

Philippians Chapter 2 v 21

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- [0 : 00] We come to worship and I'm going to read from Revelation chapter 5 as we gather this vision of the one upon the throne and the great Lamb, our Lord Jesus.
- John says, Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.
- And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll? But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.
- I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. See the lion of the tribe of Judah. The root of David has triumphed.
- He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. Then I saw a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.
- [1 : 17] The lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.
- And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb. Each one had a harp, and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.
- And they sang a new song, saying, Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.
- They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory and praise.
- Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them, saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the lamb, be praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever.
- [2 : 53] And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. So thankful to God for just that little insight into some of the heavenly realities.
- And as we come to worship tonight, we are conscious of this great one, this one upon the throne, our God, and of the lamb who gave his life for sinners like us.
- And so we're going to begin by singing our worship and thanks to the Lord Jesus. Crown him with many crowns, the lamb upon the throne.
- It's number 146 in the hymn books. Crown him with many crowns. Crown him with many crowns, the lamb upon his throne.
- Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns, music by its own. Thou wake my soul and sing, O King who died for me, And hear him as my chosen King Through all eternity.

[4 : 36] Crown him, Son of God, Before the world began, And he who tread when he had drowned, Crown him, the Son of God, Who every dream hath known, But brings the earth in rest, And takes and bears them for his love, That all in him may rest.

Crown him, the Lord of love, Behold his hands and side, Those wounds yet visible upon, In beauty glorified, No angel in his sky, Can fully bear that sight, But down with his burning light, That mystery so bright.

Crown him, the Lord of life, Crown him, the Lord of life, The triumphs of the grave, And rose victorious in the strength, For those he came to save, His glory now we sing, His glory now we sing, Who died and rose on high, A dry eternal life to bring, And lives that death may die.

Crown him, the Lord of peace, His power and scepter sway, From coal to coal that wars may cease, And only prayer and praise, His grace shall know no end, And crown his pierced feet, And cross of paradise extend, The grave and serenable sweet.

Crown him, the Lord of years, The golden day of time, Creator of the rolling skies, In ever we survive, Call him, redeemer, Herr, for God has died for me, Thy grace shall never, Ever fell, Throughout eternity.

[8 : 01] And I'm going to begin to read Philippians chapter 1 and verse 12. And there is a page number I can give you, Which is 1178.

1178. Philippians chapter 1 and verse 12. Philippians 1 verse 12.

Paul is writing to the church at Philippi. Now I want you to know brothers and sisters, That what has happened to me, Has actually served to advance the gospel.

As a result, It has become clear throughout the whole palace guard, And to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, Most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord, And dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, But others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, Knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

[9 : 12] The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, Not sincerely, Supposing that they can stir up trouble for me, Whilst I am in chains. But what does it matter?

The important thing is that in every way, Whether from false motive or true, Christ is preached. And because of this, I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.

For I know that through your prayers, And God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, What has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. So I eagerly expect and hope, That I will in no way be ashamed, But will have sufficient courage, So that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, Whether by life or by death.

For to me, to live is Christ, And to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, This will mean fruitful labor for me.

Yet what shall I choose? I don't know. I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, Which is better by far. But it is more necessary for you, That I remain in the body.

[10 : 24] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, And I will continue with all of you, For your progress and joy in the faith. So that through my being, That through my being with you again, Your boasting in Christ Jesus, Will abound on account of me.

Whatever happens, Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you, Or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, Striving together as one for the faith of the gospel, Without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, But that you will be saved, And that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, Not only to believe in him, But also to suffer for him.

Since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, And now hear that I still have. We pray that the Lord will help us to understand that passage, And indeed as we continue to read from Philippians, Later on in the service.

Let's read from Philippians chapter 2, And verse 1. Philippians chapter 2, Philippians chapter 2, And verse 1.

[11 : 59] Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, If any comfort from his love, If any common sharing in the spirit, If any tenderness and compassion, Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, Having the same love, Being one in spirit and of one mind.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves. Not looking to your own interests, But each of you to the interests of others.

In your relationships with one another, Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Who being in very nature God, Did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

Rather, he made himself nothing, By taking the very nature of a servant, Being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself, By becoming obedient to death, Even death on a cross.

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place, And gave him the name that is above every name, That at the name of Jesus, Every knee should bow, In heaven and on earth and under the earth, And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, To the glory of God the Father.

[13 : 23] Therefore, my dear friends, As you have always obeyed, Not only in my presence, But now much more in my absence, Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you to will and to act, In order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, So that you may become blameless and pure, Children of God without fault, In a warped and crooked generation.

Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky, As you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ, That I did not run or labor in vain.

But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering, On the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, That I may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, Who will show genuine concern for your welfare.

[14 : 30] For everyone looks out for their own interests, Not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, Because as a son with his father, He has served with me in the work of the gospel.

I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, My brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, Who is also your messenger, Whom you sent to take care of my needs.

For he longs for all of you, And is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill and almost died. But God had mercy on him, And not on him only, But also on me, To spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him, So that when you see him again, You may be glad, And I have less anxiety. So then, Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, And honour people like him, Because he almost died for the work of Christ.

He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. Imagine the scene.

[15 : 51] I don't think it will require much imagination for some of you. There is a mother in the kitchen, And she is preparing pancakes for her sons.

Kevin, who is five, And Ryan, who is three. And as she is preparing the first pancake, The boys begin to argue over who should get the first pancake.

And their mother sees the perfect opportunity for a little lesson. And she says, If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, Let my brother have the first pancake.

I can wait. Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, Ryan, you be Jesus. Or another time, I was listening to one of, I don't know if you have heard of Ted Tripp, And one of his parenting videos.

And he is speaking about the problem in our hearts. And he was encouraging us to see that this isn't just an issue for children, But it was an issue for himself and for other adults.

[17 : 04] And he said that they have a time, It is a bit of a bizarre thing. I think it must be an American thing. But they, In the evening, He and his wife, Margie, I think her name is. I can't help but think of the Simpsons. But he and Margie would go up at the end of the day, And somewhere, Either as part of their bedroom, Or next to their bedroom, They had a little sofa where they would sit, And just reflect on the day, And then pray together.

But one of the little treats that they would have, Was at the end of the, When they did this, Ted Tripp, Thinking he was a great man, Would go and serve his wife, By going to get two bowls of ice cream.

This is how they finish the day. I don't know if it's every day, But, And he said, After he was feeling so good about himself, That he'd gone down and served his wife, And gone and got these ice creams, As he was walking up the stairs, He realized that it was a regular thing that he did.

As he walked up, He looked at these two bowls, And worked out which one was the biggest. So that he might keep that for himself, As he gave it to his wife. He was just talking about the selfishness, Of his own heart.

And that's what we're going to be thinking about this evening. The constant challenge, Of our own selfish hearts. Now, if you don't think this is relevant to you, Or any kind of problem for you, Then please feel free to switch off for the next 20-25 minutes, Or whatever it's going to be.

[18 : 29] And you might like to spend that time, Praying that God will help you to see the truth. I think it does, It is something that applies to us all. We're going to be reflecting on a particular verse, But just want to think for a moment about some of the wonderful things, That this book of Philippians tells us.

Have it open in front of you. Look at chapter 1 and verse 6. Some of these great famous verses of Philippians. Being confident of this, That he who began a good work in you, Will carry it on to completion, Until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now I must be really careful not to start preaching on each of these verses. But they're wonderful verses, aren't they? Encouraging us with the truths about the Lord Jesus. Chapter 1 and verse 21.

Paul says, For me to live is Christ, And to die is gain. And then we've got that wonderful passage, I mean I'm not going to obviously quote all of the verses in Philippians, But we've got this wonderful passage that we read, Part of chapter 2, Where we see the humility of the Lord Jesus.

He's given us, Paul's lifting him up as an example for us to follow, The one who was in very nature God, But didn't consider equality with God something to be used, To his own advantage.

[19 : 51] And humbled himself, Even to death on a cross. And then in verse 12 and 13. Chapter 2, 12 and 13.

Therefore my dear friends, As you've always obeyed, Not only in my presence, But now much more in my absence, Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you, To will and to act according to his, To fulfil his good purpose.

Aren't these encouraging verses, Reminding us of the great truths that God has given us. Chapter 3, 7 and 8. Whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss, Because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, For whose sake I have lost all things, I consider them garbage, That I may gain Christ.

A real insight into Paul's passion for the Lord, That all that he had in the past, All the great prestige, His great learning, He counted it all as rubbish, As garbage, Compared to knowing the Lord Jesus.

[21 : 01] We might go on, 3.20. 3.20 says, But our citizenship is in heaven. So if we're trusting Christ, Our citizenship is in heaven, And we eagerly await a saviour from there, The Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope you can say that tonight, That you're a citizen of heaven, And that you're waiting for a saviour, Waiting for a saviour coming from there, The Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 4, Verse 4, Rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again, rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, But in every situation, By prayer and petition, With thanksgiving, Present your request to God, And the peace of God, Which transcends all understanding, Will guard your hearts and your minds, In Christ Jesus.

I wonder how often that verse, Has been a real help to you, In times of anxiety, And concern. What about verse 8 there?

Finally brothers and sisters, Whatever is true, Whatever is noble, Whatever is right, Whatever is pure, Whatever is lovely, Whatever is admirable, If anything is excellent, Or praiseworthy, Think about such things.

[22 : 16] And there's more as well, Aren't they? Just wonderful verses, Encouraging us, Challenging us, Helping us to see, The truth. But as I read through Philippians, There was one verse, That jumped out to me, In a way, Does that do it to you ever?

Something you must have read before, But suddenly, It just comes in full colour. And it's a really challenging verse. It's in chapter 2, And verse 21.

And this is where we're going to, Spend our time this evening. Chapter 2, And verse 21. It says, For everyone looks out, For their own interests, Not those, Of Jesus Christ.

That just stopped me, In my tracks, As I read and thought, About what Paul was saying. As it seems, He was talking about other believers, He was in Rome, In prison, Writing a letter, To this church at Philippi.

He'd, Received a gift, That Epaphroditus had brought, From them. He was very thankful for it. This is like, His little thank you letter. And, He's going to send, Epaphroditus, Obviously got very sick, Nearly died.

[23 : 30] And Paul's going to, Send him back, With this message. And, He's thinking about, Others that he can send. Timothy, Seems to be the one, That he sees, As the only possibility.

Apart from obviously, Sending Epaphroditus back. And about, It seems to me, You can, Debate it with me, If you like afterwards, But, I can't see any other option.

I think he's talking about, The believers around him in Rome. And he says, Such tragic words, For everyone looks out, For their own interests, Not those, Of Jesus Christ.

What a challenge that is, Firstly to the world. When we, Think about the culture around us, Where people are, Hedonists, Pleasure seekers, Seeking, Seeking, Only to please themselves, Or firstly, To please themselves.

Often, Little time for anyone else, Let alone, Jesus. Think about, For a moment, The way that works, Across all age ranges.

[24 : 43] For those, Children, And there's some here tonight. It's so easy, The spirit of the age, Is to be, For children to be, Thinking about the, The toys that they possess, Or the, Or the, Or the things they want to do, The sports they want to play, Or the fun that they want to have.

For the youth of our day, What's the spirit of, Of the age for them? To, Do their own thing, To be different, To rebel, To gain possessions, To get the smartest clothes, Or the best girlfriend, Or be the best dancer, Or, Or look the best, Or have the best hairdo, Or the makeup, That it might be, That many children, And young people, Are under pressure to be.

Think about the, The people in the middle ages, And, Uh, Not the middle ages, In middle age. Yeah, You know what I mean. Bit different. Um, People in middle age, And, The pressure upon them, To, To be something, And to be somebody.

Um, They, They see that their prime, Is, Is fading. And they, And they want status, And they want to prepare, and all the pressures that there are in the spirit of the age upon people of that age group.

And then to seniors, to enjoying the retirement, to enjoying the things that they've earned and hopefully are able to enjoy finally the things of this world.

[26 : 07] That's the pressure of the age, isn't it? To do those things. The world is full of pleasure seekers, people who look for themselves in relationships, in work, in their leisure time.

And amongst all that, who is looking for the interests of the Lord Jesus? Now I just want to sound a little warning. Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding.

It's a very tempting thing as we think about a passage like this to think about everybody else. For the people to come into your mind that you think aren't living in a way that they should do for the Lord Jesus.

And I want to tell myself and I want to encourage you to put those thoughts to one side and allow God to speak to you today. Ask him to challenge you and to reflect upon this verse yourself.

Everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. And I said already, I don't think this is a challenge just to those outside the church.

[27 : 12] He certainly seems to me to be speaking of professing Christians around him. Presumably, we're reading between the lines a bit, that he had been thinking, either considering who he might send to Philippi, or perhaps even he got to the point of asking some people to go to Philippi, and been met by lots of excuses.

But Paul could rely upon Timothy. And he holds him up in those verses from 19 onwards, chapter 2, 19 onwards. He holds Timothy up as an example of what we should be like.

Someone who was willing to look away for himself and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and genuinely could be concerned about the welfare of other believers in particular. It seems that Timothy was a man who put Jesus at the very centre of all that he did and all that he thought.

He was willing to pay any cost to serve his master, the Lord Jesus. It's possible, though is it not, to be very religious, but to still be entirely selfish.

In Timothy, we hear having a form of godliness, but without the power.

[28 : 45] And today I just want to look at this verse, chapter 2, verse 21, and see it as a challenge, or we might say a test, a little measuring stick for us to just reflect upon our lives for a time, and ask God perhaps to poke us and prod us and challenge us, and perhaps help us to see some things that might need to change in our lives.

I don't want to do that in a sense to bring condemnation, or to bring a sense of failure or despondency, but to spur one another on to love and good deeds.

To spur us on to take action in serving the Lord Jesus rather than ourselves. So let's have a look, three ways in which this is a test for us.

It's a test, firstly, of our allegiance. Do any of you ever remember, I'm sorry it's a bit of an old advert, those of you that are a bit younger than me, but do you remember those TV adverts where the punchline was, no, we're with the Woolwich, yeah?

The building, yeah, we got a few nods, I'm glad I'm not the only one. And the idea was there was various scenes, I think there were several in this series of adverts, but people were asked, were you with this or were you with that?

[30 : 11] And no, their answer was, we were with the Woolwich, which was a building society, which I think is now defunct, isn't it? They were with the Woolwich. Let me ask you, who do you belong to?

Who do you belong to? If you're a Christian this evening, if you're trusting in the Lord Jesus, then you belong to him. You're his child.

And actually, this verse becomes for us, actually, almost like a definition of what a Christian is. A Christian is someone who's realised that they've lived their life being selfish, doing the things that they want to do, and even, I don't know if you find yourself doing this, but even when you're doing something good, if you really sit and think about it, often it's actually for your own benefit, or for your own ego, or for your own brownie points.

And the Bible teaches us that the real problem that we have is sin. And sin is selfishness. It's putting ourselves before the living God.

So a Christian is not about, being a Christian isn't about rituals, it's not about going to church, it's not about christenings, or baptisms, or holy water, or repeating special words, or eating the bread and the wine.

[31 : 35] Being a Christian isn't those things. It might involve some of those things, but they're just outward things. It's like being a football supporter, or saying you're a football supporter, and just wearing this shirt, and that's all you ever do.

Don't take any interest in the team, or watch the games or anything, you just wear the shirt. That's just an outward thing. And those religious things are outward, aren't they? But the question is about our hearts, and whether we're being selfish.

Do we seek to please ourselves, or are we seeking to please God? You see, the Christian is someone that has been stopped in their tracks, has realised what God requires of them, that God's a perfect God, and wants us to live to please Him.

Two commands. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength. And love your neighbour as yourself. That's what the Lord requires of us.

And who of us have done that? We've fallen short. We've sinned. But God is able to meet with us, and reveal what He's done for us through the Lord Jesus, that He died on the cross for us.

[32 : 42] And as we accept that that death was to pay the price of our sin, the Bible says that we are reborn, that we start a new life.

And in that new life, we need to deny ourselves, to turn away from our own desires and wants, and serve Jesus and follow Him.

And so it's like a definition, the allegiance. And I want to ask you this morning, this evening, who do you belong to?

Do you belong to the Lord Jesus? It's like joining an army, a group of people, who are determined to serve and live for the Saviour, and not for themselves.

I wonder, if you're a Christian, whether you act like you belong to the Lord Jesus. But of course, as Christians, we do fail. Sometimes we come to church, and what we actually are worried about is whether we're going to get what we want.

[33 : 59] Whether the songs that we sing are the ones that we like. Or whether the style of the preacher is the style that we like. Or whether your friends are here, or whatever else it might be.

They're the sort of things that so often go through our own hearts and minds. Even as Christians, we come, even at worship sometimes, our thoughts are very self-centred. When we think that worship is for us, you must have been in some of those discussions, or perhaps even caught yourself doing it, where people talk about whether worship was good.

You think, well, what do you mean? It's not for me. You'd have to ask God whether it was a good worship. Perhaps we're times when we think about decisions in our lives and don't give any thought about what God might want in a situation.

Timothy was clearly no pleasure seeker. I wonder if you would match up living your life to the glory of God, serving the interests of the Lord Jesus.

And you'll notice that as Timothy served the Lord Jesus with all his heart, he was also someone who was concerned for others, genuinely concerned for their welfare.

[35 : 22] It wasn't the other way around. It wasn't because he loved others so much that he had a love for God. It was because he loved God and served him first that he had a love for other people.

So there's a test of our allegiance. Secondly, a test of humility. And you could say, chapter 2 is about humility. And again, reading between the lines, we could perhaps deduce that the church at Philippi, or at least some of the church at Philippi, amongst them there was a problem with pride.

Perhaps even a power struggle that was going on in the background. And into that, Paul starts chapter 2. Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and mind, do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves. Not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others. And then he gives this great example, doesn't he, of the way the Lord Jesus came to us.

The one who was God himself, but was willing to even come, not just to earth, but to live a life and to die a death of a criminal. Paul teaches that the Christians must have the same attitude to Christ as Christ had to his Father.

[37 : 05] He humbled himself in obedience. Pride is a massive barrier to following Jesus.

Following Jesus means that we must submit to him. We must be obedient to him. We must let go of our selfish ambitions and plans. Now, humility, you don't need me to tell you that humility is hardly the top of the world's list of popular traits, is it?

You know, who in their CV, anybody written a CV and on the bits where it asks you about your character, you've written humble. I guess there's sort of a bit of a contradiction in terms almost. But it wouldn't be seen as a positive thing, would it, to say that in an application form or on a CV.

It's rarely seen in the world and rarely, certainly, very rarely celebrated. Being humble towards God is accepting that he knows best.

And pride has been man's problem, has it not, since the Garden of Eden. What did Satan say through the serpent?

[38 : 19] You know, if you eat of that fruit, you'll be like God. That's why he doesn't want you to eat it. So let me ask you, will you be willing to let go of the way pride sometimes controls the things that you do and say and allow God to have his way?

Remember again, the great fervor of Paul, the religious leader, who's able to say, whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things, I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ.

I wonder whether we're humble and able to look to the interest of Jesus, putting our pride to one side. Lastly, it's a test of our allegiance, a test of our humility, a test of our faith.

People, let's be more specific, we, we, we like to live comfortable lives. they're either comfortable now or we're working towards the day when they're going to be comfortable.

[39 : 47] Even those who seem to do the most extreme things in life, these people who, you know, climb up Mount Everest or trek across the Antarctic, often, even though they're putting themselves right out, they're actually doing something to satisfy themselves, seeking their own pleasure.

But the Christian life is not about living a comfortable life. Did you need me to tell you that? I guess not. It's about living a life that serves the interest of Jesus.

Now that requires faith. It requires us to live by faith and not by sight. seeking the interest of Jesus leads people to do things like this.

It leads them to open their homes to those that are homeless. It leads people who are passionate about other people coming to know Jesus, moving to a Muslim land to be a missionary, leaving many parts of their family behind, and taking the cost and going to a foreign land to serve the Lord Jesus.

Loving the Lord Jesus and living by faith and not by sight drives people to do things like this, reducing their hours at work so they might be able to serve the local church or their local community.

[41 : 13] It makes people wonder, what about if I, could I be someone that could actually move to Scarborough and work with this new church plant?

At least consider it. It makes people that want to put Jesus first and live by faith and not by sight, when they're doing their little family budget, Jesus is first.

in their giving, in their financial realm. People that live by faith and not by sight, people that want to put Jesus first in their lives and seek his interests and not their own, are very careful when they start thinking about marriage.

That they want to marry someone who is also a believer, if they're a believer. father, which might have a cost to it, but it's a decision that they make because they want to please Jesus and not please themselves.

People that put Jesus first and live by faith and not by sight, find themselves overcoming their fears of speaking to people about Jesus.

[42 : 33] themselves volunteering to go and give out tracts among the goths I think I heard earlier. That's not an easy thing to do, is it? That's not seeking your own interest.

No one does that just because, I guess not anyway, just for your ego. You do it because you want to serve the Lord Jesus and put him first. It might mean that you sacrifice that new car or the new dress or the new skateboard in order to support brothers and sisters who are being persecuted in another land.

You know, that reminded me, thinking of that, of a time Caroline and I, before we were married, we were engaged to be married and we went with the UCCF to a regional event in York and a guy, you might have heard of him, called Patrick Sukdea, I think that's how you pronounce it, he challenged this room, I don't know, a thousand or so students and he stood at the front, he was really brave, he said, you lot, he said, ten years time, you'll all have 2.4 children, you'll be in a luxury house, earning loads of money and you'll have forgotten.

The church might be a part of your life but your radical thinking, your desire to serve Christ, it will have gone. And I remember sitting with Caroline saying, that is not going to happen to us.

and I pray that that's through God's grace being the truth. What a challenge it is to us and I hope you're sensing some of that challenge to yourself tonight.

[44 : 03] Putting Christ's interest before your own will lead you to some very uncomfortable situations. actions. It can be costly but it will always be the best thing for you.

And you will provoke a reaction in people. I guess a bit like if you went out on the streets and started giving out marmite or olives, you'd get a pretty strong reaction one way or the other from the people you give them to.

And people who meet you, if you're serving Christ and his interests, will have to react to you in one way or another. I wonder if you believe that God knows best. It's best to put your faith in him.

It's best to serve his interests and not your own. So in closing, let me just ask you some questions. We might sneer at the selfishness of the world and its pleasure seeking.

You don't need to be in evangelical circles very long to know that's something that we do very well. I wonder, whether we're actually much different. Ask yourself that question.

[45 : 11] To what extent are you looking to the interests of Christ? To what extent do we show allegiance to him? To what extent are we submitting to his will in humility and obedience?

To what extent are we acting in faith? Not seeking to leave a comfortable life, but a life sold out for the Lord Jesus. Perhaps this evening this message has made you even wonder whether you're a Christian.

And I would encourage you, if that's what's happened, then to think about it and reflect upon it and speak to someone. Or perhaps you are a Christian and God's been speaking to you about something that perhaps does need to change in your life.

I don't believe God just, so if you're just feeling absolutely terrible at the moment, I don't believe that's God. God speaks about something specific. He will tell you what it is, or if it just feels general and you want to know specifically what you can do, pray to him and ask him to show you perhaps areas in your life where you can do something about it and put him first again.

In both cases I would encourage you to just bring that matter to God right now. Offer to him yourself without reservation, without any small print.

[46 : 33] You know when you get a contract and they say just sign there and you turn it over and there's like a thousand words on the back in light grey print that you can't read. Don't make any small print as you offer yourself to him.

Unreservedly offer yourself to him. Jesus said, Mark 8, 34, he said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Let's just spend a few moments in silence and then I'll pray and we'll sing. Father God, this is a challenging verse to reflect on what Paul was saying and to ask ourselves whether this is true of us.

Is it true of us that we're looking out for our own interests, not those of Jesus Christ? Lord, we don't want to be guilty of that. We want to serve him.

How could we? He has given us so much. He is the light of the world. He is the one who died for us. He is the one who is our firstborn brother, the one who's gone before us, who's been raised to life and that we would follow him into eternal life.

[47 : 51] He is our champion. He is our captain. We love him. We want to serve him. We want to give ourselves in his kingdom. So Lord, help us, we pray, to offer again our lives completely into your service.

Speak to us plainly and clearly, we pray, that we might actually do something about it. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to sing a prayer to close.

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. It's number 830. 830, take my life and let it be.

Take my life and let it be consecrated. care equivine in life and let you end the day.

Take my self and I will be, heaven broken, long forget, Lord, To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages, now and evermore.

[50 : 36] Amen.