

Titus Chapter 2 v 1 - Chapter 3 v 8

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[0 : 00] Welcome visitors amongst us. I trust that you've had a good break or that you're going to have a good break in your time here in Whitby. I've been away. I was away last Sunday and again during the week. And so thank you for those who looked after things while I was away.

It's good to be home. I have to say that. I mean it. It's so good to be home. I had a good time away. Some good fellowship. I was preaching last Sunday at a church in Hinkley, which is near northeast to the northeast of Coventry.

And lovely folk. And it was a great joy to be with them. But I'm sorry. You're stuck with me because I'm back again. And I love being here with you. And we're here again, of course, because of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of what he's done for us and what God has done for us in him.

And here's what Paul writes to Titus. He says, when the kindness and love of God, our Savior, appeared, he saved us. Not because of righteous things we are done, but because of his mercy. The love and kindness of God. And as Christians, we know that. It's our experience every day. And particularly when we gather together. Not because we're good people, righteous people.

[1 : 15] Not because we get everything right far, far from where we're sinners, but because of his mercy. That's his love expressed towards us. His compassion that reaches out to us in our sin and saves us.

And we're going to sing our first hymn. It's going to come on the screen behind me. Oh, the mercy of God. So let's stand and sing together. Let's pray together. Let us all pray.

Father in heaven, our gracious and wonderful God, we come to you once more this morning as those who have so much to be thankful for. So much to praise you for. So much to glorify you for. Because you are the God who gives us all things. From your hand, every blessing flows. From your heart, oh Lord, comes every good gift that we've received and enjoyed.

Lord, we thank you that we're here because you've given us the strength and the health to be here. We thank you that we're here, oh Lord, today. Because, oh Lord, your hand has been upon us through this week and you've protected us and kept us safe.

[2 : 31] Because you're the one who's provided us with food and home and clothes and beds. Things, Lord, that we so often take for granted. But which so many people in this world just do not have.

Oh Lord, help us to be ever grateful for these very real and practical things. They are expressions of you, not only as our creator, but our provider. The one who's given us this wonderful world in which to live.

But, oh Lord, we thank you especially for the gift of your son, the Lord Jesus. We thank you so much for your grace and goodness. Thank you that we read there that when the love and kindness of God our Savior appeared.

And that's you, Jesus. You are the manifestation. You're the living out of the love and kindness of God. You're coming into this world, your life, your death, your resurrection.

All expressions of love to us and kindness towards us. Because, oh Lord, you knew that we needed a Savior. We needed rescuing.

[3 : 33] We needed redeeming, setting free. Because, oh Lord, we are lost and blind. And, Lord, we are full of all sorts of unclean and unpleasant things.

And, Lord, because we are people who, without your grace, without your mercy, would continue in this vain and empty way of living. And, Lord, we thank you that you came in love for us.

Came in love, oh Lord. Took upon yourself our human nature. Took upon yourself the pain and the struggles and the difficulties of life. You're not a God who stands to one side and looks on.

But a God who has got involved. Got his hands dirty. And got his heart broken for us. We praise you and thank you that we're here, Lord.

We're here amongst your people. We're here, Lord, to sing your praises. We're here gathered with other believers. Because, oh Lord, we thank you that we're part of this wonderful family of God that reaches through every country and every nation.

[4 : 46] In fact, through every generation. We thank you that, oh Lord, we are one. But with those who've gone before us. Those who even now are enjoying your presence in heaven.

Even now, Lord, we are looking forward to that day we shall be with you and with them. We pray that our time this morning may be just a foretaste of all that's to come.

That we may again know your presence amongst us. Bless us. Help us. Speak to us. Encourage us. Oh Lord, cause our hearts and lives to overflow. With appreciation and with joy in all that you've done for us.

For we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Read together in our Bibles from Titus and chapter 2.

I'd like to turn there. If you've got one of the red church Bibles, that's page 1198. And we're going to read the whole of the chapter and then into part of chapter 3 of Titus.

[5 : 49] It's called Titus because Titus was the man who received the letter. It was written to him by the Apostle Paul. Titus was a missionary and a church planter on Crete, the Greek island.

And Paul is writing to him about some of the things that are helpful for him in that ministry. So we're going to pick up from verse 1 of chapter 2, page 1198.

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the Word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything, set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

[7 : 18] Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them and not to talk back to them, not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things you should teach, encourage, and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, always to be gentle towards everyone.

At one time we, too, were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

[9 : 14] This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

If the children and young people would like to go to their activities now, please. So please, if you have a Bible at hand, you'll find it helpful to have it open at Titus 2 and 3, where we read just a few moments ago.

So, I wonder which sort of person you are. How would you categorize yourself? Are you somebody who is a theorist, or are you somebody who is practical?

What do you think is the most important thing, the theory or the practice, which is the most beneficial, which is of the greatest worth? What should we focus on?

All of us, to one degree or another, prefer one to the other, theory or practice. Some of us love reading and studying and finding out about things. We like knowledge and being educated and intellectually stimulated, but we're not all that keen on actually getting involved or engaged.

[10 : 36] If you're that sort of person, and you're the one who loves watching travel programs on telly with exotic places around the world, but you haven't got a passport. Just dreaming about it, thinking about it, looking into it, that's enough for you.

Perhaps others of us here maybe have very little time for intellectual things like reading and studying and so on. We'd rather just get on with it and get our hands on and get engaged practically.

If you're that sort of person, then you're the sort of person who buys a flat, put wardrobe, throws away the instructions and just assembles it the way that you think it should be done.

Leonardo da Vinci, probably the greatest mind, certainly in the Renaissance in Italy, he wrote this, he who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards a ship without a rudder or a compass and never knows where he's going to end up.

Well, to update that a little bit, like putting somebody behind the wheel of a car without first teaching them about road signs, what to do at junctions, traffic lights or roundabouts, is to believe that theory is unnecessary, only practice.

[11 : 54] We know that in reality we need both. They should be one in that sense, two sides of the same coin, theory and practice.

You can't really have the one without the other. The one is completely ineffective, theory without practice, the other is downright dangerous and destructive.

And there's a natural way in which they work together. In that sense, they do work in tandem with one sense theory at the beginning and practice at the close second.

That's the reality and that's the key to living the Christian life. This is what Paul wrote about in his letter to his friend Titus.

Right at the beginning, he says in verse 1, to further, he's writing, to further the faith, we might call that the intellectual, the theory of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness.

[12 : 53] Knowledge leads to godliness. Godliness is active, practical working. That's why at the beginning of chapter 2, verse 1, he says, you have ever must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.

What is appropriate to sound doctrine? All the things that he then goes on to talk about. A practical outliving for the Christian, whether they are old or young, whether they are slaves or masters.

The key to Christian living is theory and practice. And again, we see that in the passage particularly we're concerned with, which is verses 11 and following of chapter 2.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to our ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled.

It is the gospel which has at its core the very life of Jesus that affects and impacts our lives so that we have faith which acts.

[14 : 02] We have theory and understanding which is put into practice. It is not possible, in fact it is downright impossible for somebody simply to say I believe certain things about Jesus and for their lives to be unaffected.

But there are many people who would consider themselves to be Christians in that way. They would say well I believe in God or I believe in Jesus or I believe certain things about him but my life is my own and I live exactly as I choose.

There are many people who claim to be Christians who will go to church and do those things but their lives still are unaffected. But here, and this is the verse particularly I want us to think on this morning, it starts at the end of verse 13 where it talks of Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

This practical action of Jesus, the giving of himself which means and includes his coming into this world, being born as a human being amongst us though still remaining God, his living amongst us for well over 30 years but especially the voluntary giving of his life to die upon the cross as our ransom in our place to guarantee our salvation.

Jesus Christ who gave himself. So what I want to do is ask this, what does it mean to us? What are the effects of believing that Jesus died for us?

[15 : 45] What is the effect that it has practically in our lives believing and knowing and trusting in this Jesus that died for us? Well, he told here, aren't we, he gave himself to redeem us from all wickedness.

So in this instance, I want us to understand that what it's saying is this, Jesus came and died to set us free. To set us free. That's the most common description of God's dealings with people's lives throughout the Bible.

Over and over again, God speaks about and we see God acting as a rescuer, a deliverer, a liberator. Go to the beginning as it were in one sense of the people of God in the Old Testament in Exodus.

There they were, this nation of people, this race of people who for hundreds of years had been held as slaves to the royal family of Egypt to work and to live and to die for them.

What does God do? He comes and through Moses he sets them free, leads them out of captivity into a place of freedom. Read through the book of Judges.

[17 : 06] It's again a story of God again and again interceding in the lives of his people. They would get it wrong and get themselves into a right fix where they would be oppressed by a king or a ruler of another nation and God would raise up somebody and they would be set free.

Gideon, Samson, Deborah, these sort of people are written about again. They were oppressed and Jesus set them free. Later on in the history of God's people again they fall into foolishness and sin and they are taken captive, almost wholesale, taken captive to a foreign land, Babylon.

But they're there for 70 years and God wonderfully works to restore his people back to their own land. So it's no surprising when we go through the Old Testament and we get into the New

Testament we see that the purpose of Jesus coming into this world, the one who'd been promised for ages, centuries, thousands of years, his coming is to bring about freedom for those who believe in him.

We've been going through Luke's Gospel mainly in the Sunday mornings and just recently we were in Luke in chapter 4 where Jesus goes into the synagogue and he reads a prophecy, a promise of Isaiah which says this, Jesus then sits down and he says to everybody there, today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

In other words, I am here to live out that promise. I'm here to bring into your experience what God said he would do hundreds of years earlier, freedom for prisoners, liberty for the oppressed.

[18 : 55] And so this word redeem is helpful for us. Redeem is similar to the word we would use for paying a ransom. Somebody has been kidnapped.

All sorts of circumstances for that. A ransom is demanded and a redemption price is paid to guarantee and to set them free.

That's exactly what Jesus does at the cross. He comes to set us free. He comes to pay with his own life a price that we might be delivered.

So what does it mean to be set free? Set free, notice, from all wickedness. Well, we can understand what this sort of freedom is like when we look just a few verses down into chapter 3.

Verse 3, At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.

[20 : 00] We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. Two freedoms that Jesus brings to us just in this context of this.

He frees us from being like everybody else in following the crowd, in going with the flock. The world in which we live and we know it only too well is a world where there is selfishness and sinfulness. There is wickedness. It's a very fit description, isn't it? People are, have malice and envy, people hate and are hated.

Sadly, it's a real clear description of our world. And like everybody else, as Paul says, at one time we too, Paul and the believers in, that Titus is writing, I say, that Titus and the believers in his church that Paul is writing to, we too are the same.

We just went along with everybody else. We just followed their way of living. We followed their example. We were never free. We were never free to be ourselves.

[21 : 07] We were never free to stand against the crowd. Even if we're told today over and over again through advertisements that we should express ourselves and our individuality, the reality is we just do something else that somebody else does.

With no disrespect to the folk who are in town today, the Goths, they feel that they're expressing their own individuality, but how come there's 3,000 of them or however many?

Of course they're not individual, they're just doing what one group of people do. So we follow one group or we follow another group or this group or all groups. Mostly we do it subconsciously without very, with very little thought or reason.

We're enslaved. We may not see the chains, but they certainly weigh heavy upon us. But Jesus came to set us free from that herd mentality.

He came to set us free from conforming to the world's passions and desires. Chapter 2, verse 12. To say no to ungodliness and worldly passions.

[22 : 15] We've been released so that we can actually say, no, I'm not going to go that way. I'm not going to live the way that everybody else lives. I'm not going to be unthinking.

But also, of course, Jesus sets us free to say yes as well. See, we're set free not only from following the crowd and the world and its way of thinking and conforming to its particular pattern of understanding about God or about relationships or about money or about all things, but actually we're set free from something else which is even more powerful, even more constraining, even more enslaving than the world's way of doing things and that's from ourselves.

See, within us there is this powerful drive towards self-harm. It actually comes across as being self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction, but actually it's self-harm.

The reason that we go along with the world is that in us is that same selfish desire, those same lusts, those same longings. This is what the Bible means when it uses the word sin.

We think of sin just as the outward, the actions. Well, that's true, but where do the actions come from? Where does the outward come from? It comes from within. Within us there's a defective spiritual gene which inclines us to love what's wrong, what's bad, what's selfish.

[23 : 56] But by Jesus' death he has accomplished the defeat of sin for the believer. You see, when he was crucified, when he died, physically died, something incredible happened for the believer too.

We also died with him. We were crucified with him. This is the teaching of the New Testament, of the Bible. Here's Paul a bit earlier on writing to the Christians at Rome.

He says this in chapter 6 and verse 6. For we know that our old self, that's another phrase for the sinful desire, the sinful part of our hearts and lives, the old bit was crucified with him so that the body, that's our lives, ruled by sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

No longer, as it were, forced along that channel, no longer driven by selfish, sinful, wicked, destructive desires. For many people, they think, well, that's just what I thought.

That's the negative part of the Christian life, part of the gospel. It's all about saying no to doing things which actually everybody else seems to enjoy at least outwardly, at least briefly.

[25 : 20] I hope we can see that it's very positive. To be set free is always positive, isn't it? To be released from whatever it is is positive. But also we see it's positive because Paul reminds us as well that Jesus came to redeem us and set us free from all wickedness and, he says, to purify for himself a people that are his very own.

So Jesus came to set us free but he came to set us apart. That's the meaning of the word holy that you often hear. We think of, what do we think of when we use the word holy?

Sort of churchy and sort of priestly and religious and holy is doer and sort of a bit black and a bit sort of, yeah, thinking of yourself so good, better than others.

No, it means to be set apart for God. It means to belong to him. It means to be someone who is brought into the relationship where God is our God, my God, your God.

That, again, is a theme that goes all the way through the Bible, this sense of God choosing and working to bring people into relationship with himself. That's the key, as it were, to the Christian gospel.

[26 : 43] That's the key to the whole of the Bible. God sent his son for this reason that we may know God and enjoy God and be in relationship with God. It's all about relationship.

Let's say, when you go again, back to the Old Testament, go back to Genesis chapter 12. There's Abraham wandering around in his life and God says, I want a relationship with you, Abraham, and I want a relationship with all your descendants.

I want to bring you and your family into a right relationship with me. That's exactly what he does when he takes the people out of Exodus.

What does he do? He doesn't just take them out of Exodus and plonk them in the promised land of Canaan. All the way through, we've seen this, those of us who've been out on Sunday evenings through Exodus, God has been working, establishing a good foundation for a relationship with himself, how they can know God, what he's like, how they can live and enjoy God's blessing.

The amazing secret, it's a secret, but it's a great secret, is that everyone that God has set free, he chose to set free before they even knew it, before they even knew him.

[28 : 04] God sets us apart and shows us for himself. Purify means in one sense to cleanse, yes, but it means in one sense to remove the rubbish and the filth and the dirt, to cut off that which holds back, the chains that hold us back, the problems, the sins that keep us out of knowing God.

He saves us, not because of anything we do. Remember, we looked at the very start of our service and we read it again here, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we've done, but because of his mercy. You and I, if you're a Christian this morning, if you've believed and trusted in Jesus, it's not because you're better than the next person or the person down the street or you're better than anybody else, you're not better.

In fact, if you're a Christian, you know you're worse. You know that actually your heart and your life is not better, but actually it's sinful and it's, you know that what I've been saying is absolutely true and what Paul has been saying and writing here is absolutely true.

And that the only reason that you're a Christian is because God sent his son to purify you for himself, to cut you off, to set you free for himself, to bring you into relationship with himself.

And belonging to God and relating to God means that our whole worldview is different. The way that we relate to him changes we relate to ourselves, changes we relate to others, changes we relate to others.

[29 : 38] It means that we think and we make choices and we don't just go headlong and follow the herd, whether that be the herd of the church or the herd of religion or the herd of anybody else.

There's a change. Yes, once we were just one in a multitude who lived in malice and envy, hated of being hated, but that's all changed.

There's a new relationship with God. Instead, we live lives which reflect that relationship with him. We live lives like his life.

And what have we read all the way through? We've read about the loving kindness of God. There in verse 4, when the kindness and love of God, our Savior, appeared. Instead of hating and being hated, we love and we are kind.

We've been set free from all that silly, petty rivalry and jealousy and falling out with one another all the times. Of course, we're still not perfect.

[30 : 38] Of course, we get it wrong. Of course, we still have to stand and say no to sin. But we see in the life of Jesus a life which is so radically different.

that's the life we seek to live. There's a transformation. Transformation. So that, verse 2, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, always to be gentle towards everyone.

The Christian life is not theory alone. It's practical, outworking. And in one sense, the life of the believer is the evidence of the power of Jesus and the power of God.

The way that the believer lives, which is why so sadly we see in our nation, in our world, those who profess to be followers of Jesus or call themselves followers of Jesus, but their lives are so radically opposite to the life of Jesus.

And so those who are not Christians say, well, you don't expect me to take the Bible seriously. You can't expect me to trust in Jesus and believing there's these people who are dressed up and they call themselves Christians and they're doing these abominable things.

[31 : 55] It just goes to show it that the Christian message is false. No, it doesn't go to show the Christian message is false. It goes to show that the people's confession of Jesus is false, that they are false Christians.

They're not real Christians. They're not people who've said no to wickedness and yes to righteousness. No, the Christian, you and I dear friends, imperfect though we still are, we are to be the best advertised.

We're to be the evidence, the living proof that what Jesus has done is powerful and effective. Notice how he speaks to the slaves and he says to them in verse 10 of chapter 2, so that in every way they, that's those slaves, will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

How do we know that Christianity is true? Because of the effect it has upon the lives of those who believe in Jesus.

Well, how's that going to work? How can we be these people? How can we be these people who are set free by Jesus and set free to live different lives? Is it something that we've got to really, it's in our power, it's our strength, it's our ability?

[33 : 08] No, this is where the theory and the practice come together because we see Jesus gave himself. The work of Jesus sets us free, the work of Jesus sets us apart, and the work of Jesus, and this is the bit I pinched, sets us on fire.

That's what it does. Sets us on fire. Look at that, eager to do what is good. Jesus gave himself for us to be eager. If we were set free from those passions and those lusts and those pleasures, as it were, that were wrong, that enslaved us, it doesn't mean that we now become passionless, pleasureless people.

Again, another misconception, isn't it, of the Christian life. It's just that the passions and desires we have are no longer towards sin and wickedness, selfishness, greed, pride, those things, but the passions and desires we have are towards that which is good and right and pleasing to God and blessing and loving.

Notice that again and again, Paul talks about this reality. He says we are eager to do good. He says later on in chapter 3 and verse 8, devote yourselves to what is good.

chapter 3, verse 14, devote yourselves to what is good. When you're devoted to something, when you're eager for something, it's got hold of you, hasn't it?

[34 : 40] In a good way, in a lovely way. Those of us who have the wonderful joy of being in love or having been in love, we know what it's like, that first love particularly, isn't it?

But it does not go away. It stays with us but you're devoted. You're eager whenever you're just waiting for the phone to ring for the person that you love to be on the end of the phone.

You're longing for that meeting with them. You're watching the clock saying when is the time going to pass? We're meeting at 3 o'clock and I want to be there. You're on fire with love and so it is for the Christian.

Jesus has set us on fire. We've got a one-track mind. It's to do good. It's to live a life regardless of everything else, regardless of what people say around about us, regardless of what mockery or ridicule we have from others.

It's a life that's on fire for doing good. What is doing good? It's living that life which is blessed. Why do we do good?

[35 : 50] Why does the Christian change and transform? Why are they longing to do what is right and good? Is it so they can say, look at me. I'm better than you. Look at me.

How good I am. No, it's not. Is it so we can feel good about ourselves and say, oh, like Tom Thumb. It was not Tom Thumb. What was it? He stuck his thumb in the pie and pulled out a plum and said, what a good boy am I.

So we can say, oh, what a good boy am I. No, it's none of those things, is it? It's not an effort to win God's favor. We don't do good to say, God, please, please, you know, help me out.

I'm doing these good things. How many times have we done that maybe and prayed, God, if you help me out with this, I'll be a much better person. No, it's none of those things. The reason that we are eager to do good, the reason that we're devoted to God and to his will, the reason that we love these things, the reason that we are set on fire is because of God's Holy Spirit within us.

That's why he says there in chapter 3, he saved us. How did he save us? Which is releasing us, setting us free, setting us apart, setting us on fire. Through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

[37 : 08] Here's the transformation. It's a God-given transformation. It's a God-work transformation. See, just as when Jesus gave himself and died on the cross for us, so we died with him, that's the sense of what happened to us.

By faith in Jesus, we're united with him in his death, so just by faith, we're united with him in his resurrection. So we died to sin, but we're alive to good.

We're alive to righteousness. We're alive to that which is joyful. We share in the benefits of his death, forgiveness, and death towards sin, so by faith we receive the mighty effects of his resurrection.

Again in Romans in chapter 6, just a bit earlier, verse 4, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

The great mistakes that many of us make is this, it's all up to me.

[38 : 11] It's all up to me. I've got to turn over a new leaf. I've got to put my life right. I've got to sort these things out. I've got to make myself a better person. Whenever we do that, what are we doing?

We're setting ourselves up for failure. We're setting ourselves up for disappointment. We're setting ourselves up for heartache. The Christian message, the gospel message, is Jesus Christ gave himself to make us eager to do what's good.

By faith in him, we are transformed. By faith in him, God does a marvelous, transforming great work in us so that we are eager, we're set on fire with the same passion that burnt in his heart that brought him from heaven to earth to rescue us.

That passion now burns in us. That fire now is our fire by the Spirit of God in us. Let me say one of the surest signs that you are a Christian is that you have that fire.

When the surest signs that you've been born again, that you've been transformed by the Holy Spirit, it's not that you believe that Jesus died for your sins. It's not that you believe Jesus rose again.

[39 : 25] It's that your life is radically transformed and it is living in a different direction and it is eager to do good. Because let me say this, if you simply believe that Jesus died for your sins or simply believe he rose again from the dead, but you have not the practical outworking of that, then you're a theorist and you're still without hope.

It's got to be that link between the two. And let me say, if you're somebody who says, well, I do all these good things and I try to live a good life and I try to be the best person I can be, but I don't believe in Jesus.

I don't believe in what he did for me on the cross or dying for me or his resurrection. I believe it's by my strength and power I've got to live out these things. And let me say, you are somebody who has no hope.

You've got to have the two together in harmony, not in tension, in harmony that they are. Christ died for me, therefore I die to sin. Christ rose again for me, so I live for what is good and right.

And they come together perfectly. Not that we're perfect. His work's perfect. But he's working with imperfect people.

[40 : 43] Of course we're going to still sin. Of course we're going to get it wrong. Let me ask you, is your heart on fire? Are you eager to do good? Are you devoted to do good?

Do you see what I'm saying? Because if you're not, then there's something wrong. It may be that you're a Christian, but that fire's gone out. It was there, perhaps when you were younger, when you first came to faith in Christ, like that first love.

Wow, this is great, and I want to tell people about Jesus, and I want to live for him, and I really want to go his way. But, you know, the world, you're going against it all the time, and so it feels like I'm banging my head, and ultimately, I've stopped banging my head.

I've just decided to go with the flow, go with the rest. Not as bad as I was, not as sinful and selfish as I was, but it's so much easier not to be on fire.

It's so much easier just to let it be a sort of a, a bit of a gentle glow. Let me say to you, dear friends, you're missing out on everything that Jesus did for you.

[41 : 58] You're missing out on the very purpose and reason for which he died. You're not glorifying him as he desires to glorify himself in your life and through you.

What are the good works? We don't need to list good works and say, oh, what are these good things? It's good. Whatever we do, we're motivated by the good of others. We're motivated to share with them, to love them, to support them, to care for them.

We look for and we seek after to do them good. Let me close by giving you a little bit of a biography. A biography of a man who was on fire. His name was Henry Martin. And he lived more than 200 years ago.

As a young man, around about 23, 24, he went to India. When he was there, he preached and he spent his time studying linguistics, languages, so that he might translate the Bible into languages. [43 : 10] He translated the whole of the New Testament into Urdu and into Persian twice, translated the Psalms into Persian, the Gospels into Judeo-Persic, whatever that is.

The Book of Common Prayer was an Anglican into Urdu, and his health was always poor, and he was always up against the opposition of the local Indian rulers.

He was somebody who would say, let me burn out for God. When he was 30, he became very ill and he was told by his doctor to go on a sea voyage, and he did that.

He popped into Karnpur, which is a large city in India, India, and was rejoicing because there a church had been opened through the Gospel that had been brought to that part of the world.

He sailed on from Bombay, and by the time he was 31, he was so seriously ill that he died. You say, what a waste of life.

[44 : 20] 31 years old, what a waste of life. Dear friends, if I could have done what he had done in 31 years of my life, I would be wonderfully happy.

He said, I want to burn out for God. How many of us are burning for money? How many of us are burning for love?

Burning for acceptance? Burning for popularity? Burning for pleasure? Burning for thrills? Burning for anything but for God.

Those things consume us, but they give nothing in return. Burning out for God has everlasting both practical and eternal reward.

Theory and practice. I wonder, can we pray, dear friends, as those who know that Jesus has set us free, who know that he has set us apart?

[45 : 35] I wonder if we can pray, Lord, set me on fire again. Well, let's pray together, shall we? And then we're going to sing our final hymn.

let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you were on fire and are on fire with love for us, which is why you came into this world and why you gave yourself.

Your life wasn't snatched from you, taken from you. You weren't forced under duress to give it, but you voluntarily, willingly, yes, even gladly gave yourself to redeem us, rescue us, save us.

And, oh Lord, we know that like the rest of the world in which we live and the people around about us, we have been misled and we've been enslaved and we've gone the way that everybody says we should go.

We've sought the things that everybody says we should seek and Lord, we've come to this point in our lives where we have to say in all honesty, these things have not satisfied, these things have not given us the freedom, the joy, the pleasure, the hope that we're searching for and Lord, they never will.

[47 : 01] We're so grateful that Jesus came to redeem us and set us free, that we might be set apart, that we might be yours and you might be ours and that we might be transformed and that we might live with purpose and reason and delight and passion.

We pray again Lord, that you would bring us into not just the theory of these things but the experience of these things for ourselves. Whether that is for the very first time, Lord, give us that faith to look and believe and to trust that we might receive from your hand the new life that you give. And perhaps we've been theorists for a long time. We believe these things and know these things but it's been such a long time since we've really had that fire and Lord, it's not because you don't want to give it, it's because, well, we've just let ourselves grow cold and we're not eager, we're not devoted, we're not passionate, quite honestly we're just downright dull and grey.

Please, oh Lord, send your spirit afresh upon our hearts and lives, give to us that longing, that hungering for fire, for passion that we might live for you, that we might burn for you in this community and in this world, that men and women may be drawn to the light, and find for themselves the power of Jesus Christ.

So Lord, we ask these things and we give you our thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

[48 : 51] Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

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