

Hebrews 1&2

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[0 : 00] Well, can you turn to Hebrews chapter 1 and 2, and I just want to give a brief overview of what is happening here and why the writer is writing what he's writing.

The writer is addressing a number of major problems with some Hebrew Christians. They've been faithful through some severe persecution, and yet as ex-Jews, they had several hang-ups.

There were still babes in Christ. They had failed to mature. Their spiritual maturity was lacking, and it's a serious problem.

And the writer at the end of the epistle says that, now Timothy's just been released from prison. I'm going to send him to you, and if he comes, then I'm going to meet him there, and we'll carry on this discussion.

But in the meantime, there is a real need for some emergency treatment. There's almost a medical theme this evening, as you'll see. Now, the first two chapters address the big issue of angels and their role under the new covenant.

[1 : 19] The Bible teaches that the covenant given through Moses, the law, had indeed been done through the mediation of angels. I didn't know that.

Did you? It was done through the mediation of angels. And we read this. Martyr, as he was, Stephen, as he was being martyred, is speaking to the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the crowd, and he's saying, Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, that's Christ, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels but did not keep it.

Galatians, Paul says this. Why then do we have the law? Well, it was added because of transgressions until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.

And it was putting place through angels by an intermediary. So the teaching of angels is actually quite scattered throughout both the Old and the New Testament.

[2 : 35] In fact, in Hebrews, there is more mention of angels than anywhere else in the Bible. So we get most of our theology about angels through here. Chapter 2, verse 2 speaks about the message that they delivered.

Now, we don't know the precise role that angels played, but we do know that the Jews held angels in high esteem. And just as they held Moses and the law and the sacrificial system and temple worship, they held those as sacrosanct, they couldn't be touched.

It seems that angels also fell into that part of their theology and practice, and it was something that couldn't be challenged or touched. But these Christians, these Jewish Christians, these Hebrews, suddenly realized that being a Christian was challenging everything that they ever knew.

And the big questions they had were, what is the impact of the new covenant in my life on these old things? Does it replace them?

If it does, what happens about angels? What happens about Moses? What happens about the Sabbath? What happens about temple worship? What happens about the sacrifice? What about the atonement? These were big questions.

[3 : 56] And the writer to the Hebrews painstakingly addresses each of these and shows that in every way the new covenant was better and superseded all the practices under the old covenant.

And the grand conclusion of the letter to the Hebrews is that they were only types and shadows and that the real thing had arrived.

Now, the letter to the Hebrews is almost like a medical triage. I'm treading on the really thin ice here, John. There are people who know about triages a lot more than I do.

I looked it up on Wikipedia and soon got pretty well lost. I got as far as the start thing and then gave up. But the thing about a medical triage, if there's a disaster or it began, in fact, in France in wars, what you have to do is to quickly assess the condition of the people who have been hit.

And there were those who were dead. Well, you leave those. There are those who, if you treated them, were likely to get better. Those who you didn't treat were not going to live anyway. So what do you do?

[5 : 08] And then there are those who were the walking wounded. It's a way of prioritizing. And this is what the writer is doing. In a number of ways, these Hebrew Christians have become injured spiritually or sickly spiritually.

And so the writer deals with them in a way of priority order. Now, things are a bit more complex than that because some of the teachers within their fellowship have been very vocal about holding on to the old ways.

I don't call them false teachers because Hebrews doesn't say that they were. But they were teachers, people who were there who were saying, well, no, no, no, you've really got to hold on to the old things because that's what we know.

That's what we're comfortable with. But the writer, in one of the most difficult passages in Hebrews and probably in the New Testament, in my view, he just discards those and says, no, in this triage, really, these are the people who are spiritually dead.

And I'm only interested in the living because I want those who are spiritually alive to receive some help. And what I'm referring to is in Hebrews 6 and verses 4 to 6.

[6 : 21] And this is a difficult verse, but I think it's in the context of people who are spiritually alive and people who are spiritually dead. He said, it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

And he's dealing with a different problem here, but what he's saying is these people are really spiritually dead. And in this triage analogy is I can't do anything about that.

What I'm concerned about are these Christian believers. And that's why he says in verse 9, even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case, things that accompany salvation.

In other words, you're spiritually alive. So you need to listen and to get the teaching that I'm giving to you. Now, we may not have the same hang-ups today about angels as they did then.

I'm sure we don't, really. But we can confidently say that if we have any spiritual problem, it's a good thing to check one thing, and that is the spiritual life that we have and our contact with our spiritual head, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- [7 : 52] And so this evening what I want to do is to look at how the writer brings the Christian readers back to Christ and then how we can, in fact, receive our spiritual boost.
- I seem to have lost the page. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Yeah. The problem we're facing are these people who were saying, you know, angels are important, and they were almost like a cancer upon the life of the readers.
- But the answer in all of the cases and all the problems that these believers have is Jesus. It's Jesus is the solution. It's just like in a Sunday school, you know, asking children, you know, a question.
- If you're a child, you know, it's always good to have Jesus, God, or the Bible, because you'll get the right answer somewhere. But the answer to the Hebrews is, in fact, Jesus.
- But the teaching that these people were doing, which were holding on to, were causing a great deal of confusion.
- [9 : 03] And they were about to drift away. They were about to become spiritual shipwrecks. And we read about that in chapter 2, verse 1. Their spiritual life was ebbing away because they'd lost contact with the head, with Jesus Christ.
- And they were like the wounded soldiers, the wounded soldiers on the battlefield. They need instant medication. Maybe sometimes a big injection of adrenaline.
- They needed a spiritual boost, something that will kick them into life. And this is what the writer is trying to do. He's got the life boost of Jesus Christ that he wants to give them, an injection of spiritual adrenaline, so that they might realize that they're alive in Christ, and that he is the only one that matters.
- And I say, we do not have the same hang-up with angels as perhaps they did. But when we lose contact with the head, when we lose contact with Christ, we have all kinds of problems and difficulties.
- Now, as a summary of chapter 1 and chapter 2, we read it. Chapter 1 is a glorious affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ and his supremacy.
- [10 : 18] Chapter 2 is an affirmation of the manhood of Jesus Christ, but also not just his manhood, but his relationship with us.
- So we read phrases like we are called his brothers. I think it's the only place in the New Testament where we're referred to as Jesus' brothers. And so the connection with Jesus being a man in chapter 2 and our relationship with him is an important thing.
- So that's chapter 1 and chapter 2. But right in the middle, if you turn to it in chapter 2 and the first five verses, we have four, first four verses, we have four transitional verses between Jesus as God and Jesus as man.
- And they really are an application. The first two and a half verses are an application of what has been said. And the other half of those verses is an introduction to what is about to be said.
- And before we can go much farther, there are two phrases that he uses, two nautical phrases, if you look at it. Let me just read chapter 2, verses 1 to 4 again.
- [11 : 34] We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if a message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?
- That's the first half. That's what I've just been talking about. He's now going to introduce chapter 2. This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.
- God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and gifts that the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Now, the two phrases are careful attention.

We must pay more careful attention. It's a nautical term, believe it or not. And it's a term that you would refer to, to a mooring point.

So there you've got a boat, and you moor it up. And that is being, you've got to, the idea of, you've got to be anchored to something, you've got to be tied up to something as a boat.

[12 : 39] You've got to pay careful attention. You've got to look at this point and be really sure you've got it right. Make sure you've got the clove hitches right, and the round turn of two half hitches. You've got to make sure that your boat is moored.

But the problem they had was in their distraction about angels, is they had slipped their moorings. And they weren't anchored to the truth of who Jesus really is.

And that's why it says you've got to pay careful attention. You've got to be moored up. Because the second phrase is drifting away. So that you do not drift away.

And it's another nautical term. It's self-evident, isn't it? But what he's talking about is the imperceptible drawing away, or drifting away from a place of safety.

So what he's saying, you've got to be moored up, because if you're not moored up, you're going to drift away imperceptibly from this place of safety. And this is the warning and the carrying which he wants to draw their attention to Christ.

[13 : 44] Now, when I was a lad, thank you. When I was a lad, I think my first holiday away from home, when I was about 16 or 17, was with my best mate, and we went to the Isle of Man.

And if you've been to Douglas Bay, there's a little island there, just off the jetty. And there's a building on there. And we were told that if we ever hired a boat, we were not to try and get to the island, because the currents were really strong.

So being, you know, 16, 17-year-old lads, we took great notice of this, hired a boat on the first day, and started rowing towards the island, you see.

So there we are rowing. And we're making good speed. You know, we are really scooting along. And so we realised that it wasn't all our own steam that we were under. And we were being dragged out with a current, so we thought, oh dear, that's okay, no problem.

You know, young, fit lads will turn the boat around and we'll row back. So we did that, started rowing back. The problem was, we were trying to row back, but we were still going farther out. We were drifting away.

[14 : 54] And although it took us perhaps 10 minutes to get to the point, it took us the rest of the hour that we'd hired this boat for to get back. We were pretty scared because we were about to be shot out between the harbour and the island and out into the Irish Sea or whatever it is.

So that's an idea. You know, you drift away. You think you're safe. You think you're going along fine and dandy. And then you perhaps look around and think, ah, there's a problem here.

And this is what the writer is trying to do. You must pay more careful attention. Make sure you're moored up so that you do not drift away. Now, this warning with these two mental pictures is the meat in a spiritual sandwich.

Okay? And they needed to get the teeth into this meat and into this sandwich. One side of the sandwich, each side of the sandwich, is in fact the living bread of the teaching about Jesus Christ.

Okay? I'm not being disrespectful here. They had to hold on to this. And either side, there was the supremacy of the Son of God in chapter 1 and the supremacy of the Son of Man in chapter 2.

[16 : 15] And that was the meat they had to get hold of. And that was in the sandwich. And if they didn't have something in the middle there, it was not much of a sandwich, was it? But they had to hold on and not drift away.

And what I want to do this evening is to just take a helicopter view of these two chapters. And it will be a helicopter view. But there are some wonderful truths that we can just pick up off the surface regarding the person of Jesus Christ.

And the first one is the first chapter which deals with the supremacy of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Remember, these people had all kinds of hang-ups about angels.

And they thought that, well, maybe this Messiah was less than an angel. Maybe he was a bit better than an angel. And this is what the writer, right from the word go, hits head on.

Let's read the first four verses of chapter 1. It says, So right at the beginning he's saying, I know your problem.

[18 : 05] It's about angels. And let me just tell you about Jesus Christ. And if you go through those first four verses, you'll find that Jesus is the last word. That he is the prophet.

You'll find that he provides purification for sin. So he's the priest. And you find that he's the ruler and the sustainer of all things. So he is the king. And he's referring to Jesus as prophet and priest and king.

And they would have got that. They would have understood that. That Jesus was prophet, priest and king. And perhaps they would also remember Saul, who in his kingly office couldn't wait for Samuel to come and make the priestly sacrifice.

And so he thought, well, I'll do the priest bit myself. And he did. And he lost the kingdom because of it. Because the man was not allowed to join the office of king and of priest together.

Or they may have thought about Uzziah. Uzziah was a good king. The king who reigned the longest in Judah. And he combined the office of king and priest.

[19 : 15] And he finished up being a leper and an outcast. And it was a terrible thing to try and unite these things. Because here were just ordinary sinful men. And an ordinary sinful man cannot combine king and priest.

They're only pictures. They're only signs and symbols. And they certainly couldn't combine prophet, priest and king. Which is what these first four verses are speaking about.

And over all this, this prophet, priest, king man is also the prophet, priest, king God. It is the radiance of God's glory. It's the radiance of God's glory.

Now, I'm going to read something from a book by Brian Edwards. Which takes this verse and adds some insight to it. It says, The radiance of glory is not a dazzling reflection.

Like rays of the sun bouncing off a mirror or a wet road. That was the reflection of the glory that God had shone out through Moses' face. When he came from the presence of the Lord.

[20 : 24] His face shone with reflected glory. And therefore, it was a fading glory. On the contrary, Christ's life does not reflect the glory of God.

It is the glory of God. The writer goes further and underscores that Christ is the exact imprint of his nature. Or the exact representation of his being.

And Paul chooses the word, the Greek word character. And so, a literal translation of that verse, that third verse is this. That he is the radiance of the glory of God.

And the exact character of the actual reality of God himself. So, right from the beginning, he's saying, you've got to get it right about Jesus Christ.

And he is the exact character of the exact reality, the actual reality of God himself. And that is so important.

[21 : 32] That's where they were going wrong. They lost contact with who Jesus was. And that's what we do. When we go through perhaps times of spiritual difficulty and depression.

And we stop reading God's word. Well, you stop reading God's word. You lose contact with the head. This is a living word. And part of this sandwich we talked about is Jesus as being the radiance of God's glory.

Now, what follows in chapter 1 from verse 5 to verse 14 is an exposition of seven Old Testament scriptures.

Seven. Which prove the supremacy of Jesus over angels. That's what that next section, the big chunk of chapter 1 is all about.

And we just have to go through one or two. Maybe you could look at, it says, verse 5. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, today I become your father?

[22 : 38] You know, God never said that to any of the angels. You are my son, today I become your father. And again, verse 6, when God brings his firstborn into the world.

And firstborn here doesn't mean firstborn literally, although in this case with Christ it is. It also means preeminent. So when God brings his preeminent firstborn son into the world, he says, what does he say?

Let all God's angels worship him. These are seven indisputable scriptures that you would have been familiar with, which show that Jesus is superior to the angels.

Because Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. So Jesus, here we've got the angels. Maybe there's an angel here with us in the room, we don't know.

But way, way above that is Jesus, who is so superior to the angels.

[23 : 42] But what is the purpose of angels? You know, why do we still have them? Well, the answer is given in verse 14, right at the end of chapter 1. Are not angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who inherit salvation?

So angels are ministering spirits sent by God to serve those who inherit salvation. So that is one of the great purposes of angels, which is to serve the church of the living God.

To serve us as the children of God, those who will inherit salvation. That's really, that's staggering, isn't it?

You know, when we get to heaven, we'll be surrounded by thousands upon thousands of angels, right? But there'll still be those who were initially sent to serve us as God's children.

So when we get to chapter 2 and this transition that we talked about earlier on, where he says we must pay more careful attention to what we have heard so that we do not drift away.

[24 : 56] He then says this, Because the law was implemented through angels and every violation of the law brought about swift punishment.

And we, again, we just think, well, how does that fit? Well, Nadab and Abihu, they offered false fire to the Lord.

They, you know, they desecrated the very first offerings that were made. We find that the children of Israel, time after time, that the Lord says in Psalm 78, that these ten times you've tested me.

And that brought swift destruction from them. And that was through the mediation, it would seem, of angels, the work of angels.

He is, God is a consuming fire. And sometimes his angels are there. The angel of the Lord with the sword before Balaam is another example of the work of angels.

[26 : 13] And so the conclusion of this warning is that if angels are so great and their ministry is so binding, and because Jesus is so superior to them, we must pay more careful attention.

We've got to make sure we're anchored up to this superior person who is way, way above angels, who we know from the Old Testament were able to do terrible and impossible things that men cannot do.

But the teaching of angels was not just restricted to the Hebrew Christians, because we find that in Ephesians, there are references there about angels being a distraction, and also in Colossians.

Let me just read what it says in Colossians 2.8. It says, Therefore, do not let anyone judge you. And this is all to do with traditions and the way in which they worship.

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come.

[27 : 27] The reality, however, is finding Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you.

Such a person goes into great detail about what they have seen. They are puffed up with their idle notions and their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God calls it to grow.

That's Colossians 2.18. So you can see that the worship of angels was a problem to the Colossians. And what he's saying, don't go down that route, because if you do, you'll lose connection with the head.

You won't be moored up to Christ, and you'll drift away, and you'll become a spiritual shipwreck. So, that sort of covers the chapter 1.

What about chapter 2? Well, chapter 2 is to do with a supremacy, not as Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but it is to do with Jesus Christ, the supremacy of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man.

[28 : 41] And the transition that we find in chapter 2 is the second half of verse 3, where he says this, This salvation which was first announced by the Lord was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and gifts to the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Just as an aside, it says it was confirmed to us.

That is considered to be one of the proof reasons why Paul was not the author of Hebrews, because he received from the Lord directly the revelation of the gospel.

And what he's saying is that this was confirmed to us. But what he's talking about here is the great salvation, the great salvation. And what he's saying is that there was an authentication of the salvation that was wrought by Jesus Christ.

And we've just considered that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Now we're going to look at Jesus Christ as the one who achieved that salvation as the Son of Man.

[29 : 55] And that salvation was announced by the Lord, it was confirmed by those who heard, and it was affirmed by signs and wonders and various gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to God's will.

And straight away, he then goes on and says, it's not to angels that he has subjected the world, verse 5, to come, by which we are speaking. And then he goes and quotes Psalm 8, or part of Psalm 8, verses 4 to 6, which says this, what is man that you are mindful of him, the Son of Man that you care for him, for you made him a little lower than the angels, you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.

So what Psalm 8 is referring to in the first instance is you and me is referring to mankind. And we as mankind have been made a little lower than the angels.

And we're here on this earth. But what the writer does, he specifically starts applying that to Jesus as a man. And not just Jesus as a man, but Jesus as his work of salvation as a man.

And so in this section in chapter 2, we read that as a man, there was his suffering of death. Verse 9, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

[31 : 29] Jesus as a man suffered death. We read in verse 10 that he was made perfect through suffering. Well, he was perfect as God, but there were things that he had to achieve.

There was a life he had to live that was going to be sinless, that was going to become the spotless lamb of God, the atoning work of Christ, had to be perfect. So he was made perfect through his suffering.

So as Christ suffered in his temptations, and as Christ suffered on the cross, as Christ suffered under the judgment of God, he was made perfect because he didn't fail. He did not sin.

And we see that as a man in verse 17, that he was, in fact, made like his brothers in every way. For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a faithful and high priest.

We find that in verse 11 and verse 12, he's referred to as, we are referred to as his brothers. And I think three occasions where we read of we being the brothers of Christ.

[32 : 37] And so there's a humanity connection here. That's the point that's being made. We find in verse 14 that it says, since the children, that's us, have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death, he might destroy him who holds the power of death.

He shared in our humanity. And the reason he did that was so that he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

Jesus could not do that as God. He had to do that as man. That's why there is this dual nature of Christ, both God, fully God, and fully man.

And in his work as a man, he destroys the work of Satan. And he destroys death, as we read of in 1 Corinthians 15.

And we find that he becomes our atonement, verse 17, so that he might become a faithful, merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

[33 : 52] Atonement, there is propitiation. Propitiation means satisfying God's anger against sin. That's what it's about. And so as a man, he took the satisfaction of God upon himself in judgment upon our sin.

So we've had the supremacy of Jesus as the eternal Son of God. And we've got the supremacy of Jesus as the Son of Man.

And he's addressing this problem that these people, these Jewish Christians, were drifting away. They got tangled up with false teaching about angels and whether or not the angels were above Jesus or below him or whatever.

And so the application is really quite encouraging, I think. It says, which is this, you know, are you spiritually adrift tonight? You know, are you drifting through the Christian life?

As we've been looking at these scriptures, have you been able to identify a losing of the mooring in Christ? Have you let it slip?

[35 : 06] Are you doing what I was doing when I was 16 or 17, just being a bit stupid and getting in a rowing boat and doing something I shouldn't do, you know, just drifting out? Is that what your Christian life is all about?

Then the call of the writer is simply this. We've got a great salvation. And we've got to pay careful attention to it. We don't want to drift away.

We have a great salvation because we have a great Savior. This God who is man and this man who is God. And that's the one we've come to love. That's the one who saved us.

That's the one who's going to keep us to the end. That's the one who is unchanging. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. So we need to get back to Jesus Christ.

How do we get back to Jesus Christ? I think I've already hinted at it. It's through the Word. It's through reading something like Hebrews. It'll take you just over an hour to read Hebrews. Just go in a room one day this week and just say it out loud.

[36 : 08] Just go through it and speak it. Don't read it in your mind. Just speak it out. And you'll be encouraged. You'll be encouraged because what you'll do, you'll pick up the flow of what this writer is trying to do.

And what he's trying to do is not only is there this first warning, but there's five other warnings. And the six warnings in total deal with drifting. They deal with disbelief.

They deal with disregarding what we know. They deal with deliberately sinning against the truth. They deal with devaluing the grace of God.

They deal with departing from the one who speaks. All these. And in every case, every warning that there is in Hebrews, there is a, ah, but.

You know, pay careful attention to what we've received so we don't drift away. You're disbelieving? Well, you need to encourage one another to avoid the hardening of your hearts.

[37 : 12] If you are disregarding what you know, if you're deliberately ignoring Scripture, well, remember, you've got an anchor to the soul. And God has promised to hold on to you.

Are you deliberately sinning against the truth? Well, the answer is, well, don't throw away your confidence. Don't shrink back. Don't do that. Are you devaluing the grace of God like Esau?

Well, remember that we are coming to a company of thousands upon thousands of angels. Remember where you're heading. Don't think about Esau who lost his birthright. And are you departing from the one who speaks while he's saying, well, you need to worship God in reverence and all.

Those are the problems. Those are the solutions that we have through the book of Hebrews. And right in the middle, of course, is Hebrews 11, which is a great roll call of faith, which I'm sure is just there to say, look, these guys weren't perfect either, but they made it.

You know, they didn't drift away. And they didn't slip their moorings. So that's the first application. If you're spiritually adrift, then it's, you know, we can't do it for you.

[38 : 28] I can't do it for you. We can advise. You know, you can have a conversation, but at the end of the day, you've got to get to the Word of God and you've got to read the Word of God. If you don't, you drift.

Because the devil will come and take you and he'll sidle you off into some side alley somewhere and you'll get spiritually mugged. And you don't want that.

What about sin? Because he deals with sin in chapter 2. How are we to handle temptation and sin?

Well, the very last verse that we read in chapter 2 is this. He says, because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

And that's a great encouragement, isn't it? We're tempted to sin. We are tempted to sin. Well, Jesus suffered when he was tempted. Can you believe that? Jesus suffered.

[39 : 29] Every temptation they had in the desert, in the 40 days in the desert, every moment of his life, there were temptations just like we are and yet without sin. And he suffered.

But yet we, he is the great anchor to our soul. And he is able to help us who are being tempted likewise.

So, I hope that's been an encouragement too because I love Hebrews and it teaches us so much. And just understanding where people are, just understanding how the writer deals with the problems, this spiritual triage.

And he goes in one after the other and he hits them. And we finish off, don't we? Don't we finish off with that wonderful benediction which says, may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever. There's still problems in this church but their address and the writer can feel confident that they'll listen to it and they'll understand the message and they will be saved and they'll have good news or Timothy will have good news when he gets there after being released from prison.

[41 : 01] Now at the back, as you go out, I've done about a dozen copies on something I took from a study Bible on the glories of Christ. And if anybody wants to take a copy then feel free and just, again, something to just read out.

Find out about Christ. You know, your problem is Christ, your solution. It's Christ. And he is the one that is faithful to us.

Shall we? Our gracious God and our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your beloved Son. We thank you that as we've already sung that he is fairer than 10,000.

He is the fairest of all. He is the Lord of all creation. He is the one towards whom we are to fix our eyes. And we thank you that we have such good instruction from your word.

Please help us, Lord, not to drift, not to be tempted by the world, not to be spiritual fools, but to lay hold of Christ and be moored up to him and not drift away.

[42 : 12] Help us, we pray, for the glory of his name. Amen. Amen. Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution. At other times, you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So do not throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Let's set a grace together. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen.