

Genesis 12:10-20

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[0 : 00] I want to start this evening by quoting from my mobile phone, if I can find the right place. It was a text I received just as I arrived here this morning.

I'm sure you've all had one. You have been pre-approved for up to £1,000 cash today. To receive your cash within 15 minutes, apply to, and they give a certain number, and they promise within 15 minutes I'll have £1,000 in my bank account.

Do you ever get those letters that promise you great sums of money? They tell you that you have won some colossal sum.

It's never £5 or £10, it's £10,000, £50,000 or whatever. And all you have to do if you want to claim the money is just phone this premium line at about £5 a minute or send some money to this particular group who will process your winnings for you.

I'm sure none of us are taken in by that. Such letters go straight in the rubbish bin. Such text gets eliminated as quickly as possible.

[1 : 17] It's all too far-fetched. It's all too good to be true, isn't it? And the sceptic in me says, well, it's never get something for nothing. It can't be that true.

I just don't believe it. If you were here last week, we looked at this passage in Genesis chapter 12, and we looked under the heading of what one of the commentators called Living in the Reality Gap.

Living in the Reality Gap. And the whole idea was that there is a gap between the reality of our existence and our circumstances and the promises of God.

They seem so great. They almost sometimes seem too good to be true. But somehow or other, there seems to be a gap between what we're reading of as the promises that come to us and the reality of our everyday experience and situation.

I wonder how Abraham responded to the promise that God gave him. We're not given too much detail.

[2 : 34] We read that the Lord came to Abraham. He tells him to leave his country, to go to a place that God would show him. And then God makes this incredible promise to him.

He says in chapter 12, Genesis, and verse 2, I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you, I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. We're not told how Abraham responded in terms of what he thought of that promise or his response to God in terms of the way that he thought or what he said to Sarai.

You can imagine, can't you, him going home and saying, I've just had this vision of the Lord and I'm going to be a great nation and we're going to have a great family and every nation in the world is going to be blessed through us.

And you can imagine all the things that were going through Sarah's mind, perhaps as Abraham shared that. But we read in verse 4, just simply, that Abraham left as the Lord had told him to.

[3 : 49] He simply obeyed. He couldn't understand what was going to happen, how this promise was going to be fulfilled. The difference between the reality and the promise was huge, as we'll see in a moment.

But God spoke and Abraham believed. Not just in terms of his mind, because the reality of belief doesn't come real until it moves us to action.

Just to give mental assent to a doctrine or to a truth means it hasn't really gripped us until we start to put things into practice.

So let's look at this passage together. Firstly, I'm calling it a new beginning for humanity. A new beginning for humanity. Last week we reflected on the fact that Adam, as the original head of the human race, and then we saw Noah as the head of the new beginning after the flood.

And now the whole world had one language. And now we find the whole world coming together, only thinking of itself with this great idea of making a name for itself.

[5 : 00] So they start to build this enormous tower, this tower up to heaven, the Tower of Babel. And the Lord comes down on them and judgment and confusion comes and suddenly they can't understand one another, whereas they all spoke one language, now they spoke different languages and they went off in different areas and different groups.

In the first 11 chapters of Genesis, in many ways, we see a slow, steady spread of sin amongst the nations. And from the original blessing upon life given there in the Garden of Eden, God pronounces solemn curses upon sin and sinners.

But now, here in chapter 12, there is a change of direction. God now brings a promise of blessing.

And God begins here in chapter 12 as it were a process of recreating for himself a people by pronouncing a blessing on Abraham, on Abraham.

God will bless him and he, Abraham, will be a blessing. The builders of that Tower of Babel had sought to establish a lasting city and to make a name for themselves, but they would utterly fail.

[6 : 34] God promises to do that for Abraham. Whilst the nations coming together at that tower sought to do it for themselves and failed, God will do it for Abraham.

He will make him into a nation. He will make his name great and he will be a blessing for all nations right down to today. For we, if we're in Christ this evening, are part of the recipients of that blessing given to Abraham.

And the way of blessing would be through Abraham's obedience. read in verse 3 at the end.

And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. The way of blessing once marked by the tree of life and then by Noah's ark is now marked by identification with Abraham and his seed.

The blessing will be worked out by Abraham, Abraham, sorry, I know it's Abraham but I keep calling him Abraham. They are the same person of course. Becoming a great nation and implicit in this promise is that God will grant Abraham's descendants a land for them to live in.

[8 : 00] And as we read through the Pentateuch, as we read through the first five books of the scriptures, we see the working out of these promises and they work out in three different areas.

They work out in the area of blessing, they work out in the area of descendants and they work out in the matter of land. But there are serious obstacles to overcome.

If each of those promises in each of those areas are to be fulfilled, then there are many obstacles in the way. How can sinners enjoy God's blessing?

How is it that God would be able to bless the very people who've rejected him and have turned their back against him? Well, we know of course that they would be blessed through the gospel of Christ.

We'll come back to that in a moment. But what about this matter of descendants? How can an elderly, barren couple have descendants? Abraham was 75.

[9 : 07] That was not a young age, way past childbearing age. His wife of a similar age, way past childbearing.

How could they have descendants when they were barren and they were elderly? There was another problem as well. How could a handful of people possess a land already occupied by others?

So we've got these three promises of blessings and descendants and land, but there are so many obstacles in the way. From a human point of view, the problems seem insuperable.

But as becomes clear, of course, nothing can stand in the way of the purposes of the sovereign, omnipotent God. A God who spoke and the world came into being.

The way of blessing. There's something else we see here. It's faith's big demands. Faith's big demands. Perhaps Abraham would have settled for a quiet life.

[10 : 19] We're all like that sometimes, don't we? just something a bit quiet. Maybe, you know, just enough land to live on. Enough for his flocks. Small family.

A couple of acres, that would have been enough. Quiet life, just to get on with their situation. But you see, God didn't ask Abraham what he wanted. He didn't ask Abraham, how much land do you want?

God chose to give him not just an acre or a hectare or whatever bit of land, but to give him an entire country. In chapter 13 of Genesis, we read this, verse 12 and following.

Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. The Lord said to Abraham, after Lot had parted from him, lift up your eyes from where you are.

And look, north and south, east and west, all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever.

[11 : 30] Not a little bit of land. As far as you can see, to the north and to the south and the east and the west, all of that will be yours, says God. Abraham could well have settled quite happily for the one son.

Maybe that was the answer to this matter of blessing and descendants. He'd had this son through his wife's servant, Hagar. And when God told Abraham he would have a son by Sarah, it was almost as if Abraham saying, well that's not going to work, that's too difficult, that's too hard.

Let's settle for what we've got. We've got something, that'll be sufficient, isn't it? In chapter 17 and verse 18 of Genesis, Abraham fell face down, he laughed and said to himself, will a son be born to a man a hundred years age?

Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety? And Abraham said to God, if only Ishmael might live under your blessing. Look, we've got one son, it's perhaps not quite the right way, but we've got something, let's quit and go ahead from there.

But God's plan was not for a descendant to come from Sarah's servant. God wanted to give him countless descendants of his very own.

[13 : 00] We read elsewhere, they were to be as many as the stars in the sky, as much as the grains of sand on the beach. Perhaps at this point Abraham's vision was too small.

Maybe that was his problem. He wanted to confine God, as it were, to what he thought might be possible. And aren't we just there?

Is that not where we are so often? Our vision is too small, it's very small. We prefer to choose the easy option, the comfortable way forward, being content in a way with what we've already got, because somehow or other we don't really believe in our hearts that God can do something great in our lives, or something great in our church.

After all, we've been chugging along as we are for some years now, and we're quite happy, we have a nice fellowship lunch occasionally, and we're good, we pray for one another, we don't really want anything to upset the apple cart.

We had a new pastor at our church in Acliffe, one of the things I warned them out is to be ready for change. Who knows what God will do, but we must constantly be ready for God to work, and to bring about things and situations within the life of the church to change.

[14 : 39] Yes, we are called to be faithful in little things. We are to be faithful every day in the things of life, and we are to be content with everything that God brings to us, but are we afraid to expect more?

Do we pray for God to do great things? What's our prayer in our evangelism? God? As Spurgeon once quoted was asked if he expected, he asked a man if he expected there to be conversions at every service, and the man said, oh, no, I wouldn't think that.

And Spurgeon replied, I hope this is not apocryphal, but replied, well, that's your problem. Your expectation of God is too limited. Do we pray to God for great things?

Do we pray to God to really work in the hearts of people on the doorstep of our church, the people we have contact with, our neighbours, our friends, our relatives, those who call in on occasions?

Is our vision too small? Such things don't happen today, do they? The great movement of God's spirit.

[16 : 00] I was sharing earlier today a church we were in many, many years ago, in the 1960s. So a tremendous number of people converted over a relatively short time.

Quite amazing. At that time I was a very young Christian and I thought it was normal. And then I went to another church and another church and found out it wasn't that normal.

What were they doing that was any different to nothing at all? they were singing the same hymns, they were praying, and God was working.

Remember the command of God. We have that great command, don't we? great commission as we call it, at the end of Matthew's gospel, where we're told to go into all the world.

Let me quote so I don't misquote. In Matthew 28, Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[17 : 00] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded, it, and then God adds his own promise straight to that, and he says, lo, I'm with you, always, to the very end of the age.

Faith makes big demands, and we should respond. Secondly, Abraham and the promise. The challenge to Abraham was the challenge of obedience and self-sacrifice.

Firstly, the path of obedience. Abraham was to be isolated from his home. He was to go and to take Lot and his wife Sarai and their possessions and those things that they had acquired and they were to leave the rest of their home, their family, their friends, leave them in Haran and to go.

Ur and Haran, the places where they came from, if you remember originally, Abraham's father, terror, had set out from Ur of the Chaldeans, heading towards Canaan, but only got as far as Haran and stopped there.

From what I can understand, those cities or those areas of Ur and Haran were great areas, sort of conurbations of the day, lots of things were happening there, but Abraham is told to leave them behind and to go where?

[18 : 32] Well, Abraham's not given any specific instructions, there was no postcode to punch into his sat-nav, he had a direction to go, he was to go towards Canaan, that's all he knew, no idea where to go in Canaan, this massive area.

Was he excited about where he was going? In a way, I would suggest it was doubtful. The land he was going to had the dubious distinction of being regularly overrun by invaded armies.

So it wasn't a particularly attractive place at that point. But God spoke and Abraham went. And when he arrived, he explored the land. He wasn't sure where he was to settle, so he explored all of it.

He set up altars to God. He went to the east, to Ai, and to the west, Bethel, and then he went to the Negev, which is in the south, or is the south. It was, as it were, claiming the land for God.

Setting up altars, he was showing his dependence and obedience to God. As far as Abraham was concerned, worship and praise and thankful to God was essential, and that's where he would start in this land.

[19 : 53] And so Abraham arrives in Canaan with that little family and their possessions. and then we find that faith is overwhelmed.

Faith is overwhelmed. It seems he no sooner settles than a major set back strikes this little community. We read in verse 10 of chapter 12, now there was a famine in the land and Abraham went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.

Simple words, but it was a desperate situation. Famine is always tragic. The need to feed his little family to his maids and men servants, to all those who relied upon him, and then all his flocks, his possessions, all of that, he needed fodder for livestock.

What a shock that must have been to Abraham. Here he was, he was the man, given the promise, he arrives in the land of promise to find it isn't a land of promise, as far as he can see because it's full of famine and problems and difficulties.

Was this the land that God wanted him to be in? Surely if it was, wouldn't it have been flowing with milk and honey? How is it the land is unable to support him?

[21 : 21] Here he now has got the promise, but this is the reality. here's the gap between promise and reality. What hope would there be for the great nation the Lord had promised to be provided for in that land if there was the famine?

Abraham's faith is put to the test and he falters right at the start, God. But yet, do we not have such similar experiences ourselves?

Convinced that what we're doing is God's will? The work that we're doing is the right work that God wants us to do, either individually or in our families or in the church.

We've been laboring with the mother and tots group or the outreach to young people for so long. We think we should be doing this but yet nothing seems to happen.

All sorts of problems seem to hit in. And the situation starts to fall apart and we wonder whether we're in the right place. Whether we really believe that God would be leading us this way.

[22 : 37] Why do we spend so much time in reaching out in evangelism? We don't seem to be getting the people in. Nothing seems to be happening. We can identify with Abraham's failure at this point for we now find him heading for Egypt.

Heading for Egypt. You don't have to look far in the Old Testament to find Egypt is so frequently the alternative to trusting in the Lord.

Think of the children of Israel. They hearkened after Egypt didn't they? When they had no food as they reached into the wilderness and then when the Lord provided them food the manna from heaven that they were to provide it for each day well they hadn't had it very long when they started complaining about the fact there was no variety they wanted more they thought of all the glorious foods and the fruits and the vegetables and everything else they had in Egypt and they wanted to go back to it.

Abraham going to Egypt would seem a natural choice. There's food there not here we can find what we need to keep going there in Egypt whereas here in Canaan is a real struggle.

It was a natural choice but not necessarily a wise one. For you see he was immediately placing God's promise in jeopardy. Abraham at least for a time was willing to give up the land of promise.

[24 : 25] He even risked the whole matter of descendants by pretending that Sarah was his sister. Again it seemed the natural thing to do in any case well it was only a half-nigh wasn't it she was his half-sister and so suddenly it seems that Abraham's forgotten all these promises that have been made.

Abraham was afraid and his logic now is flawed. He thinks well if God is going to work then I'm going to have to go with what I can see. I can see the food in Egypt. I can see the threat of Pharaoh and so if I pretend that Sarah's my sister I'll be safe.

we're so often like Abraham aren't we? He'd forgotten for a moment that God was greater than his problems. He thought in a way that God needed a little bit of help to deal with the issue.

We're here in a famine there's some food if we go there we're helping God fulfill his promise. Isn't it a case really that what's happening here is that we can see Abraham who in scripture is held up as the great man of faith.

It took a while of course for him to learn. He thought too much about the potential disasters and too little obedience.

[25 : 54] Are we not there sometimes? Perhaps the Lord moves us to another area. To another work. And our mind is full isn't it?

What happens if this would happen? What if things don't work out? What if I was to lose my job? What if by telling the truth or by making a stand for Christ in my workplace what's likely to happen there?

Surely better keep my head down, keep quiet about it. You see Abraham's plan rather than helping in a way nearly scuppered the whole plan.

Abraham is now gone from the promised land. Sarah is lost to Pharaoh's harem. And instead of Abraham bringing a blessing to the nations we find that Egypt, Pharaoh and all his people are not looking to a blessing.

In fact they are seeing a curse upon them full of diseases. All of them inflicted on Pharaoh and his household by the Lord because of what Abraham had done.

[27 : 12] You see what I'm saying? Abraham suddenly in one move has really challenged the plan of God. He's out of the promised land. Sarah, his wife, is in with Pharaoh and the people inflicted with all manner of diseases.

One positive side of course that came out of it is that Abraham got very rich at this time. We read in verse 16, Pharaoh treated Abraham well for her sake. Abraham acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, men servants and maids servants and camels.

But what was going on in Abraham's mind was earthly prosperity worth, as it were, the messing up of God's plan.

At this moment, Abraham is in somewhat of a mess and didn't know how to get out of it. But God's plans, of course, are never quite so easily thwarted by our folly, circumstances and even sin.

God's God's God's God's purposes to make Abraham a great blessing. And that surely must be an encouragement and comfort to us.

[28 : 34] We start out with all good motives, and yet we quickly get sidetracked by our own incompetence and fear. We compromise our holy lifestyles.

we don't want to stand out and so therefore we just tone down a little the way in which we live in the society we find ourselves. We succumb to the pressure to conform and to be like others.

I was at a conference this past week and one of the speakers was looking at the whole issue of evolution evolution and in particular creation and the gospel.

And he was saying how often Christians compromise at this point. They feel that it's quite out on a limb to hold fast to the idea that God spoke and this world came into being, that God created in six days.

And so they want to take on board a little bit of evolution. Some take on board what's known as theistic evolution where they say well we believe in evolution but it was God who made it.

[29 : 49] But that's not what the scriptures say. The scripture says that God created and God created in six days. And we're not to conform to the pressures of the society in which we live.

Many Christians have argued of the acceptability of homosexuality. Many of them are drawing the line maybe at gay weddings.

But much have been accepted, the matter of women preachers and priests conforming to the ideas of the world. When the Church of England rejected the idea of women bishops, it was on the front page of most newspapers, not comment by archbishops or bishops or clergy, but by politicians and individuals all saying, ah, well, they're out of touch with what's going on.

God's purposes stand secure and we're not to compromise in our lifestyle and conform to those of the world.

Never an excuse, of course, to be lazy or to dodge a difficult situation. The Lord would bring Abraham back, he would be tested again and again, until Abraham finally learned that God is able to fulfill his promises without the help and interference of Abraham.

[31 : 30] Have we learned that lesson ourselves yet? And then thirdly, Jesus Christ, the promised seed. Jesus Christ, the promised seed.

What was given to Abraham in this promise was veiled in future fulfillment. Whereas we have the privilege this evening of seeing the reality.

Genesis chapter 12 points forward to the coming of a Messiah, the coming of a Saviour. The key to understanding this we find recorded for us in Paul's writing to the Galatians in chapter 3 and in verse 16.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The scripture does not say and to seeds, meaning many people, but and to your seed, meaning one person who is Christ.

So the great promise that was coming to Abraham was that there would come one who would be Christ. In other words, Paul is telling us that the promises made to Abraham have Christ in view.

[32 : 39] Abraham is a type or representation of Christ. And this brings a whole new perspective on this passage. Abraham left home and family to go to a backward nation of God's command.

Just think what Christ did. He left all the glories of being at the Father's side in heaven to come to this earth, to an insignificant town called Bethlehem.

We find that he lived unnoticed effectively for 30 years. Let's think for a moment about the strength of God's promise. Why did Abraham go?

Why did Abraham leave Haran and head to Canaan in the first place? Well the reason he went was only on the strength of the promise of God.

He had no reality of the fulfilment of that promise. It was something which was ahead. He trusted and believed God and that's how he reacted.

[33 : 40] did. But is that not also what our Saviour did? Our Saviour came in anticipation of the promise of the fulfilment of those promises in God.

In Psalm 2 we read in verses 8 and 9, ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You will rule them with an iron scepter, you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Jesus is given these glorious promises.

Abraham was given a great name and was a blessing to those who blessed him and those who cursed him, they themselves were cursed. And we read in scripture, again Paul, this time to the Philippians, reminds us of the name of Christ.

Philippians chapter 2 verse 9, Therefore God exalted him, Christ, 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 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[35 : 10] Here's the great promise, you see. Here's the great promise to Christ, that the day would come when every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

But we're 2,000 years down the line and it still hasn't happened, or has it? This is a promise.

Every knee will bow and every tongue confess. that means in this town of Whitby, there will not be a single person who's ever lived or will live until Christ returns who will not bow the knee to Christ and confess that he is Lord.

And they will do that in one of two places. They will either do it in this life as they come to salvation, as they come to trust in Christ for forgiveness. They will see him as Lord.

If you're a Christian here this evening, you have already bowed the knee to Christ and confessed with your tongue that Christ is Lord.

[36 : 21] Lord. If not, the day will come when you face God and that great day of judgment. And then whether you want to or not, you will bow the knee before God.

You will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And you will see that for reality. But it will be too late. We read from Ephesians chapter 1 earlier this evening which reminds us of the great and glorious promises that our believers, verse 3 of chapter 1, praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Again, this is the great promise to the Christian. Every spiritual blessing in Christ is given to the Christian. those in Christ are richly blessed.

But we read elsewhere, don't we? But those who cursed Abraham were themselves cursed. Do we read about that in the New Testament as well?

By curse, we mean those who refused to believe. Those who cursed Abraham were those who were refusing to believe what God had said.

[37 : 43] Those who curse Christ are those who refused to revere him and to believe him. The Lord Jesus himself says, and we have the words recorded in Matthew chapter 25 and verses 41 and following, then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. I needed clothes and you did not clothe me.

I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. I'm sure we know that passage. Those who despise Christ, those who treat him as someone to be ignored.

I never failed to be amazed that the Oxford English Dictionary gives us the first definition to the name Jesus Christ as an expletive, as being the main use of that word.

And of course that's exactly the case, isn't it? You go, wherever you go, you hear the name of Christ used in such a way. Those who treat him such, those who ignore him, are those who are numbered among the cursed.

[39 : 16] So in Abraham we have this great promise of blessing but also the promise of cursing, of rejection for those who reject God and his way. That brings us to our final point this evening, the way of promise.

Abraham was promised many descendants, that he will be made a great nation. But here was the reality gap for him as we saw last week.

The gap between reality and promise. Abraham lived to see his son of course, but not the fulfillment of the promise. That reality would come.

We could say also similarly for Christ, Christ. He who was promised the nations of the earth as an inheritance. The one who came to his own people.

Yet as we read in John's gospel, chapter 1 and in verse 11, he came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Abraham told a lie to save his life.

[40 : 25] Yet of course we see our savior telling the truth knowing that it would cost him his life so that the unrighteous might be saved. The one who was promised that he would rule the nations with a rod of iron was himself scourged by Roman soldiers in preparation for the cross.

The sinless son of God given a criminal's death, lifted up on the cross, crucifixion, that which the law regarded as a sign of God's judgment.

Jesus was a man as well as God, but Jesus was a man, if I can say this referentially, in a reality gap between the promises and the fulfillment of those promises.

Abraham's experience points us forward to the sufferings of Christ. But was the promise of God found to be lacking? No, far from it.

There on the cross we have the key to the fulfillment of the promise. Here was divine justice against sin being meted out on Christ. Jesus made sin so that sinners could be made holy.

[41 : 38] But then came the resurrection. Then came the glorious rising of the Son of God. And here the reality gap was bridged once and for all.

Christ rose in glorious form as shall all those who trust him rise in glory. He ascended into heaven as shall all his people.

even this very night there are those from all the nations of the earth being brought into his kingdom.

One of the great blessings of going to a conference like I did last week is meeting men and women from different nations. Sometimes when we think we're struggling and things are very quiet hardly anything seems to happen.

Hearing what God is doing in other places just marveling that our great God is at work even this night. The land is great.

[42 : 51] Abraham looked he couldn't see the end of the land the north and the south and the east and the west. We look this evening to the north and the south and the east and the west and God is adding to his kingdom those who come and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So then how should we live in the light of the promise? How do we live here and now in this reality gap that we've called it?

Like Abraham we've received the great and precious promises of God all the glories that are to come. We are to strive to believe them in the face of sometimes overwhelming disappointments of life.

We struggle with the temptation to abandon the promises. And sometimes we are attracted by the abundant provisions of Egypt.

But the solution of course is to cling to the promises of God and to the God of the promises. But to look to the risen Christ.

[44 : 01] Look to our Saviour. Look to his words. Look how he says in chapter 16 of John's Gospel in verse 33. Jesus says I've told you these things.

You may not be experiencing him at the moment but I've told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.

You shouldn't be surprised at a reality gap. Our circumstances seem to be creating difficulties for us. Jesus promised that in this world you will have trouble but take heart.

I have overcome the world. Someone said this life is not a picnic nor was it intended to be. One commentator put it like this we are pilgrims not picnickers.

The resurrection of Christ assures us that the promises of God are true and they will not fail.

[45 : 06] So in the midst of our deepest reality gap our deepest trial deepest problems in our families perhaps the death of a beloved spouse perhaps difficulties with our children going off the rows perhaps the problems of employment then in the midst of our deepest reality gap we are following in the footsteps of our saviour and one day we will see that gap closed.

Our faith will be sight and we will be forever with the Lord. In the meantime we live and trust and hope and rejoice that Jesus Christ is risen.

Hallelujah. Amen.