

What is your life

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Preacher: Rev Vernon Higham

[0 : 00] My text is in the epistle of James and chapter 4 and verse 14.

James chapter 4 and verse 14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life?

It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

The particular phrase that drew my attention in that verse was this particular line. For what is your life? And I'm sure that everybody here in this congregation tonight, and I should imagine that all people, sometime or another, are bound to ask themselves that question.

Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? And we puzzle over the meaning of self-existence. And sometimes, like the psalmist, we look up into the skies and see the stars and all the heavenly bodies, and we wonder, well, how is it that they are there?

[1 : 16] Who made them? And how can they be there? What are these heavenly bodies? And during our lives, sometimes, when we are children, I can remember, around about the age of eight or nine, being very worried about two things.

I was worried about space. I began to think if we went for millions of miles in one direction, and then came to the end of it, what then? And then I realized I had to be something beyond the end.

And as a little child, it got me confused. Then I began to think of time. Who made God, I thought, and who was God's father? I was but a child, and trying to sort these things out.

And I came to the conclusion that God always had to be. But where was the beginning of things?

And where did things end? And how big was eternity? And how vast was it all?

And what was the meaning of time? I thought of those things in a childlike way. And I'm sure that we all, at some time or another, have thought of these things above the order of the day where we do our shopping, or our work in our house, or our particular work, our obligations at work, whatever they may be, that every now and again we pause in our lives and we consider and we begin to think.

[2 : 34] It can be a sorrow or a bereavement, a sudden shock, whatever it may be, that makes us think of these things. What is the meaning of life? And is there an afterlife?

But really, you know, it doesn't start like that at all. The Bible doesn't even pretend to prove God. It begins with a statement about God.

God. In the beginning, God. And that's why we are here tonight, because we believe in this inerrant, infallible, and inspired word, that it is the word of God.

And the one who is written through men by the Holy Spirit, the one who has given us this Bible, is the great creator and upholder of all things. Nothing can live or exist without the permission of God.

We live, move, and have our being by the mercy of God. The God in whose hand our breath is.

That is our God. And he is our creator. He is our maker.

[3 : 36] The question is the other way around. What does he think of our lives? What is my life in his sight? What are we like in the sight of this great and this glorious and this powerful God?

And then perhaps we begin to consider these things. And when we are considering these things seriously, I believe then that the Holy Spirit is beginning to work in our hearts and stirring us to consider the meaning of life and of eternity, of where we shall spend eternity, of heaven and of hell, and of facing God, and the meaning of such things.

A verse like this brings thoughts like that to me. Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow, how limited we are.

Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

And yet we don't live like that. I'd like to bring first of all to this point, and bring another part of scripture to your attention as well. The preparations of life. We are so busy.

[4 : 49] I'm sure that if I ask every one of you here tonight, have you got plenty of time? Your answer to me would be that your lives are very full, and that we are all so very busy, and it is very hard to fit everything in, all the things that we have to achieve, all the things that we have on our minds.

This is how we are. And James put it like this. Go to now, he says in verse 13. Go to now. Ye that say today or tomorrow, we will go into such a city, and continue their year, and buy, and sell, and get gain.

We talk like that. Not exactly in that same kind of terminology, but we say this summer, I believe I'll go on a holiday to such and such a place. We'll make our booking now.

We'll decide about that. I think about what I will take, the clothes I shall wear, the places I shall visit, and things relating to that. Or it may be in business, that by a certain month, I intend to do this, that, and the other, and we are full of our own affairs, and getting gain, as it says here, that we go to a city for a year, buy, and sell, and get gain.

And yet, we have no such authority. The following verse is a very super one, or the verse, the beginning of this verse. For what does he know not, what shall be on the morrow?

[6 : 17] Look at verse 13 again. Go to now, he that say, today or tomorrow, he will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain. Well, you're talking like that, says James.

How can you talk like that? Whereas, you know not, what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then, vanishes away.

There are many things in our lives, that cause us to think, of thoughts like that. I have many. But I think I have one, that I'd like to share tenderly with you, and also with sensitivity, and one that you all know about as well.

But yet you know, there have been so many tragedies in this world, that as we grieve and sorrow, for those who suffer, in one great tragedy, then next week there's another, which seems to eclipse that one, then another, then another, then something the other end of the world, then something near at home, until in the end, we don't even know the times, or the dates, or when things happened.

But there are some things, that remain. And for me, I think it was something, that seemed to be, it didn't seem to be anything at all. It seemed to be, just another day in November.

[7 : 32] It had been raining a great deal. Grey, dark days, miserable days, that we in the West, are quite used to. a kind of a, you have a grey feeling, for that kind of day. Not particularly miserable, but another day without sunshine.

And it had rained a great deal, for weeks and weeks. And then, we happen to have the news on. You know, they can, one thing can happen in a day, and that day, changes all its meaning.

There is no other news then, and there is no other interest. I don't want to, take advantage of this, but to mention it, with reverence.

It was an announcement, it said, that the little town, of about six or seven thousand people, a mountain, had slipped, and fallen on the school.

But the first news, didn't seem to be so bad. It just said, that the main door, seemed to be blocked. We didn't know then, that the total thing, had happened then. The news came in, in ways like that.

[8 : 35] And I thought to myself, well, those children will be excited, and they'll be making such a fuss. I'm thinking, of the few hundred children, that will be there. And then the news, became more serious, and said, it may be, very difficult, to get to these children.

And as the hours went on, he began to realise, that there was, no hope. There was no hope.

And there were those terrible photographs, that they could not get, even one child complete. The terrible, terrible story of it all. We didn't think, at the beginning of that day, it would be such a day, as that.

And I could remember, the following Lord's Day, that I knew, that all things, are in the hands of God. And I believe, in the absolute wisdom, and the sovereignty of God. Believe those things, with all my heart, and being.

And yet, it seemed so hard, that we stood as a congregation, in prayer, to remember, the poor families, and the fathers, and the mothers, in a town, that no longer, had any children, apart from

two or three, who stayed home that day.

[9 : 46] A kind of a nightmare, of a thing. And I can remember, well, a year later, with Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the late Dr. Lloyd-Jones, he was taking a memorial service, that was relayed, in all the chapels, in the town, that were full for that occasion.

And I read, and I prayed, and then he preached. And I remember, what he said, you are all asking why. Why was there, such a day, as this?

Why had that day, to happen, in our lives? And very tenderly, he said, shall I tell you why? It isn't because, of your fault.

It isn't because, of anything in your town, or your village. Although you, like all other people, are in the same condemnation, it is because, of the fall.

And that is why, we have great catastrophes. That is why, we have wars, and rumors of wars.

That's why, men lust, and greed. That's why, we have these terrible things.

[10 : 48] That's the reason why, and very tenderly, he explained to them, that we all lived, under this terrible cloud, and this terrible, the layers of human beings, and then turned our thoughts, to the grace of God, and to the kingdom of God, and to the weight of glory, and to everlasting things.

But it remained with me, and will remain with me, and I suppose, with many people, particularly, that sad town, which is still, a sad town, with a gap, in this generation, a generation gap, that is used, usually, in a very careless way, in a way, I do not agree with it, the world, when they say, that young and old people, don't agree with one another, here is a terrible generation gap, a gap that can never be filled, a day, that we never thought we'd see.

Many countries have had, tragedies on a greater scale, but there's something about a school, and little children, I shall not forget. This verse then, to me, whereas he know not, we just don't know, whereas he know not, what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life, it is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

There is one thing that is certain, we do not know what the morrow holds, and yet, strangely, with diligence, we give attention to it, as if we knew, how many hours, exactly would be hours, how many minutes, we're at our disposal, how many days, how many weeks, how many years, as if we, were the master of our days, as if we, were our own makers, and our own creators, we live like that, and forget, our limitation, we forget, the frailty of man, and the brevity of our lives, our Lord Jesus Christ, was talking, to people at one time, and he gave them a parable, and you know the parable well, and I'll remind you of it, because it marries well, with the get gain, and how we fill our lives, and so suddenly, we are pulled up, with something, that we never thought, would happen in our lives, and he speak a parable, and said, and saying, the ground of a certain rich man, brought forth plentifully, and he thought within himself, saying, why, what shall I do, because I have no room, where to bestow my fruits, a very happy, worried man, not the kind of worry, what shall I do, how shall I pay for this, or how shall I pay for that, but the kind of worry, that he would tell us, I suppose, we rich men, have worries, that you poor men, know nothing about, I lie awake at night, and I wonder, where am I going, to put all my money, where, how am I going to deal, with all my prosperity, how am I going to, manage with all the business, I have, the responsibilities, that weigh upon, my little shoulders, and the worries, that seem to whiz around, in my little head, what shall I do, I have no room, to put all these things, that kind of worry, we may not have, much sympathy with, and yet, we can be guilty, of lying in our bed, at night, and thinking, what shall I get, and what shall I do, what shall I have, he was doing that, and he said, he came to a conclusion, and the solution, of his problem, this will I do, I will, pull down my barns, and build greater, he did a brainwave, I'll find a bigger bank, that can hold my money,

[14 : 32] I'll find a bigger barn, that can hold my fruits, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow, all my fruits, and goods, and a great feeling, of relief, filled his whole being, a great wave, of happiness, and self satisfaction, of thinking, I solved my problem, I know exactly, what I will do, and tomorrow, immediately, diligently, and with all my effort, I will get about, solving this problem, of mine, but he never thought, he never thought, that he would not have, the moral, to do that, and I will say, to my soul, so, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years, six, nine years, eat, drink, and be merry, you're doing very, very well, you're doing very nicely, there's no need for you, to work as hard now, you can still be successful, and prosperous, and money makes money, and prosperity, gains prosperity, and let money earn, its own money, and then you can take your ease, and drink, and be merry, that is what you'll do, what will you do in your life, well,

I've been a very busy man, I've worked hard, all my life, I'm a self-made man, I'm prosperous, and now, I'm a very happy man, because I will eat, drink, and be merry, that is exactly what I'll do, that is what I want to do, what possessions, can do to a man, I remember reading, in some book of phrase, the tyranny, of things, it's a good phrase, the tyranny, of things, near my, church, in Cardiff, it's far enough away, for it to be, impersonal enough, and the person, that I'm referring to now, could not be known to anyone, is no longer there, a little shop, was taken over, by a very, hard working man, it was a grosser shop, he was a very pleasant man, he cut prices,

I don't know how he made money, but I think, it was because, if any shop was open, his shop was open, yes, late at night, if you've forgotten something, at 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, that shop next door, to our chapel, to our church, it would be open, it was open always, a busy, busy place, and he worked, and he worked, and he slaved, he was open on Sunday, sadly, he was open on Easter time, he was open Christmas day, it seemed as if, there was no day at all, that made any difference, but make money, get gain, buy, sell, buy, sell, that seemed to be, him altogether, then the shop next door, became empty, and he bought it, and to make it, briefer, in the end, he bought, four or five of the shops, and then, he made it so, as he can today, that he became, one massive supermarket, and he became, successful, but you know, if you try to talk, to that man, you are not talking, to a man, you are talking, to a shop, he bought shop, he slept shop, he ate and drank shop, he only walked, to and from the shop, and when he eventually, went from the shop, it was only to sell that shop, to get a bigger shop, it's as if there was a point, where he, she's to be a person, and he was, a shop,

I thought, that can happen, it can happen, on a smaller scale, and yet, totally on the same scale, as a person is concerned, the tyranny, of things, the tyranny, of things, dwelling upon it, thinking upon it, thinking of ways, and means, cut prices, yet getting gain, all the while advancing, and all the while, losing, something, so precious, he gave them, their hearts, desires, and he sent, leanness, to their souls, it is a frightening thing, and yet, we know, that this can happen, the story goes on, the presumption, of men, you see, we can behave, like that, of course we can, we can be as active, and as diligent, as that, in our effort, to get gain, and fill our mind, with our favorite ambition, whether it is money, or something, that is material, or popularity, or ambition, or grief, or anything, that fills our lives, other than God, whatever it may be, that we fill the bonds, of our lives, with whatever it may be, but we presume, far too much, we do not consider, another factor, that other factor, is God himself, we forget that, and this poor man, whereat he know not, what shall be a no matter, for what is your life, it is even a vapor, that appeareth, for a little time, and then vanish away, vanisheth away, and that's all there is to it, it's a terrible thing, that's the verse in James, that I'm reading to you now, and how is he describing, life, well like this, you're looking upon a valley, a beautiful valley, and then, you tell your friend, come along, and see this lovely valley, that I see, and by the time, the friend has come, there is a gentle mist, hovering over, the river, that's there in the valley, and the trees, that surround, each side of the river, and then he said, but there was a very lovely valley there, but the mist has come, and we look away, and you look again, and the mist has gone, you can't catch it, you can't hold it, you can't tie it, you can't keep it, says James, your life, is as frail as that, you have breath at all, because, it is God, the God, in whose hand thy breath is, we are told in Daniel, that is where your breath is, and other than that, there is no permission to live, or to be, or to be able, to do anything at all, and yet, we, we forget,

I can remember, an incident, I recall now, the phone went, and a lady asked me, if I would be so kind, as to take, her husband's, funeral, and she said, you don't know him, so I went round, and I said, well, why do you want me, to take your husband's funeral, well, she said, we are not, church attending people, and then of course, you know how people usually say, but we are good living Christians, but we have never attended church, but my husband has been, to your church, four times, when friends of his, have died, and it was only last week, he said, he said, if ever I go to church, that's the church I go to, and then she said, the strangest thing, he's made it, hasn't he, I said, but my dear, he hasn't,

[22 : 19] I couldn't let her say that, I was kind to her, I was gracious to her, I wouldn't in any way hurt her, but he hardens, when you think, what people intend to do, and yet they are so full, of doing this, and doing that, and yet their little life, is as fragile, and as frail, as a mist, it is here, it is gone, it is visible, it is invisible, as frail as that, and how can we, be so certain, so absolutely certain, I've got tomorrow, in my hands, I will do this tomorrow, and I will build, my little empire, or whatever, my little ambitious empire, may happen to be, but now you rejoice, in your boasting, all such rejoicing, is evil, and back to the parable, it's so closely linked, but God, the buts of the Bible, do you notice

them, but God, said unto him, thou fool, you know, it's a terrible thing, to call a man a fool, there are some things, that if you call a person, they are allowable, in a way, in the world, that men, will allow you, to call them, when they call names, on each other, but there are two words, that they cannot bear, to be called, even though, the two words, may be well descriptive, of them, if you say to a man, who is incapable, of truth, if you say to him, you're a liar, he feels deeply insulted, that he should be called a liar, even though he may be one, and even though he may be, a man totally lacking, in wisdom, if you call him a fool, there is rage, in his heart, to think that you should, call him a fool, but our Lord, does here, what God said unto him, thou fool, why is he calling you a fool, he is risking, his immortal soul, that's why, he's playing, shipwreck, of any hope, that can be, for everlasting life, in glory, and with God, thou fool, this night, thy soul, shall be required, of thee, then who shall, these things be, those things be, which thou, has provided, you must have seen it, and I've seen it, our people of quarrel, even at the gravesite, hardly has the service finished, on one occasion,

I can remember, of a godless family, where they began to argue, and quarrel, about the things, that they had to have, they wanted this, and they wanted that, it seemed an incredible thing, but in the, in the experience, of a minister, I think you get, the whole spectrum, of behavior, that is possible, to observe, and experience, to know, see, they'll be after, your things, oh yes, your family, and your friends, will say, I'll have a share, and I'll have a share, and you'll not be able, to say, exactly where they will go, thou fool, these things, you have to let them go, when all around, the world, gives way, what is going to be, your hold and stay, what are you going, to hold on to, thou fool, this night, thy soul, thy immortal soul, shall be required, of thee, so is he, that layeth a treasure, for himself, and is not rich, towards God, where are we, where are we, do you remember, the words, the terrifying words, that's, where your, heart is, that's your treasure, that's your heart, that's your treasure, how a man thinketh, what we dwell, what we dwell, what we desire, that's you, that's me, does it make us, not rather, to cry out, in mercy, oh God, is that myself, is that all I am, is that all I am, groveling about, in the things, and the trinkets, and the material things, of this world, desiring, a little extension, of life, in order only, to get more gain, is that all I am Lord, can there not be more, than that, and there can, when the Holy Spirit, of God, begins to work, upon the soul, of a man, then great things, can happen, even impossible, people, can turn, to God, wonderful things, can happen, but how do they happen, lastly, the provision, of God, back to James, for what he, ought to say, if the Lord, will, we shall, live, and do this, or that,

I can remember, when I was a young boy, and in the, congregation, the Welsh Presbyterian, chapel, that I attended, and each one, I attended, in different places, where we lived, as a family, when the, secretary, of the elders, would get up, to give the, announcements, for the following week, this is how, he would begin, God willing, these other meetings, we hope, by his mercy, to hold, next week, and there was, wasn't there, in that time, a great awareness, of God, and we saw things, in a different kind of light, we saw the events, in the world, as they were, and as he affected, the church, of our Lord, and Saviour, Jesus Christ, a great awareness, of God himself, for what he ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that, an acknowledgement, of God, we begin there, an acknowledgement, of the creator, and the upholding, of all things, and by him, all things consist, live, move, have our being, because of the greatness, of the power, of our creative God, you cannot exclude God, in your thinking,

I wonder, if there is any one, of us here tonight, that thinks, about many things, do you exclude God, we can even be, reasonably good people, and yet, we exclude, God from our thinking, that we cannot do, if the Lord, will, we shall live, tonight, and do this, or that, if the Lord, will, we shall be alive, tomorrow, and do this, or that, and what he's telling us here, and leading us into this, is a recognition, of the greatness, of God, and the absolute, sovereignty of God, and the absolute, authority, of God, where do I stand, in relation, to the will of God, and what is my life then, in the light, of this great God, what will he call me, will he call me a fool, or will he call me, his child, it's one or the other, for surely, it must be one or the other, for he who is not, his child, must be a fool, for he has neglected, the great things, and the great issue, of eternity, and the immortality, of his soul, and of the day, of judgment, and of the wrath of God, and of the favour of God, of course, a man is a fool, if he neglects such things, then how can we know, his favour, in this epistle, in the first chapter, in verses 17, it's as if, a window opened, and gave us, a glimpse, of something, of the greatness, and the power, and the loveliness, of God, let me read you the verses, for every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, it says let's begin there, every good gift, and every perfect

gift, where does it come from, is from above, and cometh down, from the father of lights, with whom, is no variableness, neither shadow, of turning, the immutability, of God, the unchanging, character of God, because of the perfection, of all his attributes, there is no need, can there ever be, any improvement, or any change, because he is perfect, from, from the very essence, of his being, in whom, there is no variableness, neither shadow, of turning, when we walk, a shadow goes this way, and that way, sharpens, and lengthens, but with God, there is no variableness, there is a straightness, a rightness, a purity, a holiness, about our God, in whom, there is, no variableness, neither shadow, of turning, never will he deviate,

O Lord, bend your rules, a little to the left, or to the right, no, I am constant, constant, in my holiness, constant, in my righteousness, of pure eyes, that cannot behold sin, what are you like, O God, here is described, as a father, of lights, the father, of righteousness, dwelling, in holiness, dwelling, in righteousness, dwelling, in depths, of burning light, and a soul, might cry out, like this man, do it once, eternal light, eternal light, how pure, the soul must be, when placed, within thy, searching sight, it shrinks not, but with calm delight, can live, and look on thee, O how can I, whose nature's fear, is dark, whose mind, is dim, before the ineffable, appear, or upon my naked, spirit's bare, the uncreated beam, there is a way, for man to rise, to that sublime abode, an offering, a sacrifice, a holy spirit's, energies, and advocate, with God, father, father of light, in whom, there is no variableness, absolute purity, and righteousness, and no one, can have fellowship, with him, unless they find, a righteousness, that matches, equals, is acceptable, to the righteousness, of God,

[34 : 03] O how can I, O how can I, whose nature's fear, is dark, whose mind, is dim, before the ineffable, appear, or upon my naked, spirit's bare, the uncreated, beam, do you remember, the next verse, of his own will, begat he us, with a word, of truth, that we should be, a kind of first fruit, of his creatures, there's hope, there's hope, for the hopeless, and the helpless, we who are sinful, by nature, and whatever degree, of sin it is, we are helpless, and hopelessly far, there is I suppose, a difference in a way, but what difference, can there be, if some of us have, my sins, that are like the Himalayan range, and others, maybe like the Pyrenees, and others like the Scottish mountains, and others like the Welsh mountains, what is that, from the heights of eternity, they're all about the same size, in comparison, to the perfection of God, in eternal life,

O, how can I, whose native sphere is dark, whose mind is dim, before the ineffable appear, or upon my naked spirit bear, the uncreated beam, he begins us, by the word of truth, it is a new birth, it is a new dimension, it is an amazing, of the spiritual, it is an intervention, of the grace of God, for where are men going, no man ever chooses hell, every man and woman, in the world, are heading, headlong towards hell, in any case, it is only a divine intervention, that can arrest them, and turn them, into a direction, which is Godward, it is mercy, and the grace of God, that will do this, stirring in the depths, of our being, a dissatisfaction, with things, and beginning to see, that my shop, or my ambition, or my ability, or my talent, or this, or that, did not help me, in my sorrow, did not strengthen me, in my weakness, is not helping me, in the valley, of the shadow of death, I am beginning to see, that there is a weakness, in these things, that we see, have, and hold, and we begin to think, of the invisible God, and at last, the word of truth, how many times, in this building, have men, and women, come to the ministers, at that time, any time in its history, and would say, something like this, why did you not, preach that before, it preached many, many times, we can answer why, they heard, for the first time, we hear, and yet we are deaf, we see, and yet we do not see, until one day, the eyes of our understanding, are enlightened, and we see, and we hear, and we begin to see, the wonder of it all, we begin to see, our unworthiness, what is this word of truth, the word of truth, about myself, is this, that I am sinful, and that the wages of sin, is death, and that is a second death, it is a living thing, it is eternal, damnation in hell, there is no reprieve, there is no end to it, it continues, where we hate, and are hated, and where there is no hope, only utter despair, and however much we might desire, there is no desire, that can bring us out, or bridge, that can bridge the gap, there is a great goal fixed, that is where I am going, and then he turns my eyes, to see the loveliness, of Jesus Christ, how can a sinful thing, like me, how can I, with a mind like mine, and a heart like mine, and a life like mine, that is my life, and I am spending it, like a tale that is sold, that is my life, oh how can I, whose nature's fear is dark, whose mind is dim, before the ineffable appear, the word of truth, and then we are shown, by the grace of God, the loveliness, of our Lord, and Savior,

Jesus Christ, the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley, and the fairest, of ten thousand, to our souls, are bright, and morning stars, Emmanuel, or the line of David, Messiah, Jesus Christ, the anointed one, the son of God, perfect humanity, absolute deity, this, great son of God, and in the fullness, of time, he took on the fall, of a servant, and he came into this world, what is he doing, it is a great, divine rescue mission, he comes to live, to die, and to die, that we might live, think, of his cross, he lived, a perfect life, in my stead, fulfilled the law, for you and me, and then, on that cross, on that cross, he paid the penalty, for our sin, do you understand, its meaning, do you understand, may I give you, a little illustration, there,

I was in a preaching mission, somewhere in the south, of England, and a lady, came to me, a fine lady, Christian lady, and she said, that she'd been visiting, her brother, and that he had, come to the Lord, shortly before he died, she said, he'd always been, a very keen, church goer, church officer, very diligent, and a good man, as the world would say, and yet, he had no peace, and he had, his terminal illness, and although, she lived many, hundreds of miles away, she went to see him, and she said, how is it, with your soul, and he said, well I've been, confessing my sins, to God, have you got peace, no, now she knew, what she was doing, then she said, maybe you've not, confessed them all, I'll leave you, an hour or two, she came back, have you got peace, my brother, no, then she said, well,

[41 : 37] I can remember, what you were like, when you were a young man, I can remember some as well, you may have forgotten them, and she reminded him of some, some he remembered, and some not, and he thanked her, and he said, I confess those now, to God, and he went on, and the following day, she came to see him, and he said, I have no peace, and he said, have you got peace, she said, yes, what do you mean, I have peace with God, I am a forgiven person, I rest upon the merits, of Jesus Christ, I have assurance of salvation, because I stand, by the grace of God, on redemption ground, he said, could you remember, all your sins, no, I could remember some, but what did you do, I came, as I was, what do you mean, he said, well, she said, I knew,

I was a sinful person, I could remember, some of my sins, God would know them all, but all I did, before God, I said, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and he understood, and came, as a sinner, to Jesus, for there you see, nailed on the cross, all was there, he pays the penalty, in full, it hardly seems bearable, to be able to say, oh, was there ever suffering like this, what a wondrous cross this was, there are many crosses, but not like this one, never was there such a weight as this, when he looked into the cup, in the garden of Gethsemane, when he looked there, he said, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but my will be done, and yet he went through with it, and drank as if it were, the iniquity of it all, he never became sinful, but there was counted to him, imputed to him, our sin, and he pays a penalty, yes, it is a crucifixion, yes, there are nails, yes, there are falls, they are there, and the insults, and the shame of it all, but the suffering, was equal, to the intensity, of eternity, in hell, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, never was a penalty paid, in full, in full, past, present, future, that's not an excuse to sin,

God forbid, says Paul, he pays a penalty, of what we are, in full, then the grace of God, stirs in our hearts, and we cry out, he gives us grace, to repent, he gives us grace, to believe, by grace, I am saved, through faith, and that's not of yourselves, it is the gift, of God, and we are embraced, and do embrace, our blessed, our blessed, Savior, and what is our standing, now, it always remains, the same, by faith, we appropriate, the righteousness, of Christ, and the forgiveness, of sins, to ourselves, which justifies us, in the sight, of God, our sins, are forgiven, we have peace, with God, and that, never changes, my feelings, may come and go, my mood, my moods, may alter dramatically, but the relationship, with God, through saving faith, always, remains the same, not an excuse, to sin, of gratitude, and grace, from God, to go on, to be not likened to him, but our salvation, always will rest, on the finished work, of our Lord, and Savior,

Jesus Christ, with our minds, he enlightens us, to understand, that he died, for me, for you, with our hearts, he moves us, to feel, that he loved, like this, for you, for me, and with our will, he enables us, to come, and believe, in him, by the grace, of God, we are begotten, we are reborn, we are brought, into a new dimension, there is hope, for the hopeless, he says, in this epistle, humble yourselves, in the sight, of the Lord, and what will he do, and he, shall lift you up, what a different story, what a miserable story, it is for many people, when they've been too busy, I remember one man, saying to me, you know, I'm very interested, in evangelical Christianity, but I've got a problem, he said, I'm a very busy man, he said these words to me, he came for a couple, of Sundays, and then he said, this is my problem, he said, I've got no room, for the services, I do such a lot, of business on

Sunday, and call so many friends, in, I have no room, and I challenged him, and said, is it that you're saying, that you have no room, for God in your heart, he was a fool, a man is a fool, a man is wise, if he begins, to seek those things, of God, and to call, to God, for mercy, and to know, of riches, that are so very different, what can there be, more wonderful, than to be forgiven, to be clean, what can there be, more wonderful, to be an heir, of glory, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, for us, what can be, more wonderful, than to have, an abundant entrance, into the everlasting kingdom, of our Lord, and Saviour,

[48 : 01] Jesus Christ, what can be, more wonderful, than to be welcomed, by God, himself, who wipes away, our tears, and there, to dwell, in glory, and see, our God, and live, may I close, with an illustration, I read, a long time ago, in a book, by a man called, Beutner, the book was called, Immortality, the illustration, was not his, but he, I don't think, he said, where it came from, so if he could, quote it, I think I can, it's a lovely one, the difference, between, thou fool, this night, thy soul, shall be required, of thee, and this, the death, and this, the death, and the comparison, was this, on a sailing ship, and this would be, very relevant, in your case, in an island, like this, and think of the times, of a sailing ship, and there she is, in the harbour, of this life, the ship is a person, and there he or she, we call the ship like that, in the harbour, of this life, but all around, on the harbour, are able to say, we know, that she, she will not be long, before she leaves, she is, lifting her anchor, she is setting out, she's got, no she hasn't, she's still here, and then there's a moment, and then, because slowly, to go out of the harbour, and other friends, and the relatives, are thinking, about this person, and this loved person, and this person, who had faith, and this faith, now it is going to change, in the sight, and they see, this beautiful sailing ship, this soul, as it were, going smaller, and smaller, until, at the end, it comes on the horizon, and it is a mere dot, on the horizon, but it is only a dot, so then, and the dot disappears, but it has only disappeared, in their eyes, for there is another shore, and not another shore, there is another harbour, the harbour, of the haven, of the glory of God, and there, the multitudes of heaven, are saying, see, here she comes, and as she comes, larger, and forward in sail, and enters, full sail, into the everlasting, harbour kingdom, of our Lord, and Savior,

Jesus Christ, and that, is dying, for the believer, there seems, as if there could not be, a choice between them, as if there could never be, there was, a gentleman, who is a preacher, in our congregation, his, I think he had read, his Bible, over 80 times, from beginning to end, he used to sit, in a wheelchair, and come there, and preach, from the, from the big seats there, and he was taken ill, and he was in hospital, and we have some of the nurses, in our congregation, now who remember this, he said to the sister, now sister, he said, tonight, I am going to die, oh, no, no, no, you're not, you mustn't think about this, yes, I am, he said, I'm not worried, I'm going home, and I want to go home, tonight I'm going to die, what do you want, I want all the doctors, that have attended me, I want all the nurses, and I want you sisters, I want you around my bed, with my family, and I want you, whether you believe in God, or not, to watch a Christian die, and see me sailing, into glory, he had the privilege, of that, do you think like that, for me, to live, is Christ, and to die, is gain, for we know not, what shall be in the morrow, for what is your life, it is a vapor, it is here for a while, then vanish it away, but Lord, is there any more, we have any more, so a soul, and our souls, are incapable of death, they cannot die, they may try to die, they cannot die, it will live, and the question is this, will I be a fool, or will I be a child, of grace, will my soul, be embraced, by my blessed savior, or will I be so, trapped, in the tyranny, of things, that my eyes, can only behold, the things, that I can grasp, and see, and touch, feel, no, rather than come, to that knowledge, which is a knowledge, of God, that peace, which passes, all understanding, that grace, that keeps us, so firmly, in adversity, and in prosperity, that we know, where we are going, we belong, to God, and that no power, in hell, or in earth, is able, to take away, that relationship, from us, let us pray, let us pray, let us pray, let us pray, almighty God, and our heavenly father, we ask thee, in thy mercy, to look upon us now, and pray, oh Lord, for us other people here, oh merciful God, will thou grant, that they may be, mercy, towards us, according, to our need, and for those, who are on the brink, of faith, for those, who are beginning, to be stirred, by thy spirit, we ask thee, oh Lord, that they may be, given grace, to believe, for the sake, of Jesus Christ, our saviour, amen.