

2 Tim 2:1-13

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[0 : 00] We're back in 2 Timothy chapter 2 this evening as we come to God's Word. And there's a very powerful statement which Paul slots into this passage that was read for us.

And I want us to consider it this evening. And it comes at the end of verse 9. It goes like this. But God's Word is not chained.

There's a little bit of an imprisonment theme going on today. I didn't particularly plan it that way but we mentioned about being in darkness and in prison this morning and this evening here we have the Apostle Paul in prison writing this letter.

And talking about him being chained like a criminal but God's Word not being chained. You may be surprised to know that I've done some prison time.

You can picture the scene a few years ago in Ukraine and Tanya and I were walking back from the markets and we passed the prison in our city. Very large prison where many of the Christians were held during those awful years of persecution.

[1 : 21] And I decided rather foolishly that it would be nice to take a photograph of the prison so that I'd have a picture to show people back home and put on nice PowerPoint presentations and show churches where the Christians were held.

So I took this photograph of the prison and then merrily carried on my way not realising that the guys in the lookout tower had spotted me taking the photograph. Had consulted their Ukrainian legal handbooks which told them that taking photographs of prisons was an illegal act unbeknown to me.

And radioed down to the guards on the gate and they came running around the corner with their guns and their whistles and their batons and arrested Tanya and I in the streets. Frog marched back into the prison and we were in trouble.

And we were then interrogated by five different ranks of the Ukrainian army. The guy didn't know what to do with us so he called his boss and he didn't know what to do with us he calls his boss. And up we went until we got to the general.

The general didn't know what to do with us so he called the director of the prison service in the capital and he eventually decided after checking our passports and visas that we were to be let go.

[2 : 29] So we kind of got away with it. So the sum total of my prison time is two hours. That was my prison time. The following, that was a Saturday, the following morning at church I shared this story with one of the pastors of the church that I was in that particular morning who had done a great deal of time in that same prison.

And he listened to the story and smiled and then slapped me on the back with his huge hands and said, Andy you can have your Bible colleges in the West if you like.

He said, but in this country we learn our theology on the floors of those prison cells and only now are you qualified to be a pastor in this land. It was a funny moment.

But some tremendous sobering truth to that. That's not today thankfully yet, but in days gone by, that was where pastors were for the sake of the gospel.

And that is where the Apostle Paul was for the sake of the gospel as we read this letter. He didn't write his final words to Timothy, his young apprentice, his trainee, his protege, his colleague, he didn't write these final words, sitting on his sofa near a fire, hoping to encourage this young man in his ministry.

[3 : 59] But here is Paul, chained to Roman guards, probably hand and feet, as he probably dictates this letter to someone else writing it down.

And he didn't need to search around for illustrations. When he wanted to say to Timothy, God's word is not chained. He didn't have to Google chains on the internet or tell stories about people that

were in prison.

He had to just feel the rawness of the flesh on his wrists. I am chained. You see verse 9, it's evocative language. I am suffering, even to the point of being chained like a criminal.

Not as a criminal, notice. His language is very precise, not as a criminal, but like a criminal. He's not done anything wrong before the king of kings, only unashamedly preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

But he's chained like a criminal, and with the pain of that, he then immediately interjects, but God's word is not chained. And I find this passage a very moving one, because I don't know if you're anything like me, but if this was the second letter of Andy to the church, verse 9 probably would have come out very different.

[5 : 20] For which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. And don't you as a church know how unjust this is, and how this prison is very cold, and how I'm missing my wife, and how this has been a long, hard year for me, and I'm hungry, and couldn't you please send me a blanket, and if you could mention to the church to come and visit me, and oh, I feel very sorry for myself in this prison cell.

That might be how our letter would go. That's not how Paul writes it. I am suffering to the point of being chained like a criminal. And straight away, lest his mind wander to self-pity, lest your mind as the reader should wander to the humanity only of the situation.

Paul immediately wants his readers of the first century, and us as the 21st century later, immediately to know what is of greater importance to the fact that this one man in this one prison is suffering for the name of Christ.

What is a greater thing for you and I to know than that is that God's word is not chained. This preacher has been put in bonds, but God's word has not.

And the same word which he believed, and that he wrote, and that he preached, is the word that we have, and that we believe, and that we preach, and it is not chained.

[6 : 57] What a tremendous thing. What hope for our world and for our witness that God's word is not chained.

In fact, in Philippians, writing from probably the same prison, Paul writes in Philippians 1, What has happened to me, he says, has really served to advance the gospel.

Have you pondered what a gospel-centered way of thinking that is? What a God-focused mindset that is.

What has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. Could it be that when our lives are lived in such devastation from time to time, even in those times, that we could think of how God is advancing the gospel through those times?

And of course, Paul wrote from prison, didn't he? We don't just have this letter to Timothy from his times in prison. What else do we have? We have Galatians, don't we, and Ephesians, and Philemon. All of these books of the Bible that now are such a blessing to us were smuggled out of those cells by men like Tychicus.

[8 : 22] We owe a great debt to Tychicus, don't we? Tychicus was the man who took the piece of paper that Paul wrote a letter on and folded it into his cloak and smuggled it out of prison.

And that became the book of Ephesians in our Bible. Paul wrote it in prison. And the gospel has been advanced. And my soul has been blessed so much by that book.

Hasn't yours? That's because Paul was serving in prison. And the Lord used him there. So I want to ask this question this evening.

Paul, in this powerful statement, says, But God's Word is not chained. I want to ask you if you believe that. Do you believe that God's Word is not chained?

And if you believe it, I want us to think together about why God's Word is not chained. Why God's Word cannot be chained.

[9 : 21] Why it is impossible for men to chain the Word of God. I want to give you three reasons. The first is this. Because God's Word is invested with something.

God's Word is invested with infinite and unstoppable resurrection power. Did you notice that in verse 8, when Paul is describing the gospel for which he is imprisoned, he doesn't actually mention the cross.

Usually in Paul's summaries of the gospel, he would include Jesus Christ and him crucified. But actually, in verse 8, the cross isn't mentioned. We know that the cross was very central to Paul's

teaching and his ministry.

But in this particular description of the gospel, there are many in this book. We'll look at another one in a second. But here he says, Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

Descended from David. This is my gospel for which I am suffering. He puts it like that, of course, but it was because in his day, the fact that Jesus was risen from the dead was the point of contention, wasn't it?

[10:33] He was called a heretic for so believing. And so he describes the resurrection from the dead as being central to the gospel. And of course, he was to write in 1 Corinthians 15 that if Christ is not raised, then we among all men are to be pitied.

Our faith is futile if Christ is not raised. You see, the gospel of Christ, the word of Christ, it is invested with resurrection power from God such that he is able to speak and the dead are able to be raised.

As God spoke in the beginning of time when there was nothing and all that is came into being. Such as when Jesus spoke in a boat in a storm and the storm was stilled.

When Jesus was able to speak to a little girl who was already dead and she was able to be raised from the dead. Jesus' words invested with resurrection power.

It's described beautifully in verse 10 of chapter 1. I love this description of the gospel. Just flick back to the chapter before. Chapter 1, verse 10. Again, he's summarizing his gospel.

[11:58] Well, if we read just from halfway through verse 9, he says, this grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

It's just a glorious description, isn't it? Life and immortality are brought through the gospel in the place of death, which is destroyed.

The enemy has lost its sting. The final enemy is defeated. The whole terrible plan of Satan to drag people into sin and ruin, to cast their souls forever into hell with him.

His plan to ruin your soul has been destroyed. When the word of Christ comes with its power to speak into our life and to raise us from death unto life, destroying death, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

This is the gospel. This is the power of Christ. When we speak it, when we share it, when we preach it, no wonder Paul says the word of God is not chained because God has invested his word with resurrection power.

[13:27] Now, for sure, some people will laugh at us when we share his word, when we speak of Jesus, when we speak about the Bible. But you know, something in their conscience is always on your side when you speak to somebody with the word of Christ.

They may not agree with you. They may not accept the word that you speak, but something in their conscience, something that has been darkened by sin and thirsts to be enlivened and awakened by grace, something in their conscience, made in the image of God, is on your side when you speak the word of God.

And other times, of course, our word seems to fall on deaf ears. We speak it and it seems to have no effect. But I ask you again, do you believe that even in those cases, the word of God is not chained?

I heard a very moving account a while ago from a man who was saved in a bar in South London. And he was later in life.

He'd already lived his entire working life, was now retired, and was in his bar, sat at the bar with his pint. And on one particular day, as he lifted his pint from the bar and he got halfway to his mouth, and as he got halfway to his mouth, he suddenly remembered a word that had been spoken to him 40 years before in Sunday school.

[15:05] And he put his bar, his pint back on the bar and walked out. And by the time he got to the pavement, was already humbled and crushed under the mighty hand of God and cried out for salvation there on the pavement.

Now the Sunday school teacher that taught him was probably long since dead and in glory, probably. And I just picture Sunday school teachers I'm sure many of you here have been such Sunday school teachers who have spoken many words falling on deaf ears.

I was a ruffian in Sunday school. If you don't believe me, ask Frederick. He was one of my Sunday school teachers. We were all for me and my brother and our friends. But the word of God is not shame.

And God has invested his word with resurrection power and the word spoken to a soul may not be for that moment. If you've spoken to children and they've had no... it seems to have had no effect upon their lives.

Maybe it's not for that moment or for this year but maybe for next. Maybe for 10 years. Maybe for 40 years. God will not let his word return to him void. It will accomplish all that it has planned.

[16:16] Because God has invested his word with resurrection power and he will raise the dead. Let me tell you a true story about a friend of mine, John.

John was arrested a few years ago for preaching and it was a tragedy when he was arrested because he was a young man 32 years of age, a preacher, growing in power in his preaching, very fruitful ministry.

God was starting to really use him. Many people have been helped by his preaching. Many have been saved. His preaching has affected me also, I have to say. People had great hopes for him.

He was about to move to a new church. He'd just been called, in fact. And now John has been arrested, thrown into prison for preaching, silenced, not allowed to preach in a pulpit.

Absolute travesty. No use to the church. Big disappointment to many Christians. What is God doing? How can he allow for men like my friend to be silenced and imprisoned just for preaching the gospel?

[17:24] My friend John, his surname is Bunyan. He was arrested in November 1660. He spent 12 long years in that prison, in two spells, in Bedford jail.

What did he do with that time? Was it useless? Was it wasted? Was his preaching to be silenced forever? Do you know, in that jail, John Bunyan wrote tracts and sermons and pamphlets and books and they were published.

A hundred thousand copies were printed in his lifetime. And of course, many of them have blessed many of us, including Pilgrim's Progress.

Has that encouraged you? It's been a great help to me. He wrote that in Bedford jail. Because he was chained, God used him to write down his word in all manner of forms and then through those words, resurrection life came to many people.

Let me ask you again, do you believe God's word is not chained? You can chain the man. You can chain the preacher.

[18:42] But you cannot chain the word of God. God has invested his word with power. So I want to implore you not to be afraid of powerful opposition or even the loss of our freedoms.

One of the things that I've noticed during the year that we've spent in this country is having come from a country where people have had their freedoms lost and now they have relative freedom, that's Ukraine, to a country like this where we're used to our freedoms and there are certain things on the wind which suggests that we may not have our freedoms for much longer, aren't there, even in this country.

I have noticed a great fear among Christians and pastors in this country, a fear for the times when we may lose our freedoms.

Can I implore you, do not be afraid of the loss of your freedoms. Do not be afraid of powerful opposition. They have no ultimate power.

The word of God is not chained, it cannot be chained, it will not be chained and it may be that the loss of our freedoms will be the very means that God uses to bring the gospel to our nation, to our times, to our generation.

[20:05] His word is not chained nor can it ever be because God has invested it with resurrection power. And let me give you a second reason why the word of God is not chained.

Because no one has the authority to stand against it. No one has the authority to stand against it. Now I worked in secular employment for nine years before I went into the ministry and I know that every boss has a boss.

And I was a boss but I had a bigger boss. And then when I was promoted I was a bigger boss. But I still had a bigger boss. And however high you go and however senior you go you've always got someone else who is a greater authority.

And if you're the chief boss, if you're the chief executive, the managing director of the whole show, then you've got your shareholders or you've got the people that have invested or you've got your partners or whoever. there's always an authority to whom we have to bow or get a say so. God has no rival, no equal and no high authority.

[21 : 19] When there was nothing and no one there was God. And when every ruler and every leader and every power and every dominion has been crushed there will be Jesus enthroned on high.

And everyone will be below him. Because he is enthroned. He is the king of kings. He has all authority. And even the devil, powerful though he is and a mock though he often runs, even the devil must go to Jesus for approval to do what he will.

We have that account at the beginning of Job, don't we, of the devil asking God for permission to attack Job. And God setting a line over which the devil could not go.

did you notice in our verse here, verse 8, along with that description of Jesus raised from the dead, notice how Paul writes it. Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended from David.

This is my gospel for which I am suffering to the point of being chained, but God's word is not chained. Why does he use that phrase? Jesus raised from the dead, descended from David.

[22 : 45] David. Well, he's drawing a connection here, he's underlining the kingly authority of Jesus.

Descended from David, Israel's greatest king, and he's underlining that Jesus is kingly in his authority.

And then, of course, when you add into that his eternal resurrection, who can raise from the dead? God alone. This is not just some human king. This is the eternal king.

And if that is true, and if Jesus Christ is descended from David, and if he is raised from the dead, then it is an automatic consequence that his word is not chained.

Because he is the almighty, everlasting God. If you want to stand in front of his word, you might as well be a garden pea trying to stand against the steamroller that's coming down your streets.

[23 : 48] You couldn't stop the steamroller because you're puny and it is mighty and you couldn't stop it in its way. The word of God coming with authority like that, but of course not to crush like a steamroller would crush a pea.

Not coming as a dictator like the one that's been voted in again in Ukraine, a dictator seeking to do away with all of his opposition. The previous Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yulia Tymoshenko, is in prison just a mile from our house.

Her only crime to be the political opposition of the current leader. Awful corruption. Jesus' authority not coming to crush, not as a dictator, not as someone seeking to grab power, but coming to redeem and to rescue and to remake our ruined humanity.

Jesus doesn't come to us just wanting to take away our poverty, deal with our financial troubles, cure our cancer. He comes with authority to save our soul from hell.

One word from Jesus and your eternal destiny is set. No one has the authority to stand against it.

[25 : 21] Are you trying to block it? Have you got arguments? Have you got reasons? Have you got some logic that explains away the gospel for you?

We can come up with very complex arguments in our mind to even believe that the gospel is right for some people or for them or for my mum and dad or for the youth group but not for me.

How can you stand against the word of the risen Christ? He's either laid in a tomb for three days and risen again or he's not. And if he is and all the evidence points to the fact that he is then he is the risen eternal king and no one has the authority to stand against him.

And if Satan can't let me assure you that you can't. You don't have the authority to stand against him. You want some evidence of that?

Well let's look at the history of the 20th century. What is the 20th century? Can I suggest to you the 20th century is a history of great empires trying to ban the Bible.

[26 : 34] Trying to overthrow the truth of the Christian gospel. Trying to kill believers and squash the church and proclaim that God is dead.

They tried it in the Soviet Union where I live now. They tried it in China. They tried it in wartime Germany didn't they? They tried it in Albania.

They tried it in Vietnam. They're trying it today in North Korea. All of these are empires trumpeting their power and their authority to say God is dead you will believe what we say. Let me ask you how is the church getting on in China? 100 million people and growing. That's more than twice the population of England.

How's the church getting on in the former Soviet Union? It's growing rapidly. In 1929 Joseph Stalin who was the leader of the Soviet Union at that time a mass murderer killed four times more people than Hitler ever killed.

[27 : 41] Awful man. He instituted a new five year plan and part of his five year plan was to state that and I quote the name of God will be eradicated from this nation within five years.

He said that in 1929. And he had a plan to carry that out and part of his plan he called his 15 to 1 plan. For every 15 churches he closed 14 of them and left just one left.

His idea was if we close most of the churches in the country we'll be able to put spies into the ones that are left and we'll stop most of the preaching and we'll stop most of the believing in God and he carried it out in Ukraine and in all the other republics of the former Soviet Union.

And my wife's grandma was in one of the villages Vilikaya Babka is the name of the village. She was in a village where the church was closed. Orders of Stalin. And there was a group of mainly women some men as well but mainly women who were regularly going to that church and now the church was closed.

They didn't have anywhere to meet they didn't have anywhere to go and they didn't know what to do so they started meeting in a little home. What were they going to do? There were discussions as to what can we do now that there's no church.

[28 : 54] They didn't have any transport they were poor villagers and they couldn't go to another place to church. At exactly that time Tanya's grandma heard the bleating of sheep in the street one day.

Very unusual no sheep in the village. Came out there was a shepherd herding a herd of sheep off to the market and he asked her for a glass of water and she gave him a glass of water and in response he reached into his pocket and gave her a Russian New Testament.

Never seen one before. In the churches they didn't have any Russian New Testaments. They didn't have any copy of the Bible at all in their churches of the Russian Orthodox Church in those days. She wasn't a born again believer at that time a church goer but now she had a copy of the Russian New Testament in her language so her and this group of other folks meeting in her home started reading this New Testament.

Exactly the week that tens of thousands of churches were closed around the whole of the Soviet Union 150,000 copies of the Russian New Testament flooded all over the Soviet Union.

Paid for by Lord Radstock an Englishman who years before had decided he was going to give money to the translation of the scriptures into Russian and these 150,000 New Testaments went everywhere around the Soviet Union and in places where the churches had been closed the Bible came and people started to read the Bible for themselves and they were born again.

[30 : 23] And Tanya's grandma was in a church where the gospel wasn't preached but now they had a Bible and everyone in that room was converted. That was a tremendous indication that God's word will not be chained.

You can close the churches imprison the preachers do whatever you will but God's word will not be chained because no one has authority to stand against him.

He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Do you believe that? Do you believe that the soul that you will speak to tomorrow about Jesus has no authority in their heart and mind to resist him?

Will that empower you to speak? Let me give you a third reason why the word of God is not chained. Because Christ has sent it into the world to change the destiny of every life.

Now let me explain what I mean because I've chosen my words very carefully. I'm not saying everyone will be saved. I'm not saying that everyone that hears the word will believe and become a Christian.

[31 : 38] But every life the destiny of every life will be changed by the hearing of the word of God. Notice in this passage that in verse 10 Paul describes how he's willing to endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ.

He's talking about people there that God has set his love upon but haven't yet obtained salvation and there's coming a day through the ministry of his word that those that God has set his love upon

then receive this salvation, this joy, this forgiveness, this release from the prison.

There are those that obtain salvation and verse 11 those that obtain that salvation what does it mean for them? Well they're willing to even die with him die to self die to sin in repentance and faith and therefore also live with him.

There are those that are being saved as they hear the gospel but then notice verse 12 in the middle there are also others who hear the gospel learn about Jesus Christ and as he describes it here if we disown him he will also disown others.

This is not a comment about the faithfulness of God. He makes that clear in the next verse. Look, if we're faithless he will remain faithless. This is not an evidence of the faithlessness of God.

[33 : 11] God will be faithful. He cannot disown himself. He will save those on which he sets his love but there are those that hear the gospel there are those that hear about Jesus Christ and disown him.

Walk away turn away close their heart refuse to follow him or to have him and hence every life the destiny of every life is divided.

Those that are obtaining salvation and those who disown Jesus Christ and are therefore ultimately disowned by him. Every life the destiny changed by their response to the gospel.

And Jesus has sent his word to do that. My question for you is which will be the response in your heart? God has sent his word to you that you might be one for him and rescued or that you refuse him and are disowned by Christ forever.

Which will it be? Is there a desperation in your heart to know that you must be saved?

[34 : 35] For years in my life I didn't want to be saved. And then for a few years after that I thought that I could be saved if I wanted but I still didn't want it.

And then there came a moment when by the work of God's spirit on my heart I knew that I must be saved. And that was the day I was saved.

Have you realised you must be saved? You must be born again. You must follow Jesus because his word is not chained. It has authority over you. He is your maker, your redeemer.

He is the judge of all men and he has sent his word today into your life to change the destiny of your life, to draw you to him or to send you from him. And oh, wouldn't it be a great thing if his word today drew you to him such that he became a sweet and a beloved friend and a glorious Lord that will stick closer to you than a brother and never ever leave you or forsake you?

Do you believe that the word of God is not chained? Will you be able to speak that whatever the circumstance? Would you believe that that is more important than your safety and your security and your freedom?

[35 : 54] That the word of God is not chained? I have a friend who often used to rebuke me for my lack of boldness in situations in life to share the gospel.

And he told me a story of when he was walking along the street of a large and dangerous city and he was mugged in a shop doorway, knocked over in a doorway by this guy in a hood and the guy flicked open a flick knife and put the knife on his throat and as he felt the blade upon his neck, the man said to him, give me your wallet or you're a dead man.

Now if that's me, I'm giving him my wallet, my passport, my watch, the loose change in my pocket, my phone, anything he wants, he can have it. My friend didn't give him his wallet and he paused and he prayed and then he said to the man, there's so much anger in your heart.

did you know that Jesus came into the world to bring joy and peace and reconciliation? Do you know him? Now that's a tough thing to do with a knife on your throat.

The man got up and put his knife away and started running down the street. My friend got up and started chasing him, very odd thing to chase a mugger and he caught up with him eventually down this escalator and in the shop and the man was weeping, absolutely weeping with tears and he said, my brother has just become a Christian and I was so angry I decided I would go out and kill a man and I picked you and you have to tell me about the same Jesus.

[37 : 32] See that is not my friend, that is God, that is Jesus at work in that man's life and just because he had a hood on and just because he carried a knife and just because he had the intention in his heart to go and kill a man does not mean that God wasn't seeking him and that the grace of God wasn't enough to rescue him and at the bottom of that escalator God rescued that man because the word of God is not chained and he has sent it into the world to change the destiny of every life and the life that it might change tomorrow or on your way home from church might be the life that God sends into your life and into your way.

Nobody else, just you. Will you speak the word of Christ? Will you be the one that believes tomorrow just as we believe tonight that the word of God is not chained and that God has sent it with resurrection power that he has authority to command every soul to believe in him and that he has sent it to change the destiny of every life.

If we believe that, friends, it will change a hundred little things about our life. because we will allow the word to have authority in all manners of our business dealings, of our marriage, of our parenting, of the way we speak to our neighbours, of what we do with our money, the way we treat church members when they don't agree with us.

Every aspect of our life, the things we watch on our TV, the places we go on a Saturday night, how much alcohol we consume, it will affect everything about us if we believe that the word of God is not changed and has authority over my life.

Do you believe it? And then, it will change one big thing about us. It will change a hundred little things and it will change one big thing.

[39 : 22] And the big thing will be this. If you believe this and I believe this, we will be willing to go anywhere, to anyone, at any cost, to bring to someone the message of saving grace.

Two thousand language groups today have not a word of the Bible in their language. We need people who are good at languages to translate the Bible for them. I can't do that, I'm no good at languages, you might be able to do that.

There were unreached peoples, not just around the world, in tribes, in far-flung continents, there were unreached people in this town. And we must be willing to go to whoever God is calling, even if we feel we have no ability.

In Southampton, where we were, Lord Radstock was from Southampton and Lord Radstock was a friend of the prime minister, heaps of money, funded all those Russian Bibles I mentioned. But he also used to go to Southampton docks and witness to the sailors.

And they're a pretty rough bunch, forgive me if you're a sailor. And he used to go to the sick infirmaries on ships and read to them the Bible.

[40 : 44] And he went on one occasion onto a Spanish vessel with a sick and dying Spanish sailor. And he had a Spanish New Testament in his pocket, but he had no Spanish, not a word.

And he asked around for somebody to read this Bible to this man, and he could find nobody. So Lord Radstock opened his Spanish New Testament and he read from John's Gospel to a man in a language he didn't have a single word of.

Probably would be a bit like my Russian sermons on a Sunday morning. Very difficult accent. But the Lord spoke to that man and rescued him.

Through another man willing to bring the word even without ability in that language. I wonder what the Lord will do with your ability.

Could it be that God has fashioned all the circumstances of your life and all the abilities that you possess to be a messenger of the word that is not chained into a life, maybe many lives, and he'll do that for his glory.

[41 : 59] The word of God is not chained. If that is true in your heart, then it will make a huge difference in this town of Whitby and this land of Britain.

May it be so for the glory of Christ. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we are humbled by men like the Apostle Paul who were so willing to give up all for your sake.

We sang this morning that we should be willing for it to cost us our life and our all to follow him. But Lord, if we're honest, we often don't want to give up our all.

Certainly not our life, and usually we don't want to give up anything for you. Lord, we pray that you would challenge us with that and rebuke us. Remind us, oh God, that you have given up the life of your own Son, your own one beloved Son for us.

And even with him you have not spared us any good thing, but graciously given us all things in him. Oh Lord, help us to be those who believe not just in our heads, but in our hearts and with our checkbooks and with our feet and with our time and and with our wills.

[43 : 27] Help us to believe that the word of God is not chained. And therefore to take it with confidence to every living soul that you would lead us to.

And through that, may there be great praise and singing in heaven through sinners who were lost and are found again, who were dead, but are now alive.

Hear our prayer we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.