

Genesis Chapter 26 v 34 - Chapter 27 v 29

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[0 : 00] Good evening. It's great. It's great that we can be together. Great that we can come and worship him.

Often we read part of a psalm together before we come to worship. We're actually going to read part of Isaiah the prophet. So if you'd like to turn with me to Isaiah 40 for a few moments. Isaiah 40. We're going to read part of the word of God in Isaiah.

Then we're going to sing part of the word of the God in Isaiah. Some of our psalms, some of our hymns are based on psalms and other parts of scripture. The song we're going to sing in a few moments is based upon part of Psalm 40. I'm not going to read all of it.

It's a wonderful psalm. It begins with comfort for my people. It talks about the voice calling in the wilderness. John preparing the way of the Lord. But we're going to pick it up from verse 9.

Verse 9 of chapter 40 of Isaiah. Where Isaiah has been given a message to proclaim. So just listen as I read this through.

[1 : 08] Till we get to verse 15. You who bring good news to Zion. Go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem.

Lift up your voice with a shout. Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah. Here is your God. See the sovereign Lord comes with power.

And he rules with a mighty arm. See his reward is with him. And his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms.

And carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those who have young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand. Or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens.

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket. Or weighed the mountains on the scales. And the hills in a balance. Who can fathom the spirit of the Lord.

[2 : 11] Or instruct the Lord as his counselor. Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him. Who taught him the right way. Who was it that taught him knowledge.

Or showed him the path of understanding. Surely the nations are like a drop in the bucket. They are regarded as dust on the scales. He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

And then verse 18. With whom then will you compare God. Who will you compare God with. And our first hymn is taken from those words in verse 12.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hands. Who has held the oceans in his hands. We're going to come up on the screen. And we're going to stand and sing. Amen. Come.

Let us adore him. Let's pray together. How can we do anything else, O Lord our God, but adore you?

[3 : 29] When we gaze upon your majesty and power. When we look upon your creation. And the works of your hands.

We stand in awe. We stand amazed. We stand humbled before you. But when we gaze upon your son.

The one who indeed was nailed to a cross. The one who bore our sins. And suffered our death. Who tasted of our hell. Then, O Lord, our hearts melt. And we do not only stand in awe. But we are lost in adoration.

Adoration at such love that took him there. Adoration at such grace. And mercy. And kindness. That brought him from heaven.

[4 : 27] From where he. From where he. In all. Throughout all eternity. Enjoyed. Fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. Where he enjoyed the worship and the praise of the angels.

We adore him. We adore him that he came. That he came down into our sinful and broken world. That he came, O Lord, to suffer.

To sorrow. To weep. He came, O Lord, to be torn. Hurt. He came willingly. Voluntarily. Yes, Lord, gladly. Such is his love for us. O Lord, we confess that we do not adore you enough.

We confess that, O Lord, at times, so often. More often than we care to remember. Our hearts are filled with adoration for the things of this world.

[5 : 32] Our minds and our hearts adore other people. And things and objects. And the creation and yet not the creator. O Lord, fill our hearts with such a sense of adoration and delight.

That we may be lost in wonder, love and praise. We know we shall be when we see you in the glory. When we are with you and everything else is stripped away and falls away.

When we gaze upon you, O Lord, then we shall throughout eternity adore you. With no sin to spoil. With no death.

With no corruption. With pure hearts. And pure lips. O Lord, we long for something of that even in this life.

We long, O Lord, for greater love. Not just that we may feel such love. But we may be moved and changed and motivated by this love.

[6 : 32] That we may be men and women whose lives live for love. We praise you and thank you again. That as we come this evening, you are with us by your Holy Spirit.

We pray that as we continue to worship you. Not only in singing, but in prayer. In the reading of your word. In the preaching of the word. So we pray again. Do that gentle, gracious work in our hearts.

And cause us to love you more. And fit us for that life of love. In this lost and loveless world. For we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. We're going to read again from God's word. This time we're going to read from Genesis and chapter 27. Genesis and chapter 27.

And actually we'll go back a verse to verse 34 of 26. We won't read the whole chapter, but we'll read through to verse 29.

[7 : 44] So beginning at verse 34 in chapter 26. If you've got one of the church Bibles, that's page 28. And we'll read through to verse 29.

Verse 34. When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith, daughter of Beerli, the Hittite. And also Basemath, daughter of Elon, the Hittite.

They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for his eldest son Esau.

And he said to him, My son, here I am, he answered. Isaac said, Now then, get your equipment, your quiver and bow.

Go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat so that I may give you my blessing before I die.

[8 : 47] Now, Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.

Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you. Go out to the flock, bring me two choice young goats so that I may prepare some tasty food for your father just the way he likes it.

Then take it into your father to eat so that he may give you his blessing before he dies. Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother, My brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin.

What if my father touches me? I will appear to be tricking him and bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing. His mother said to him, My son, let the curse fall on me.

Just do what I say. Go and get them for me. So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best clothes of her elder son Esau, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.

[10 : 11] She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goat skins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, My father?

Yes, my son, he answered. Who is it? Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.

Isaac asked his son, How did you find it so quickly, my son? The Lord your God gave me success, he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.

Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau.

So he proceeded to bless him. Are you really, my son Esau? He asked. I am, he replied. Then he said, My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.

[11 : 27] Jacob brought it to him, and he ate, and he brought some wine and drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, Come here, my son, and kiss me. So he went to him and kissed him.

When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness and abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be Lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed.

Those who bless you be blessed. We thank God for his word. One of the things that I like to do regularly, if not daily, is to read a psalm or a couple of psalms.

I find that they are great. Spiritual encouragement and blessing, and if you read the psalms regularly, and you know the psalms, and you'll know that there's a recurring theme that keeps cropping up in the psalms, and that's a theme of salvation and particularly protection.

[12 : 50] And the one who needs salvation and protection is the believer, David and others as well, calling or praying or renewing their faith in God, and the one, of course, who provides that salvation and protection is the Lord himself.

And so you'll often get psalms which speak of God as my rock, or my refuge, or my mighty fortress, or a stronghold, or even a strong tower, or giving that imagery of a place of safety, a place of security, imagery of being sheltered by God or hidden by the Lord.

But in several of those psalms, there's a sense of not just being hidden by the Lord, but being hidden in the Lord. We sang in the hymn that we just sang a minute ago, hidden in my Saviour.

That reflects the attitude of David and the others. Psalm 17 and verse 8, hide me in the shadow of your wings. Or more personally, for Psalm 143 verse 9, I hide myself in you.

Psalm 32, you are my hiding place. This concept of the believer being hidden in, or finding a place of refuge in the Lord, has its fullest expression, surely in the New Testament, when Paul talks about the believer having this position of being in Christ.

[14 : 30] In Christ. I want to read to you the first, don't look at it, but you'll see if you can, well you can look at it if you want to. The first ten verses of Ephesus chapter 1.

But I want to read it to you, and I want you to see if you can count how many in Christ, or in him, Paul uses. Okay? Particularly looking to Samuel and Amalie, give me the answer to this question. Okay? How many can you count? Listen carefully. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, I'll emphasize them so you can count them as well.

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who's blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

[15 : 39] In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Who's got five? Who's got six? Six? Yes, I make it six. If you find more than that, that's great, because I couldn't find more than that.

Six. So first of all, we've got it in verse one, haven't we? Where every believer is one of the faithful in Christ Jesus. Then in verse three, we're told that it's the place of every spiritual blessing we enjoy, that's in Christ.

It's in Christ where God chose us to be even before the creation of the world. It's where we are given God's glorious grace in Christ in verse six.

[17:09] Verse seven, it's where we have redemption and forgiveness in him. And lastly, verse nine, it's a place where God's purposes are made known in Christ.

In Christ. In him. In the one he loves. My hiding place. Now that leads us to Genesis 27.

Because in Genesis 27, for me personally, it's one of the lovely places where the New Testament realities of being in Christ are pictured in a lovely way.

In a seemingly surprising way. In the relationship between Jacob and Esau and Isaac.

In this story, we have something of a silhouette. Remember, whenever you look at the Old Testament, dear friends, and I would encourage you again and again and again, read the Old Testament.

[18:13] Read the Old Testament. Because if you want to understand what we have in Christ, you'll understand it better by knowing the Old Testament. But always in the Old Testament, we have a prefiguring, a shadowing, a silhouetting.

We never have the full picture. Remember, Jesus is the full technicolor, Dolby sound picture of God. Those of you who are not as young as you used to be can remember when everything was in black and white in the telly, wasn't it?

I can remember that, and I'm just so young too. But everything was black and white, wasn't it? And you had the great big massive box of a television and a knob to try and tune it in. And it's all in black and white, a bit crackly and so on.

That's the Old Testament in one sense, isn't it? And when you get to today with the LED screen and the surround sound and this beautiful glazing picture, that's not Jesus.

Because he's the whole picture. He's everything. He's the reality. But it's getting closer. That's the New Testament, at least, in one sense. So when we get to the Old Testament, when we read the Old Testament, we're getting the black and white picture.

[19:22] We're getting help to see Jesus better. We're getting help along the way to understand who he is and what it means to be hidden in Christ and what it means to be able to be accepted in Christ before God and to enjoy the blessing that he's won for us by the cross.

So that's why we read through Genesis 27. I'm going to pick up a little bit about it in a moment. Most of you will know the situation. Esau and Jacob were twin sons, but only Jacob was going to inherit, as it were, the spiritual blessing of God.

It was through Jacob, sorry, through, yeah, through Jacob, that the Messiah was going to come, the promised Savior was going to come. Esau, in one sense, is a picture of people who live without God and have no care for God.

That's why we read there, verses 34 and 35, Esau went off and married these women who were not in the family of God. They were not believers. They had nothing to do with him.

And we're told they were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. They could see that Esau had no interest in spiritual things. And Jacob, though he was a right old scallywag, was actually the one that God was going to work through and in to bring the blessing.

[20:45] And so even though it seems to us that this is the organization and the trickiness of Rebekah, it's actually God's hand in it.

Wonderful hand to bring about his purposes. Isn't it marvelous? We have a God who works even through and in spite of deviousness, jealousy even, wrong attitudes.

None of these things can stop God fulfilling his purposes. But we need to just make a few things clear when we look at this and in a moment apply it to Jesus and us.

Jacob is going to come to Isaac and he's going to deceive him into giving him the blessing by pretending to be or disguising himself as Esau, the oldest son who should have had the blessing in the proper chronological order of things.

First thing we need to recognize, of course, that though Isaac was blind, we're told they're an old man who couldn't see, God is not blind. God is not blind.

[21:55] He sees everything. He recognizes us for exactly who we are. He knows not just the outward appearance, he knows our sins, he knows our hearts. He knows how so often we try to

hide ourselves, don't we?

We put a mask up or a pretense up to pretend that we're okay, to look like a Christian or whatever it may be. We hide behind all sorts of things.

We hope that God doesn't really see what's in our hearts, but he definitely, definitely does. So God sees, even though Jacob doesn't. Secondly, we recognize, of course, that though poor old Isaac was hoodwinked, we might say, conned, God is not conned.

God is not fooled or hoodwinked in any way. It was his plan and purpose for us, as we read in Ephesians, to be hidden in Christ.

It wasn't just some sort of idea that humans invented. Sometimes we're told, of course, Christianity and religion is all man-made. No, it's not. It's God-made, God-planned, not a foolish thing, but God's wisdom revealed.

[23 : 12] And thirdly, again, of course, there's no cheating that's going on in this, in what God does with us, nor any wrongdoing. This is sinful action, isn't it, to deceive.

And Jacob lies on more than one occasion, doesn't he? So the Bible is not saying, and I'm not saying, oh, lying is okay. That's not what the Bible is teaching us or saying to us. Actually, what we recognize when we come to Jesus and being hidden in Jesus, that God's righteousness is revealed, not lies, not sin.

There isn't as if there's a loophole in the law, whereby sin goes unpunished, as we shall see in a little while. So though it's a shadow and a silhouette, it's not the full picture, but it helps us nonetheless.

So in what ways are we, like Jacob, hidden, if I can put it that way, in Esau? In what ways are we hidden in Christ, so that we can approach the Lord our God and know his blessing, particularly when we come to him in prayer?

Well, first of all, you know, we read there, didn't we, Isaac says to Esau, go and hunt. Isaac, we're told, is a great hunter and an outdoor, a woodsman, sort of a man, a manly man.

[24 : 31] Jacob seems to be a bit of a nerd, a bit wimpy, and also a little bit on the sly. So Esau goes off to hunt, and Rebecca, who loved Jacob more than she loved Esau, comes up with a plan.

Go and get a couple of the goats, kill them, I'll prepare the lovely food that I know your dad loves, and then you can go in and receive the blessing. But Jacob, because he's a bit of a confidence trick, he knows he'll be caught out if he doesn't fully convince his father that he is Esau, and then he'll bring upon himself a curse instead of a blessing.

So, what does Rebecca say she'll do? She says, I will get the skins, and that's what she did, verse 16, she covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goat's skins.

So when Esau, sorry, when Jacob goes into Isaac, he comes near to him, and what does he recognize first of all, verse 23, he did not recognize him for his hands were hairy like his brother Esau.

First thing that he recognizes, the first thing, as it were, that convinces him to accept Jacob and to give him his blessing is his hands. clearly this is in the time before the 21st century.

[25 : 57] Nowadays, men have all sorts of male grooming products to wax their chests, probably their hands, I don't know, I don't do that, I'm not saying messing any judgment upon anybody here who waxes his chest, that's completely up to you.

But, anyway, that was not the case here. And Jacob's hands covered by the goat's skin, which was killed for the meal, convinces Isaac that this is Esau.

When we come to God, of course, we come to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we particularly come to him in the merits of Jesus' atoning death.

And, one of the things that's very surprising, I think, is that the Lord Jesus Christ still bears upon his hands the scars of his crucifixion, even in his resurrection body.

We all know the story, don't we, of the week after Easter when Thomas was there. Remember Thomas? Thomas, he'd been missing the week before. He should have been in the meeting with God's people.

[27 : 07] For some reason, he was off doing something else. And he missed meeting Jesus and seeing Jesus. And so he says in John 20, unless I see the holes in his hands, put my hand in his side, I won't believe this is the real Jesus who's risen from the dead.

And a week later, Jesus comes again, doesn't he? In his resurrection glory. Remember, this is Jesus raised from the dead. It's not Jesus as he was in that sense.

It's Jesus resurrected from the dead. And we're told that even then, Jesus bore these marks. So Jesus said to Thomas, put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand, put it into my side, stop doubting, and believe.

When we come to God, in one sense, we come to him in prayer, we are coming, trusting in the pierced hands of our Savior, we're trusting in the atonement that he bought with his crucifixion for us.

And there's a lovely picture, in one sense, when we read in Revelation of what heaven is like, and we have God upon his throne with this incredible emerald rainbow behind him, and we have before him, we're told, one who looked like a lamb who was slain.

[28 : 29] We know who the lamb who was slain was, was Jesus, but he still looked as if he was slain, as if he'd been sacrificed for his people.

When we're united to Christ by the Holy Spirit's new birth, we're made one with Jesus in every way. So Paul can say in Galatians 2.20, I've been crucified with Christ.

I've been crucified with Christ. We are real partakers in the death of Jesus. We're not mimicking, in that sense, the death of Jesus as Jacob did with Esau.

It's as if we truly died upon that cross with him. Our sin was punished there. 1 Peter 2.24, for he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross.

So when God looks upon you and I, as we come to God in prayer and draw near to him, then in one sense, he sees all of our sin has been atoned for. All of our sin has been taken away.

[29 : 36] He sees that justice has been done. The penalty has been paid. His wrath is completely satisfied. dissatisfied. There is no way that he's going to turn us away because of our sin and say, no, you are not acceptable to me.

We are justified from all guilt, all shame. And so Paul declares, Romans 8.1, therefore, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

the marks of his hands tell us that we are forgiven, pardoned.

But then, Isaac is asked to come a bit closer. Not just his hands are felt, but in fact, his father, we're told, says to him, come a bit closer.

Give me a kiss. And what happens is that he recognizes the clothes. Remember, that's what Rebecca had done, hadn't she? She not only put these skins on his neck and his hands, but we're told there that she put on him the best clothes, verse 15, of her eldest son, Esau, which were in the house.

[30 : 56] Now, I imagine, in my own mind, Esau was quite a bit of a hefty lad and Jacob was a bit of a skinny lad, so they may have hung on him a bit, but that doesn't matter.

They were enough to convince Jacob that this was his son, Esau. He was clothed with the garments of his older brother. Jacob, Isaac recognized that.

Now, when we draw near to God, not only do we draw near to him, trusting in the cross of Christ, trusting in the sacrifice of Christ, that covers our sins, but we also trust in the fact that we are clothed with Christ.

And so, Paul writes, in Galatians chapter 3, verse 27, For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. He's not talking about water baptism. That doesn't clothe us with Christ.

He's talking about the baptism of the Spirit, which takes place when we are converted. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, For we were all baptized by one Spirit. That's actually the very work of the Holy Spirit.

[32 : 07] He takes us and he places us in Christ. It's a spiritual work. It's something which is uniting us with him, and we are wrapped up in him, and we are clothed with him.

And especially when it speaks about us being clothed with Christ, it's talking about being clothed with his righteousness. By nature, we are naked when it comes to righteousness.

We have nothing to cover ourselves with. In fact, worse than that, when we read through the Bible, we find out that we clothe ourselves with stinking rags.

That's what Isaiah 64, verse 6 says, All of us have become like one who is unclean. All our righteous acts are like filthy rags. Those righteous acts by which we attempt to justify ourselves before God or hide our shortcomings.

Instead of them making us more acceptable before God, these stinking, rotten, filthy rags actually make us more repulsive to God, more vile to God. Do you remember when Adam and Eve were in

the garden and all was well and God walked with them amongst them?

[33 : 31] Didn't he? Walked with them and talked with them and they had fellowship with God. And then they sinned. What does it tell us? They hid because they were naked.

So what did they do? They sewed together some leaves. There's the picture, isn't it, that you often get a sort of cartoon of them with a sort of a fig leaf. We don't know what leaves they were.

Probably huge leaves, I don't know.

But anyway, they sewed together. They covered themselves so they somehow could hide the shame of their guilt. Well, that's often like people of our own world, isn't it? Perhaps even ourselves at times.

We think if we can give to charity, if we can do good things, then somehow we can cover over the guilt, the shame that we feel about our past. We try to redeem ourselves that we might somehow be acceptable to ourselves and to God.

No, no, the reality is this, that we can only be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus. By that righteousness, we mean his perfect obedience to God. By his perfect life, by his perfect obedience, by his perfect living, he has fulfilled all righteousness.

[34 : 47] He's kept God's law completely and thoroughly on our behalf so that when we are in Christ, we are covered and clothed with his goodness, his acceptability.

1 Corinthians 1, verse 30, Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. When we come before God, we don't come to him naked. We have something to bring, not ourselves, not our own righteousness, but Christ's. We are perfectly adorned in his sight.

But we're actually told the reason why he recognized those clothes, aren't we? Because he caught the smell of his clothes. The smell of his clothes.

And he said, ah, the smell of my son. Something clearly agreeable to him, wasn't it? Clearly, the clothes of Esau didn't smell of B.O.

[35 : 50] or some other pungent smell. They smelled of something, as he said, like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. It's a bit like an advertisement for bold, isn't it?

Three in one. The smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. Wouldn't you like your clothes to be like that? Fresh and clean. Certain smells, it's a powerful thing, smell, isn't it?

I'm not sure about you. There are times when I'm somewhere and I smell something and my mind races to some event or some person or something. Years and years ago, smell is quite powerful. Perhaps even more powerful than sight, I'm not sure, but it can, of course, be a pleasant smell.

Maybe your great-grandmother's perfume.

It may, of course, be a very unpleasant smell, a farm yard or something that brings you back to your childhood, whatever it may be. God has a sense of smell.

[36 : 50] We find that cropping up again and again in the Old Testament. In Genesis, in chapter 8, we're told that Noah made an offering to God. In chapter 8, verse 21, a burnt offering to God and the smell of it rose up to the Lord.

Chapter 8, verse 21, the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma of this sacrifice. Now, clearly, it wasn't the, try not to be too gross, it wasn't the burning of the flesh of the animals that made God think, oh, that's nice.

No, it was the offering of the heart, wasn't it, of thanksgiving. It was the smell that spoke of the thankfulness of Noah's heart, his faith and trust in God.

Now, when we draw near to God, you know, the wonderful thing is we're told that he smells his beloved son on us. 2 Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 15, we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ. He doesn't smell the stench of our sin any longer. He doesn't smell our rotten hearts and lives, but he enjoys the perfume of Christ, of Christ's obedience and loveliness and sacrifice.

[38 : 11] We smell to God of his eldest son, of our elder brother. In fact, we're to bear that fragrance of Jesus in the world around about us.

we are to be to the people we meet the fragrance of Jesus, the scent of Jesus by the way that we live and by the way that we speak.

For some, that scent will be a pleasant, pleasing smell which will draw them to Christ. For others, it will be a smell which actually they recoil against. Here's what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 and 14 and 16 where he speaks about us being that aroma to God.

Sorry, 2 Corinthians chapter 2. 2 Corinthians Thanks be to God who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ amongst those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death, to the other an aroma that brings life. [39 : 40] You and I dear friends are hidden in Christ. When we come to God in Christ we come as those who remind him of his sacrifice.

Those pierced hands which have taken all our sin. We remind him of the righteousness and obedience of Jesus for we are clothed with Christ and we remind him of the sweet fragrance of his beloved son, his firstborn, his most treasured, precious possession.

So the question is this evening dear friends do you know that you are hidden in Christ? Is he that place of your safety and security before God? Is he the one that you are trusting in to cover all your sin?

When you come to him in prayer are you pleading because of his righteousness and his merits or are you coming saying God you know I'm quite a good person I'm trying to live a good life won't you please accept me won't you please bless me won't you please answer my prayer because of the good things I've done.

Those are filthy rags. Only the wounds of Jesus at Calvary can give us the peace of mind that sets our conscience free.

[41 : 07] Sets our conscience free from our own doubts but also from the condemnation that Satan would bring against us to tell us that we are unworthy undeserving.

It's only that perfect robe of Jesus' righteousness that gives us confidence to stand before God in prayer knowing that we shall be accepted and not rejected. That we've got nothing to bring as it were to make God accept us but that everything of our acceptance is found in Jesus and because we are in him then we're accepted.

But I want to leave you with this question really. does my life bear the sweet perfume of Christ to those around about me?

As we touched upon it just a little bit this morning does my life make the teaching about God our Savior attractive or unattractive?

Does my life smell of Christ or of my own self-righteousness? or my own pride? Or my own selfishness?

[42 : 28] May the Lord in his goodness and grace cause us to be so in Christ that we are lost in him and that our language and our actions and our fragrance all bear his touch.

his likeness his beauty. Let's sing together our final hymn. It's a wonderful glorious hymn of Augustus Toplady really picking up on what we've already been thinking about.

Rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee. 593 3 Therefore brothers and sisters since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way open for us through the curtain that is his body and since we have a great priest over the house of God let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and the full assurance that faith brings having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience having our bodies washed with pure water let us hold unswervingly to the hope we professed for he who promised is faithful Amen