

John Chapter 15 (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] O Lord our God, we come to you this morning and give you thanks once again for the truth of which we've been singing and of which we've been reading. The truth that you really are God, that you are the one true God, the only God, the mighty God. To be God there can be only one, and you are he. We thank you that, O Lord our God, though you are so great, mighty, and wonderful, though you have been always God, from always to always, and though we can't fully get our heads around that, we realize again that you are the God who has made himself known to us.

You're the God who made us and created us, that we might know you. We might know you as our God, as our maker, but we might know you more than that. We might know you as our heavenly father, that as our friend. We might know you as the one who is indeed there for us day and night, in trouble and in joy, that we might, O Lord, live in the joy of your presence. We might live to the glory and praise of your name. And again, we come, O Lord, and know that that's the reason you made us, and yet, even this morning, we have to confess and acknowledge that we haven't lived that way. We haven't lived a life in relationship with you. We haven't lived with that desire to know you and to follow you, to trust you, to obey you, to glorify you. We've lived selfishly, thoughtlessly.

Lord, we've been more concerned about what makes us happy than you, what we want to do rather than what you want us to do. And the sad truth is that this sinful living has not made us happy at all, has not made this world a better place. But our sin has rather spoiled your creation, spoiling the relationships that we have in this life, spoiling the world in which we have and the people around about us. And yes, Lord, bringing upon ourselves as a race of human beings and upon ourselves as individuals, sorrow and grief, unhappiness, misery, pain and loss. And yet, we thank you that in spite of our sin and in spite of our turning our hearts away from you, Lord, you still have been patient with us and in love for us sent your Son, the Lord Jesus. We thank you that he came to restore what was broken, to bring back what was lost, to mend what was corrupted. We thank you, Lord Jesus, you came. You came though you are God and always will be God. You came and became a human being for us, a man, a baby born into this world to live in the midst of this sinful and broken world, to bring life and healing, to bring truth, to bring light in darkness. We thank you that by your life, your death in our place on the cross, you took away our sin, removed that curse, that punishment we deserve. And we thank you that you rose again to life, conquering death. You're alive today. And because you are alive, we can know you, trust you, follow you, and we can be right with God once more.

Thank you that you ever live, Lord Jesus, to do us good. And we know that you brought us here this morning to do us good, whether we're here by a desire, whether we're here because we've been forced, whether we're here, out of duty, whatever reason we're here. We thank you that you are here to meet with us. And we ask that you would meet with us, bless us, and help us now to meet with you and to know you, the living God. For we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

Amen. To turn in our Bibles now to John and chapter 15. At the beginning of the summer, we started an occasional series on the I Am sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John, those times when Jesus spoke of himself in a particular way, beginning with the phrase, I am, I am the light of the world, I am the bread of life, I am the resurrection and the life, I am the way, the truth and the life, I am the good shepherd and I am the gate.

[4 : 23] And we come to the last of those seven in John 15. And we're going to read from verse 1 through to verse 12. Okay, so the Gospel of John and chapter 15, beginning at verse 1, reading through to and including verse 12.

I am the vine, sorry, I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more

fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I've spoken to you. Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he's like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I've told you this, so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. So as I say, we're in John and chapter 15 and these words of Jesus concerning himself as the true vine and we his people as the branches. Several years ago, probably 20 or so years ago, a friend of mine who was a keen gardener, unlike myself, went to a village fete and I'm sure all of you have been to those sort of things. And of course, at the village fete, there's often somebody who's a keen gardener in the south who's got selling plants and potted bushes and all those sort of different things. And of course, they're very, very cheap, much cheaper than going to a garden centre. And since this person, even though he wasn't from

Yorkshire, was very keen to look after his money, and it was always after a bargain, he saw these bushes and plants with some flowers on and leaves on and things like that. He thought, well, they look good, they look strong and healthy. I'll get some for my garden and plant them out and so on. So he bought several, returned home, didn't immediately plant them out, wanted to walk through them in and make sure that they were okay and then think about where he's going to place them in his garden. But after a day or two, the flowers began to droop and to fall off and the leaves began to go and brown and curl up and die. And obviously, he was quite concerned. So he investigated to find out why these plants that looked so well just a few days ago were suddenly now, you know, virtually dying.

Where they were. What he discovered was that each plant that he thought was a plant was nothing more than a branch that had simply been cut off from the parent plant and stuck in the earth and sold as a living organism. Well, no wonder they died, because everybody knows, even an idiot like me, who's not a gardener, that unless a branch or a flower is connected to the tree, to the bush, it cannot survive on its own. And Jesus knew that very well as also himself. That's why he uses this illustration of the vine and the branches. He knew, as did his listeners and the disciples, that very fact that a branch, unless it's connected, cannot have life, cannot live. And so he speaks of himself as the true vine and the disciples as branches to encourage them and us and to teach them something of the vital importance of our relationship with Jesus Christ or what it means to really be a disciple of his. And as I said in the introduction, he is the last of Jesus's seven

[9 : 09] I am sayings recorded in the Gospel of John. And it's the climax, really, of those seven. And it's the explanation of the previous six as well. For that reason, we're going to actually spend all of today on this passage, this morning and this evening too. And each of those I am sayings of Jesus, as we've looked at them, explains something more of who he is and what he came to do, or what it means to be in relationship with him, what it means to enjoy the salvation he brings, the blessings he brings. But in this last one particularly, Jesus is explaining to his disciples and to us how we receive those blessings, how they become part of our lives, how we enter into this wonderful salvation that he came to bring. So when Jesus talked about the bread of life, he now explains how we feed on him as the bread of life, how we relate to him as the good shepherd and we his sheep. How his light as the light of the world impacts and lightens us and so on.

And the answer to this, the answer to all the blessings and how they come to us and how we enjoy them is in this simple illustration of how a branch is united to a vine. Only a branch that is part of the tree is able to live. Only a branch that is connected to the vine is able to receive life and truly be part of it. And so if you try to be a gardener, if I can put it that way, if you take a branch from one tree and lean it against another tree, even though it's touching it, it's going to have no effect. You can even take a branch and you sort of tie it on with string or glue it on with glue.

It can't become part of that tree unless it is united. And those of you who know a bit more about grafting and all that sort of thing can explain that. You see, the union that we have with Jesus Christ is not a superficial union. The relationship we have with Jesus Christ is real. Yes, it's spiritual, but

it's not just on the surface. It's not just merely outward. It's not merely leaning on Jesus or doing, as we explained with the children, things of a Christian type of nature. It is a union. And that's the very heart of everything the Bible has to teach about being a Christian.

This is key. This is vital. There must be a spiritual, living union with Jesus Christ. There has to be a connection that is made which goes deep within the heart and the soul of a person.

When the Apostle Paul talks about what it means to be in relationship with Jesus, he uses his very common phrase, his favorite phrase of being in Christ. So when he writes to the Christians in Ephesus, in the very first chapter, over and over again, he talks about the Christian being in Christ, in him, and so on. And so we have in verse 3, every spiritual blessing in Christ. God chose us in him.

[12:30] Later on, verse 7, in him we have redemption through his blood. Later on, in him we were also chosen, verse 11, and so on. And then verse 13, you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth. And Jesus, similarly, here in this chapter, as I'm sure you've picked it up as we read through it, uses again a phrase over and over and again to explain and to try to give an understanding of what it means to be part of Jesus. He uses the word, the NIV, has it remain. Many of you who are used to the old AV would be abide, from which we get the hymn, abide with me. And Jesus uses that word remain or abide ten times just in those verses that I read. If, there in verse 9, remain in me. Verse 5, if a man remains in me. Verse 6, if anyone does not remain in me, and so on and so on. What does that mean?

Well, the word abide isn't a word we use very often, but we use the word abode. If you've read through the paper, and perhaps there's been somebody arrested, perhaps for breaking a window or for stealing something, sometimes they'll appear in court and we'll be told they're of no fixed abode, which means basically they're homeless. They have no permanent place of their own. So to abide means to have a place of your own. It's to live in. It's to belong there. It's to be the place in which you remain. And so Jesus has been talking about this wonderful union and this abiding in himself already through the Gospel of John, particularly about how God's Holy Spirit comes as a helper and how he abides in us, or comes in, lives within us and makes us his dwelling. There in chapter 14, verse 17, the Spirit of truth, you know him for he lives with you and will be in you. And then later on, Jesus talks about the Father and himself abiding and living in the believer. Verse 13, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him, our abode with him.

So this incredible sense of which we are in Christ and Christ and the Father and the Spirit are in us, there's this incredible sense of being connected, united. And Jesus wants his disciples to understand that and us to understand that as well. And so he uses this illustration of a grapevine and the branches. So what do we understand? What are we meant to grasp by this? What is Jesus saying to us?

If we're Christians this morning, if we're followers of his, what's happened? How have we become part of this union with Jesus? And if we aren't Christians, we may have a superficial relationship with Jesus.

We may say, well, I believe that he's God or I believe that he was a good person or I come to church occasionally or even may pray occasionally. What's the difference between being united with Jesus? What's the difference between Jesus and Jesus?

[16:13] I am the vine. I am the vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing.

We accomplish great things by simply abiding in Christ. Things that we could never ever do alone. The life of a believer, the life of someone who is a branch is a fruitful life. It is a life that does things, that accomplishes things, that achieves things that could never be done except for the fact that Christ is one with us. In fact, every accomplishment, every good thing that you and I do as Christians can be put down to this simple truth that we are united with Christ.

See, the fruit may hang from a branch, doesn't it? We saw that with the children. The fruit may hang off the branch, but the branch would not be able to produce any fruit except from the nutrition and the life and the sap that it receives from the trunk. The branch really is just an extension, isn't it, of the trunk.

It's a mere channel through which the life of the plant flows. The source and supplier is the trunk itself. And so from start to finish, your spiritual life is because of Christ's life flowing in you and through you.

[17 : 45] Paul says this in Galatians 2.20, he says, I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. By God's grace, every one of us, from the moment that we became united with Jesus, have been changing.

Sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes you couldn't see much of the change, but the reality is if you go back to when you weren't a Christian, you see what's happened and how your life has changed. Things have happened. Things have been conquered.

Things have been overcome. Bad habits. Your lifestyle, the way you thought about people, your attitudes, all these things have been gradually transforming and changing. And the reason they've been doing that is not because of you yourself changing yourself, but because of Christ's life flowing and working in and through you.

That's why when Paul writes to the Christians at Philippi, he says to them, I'm confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.

The one who started the work will carry it on. And then later on in chapter 2, he says to the Christians, there he says, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[19 : 05] Continue to live out what God has begun in you. And this is what he says, for it is God who works in you to will and to do according to his good purpose.

So there's no place for us to boast. If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, there's no place for you to be able to pat yourself on the back and say, look at the wonderful things that I've done.

Look how much I'm a much better person who turned over a new leaf in my life. Look at how faithful I am. Look at how wise I am. Look at the love that I have.

It's about as silly as a branch of an apple tree turning to another branch and saying, look at all the fruit I've made. And I might note, without even the help of the tree.

Of course not. It's because we're connected to Jesus. So the question is, again, is my life fruitful? Can I see those changes?

[20 : 02] Can I see the produce of Christ's life working in me? All right, yes. It's not an abundant harvest. For some of us it may just be an apple here or there.

But is there some fruit? Is there some sign? We can say, thank you, Lord Jesus. You are working in me and changing me. I'm going to think a bit more about that fruit, particularly tonight.

The other thing that Jesus therefore stresses here is that this union is a vital union. It's vitally important. It's essential. It's necessary, as we've been saying before.

If abiding in Jesus is the only way that we can really be a Christian, we can really be a believer, then it's obvious that if we are not abiding in Christ, if we're not a branch united with him, then it's disastrous.

It's eternally disastrous for us. And Jesus makes that clear, doesn't he, there in verse 6. If anyone does not remain in me, abide in me, make their home in me, be united with me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers, such branches are picked up, thrown in the fire and burned.

[21 : 15] What does Jesus say there? Well, because, again, Jesus is always going to be the one who tells us the way it is. He's never going to beat around the bush.

He's never going to lie to us or deceive us or say it's all going to be okay when it's not all okay. The reality is what he's saying is this. If I'm not united to Jesus in this life-giving union, if my life is not bearing that fruit of being one with him, then like an ordinary branch which is cut off from the tree, I'm going to wither and die.

I can have no life within me, spiritual life within me, and ultimately that means I will be cast into the fire and burned. I'm of no use. It's harsh, isn't it?

It's clear, of course, that what Jesus is talking about is he's talking about hell. Once more, the words he uses here are very similar to words he uses elsewhere when he talks about people who are not his and have not won with him.

He talks about it in one of his parables in Matthew 13, a parable about the wheat and the weeds. He says this, As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

[22 : 28] They will throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. A terrible sign, isn't it? A terrible thing. There's nothing more vital to you or to me than to be sure that we are one with Christ.

There's nothing more vital in life, not whether we get paid at the end of the week, not whether we've got health insurance, not whether we've got our pension sorted out, not whether we've got our funeral already paid for, not our holiday book.

None of those things ultimately have anything in comparison to this. Whether I am united with Jesus and one with him, whether I'm a branch, that's part of his vine.

And that's why when Jesus goes on, he talks about then the evidence of that. The evidence we've already seen to begin with is that there's fruit, but the evidence that shows that we are part of the vine is so vitally important, we dare not dismiss it.

And there's two things particularly here that we can see that Jesus talks about as evidence, as it were, of our union. First of all, that the union we have with Jesus is a verbal union.

[23 : 43] Verses 7 and 10. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

And verse 10 particularly, If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I remain in my Father's, just as I've obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I told you this so that your joy may be complete. He's already said verse 3, You are already clean because of the word I've spoken to you. So Jesus is saying to us clearly that the attitude we have to him is revealed by the attitude we have to his words.

Well, that's obvious, isn't it? We relate to one another by the things that are said. That's how we form friendships. That's how we form business agreements. We don't separate a person from their words.

The person is represented by their words and we take them at their words. There may be a few occasions when occasionally somebody may be disconnected from their words. We might say when somebody's drunk particularly, oh, don't listen to them, that's the drink talking.

[24 : 59] Or perhaps when they're overcome with shock or grief and they may vent their anger and we say, well, look, don't listen, it's just their grief or the upset, it's a product of their sadness.

But what we say reveals about who we are and how we relate to people's words is how we relate to them. We can't connect words from person.

And so abiding in Jesus is largely shown by what we think of and how we respond to his words.

Again, this is something that Jesus has oppressed upon his disciples over and over again.

Chapter 14, if you love me, verse 15, and you will obey what I command. 23, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. So there's two things really simply here.

Do I abide in Jesus's words and do Jesus's words abide in me? What do I mean by that? What does Jesus mean by that? Well, to abide in Jesus's words, in one sense I put it, living within the scope of his word, seeing his word as the hedge around my life, the fence around my life, around my thoughts, around my words and my actions, keeping me from crossing over into sin.

[26 : 14] There, that security line that we live within. That how I view Jesus's words will show whether I abide in them or not.

If I view Jesus's words as being for my good, for my safety, my security, my blessing, then I will seek to live within them, their scope and their boundary.

If I view Jesus's words as being an annoyance, a hurdle, an obstacle that keeps me from doing what I want to do and pleasing myself, then I clearly won't abide within them.

I will clearly break through them. Jesus's words are for us to abide in because they're that place of good pasture. They're that place of blessing.

They're that place of enjoyment, that place of life. But do Jesus's words abide in me? That's the other part of it. In other words, do I take them in?

[27 : 13] Are they part of my life? Do I feed upon them by reading them? Do I find that as I read Jesus's words and the word of scripture, that I'm being fed and strengthened in my faith?

Do I find that often they're there popping up in my mind? One of the worst habits, not one of the worst habits, one of the many habits I've got is often if somebody says a word, I'll start singing a song with that word in it because it's there in my head.

But really what should be happening is, if I was a really godly person, is somebody should say a word and I think of a verse of scripture. So that's what I'm aiming at. But that's who we are. But is that the case?

Do I find that when I'm in a situation or facing a decision or a challenge, actually my mind has been feeding on God's word so I know what it is that Jesus would have me to do? That's his word abiding in me, guiding my thoughts and my thinking.

Not because I have to slavishly go through the Bible, well what can I find about this matter here? Should I do this or should I do that? But actually because God's word abides in us, there's that sense in which, yeah, I know that I need to forgive that person and to love them or whatever it may be.

[28 : 26] But of course communication flows both ways. So this verbal relationship, this verbal union we have with Jesus is also vocal in the sense that we speak with him. He doesn't just speak to us, wonderful though that is, and wonderful as it is he's given us his word for us to abide in and to abide in us, but we communicate with him.

That's why Jesus brings this promise again about prayer, doesn't he? In verse 7. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you.

It's a promise he's given just in the chapter earlier. Verse 13 of chapter 14. I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it. Like any relationship, like any union, it's reciprocal. It's two-way. That's the beauty, isn't it, of being a Christian, of being in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Not only do we hear what he has to say to us in his word, and his word helps us and guides us and affects us, but also we speak with him and we talk with him and we bring our concerns to him and we pray.

[29 : 34] Everything that we have, as we've seen, comes through Jesus. Everything we have comes through him so our natural response is to ask him for those things that we need, to give him thanks for the things that he provides, to worship and delight in him for the goodness of his love to us.

In every relationship, there's communication. There must be. One of the sure things, one of the sure signs that a marriage is breaking down is that there's no communication or a relationship or a friendship, whatever it may be.

When communication ceases, that's the beginning of the end. It's so important, dear friends, husbands and wives, parents and children, talk, speak, share.

But of course there's prayer and there's prayer, isn't there? What do I mean by that? Well, you can pray and you can pray. You can pray really from the heart or you can pray outwardly.

Remember we were talking about superficial and real. That's what Jesus says here in verse 7. He says, whatever you wish, other translations put it, whatever you desire.

[30 : 49] It's the heart, isn't it? Jesus doesn't say, whatever you ask, he could say that, but what you wish, what you desire, what's the desire of your heart?

What is it that you're bringing before me? What is it that really matters to you? That's heart prayer, isn't it? It's not just a formulaic prayer, a prayer which is reeling off sentences, a liturgy.

not saying our prayers at bedtime as we go through the habit of doing it since we were children. Nothing wrong with those things in one sense, but it's got to be prayer that's spoken to God from within.

It's got to be the heart language. It's got to be a heart that says, Lord, I know you hear me and I know you want to answer me and I know that you love me and I know that these things matter to me and therefore they matter to you.

So what's my prayer life like? What's yours like? Just an occasional pop at mealtimes or occasional pop just before you go to work or occasionally when you get home after work when you're too tired.

[31 : 58] What's your prayer life like? Is it at this heart prayer life? Jesus wants it to be. He's not after the superficial. He doesn't want just that which is throw away, that which is, easily dismissed.

He wants that which is really from the heart. He wants to know what are you struggling with? What's your pain? What's your concerns? Ask whatever you wish. What do you wish for?

I wonder. So this union with Jesus, it's fruitful, it's vital, it's verbal and vocal. It's something so real. It's something that you can't mistake. You can't mistake it for something else. You can't mistake it for a dead religion or going through the motions. You can't mistake it for something which is dead. It's real and living.

And finally and wonderfully, of course, dear friends, we've picked this up a little bit with the children. What makes this union with Christ so marvelous is that it's a loving union.

[33 : 01] It's a relationship and it's an abiding in love. It's built upon love. It's built upon Christ's love for us and our love for him.

This relationship with Jesus Christ is not built upon duty. I don't go to church because it's my duty. I don't pray because it's my duty. It's not built upon fear.

So yes, though Jesus has said that to be a branch separated from him means to be cast into the fire, to be separated from him for eternity in hell, that's not the reason, firstly and primarily, why I love him.

It's because he saved me from that, rescued me from that. It's not fear that makes me want to love Jesus and follow him. It's not because of the reward. It's not simply because I think, oh well, if I follow Jesus, my life will be better.

I'll give him a ticket for heaven. No, it's built upon love. And every good relationship must be built upon love.

[34 : 00] It cannot be built upon fear or duty or reward. There are times when we are motivated by those things. Sometimes they can be good motivations, but they can't be the main motivation. That's why again and again in the New Testament and throughout the Bible we find that God pictures the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and his church as one of a marriage of love.

In Ephesians chapter 5, Jesus, sorry rather, Paul writes this, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Later on he says, for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

The two will become one. This is a profound mystery, but I'm talking about Christ and the church.

The proof of Jesus' love for us, of course, is seen that he has done everything to bring us into a relationship with himself. Coming from heaven to earth, living and dying, he's done everything to bring us into that place of being his and the proof that we are in that union with Jesus is that we love him.

that we love him. Jesus says there, as my father has loved me, so have I loved you.

[35 : 26] What makes the security and the certainty of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ so real? The confidence we can have, dear friends, if we are united with Christ, that we shall always be united with him, is his love for us.

As a branch, dear friends, he will never break you off from the vine. As a branch, dear friends, you cannot break yourself off from the vine because what keeps you united with him is his love and such powerful love that he compares it to and likens it to the love that he has between himself and God the Father.

a love that stretched back through all eternity and always was and always will be. If it's possible to break up the Trinity, it's possible to you to be broken up and separated from Christ because that's how strong this unity of love is.

And so I close this morning. What are you? Where are you, dear friends? Are you a branch connected to Jesus or separated from him?

Separated, you've got no life, no fruit and no future. United with him, one with him and you have his life dwelling within you and through you.

[36 : 54] You have the assurance that the things that work in and through your life are his work. The changes, the transformation, the fruit that's being born and you have the assurance that you are his and will never be separated from him and the love that he has for you is everlasting, eternal, unbreakable love.

Which branch are you? Notice why Jesus tells us these things. Verse 11, I've told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Jesus wants us to be joyful. Not again in the things that pass, not in the things that just come and go, but to be joyful in who we are and what we are.

Joyful with the joy that is his joy. We're to rejoice in this. We are Christ and he is ours. Rejoice in this that his unbreakable love keeps us close to him.

And we're to make the most of this union. Am I feeding and drawing off Jesus the strength I need to face each challenge each day? Am I enjoying and drinking in his word?

[38 : 04] Am I looking for him to bear fruit in my life? Am I talking with him? Am I making the most of all that he is for me?

Well, let's sing together our final hymn this morning. It's number 642. 642. May the mind of Christ my Saviour dwell in me from day to day.

This is what we've been thinking about. That Christ himself in us, his love, his peace, his strength, his beauty. 642. 642. 642. 642. cartons ■■ choose me and let us like in the will By His love and

power controlling all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly in my heart draw unto earth.

So that all may see I triumph, going through His power.

[39 : 45] May the love of Jesus fill me as the waters will receive.

May exalting, self-relacing, this is victory.

May His beauty rest upon me as I seek the lost to him.

And may they forget the channel, seeing only Him.

Amen. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[40 : 57] Amen.