loved us when he died for us.

[40 : 55] That realization that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts to bring us from death to life, from wrath to glory. He lights up the glory of the cross of Christ for us.

So it becomes real, it becomes everything to me. Look at verses 6 to 8. Four times he explains what it means for us to be made known, for God to make known his love to us.

Let me read it with the emphasis that perhaps it should have. God's love to be God to make it for us to be God. For God is powerless under sin. At the right time for the ungodly, Christ died.

For scarcely for a righteous person will one die. Though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, for us Christ died.

Do you see that? He shows his love for us now in the present, in our experience, in the death of Jesus then, in the past, once and for all, for sins.

[42 : 04] That's why in the language of the New Testament, when it speaks about Christ's love for his people, it's almost always in the past tense. We are more than conquerors, says Romans 8, through him who loved us.

The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me. That's how we know that God loves us now. And he will love us to the very last, with a love that can never be separated from us.

With a love that will bring us safe to glory. Because he loved us. There at the cross of Calvary, where he shed his blood for me.

For me. You see the wonderful assurance that there is for us in these words.

If we can say that, if you can say that, and you know in your heart that it's true, that while you were a sinner, Christ died for you, then you can know that nothing will ever separate you from that love.

[43 : 08] Not death, or life, or angels, or demons, or earth, or heaven, or anything else in all creation, says Paul. We know, if we can say that, that we stand already in the peace of God the Father.

That we're being shaped even now by the presence of God the Spirit. That we shall share in the perfection of God the Son. We can celebrate with absolute confidence the hope of the glory of God. We need never be insecure, ever. We need never be fearful. We know our Father loves us and can never stop loving us because in Christ He loved us.

He laid down His own life to save me forever from sin. That means also that we can be bold and joyful and confident in proclaiming that sovereign salvation of a sure and certain hope of glory for everyone who believes.

We can say to everyone, can't we, what I would say to every one of you this morning who may not yet be a Christian. Do you have the hope of the glory of God? Do you have a certainty of salvation from the wrath of God on the day of judgment?

[44 : 27] Do you have the certainty that you will share in the glory of eternal life? Do you have a hope that will never be put to shame? Do you know that God, your heavenly Father, accepts you and approves you and that He loves you and will love you forever?

Well, says Paul, you can. You can know that today. You can be assured of it today by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. A few chapters on, in chapter 10, he says this, the scripture says everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.

Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. You can know that certainly this very day, this very moment.

Why would you hesitate? Believe, says Paul. Throw your life at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ and God will pour His love into your heart by His Holy Spirit and you also will know that you stand in the grace that guarantees the hope of the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

For, says verse 10, if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more now now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved in His life.

[46 : 10] Let's pray. Gracious God, how we marvel that glory is guaranteed by Your sovereign grace.

Pour Your love, we pray, into our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, to assure us that You love us, to apply every one of us here this morning the truth, the reality, the knowledge of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, where He laid down His own life.

We might become Yours. May we all go this morning, Lord, away from this place knowing we can say, He died for me. And therefore, You shall love us to the last.

Open our eyes, we pray, to the glory of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We might be transformed forever for His sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[47 : 44] Amen. Amen. Amen.