

A Continuous Standing: True Access to the Father

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] We're going to come now to open God's Word together for our Bible reading. We're very pleased to have Willie, our senior minister, back with us from sabbatical.

! And it's good to have him here this morning as well, so we're not relying on tech to see him. But he's going to be taking us through, continuing on Romans 5 in the next couple of weeks in August. We'll mainly be focusing on Romans chapter 5, verse 1 to 11 this morning. But we're going to begin by reading from chapter 3, verse 20 through to the first half of 22.

If you've got one of our visitor Bibles, you'll find that on page 940 for the first reading. 940. So we read Romans chapter 3, beginning at verse 20.

And then over the page, Romans chapter 5.

[1 : 18] And we'll read together verse 1 through to verse 11. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but 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 who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person. Though perhaps for a good person, one would dare even to die.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

[2 : 33] For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Amen. This is God's word. Well now, we're back in Romans chapter 5.

So do turn in your Bibles with me, if you can, to Romans chapter 5. And I hope those of you here in Bath Street have been able to listen in to last Sunday's sermon, which you didn't get here because you had Andrew preaching, I think, a very excellent sermon instead.

But do have a listen in if you can. We're looking at Romans chapter 5, verses 1 to 11. And we're spending a few weeks on this so that we can really rub into our pores, as it were, the implications of Paul's teaching here, about the implications, the wonderful fruit, the guaranteed fruit of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ and his great saving grace.

And last time I said that one of the things that all human beings crave, all human beings need, is acceptance. Love, the acceptance, the approval, especially from those who are most important to us.

[4 : 02] And that goes very, very deep within us, doesn't it? Because we want to be accepted. We want to be loved for who we are. And, of course, that can become a problem when people define what they really are and who they really are by some factor that's so important to them that their whole identity is bound up with it.

And that can actually lead to real slavery, to real bondage, psychological bondage, even physical bondage. Think of the young girl, teenage girl, who's so desperate to have the body beautiful, to be like those celebrities, to be like those fashion models, to have the approval from others that those things bring, that she becomes absolutely obsessed with her weight, with her diet, can be enslaved by an eating disorder and so on.

We know that. Today's sad social contagion so often seems to be people determined to define who they are by some delusional ideas, really.

Being trapped in the wrong body, things like that. And we can see, can't we, how that can lead to a real slavery, even to bodily mutilation. The sort of thing that's been encouraged in our society by so-called professional people who ought to know far better, who ought to be ashamed of themselves.

But friends, listen to me. Our identity, who and what we are, does not lie in our bodies, does not lie in our looks, does not lie in our professional reputations, or in our marital status, or in our fertility status, or in our educational status, or wealth, or anything else, including our sexuality.

[5 : 49] And by the way, this very idea of a nebulous thing called sexuality, that's a very recently manufactured thing. If I'm determined to be defined and identified by my sexuality, then that must be accepted, that must be approved, that must even be celebrated by others, because if they don't do that, if I've made that my identity, and people don't accept it and recognize it, then I feel they're rejecting me as a person.

But of course, friends, all of these ways of thinking are deeply flawed, misplaced. The truth is that our identity, our value, our worth, the heart of who and what we are, lies in one simple fact, the fact of our humanity.

That we are creatures who are made in the image of God, by God, and for God. And if we define ourselves in any other way at all, far from dignifying us, it actually dehumanizes us.

C.S. Lewis puts it wonderfully in what he makes Aslan say in one of his Narnia books. I think it's speaking to Prince Caspian. And he says this, you come from the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve. And that is both honor enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth. And friends, that is what the Christian gospel teaches.

[7 : 22] And when we begin to understand that truth, when we begin to grasp the reality, as the gospel of God unfolds it to us, we begin to realize that the real acceptance, the real approval that we need, the real approval that we crave, the only acceptance that really matters at all, is our acceptance with the God who made us.

But of course, at the same time, as we come to understand that in the Christian gospel, we realize that that is the one thing that must always elude us. Because as we read there in Romans chapter 3, verse 23, all human beings, all alike have sinned, and lack, fall short of the glory of God, the glory that he created us for, the glory that he desires from us, as the creatures that he made us to be in his image.

But we lack it, all of us. And Paul there in Romans is telling us that, whether we are irreligious, or indeed, whether we can be very religiously pious, all alike, he says, are under sin.

Utterly under the power, utterly under the sway, of this dark force of sin. So that, as we read there, by the works of the Lord, no human being, no human being, will be justified, will be accepted, approved in God's sight.

And you see, that is, the collective malady, of the human condition. That is the pathology, that underlies all human ills. And all the multiplicity, of different symptoms, that manifest in the human condition, both morally, and very often, psychologically.

[9 : 04] There is a deep, anxiety, there is a collective neurosis, that is deeply embedded, in the human heart. And just like, like other neurosis, very often it goes, unrecognized, but it's there, it's a destructive, it's a damaging force, at the very heart, of our human lives.

But you see, the gospel of God, is the sure, and certain answer, to all of that uncertainty, all of that lack of peace, that is at the very heart, of the human condition.

No human religion, on earth, can bring peace, to the anxious heart. In fact, religions, just breed fear, breed anxiety, breed uncertainty. Because it's all focused, isn't it, on reaching up, to God, or to the gods, to find acceptance.

And so that anxiety, never dies, it's constant. And in fact, that is what gives, all human religions, their power, and their hold, over people. Only, only the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, the very antithesis, of human religion, only that, is what reaches down, from our wonderful Savior.

Only that grace, can bring us certainty. And it does, because, look at verse 1, of chapter 5 here, we have been, justified, by faith.

[10 : 29] That is by God's grace, as a sheer gift, received, as we said last week, into the empty hands, of faith. We have, peace with God, says Paul, through, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In other words, our status, before God, is absolutely certain. It's certain today, and it's certain forever. Because it is not, something that we have to do. It's not something, we can do. It's all something, that God himself, has done, through our wonderful Savior. God was angry with us, because of our lack, in his sight. But as Paul says elsewhere, to the Colossian church, he made peace.

He made peace, through the blood, of his cross. He himself, in the person of his own son, the Lord Jesus, he put himself forth, as a propitiation, as a sacrifice, to turn aside, his own wrath, and anger. And so we are at peace. Look at verse 11 here, we are reconciled. And notice again, not through a, a peace and reconciliation process, in which we participated.

[11 : 36] Look, it's something that we simply received. We received, reconciliation, as a free gift, which was achieved. Look at verse 10. How? By the death of his son.

And when? When we were still enemies. So be absolutely clear, Paul is saying, this is nothing, to do with us. Not with us, making peace with God.

That we were, we were rebels against God, but now we've made peace with God somehow. Not at all. That's sometimes how people talk, isn't it? Even Christians sometimes talk like that. You better make your peace with your maker, before you die.

But that is quite impossible. It's all about him, making peace with us. And that is why, therefore, verse 2, through him, Jesus Christ also, that's a better word, word order there, by the way, through him also, through our Lord Jesus Christ, once for all death on the cross, we have obtained access, he says, permanent access, into this wonderful world of God's grace, into God's own presence, into the Father's house.

And Paul says in verse 2 there, we stand in that grace, permanently, now and always. We have a continuous standing, with God.

[12 : 59] And that's the second great fruit, of our Savior's grace, that I want to get us very clear about today. Our personal, ongoing relationship with God, is guaranteed, because, we are reconciled, through our great Savior alone, by grace, and not, through our faithfulness, not through our fruitfulness, not through anything in us.

If we have entered by the door, of Jesus Christ himself, then we have gone, from one world, into another. Just like those children in Narnia, going through the door of the wardrobe, into another whole world.

Except this door, is irreversible. There's no going back. It's a one-way door. Because we have left forever, this whole realm, this world, of being under sin, the home of sin and death.

And we've entered instead, the home of grace, and of peace. Look down to the very last verse, of chapter 5, verse 21, and see the stark contrast there, between these two worlds. You see, once we belong to a realm, where Paul says, sin reigned, in death.

But now, because grace reigns, through righteousness, leads to eternal life, through, Jesus Christ our Lord. You go through the door, of the Lord Jesus Christ, our wonderful Savior, through his death on the cross, and we have gone into a new world, where grace reigns, not sin.

[14 : 23] And there we stand, continuously, now and forever, in that grace. We've been brought back, through that door, of our Lord Jesus, into the near presence, of God our Father himself, permanently, forever.

Our status is certain, so that standing, is continuous. We have, permanent acceptance, with God, so we really do have, permanent access, to God.

And that is what is, so, so vital for us, to get our heads around, and get clear on. Because our righteousness, before God is real, is unshakable, our ongoing relationship, with God, is just as real, and just as unshakable.

And that's what verse 11, here of Romans 5, proclaims loud and clear. We have received, reconciliation. And so do you see, we also rejoice, in a real, and permanent, restored relationship. We rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice with God, in his presence, as friends, rejoice together, as friends share together, in each other's joy.

[15 : 28] We have permanent access, to the presence of God, in a way that, no one could have before. You know that, don't you, in the Old Testament. The people of God, had no access, to the innermost presence, where God himself, dwelt at the heart, of the temple, except through the high priest.

And even the high priest, could only go into that, central place, once a year, and never without, the sacrifice of blood. But you see, now, through Christ's, permanent sacrifice, which all of those, sacrifices pointed forward to, we all, have permanent access, to that very place.

We have a continuous standing, before God. We are in fellowship with him, near him, both today, but also forever, and ever. And you see, friends, Christian faith, real Christian faith, simply means, trusting in the fact of this, whatever our particular feelings, might be, at any time.

I want us to think this morning, about how this fact, relates to our varying feelings. And think about, when these two things, seem to be in conflict, whether we actually, are responding in faith, or rather just responding in fear.

So facts, and feelings, and faith, or fear. First, the fact of this, permanent access to God. And the most, important thing to say, as I've already said, is that it simply, is a fact.

[16:58] We have received, this reconciled relationship, of intimacy with God. That's what verse 11 says, and we've received it, through what Christ has done, once and for all. And therefore, we cannot un-receive it.

And that's why we rejoice. Says verse 11, if you see the footnote there, it says, boast, is another way of translating it. We celebrate, confidently, in God, our direct access, to the Father, through Jesus Christ, and through him alone.

And that means, we need no one else. We need nothing else, ever, to bring us, into the presence, of our Heavenly Father. It is ours, continuously, forever. And that is just as true, whether we feel, that presence of God, more, at some times, than we do at others.

Because it is a simple fact. Some years ago, I was, at a conference, in South Africa, in Cape Town. And after a long, long flight down there, to the Cape, I went through the airport, I went through passport control, and I was in. And at first, it was, it was very obvious, that I was in a new country.

[18:10] Look around, all the faces are different, all the terrain's different. See Table Mountain, up there behind you, it's very, very obvious. I'm in the Cape, I'm in South Africa. The sun was visible as well. I knew I was in a different country, from Scotland.

But here's the thing, it was a long conference, for 10 days, and we were in a big conference center, and I was staying in a hotel. And there were times, when I was in that hotel, or in that conference center, that you know, I could have been anywhere in the world, because they all look exactly the same, on the inside.

It didn't feel at all, like I was in Africa. But if I was in doubt, all I had to do, was walk out of the conference center, have a look again, all around me, at the sea, and at the mountain, and at the people, and I could see, yes, I am here in Africa.

I didn't have to go back to the airport, and go back through immigration, and get the man to stamp my passport again, and say, oh yes, yes, you are actually in Africa. I was there, it was a fact. I just had to reckon, on the facts, as they really were, and not on my feelings, because my feelings at times, were out of line with that truth.

Well, I think of a newly married couple. Congratulations to Corner and Laura, nice to have you back with us, after your honeymoon. But a couple on their wedding day, it's very obvious to everybody, isn't it, that this is, this is a new life, a new partnership that's being made, that the bride is there, and all her beauty, of her beautiful wedding gown, even the groom has actually put on, a decent pair of clothes for a change, and had a haircut, and shaved, and looks sort of semi-human.

[19:33] And clearly, everybody sees, and they see, we've entered into a new world, it's married life. But you know, even then, sometimes it doesn't feel like that, at first. I used to sometimes enjoy, having a little joke in the vestry, when the wedding party, came through to sign the papers.

And I would say, oh, Mrs. Smith, it's time for you to sign now. And the bride would not look, as though this was her I was speaking to, she would look to her mother-in-law. And I'd say, no, you're Mrs. Smith now.

Oh yes, so I am. And it's a new world, you see, isn't it? A new situation, and a new intimacy. The only place, by the way, for that full sexual intimacy, but marriage, opens the door, to that new intimate relationship.

And not just once, but always. After the first letter of marriage, a man doesn't have to, go and find a minister, and say, can we do these marriage vows again, and sign things again, so that I can be intimate, with my wife tomorrow?

Of course not, thank heavens for that. The certain status of marriage, has opened the door, to that continuous standing, to that continuous permanent, intimate relationship, do you see?

[20 : 46] And just so, you see, it is with our entrance, by grace, into God's intimate presence, and peace. Verse two, we have obtained access, by faith, into this grace, in which we now stand, this new world.

We're there, even if, sometimes, we forget it, or we don't feel it. The Lord Jesus Christ, has brought us there, himself, and we are there, and his forever.

And that is, the simple fact, for every Christian believer, everyone, who has trusted Christ. And it's really, really vital, for me to emphasize that, precisely because, secondly, our feelings, our feelings, sometimes seem to deny that fact.

Sometimes, we don't feel, intimate with God. We don't feel, his presence. We don't feel, assured, of his peace, and of his acceptance.

Isn't that right? We know that. All sorts of things, can make us, feel, that we're not really, right with God.

[21 : 54] Sometimes, it's sin in our lives, that shakes our assurance, of God's presence, makes us feel, there's no connection, with God. And, if we do let, willful sin, come between us, and God, we shouldn't be surprised, should be that it affects, our feelings, about faith.

That we lose sight, of God's face. Someone's put it this way, sin grieves the spirit, and he withdraws, not, not his presence, but the sweetness, of that presence.

And when that happens, our assurance, will cloud over too, and dark doubts, may disturb our peace. See, the whole world, looks very different, doesn't it, when clouds, cover the sun. And that can happen, in our Christian lives, through disobedience.

And one of the most, common reasons, in my experience, of a young Christian, or a new Christian, perhaps getting into that, state of doubt, and confusion, is because they get involved, in a wrong relationship, with someone, and deep down, they know it's wrong.

But there's all kinds, of other things, that can do that. But, the answer to that, friends, is a very simple one. It's just one word, repent, stop, turn around, ask the Lord, to forgive you, ask the Lord, to help you do, what's right.

[23 : 10] The sun, will begin to shine again, and you will begin to, recover that assurance. But sometimes, it's not actually, willful, and unacknowledged sin. Sometimes, the thing that clouds, our sense of God's presence, with us, is just the shame, of sin, that we've, have acknowledged to God, and we have asked, for forgiveness for, and yet it can crush us, it can make us feel, can't it, that God must have, cast us off, this time.

But again, Paul tells us, very, very plainly, a little further on, in Romans 8, that no one, or nothing, can lay any charge, against God's elect.

No one, can condemn, ever, those, who Christ has justified, who Christ has declared, forever, accepted by God. That is a fact. But our hearts, don't always feel that, do they?

Our hearts, so easily condemn us, because, well the truth is, our hearts have got access, haven't they, to so much evidence, of our sins. Goodness, we don't need Wikileaks. Wikileaks has nothing, compared to the files, and files, and files in my heart, of sins that would, condemn me before God. So sometimes you see, even when we're not being proud, in our sinfulness, but we're penitent, sometimes then, we can feel condemned, and we can feel that, that we can't have access to God, in the way we would desire it.

[24 : 34] And certainly friends, that is what the devil, wants you to think. That's what the devil, loves to tempt us to think. Or it may be sometimes, that it's various kinds of, trials and sufferings, that can make us just feel, as though God has, abandoned us, separated himself from us.

Now listen again, Paul tells us, absolutely, and famously, in Romans chapter 8, that none of these things, can separate us. not tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword.

None of these things, can ever, separate us, from the love of God, in Jesus Christ, our Lord. That is the fact. But the thing is, it often feels like they do, doesn't it?

When you get that, dreaded news from the doctor, that shatters your hopes. Or perhaps just when you're having, terrible struggles at home, or in your marriage, or with your family, or at work, or with friends.

Or you're being victimized, at school, or at work, or at college, because of your Christian faith, or whatever. It can feel, can't it? As though, as though God has distanced himself, from us. There's so many bad things, that have happened, in my life of late.

[25 : 50] There's so many things. It must be, that God's angry with me. I must have done something, that has made God, desert me, and leave me. Sometimes you might even think, well maybe, maybe I'm not really, a real Christian at all.

Maybe I never really, properly became a Christian. It can be very easy, can't it? To feel these kind of things. And then of course, you see, behind every one of these things, and every other, that does that to it, behind all of these things, is Satan himself, is the great accuser.

Prowling around, says the apostle Peter, seeking whom he can devour. Telling us, yes you must, you must have lost access to God. You can't expect God, any longer, to hear your prayers, or answer your prayers.

You can't expect God, to draw near to you now, because of this, or this, or this, or this, or this, or this, don't even bother to pray. He is the greatest liar, he is the father of lies.

And he loves nothing so much, as when he can latch, onto some truth, about some sin in our life, or something that we know, is real, something that we're ashamed of, but then take it, and accuse us, and use it, to deceive us, to accuse us, to turn our eyes away, from our great saviour's grace, which is the thing, he despises more than anything else.

[27 : 15] And our friends, when the facts, of our saviour's grace, are assaulted like that, by the feelings, that come from our weak hearts, we can react, in one of two ways, can't we?

Either with, faith, or with fear. Either, we trust the facts, we believe, that what God has told us, is actually true, that we do have, permanent access to the father, through Jesus.

Through Jesus alone, and through Jesus forever. Or, and this is so often, what we do do, isn't it? We fear. And that means, we're just not trusting, God's truth.

And we don't honour, the wonderful cross, of our Lord Jesus Christ. We disbelieve, that we have, permanent access to the father, through his death alone. Isn't that what we so often do?

We deny, in practice, what we say we believe. That we do have, true and permanent access, to God our father. And so what we do is, we seek some other means, of finding that acceptance, with God.

[28 : 23] But you know, in doing that, however we do it, we are simply, scorning, the cross, of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we're really saying is, well no, that wasn't enough, on its own, to really bring me, continuously to God.

I need another door, to reopen that relationship. And we may not realise it, but that is what we're saying. Maybe you don't believe me, but let me ask you this, when your heart condemns you, for your sins, when you're, when you're struggling, perhaps, when you're suffering, when you feel dry, when you feel, I'm not, I'm not experiencing, God, the way I ought to, the way I used to.

Who is your real priest, that you turn to, to open things up, with the Lord again? Who is it? Or what is it? Is it? Your great saviour, Jesus Christ alone, by simply trusting, that he has done for you, what he says he has done for you, and rejoicing in that?

Or actually, is it someone else? Is it something else? Do you say, I have a priest forever, and I know that I do stand in grace continuously, so I will rejoice in God, with absolute confidence, through Jesus alone.

I will come to him. Or do you actually seek a priest? Do you seek a mediator, that you can see? To give you something you can see, or you can feel, or you can touch, something that will give you, a better assurance, you think, of God's presence with you.

[29 : 54] Friends, it can be very, very, very tempting, to seek those kind of assurances. Might be, for some, the assurance, of institutional access to God, perhaps, through, institutional priests, and practices.

Many people think that, by going to a holy place, going to a pilgrimage, that special place, and prayers there, will give you, special access to God, when you pray.

Many people think, they're going to a special holy man, a priest, can give you better access to God, through his prayers, or his power. That's the, the great attraction, of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, isn't it?

With its confessionals, with its penances. You can have a visible priest, who can speak audible words to you, and give you assurance, by doing physical things, penances and prayers, and so on. But actually, plenty of, plenty of Protestants, can act very similarly, as though, the prayers of their pastor, or somebody in the clergy, or whatever, can be more effective, with God, than their own prayers.

[31 : 01] It can be very, very tempting, for some to seek, mystical experiences, to give them access to God, through, well, what I call, praise priests, who claim to, to lead people, into God's presence, through their worship.

There's such an enormous, misunderstanding today, in the so-called, Christian music industry. As though music, was some kind of, special worship, like sacrifices, in the temple, it would open the door, to bring you, into the presence of God.

Go and have a look, at what's claimed, on albums, of so-called, worship music. This song will take you, to a deeper level, with God, said one that I looked at. This other song, leads you, into the presence of God.

Do you see, what that is friends? That is an alternative, human priesthood, that we think, we need to have, as well as, the once for all, cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

That is what gives us, uniquely that standing. For other folk, it can also be very tempting, when we don't feel, God's presence, to seek access, to that presence again, by our, performance, of intense prayers, perhaps, or times of fasting, or some other, spiritual discipline, seeking the Lord's face.

[32 : 19] Lots and lots, of well-meaning, young Christians, have been led into, really a bondage, of performance. Sometimes, by very well-meaning, older, but overly pious, Christians, who talk in those terms. Friends, listen to me.

It is our Lord, Jesus himself, who tells us, plainly, that very often, these things are hallmarks, not of piety, but of paganism, of religious hypocrisy.

Read Matthew chapter 6. It is the pagans, who try to stir up, that kind of, connection with God, through religious fervor. It is the hypocrites, Jesus says, who go on and on like that.

And he says, don't you do, as they do. You don't need, any of that. He says, you can come directly, with just a few words, of humble trust. Our Father, in heaven, hear us, your children.

Do you see, how so many, of these things, all of these things, in fact, which so often, we do, in response, to our feelings, they flatly, contradict, what Christ's apostle, is telling us, right here.

[33 : 26] That if you are, in Christ by faith, you have entered, forever, God's nearer presence. And you've done so, through Jesus Christ, said our Lord, and him alone. You cannot get, any nearer, to the Father's heart, than that.

If anyone, loves me, said Jesus. Listen, if anyone, loves me, my Father, will love him. And we will, come to him, and make our home, with him, forever, permanently.

A permanent home, not a, not a camping trip, not a caravan. You stand, says verse two, continuously, in the grace, of God's nearer presence.

What could possibly, ever be added to that? So to say things like, oh, this will take me, nearer to God, that actually, is a terrible, blasphemy.

Because it implies, that Christ, hasn't done enough for me. I've got to add, something else, myself, to get nearer, or to keep this privilege, or to feel that intimacy, to have that real nearness. And to all of that, Paul says, no.

[34 : 31] No, never. You are not justified, by any of these things. You're not justified, by singing. Even if you sing, the same thing, 20 times over, with your eyes shut, as some Christians, seem to think, is especially effective, to bring you, into the presence of God.

What that actually does, is drive sane, and balance people, right out of the presence, of the church, altogether. Nor are you justified, ever by your spiritual heroics, in prayer, or in fasting, or in meditation, or in memorizing, reformed catechisms, or confessions, or anything else, whatever flavor, you want it to be.

You don't need, any of that, says Jesus. Because I've already, brought you to the Father. All you need to do, is very simple, is recognize the reality.

Our Father, in heaven, that's how you pray. No shouting, no need for long, long, long prayers. God is not deaf, God's not demented. He hears you. He understands. So Paul's saying, come, I know that sometimes, you don't feel, as if God is near.

But don't react, with fear. Have faith in the facts, the truth, about the fruits, of our Savior's grace. Because reacting, with fear, means really, you're rejecting him.

[35 : 53] you're distrusting, all that he's done for you, all his wonderful love for you. You're saying, oh, that's not enough, somehow that's inadequate. You're scorning, the precious blood of Christ, that so willingly, he gave, for you.

No one in my life, has helped me, to understand these things more, and helped countless others, understand, than William Still, of Aberdeen, who was a pastor, when I was, a young student. And in this little book, *The World of Grace*, which I think is, still in, in print, he speaks of, of some of these things. I want to read some of it to you. Listen to what he says.

This, is the way to deal, with the crippling fears, that terrorize us, and paralyze us. Run to God, and believe, in the rest, he promises. That may seem difficult, but it's not hard, to see what in fact, militates against, the healing process, of our rest in God, and our enjoyment of him.

It's because, we will never accept, his estimate of us. See, if we constantly, beat our breasts, and see ourselves, as the poor things, we may need to feel, that we really are, nothing sweet, or good, or kind, that God says to us, about ourselves, really comes home.

[37 : 11] We just don't believe him. We tell God, he's a liar. We're worse than that. We know better than him. We won't let him, be good to us. That's the root of our trouble.

You must, let God, tell you, how valuable, you are to him, and how dear, you are to him, and how important, you are to him. He sees your faults, better than anyone else.

He won't flatter you, but it's the one, who sees our faults, the most, who thinks the most of us. Take a load of that, says William Still, and swallow it whole.

Friends, those words are so true, they are vital for us, to take in, to take in deep down, into our souls, not only, not only for our personal lives, but also for the life, and the health, of our corporate life, as a fellowship.

And that's what Paul's, dealing with here, in Romans, isn't it? He wants a people, who are truly, humble together, under God's grace, and know that they are, exalted also, all the same, by that grace.

[38 : 23] Listen again, to William Still, speaking about that, in a congregational setting. He says this, I find it very hard, to convince some people, in the fellowship, that they really are accepted. They'll tell you, all about their past.

I'm not caring, about their past. I have a past, I'm not caring, about that either. And I'm not going, to dig into that, or into yours. It doesn't matter, a rap, what our past is. It doesn't matter, who we are, or what we are.

If God has laid, his hands upon us, and chosen us, in Christ to be his, then we've got to learn, to love one another, and trust one another, equally. However unequal, we may be, intellectually, or as far as class, and education, and culture is concerned, that is of no importance.

Absolutely, of no importance. There is room for all kinds. Let's have the clever, and let's have the simple. And let them join together, and we brothers, and help one another, and drive the devil out. Christ gained the victory, over the devil, he says, on the cross. And he has given this victory, to us, into our hands. And he says, come on now, you deal with the devil, when he comes to you. Not directly, but deal with him, on the grounds, of what I have done, in my victory.

[39 : 37] Here's my victory. This is what I did to him. You do it to him. Do it to him. He says, sometimes we forget, that such a person, is the devil. Such a being.

We must never do that. There is a devil. Keep him in mind, 24 hours a day. Don't, don't be distracted by him, but keep him in mind, and keep him at bay.

God kept the wild beasts, at bay from David. When he set a feast for him, in the midst of the wilderness, as we sang. David says, in the midst of foes, he set a table for me, and I sat under his shadow, and ate, and enjoyed, and Satan's wild beasts, could not touch me.

Let's get a load of this, and swallow it whole. Friends, that is what the apostle Paul, is saying to us here, in Romans chapter 5. Get a load of this, and swallow it whole.

This wonderful, guaranteed fruit. of God's saving grace, to us in Christ, that humbles all of us, but exalts all of us, because he who knows, the most about us, loves us the most.

[40 : 42] And just as a, a woman can look at her wedding ring, and see, that yes, she is married, of course she is.

Even if she might not feel that, at the time, or whatever. Or just as someone, can go to a city far away, and go out, and look at the terrain, and look at the people, and look at it, and see, yes, I am in this country, I really am.

Well, that's what Paul is doing us here, showing us these, landmarks, these wonderful, certain fruits, of our Savior's grace. Look at them once again, as we close.

Verse 2. Through him also, Christ our Savior, we have obtained access, by faith, into, into this grace, in which we stand, and we rejoice, in the hope, of the glory of God.

And verse 11, more than this, we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now, received, reconciliation. Doesn't that tell you, that whatever you may feel at times, whatever you may be feeling this morning, whatever you may have done, the fact, the fact, is that if you love, the Lord Jesus Christ, then you stand, continuously, in his grace.

[42 : 01] And so you can rejoice, you can celebrate, confidently, with great, great joy, your permanent access, to the Father's heart, through the Lord Jesus Christ, through our great, wonderful Savior.

And you can live, therefore, today, and tomorrow, and every day, you can live without fear, not in fear, but in faith. And you can know, the perfect peace, that only the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, can ever give, but does give, permanently, to every single one, of his beloved children.

Well, let's pray. Lord, we believe, but help our unbelief. Help us, Lord, to mark, to learn, to indigest, to digest, to really swallow whole, the wonder of your grace to us, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And when Satan seeks to devour, Lord, remind us, that you have prayed for us, for everyone who is yours, and you will keep our souls safe forever, to be with you forever.

And so grant us, Lord, grant us that calm assurance, that you have shed your own blood, for our souls, and therefore, it is well, it is well, with our souls, today, and tomorrow, and forever, and ever, for nothing, and no one, shall ever separate us, from the love of God, that is in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[43 : 41] help us, Lord, to swallow that whole, and to chew on it, every day of this coming week, for we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.