

# Jesus Our Fullness

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Date: 21 February 2018

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Well if we could, for a short while this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Paul's letter to the Colossians in chapter 2.
- And as I said, we're looking at verses 8 to 23, but if we just take as our text, the words of verses 13 and 14. Colossians 2 and verse 13.
- And you who were dead in your trespasses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of death that stood against us with its legal demands.
- This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Now I want to begin this evening by asking the very simple question, what is a Christian?
- What is a Christian? And of course the answer to such a simple question is that a Christian is someone who follows Jesus Christ.
- [ 1 : 18 ] Because the term Christian, it means Christ's one. One who follows Jesus Christ. But more than that, the term Christian means someone who belongs to Jesus Christ.
- Someone who has been bought by Jesus Christ. And someone who is united to Jesus Christ. So we're thinking about the question, what is a Christian?
- And I ask this simple question because, well it's relevant to our study of this passage this evening. Because in this passage, Paul is actually asking us the question here.
- He's asking us, do you live like a Christian? Do you live like a Christian? And when Paul asks this question, he's not asking if you live a godly life that reflects the word of God and follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.
- For Paul, that's a given. That's what's expected. That's what's demanded in scripture. That as Christians, we live a salt and light in the world. We live a distinct lifestyle that goes against the grain of the world and follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.
- [ 2 : 26 ] But when Paul asks in this passage, do you live like a Christian? As I said, he's not talking about our Christian conduct. He's asking about your assurance as a Christian.
- Do you live like a Christian? Do you live in the assurance of your Christianity? You say that you're a Christian, he's saying.
- But do you live like a Christian? Do you live in the assurance that you're following Jesus Christ? That you belong to Jesus Christ? That you're bought by Jesus Christ?
- And that you're united to Jesus Christ? Do you live like a Christian? Or do you constantly live in fear? Do you live with this maybe sick feeling in your own stomach thinking that you might not actually be a genuine Christian?
- Do you live thinking, I'm not good enough? Or I'm not what I should be. I'm not what I want to be. How can I really be a Christian? What if what I have isn't genuine biblical Christianity?
- [ 3 : 32 ] What if I'm not the real deal? What if all this is just in my head? And I've just convinced myself and I've convinced everyone around me that I'm a Christian. And on the day of judgment, when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ, I will be told, depart from me.

For I never knew you. My friend, do you live like a Christian? And the reason Paul is asking this question is not to plant a seed of doubt in your heart and in your mind.

The reason he asks this question is because the Colossians, well, they were like a field that was full of seeds of doubt. In fact, these seeds of doubt, they'd already germinated and they began growing.

And they were making the Colossians worse. Because these seeds of doubt, they had been sown, as we've said before, they had been sown by these false teachers. And the seed that these false teachers were sowing was that the Colossians lacked something in their Christianity.

And that they needed something more than Jesus. They claimed that their minister, who was the minister of that small town of Colossae, Epaphras. They claimed that Epaphras' message was okay, but it wasn't the full gospel.

[ 4 : 46 ] It was only a half gospel. They said that Epaphras didn't stress the need to have that something extra, that full Christian experience. And the Colossians, they claimed that they weren't proper Christians until they received that vital extra thing that was missing in their Christianity.

And you know, the message which the false teachers were proclaiming, as we've said before, it was a message of Jesus plus. Jesus plus their knowledge. Jesus plus their good works.

Jesus plus their law-keeping. Jesus plus their circumcision. It was all Jesus plus. And the result of presenting to the Colossians this message of Jesus plus, it made them feel inferior and inadequate.

And that they lacked something in their Christianity. And the Colossians, they doubted their salvation. And they questioned whether or not they were actually saved. And they lacked confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

And you know, Paul knew how clever and how cunning these false teachers were. That they would try and delude the Colossians with all these intellectual and plausible arguments.

[ 6 : 00 ] That's what he says in verse 4. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness, the confidence of your faith in Christ.

So Paul is reminding these struggling Colossians. And he's reminding us when we're full of doubts and when we have feelings of unworthiness and we think that we're not really a Christian.

Paul is reminding us that as Christians, he talks about in this passage, as Christians we are complete in Christ. Our sin is cancelled by Christ and we are to be content with Christ.

That's the three headings this evening. As Christians, we are complete in Christ, cancelled by Christ and we're to be content with Christ.

So first of all, we're looking at complete in Christ. We are complete in Christ. Look at verse 8. He says, See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

[ 7 : 21 ] For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. And so when Paul reminds the Colossians that they are complete in Christ, he's just reminding them of what he's already said.

He's re-emphasizing the points that he already raised in chapter 1, that Jesus Christ is their fullness. And that in Christ, as Christians who are united to Jesus Christ, they lack nothing.

They are complete in Christ. As Christians, they have received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And they are complete in Christ because, as Paul says in verse 9, For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

And you know that statement alone, it's enough to blow your mind. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And with this, Paul is just picking up on what he was talking about in chapter 1, where he was mentioning the pre-eminence of Christ.

If you look at chapter 1 and verse 15, just to remind ourselves, he says about Jesus, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.

[ 8 : 57 ] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

And what Paul is reminding the Colossians is that Jesus Christ, he is the image of the invisible God. He is the full and final revelation of who God is and what God has done in salvation.

He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And he has all authority in heaven and on earth, as he said there. And he is the king and head of his church. He is overruling in all things.

And Paul says that because of who Jesus is, and because of what he has done for us, you have a full salvation. You have a complete salvation. When you are a Christian who follows Jesus Christ, and when you confess that he is Lord, you have the assurance that you belong to Jesus Christ.

You have been bought by Jesus Christ. And you are united to Jesus Christ. And again in this chapter, in chapter 2, Paul is making this point. And he's making the point because these false teachers, they were harassing the Colossians by saying that they needed something else, something extra, something more.

[ 10 : 18 ] They had to do something in order to make them worthy of their Christianity. And yet Paul lovingly reassures them that what they already have is enough.

And he says to them in verse 8, See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy or empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Because in him the whole fullness of deity dwells, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. And you know I love that phrase in verse 10, you have been filled in him.

He's saying you are complete in him. Because what Paul is saying to these doubtful Christians is that you have everything you need and more because you are in union with Christ.

You have received the fullness of salvation because of your union with Christ. And you know, I've said it before, Paul loves this concept of union with Christ.

[ 11 : 33 ] In every letter he writes, he's talking about it. And he emphasises how precious our salvation is and how full our salvation is because of our union with Christ.

And when you read Paul's letters, all you see is that every aspect of our salvation, every spiritual blessing which flows to us as Christians, it does so because we are in union with Christ.

We are united to Jesus Christ. And these are key phrases for Paul, and we'll see this in this passage, where he uses these phrases, in Christ or with Christ.

In Christ and with Christ. And every time he uses them, he's always alluding back to our union, our relationship, our marriage union, you could say, with Christ.

My friend, union with Christ is what underlies every aspect of our salvation. And this union which exists between Christ, you and the Christian, you and the Christian, sorry, Christ and the Christian, that connection, that union, in that union, Christ provides every spiritual blessing.

[ 12 : 50 ] And I'm sure I've quoted this before, that one theologian, he says that union with Christ is like the fountainhead. And from that fountainhead flows the Christians' every spiritual blessing.

And the blessings are repentance and faith, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification.

All these blessings, they flow to us, and they flow to us from our union with Christ. It's all encapsulated and bound up with our union with Christ.

And the point that Paul is making here is that our salvation is full. It's full and complete because of our union with Christ.

And this is what Paul is saying in verse 10. You have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority. You're filled in him.

[ 13 : 49 ] You're already complete. You don't lack anything. And you're complete because of your union with Christ, because Christ has done everything on your behalf. And you know, the imagery that Paul is using here in verse 10, it's the image of just a cup, a cup that's full to the brim.

There's nothing more you can add to it. Completely full. And that's what he's saying about you as a Christian. You're full. You're filled to the top.

You lack nothing. You're absolutely complete in Christ. And you know, when you think about Psalm 23, we all know Psalm 23 so well, where David, he confesses the testimony of the Christian, the Lord is my shepherd.

Then he says, I shall not be in want. I lack nothing when the Lord is my shepherd. But then he says down in verse 5, And the point that David's making is that it's more than full.

When David confessed the Lord as his shepherd, he said that his cup overflowed because he had discovered the fullness. And he discovered the completeness of his salvation in Jesus Christ.

[ 15 : 13 ] And he had the assurance of that fullness, the full salvation. Because he went on to say in verse 6, Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me.

And in God's house forevermore, my dwelling place shall be. And so Paul is asking us tonight, do you live like a Christian? Do you live with the confidence and assurance that as a Christian, you are complete in Christ?

You lack nothing. You lack nothing. The Lord's my shepherd. I shall not be in want. So you're complete in Christ. But then secondly, Paul says that we can have confidence and assurance in our Christianity because our sin has been cancelled by Christ.

Cancelled by Christ. Look at verse 11. He says, In him, notice, in him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead.

And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[ 16 : 47 ] This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Now, you'll remember that when the apostle Paul was, when he was dramatically converted on the road to Damascus, he was commissioned by Jesus to go to the Gentiles with the gospel.

Paul was commissioned to go to those who were not Jews and they were living outside the promised land of Israel. And all of these letters which Paul has written to the churches, he wrote to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians and even the Colossians.

And the majority of these churches, they were made up of Gentiles. But because of the persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, there was this dispersion that took place in the first century.

And so many of the Jewish Christians, they had to flee their homes and they came to the Gentile areas and they came to live in all these cities and towns and they had to live with the Gentiles and they had to worship with the Gentiles.

But because there was Jews and Gentiles, there was always this bit of tension between them. And they even had nicknames for one another because the Jews, they referred to the Gentiles as the uncircumcision.

[ 18 : 06 ] And as you can guess, the Gentiles referred to the Jews as the circumcision. But their nickname for one another wasn't really a nickname. It was actually a derogatory term that they used for one another.

And that was because circumcision had become this stumbling block. It had become a stumbling block for both the Jews and the Gentiles. And Paul grapples with this problem of circumcision.

And he grapples with it, you'll see in many of his letters. The letters to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and here in his letter to the Colossians.

And so you can see that circumcision, it was a big problem in the church. And every male in the church was defined and labelled by whether or not they were circumcised.

And this issue of circumcision, it was a constant problem for the Colossians. Because it seems that the Jewish Christians and the false teachers, they were stressing to these local Gentile Colossians that they needed to be circumcised in order to be the proper Christian.

[ 19 : 15 ] But of course that wasn't true. Paul had already affirmed to the Galatians that if you receive the sign of circumcision, Christ is of no advantage to you.

Meaning that if you're doing all these outward signs in order to prove your worth as a Christian, then your focus is not upon Christ. Your focus is upon yourself.

And you know, we can fall into these same traps. And we can use the same language as the false teacher. Because, you know, we can sometimes define Christianity by saying that if you don't do this and if you don't do that, then you'll be a proper Christian.

If you, I don't know, read this Bible version, or if you keep the Sabbath, or if you put a hat on your head, or if you wear a suit and a skirt to church, or if you pray in a certain way, or read certain books, or do certain things, then you'll be a proper Christian.

And we can sometimes fall into the trap that thinking these things, that these are the things that define Christianity. That these are the things that make you a proper Christian. But Paul is saying here, no, no, no.

[ 20 : 28 ] Now, I'm not saying that any of these things that I've just mentioned are unimportant. I believe that they're all important, that they all have a place. But what Paul is reminding us here is that none of these things are what defines Christianity.

Because Christ alone is what defines Christianity. Nothing else. Our union with Christ is what defines our Christianity. And that's what Paul is reminding the Colossians here.

He says to them in verse 11, in him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

He says in him, by your union with Christ, where you have received every spiritual blessing, you were circumcised with a circumcision without hands.

And he's talking about the putting off of the flesh. And Paul is saying to these Gentile Colossians who were made to feel inferior, that they weren't proper Christians because they weren't circumcised.

[ 21 : 34 ] Paul is saying to them, you are circumcised. But it's not the circumcision of the flesh by your own hands. It's the circumcision that has been carried out, as he says himself, by Christ.

And that circumcision, he says, that cutting away, it's not a piece of flesh. It's the cutting away of your old life. It's the circumcision of your heart where you've put off the old self and you've died to sin and you've died to self, where the old man is dead.

And more than that, says Paul, the old man is buried. And with this Paul, he's again highlighting our union with Christ. And he's saying to us, this is how close your union with Christ is.

When Christ was crucified on the cross, your old self was crucified with him. When Christ died upon the cross, your old self died with him.

When Christ was buried in the grave, your old self was buried with him. But then Paul says, that's not the end of the story. Because he says in verse 12, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead.

[ 23 : 02 ] And Paul is saying that because you're in union with Christ, because you're a Christian, your old self has been crucified, dead, and buried. But there is now new life through the power of the resurrection.

And Paul says that that same power, that same energy, which raised Christ out of the grave and brought him from death to life, because of your union with Christ, it's that same power, that same energy, which brought you from death to life.

It's that same power and energy which threw you out of the grave of sin and death. My friend, this is wonderful. And you know, it should make us realise how close our union with Christ really, really is.

And you know, it's because of this closeness, this close union that we have with Christ. That's because, it's because of this that Paul could say to the Galatians, those precious words in Galatians 2, verse 20, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[ 24 : 25 ] But you know, in order to emphasise how dead the Colossians were without Christ, and how alive Christ has made them, he says in verse 13, And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the record of death that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

And with this, Paul is drawing our attention to the fact that the only way that we could be brought from death to life, darkness to light, and from sin to grace, the only way was by the cross of Jesus Christ.

It wasn't by our works, it wasn't by our circumcision, it wasn't by our law keeping, it wasn't by trying to live like a proper Christian. Paul is saying that it was all because of what Christ has done on our behalf.

And what Christ did, he says, was cancel our record of debt. Because what Paul is saying here is that when we were dead in our trespasses, we had broken God's law.

We had transgressed. We had crossed that boundary line which God's commandments set. We had transgressed the boundary, we had trespassed the law.

[ 25 : 50 ] But what Christ did for us when we confessed him as Lord and when we were united by faith, what Christ did for us was that he cancelled our record of debt that stood against us.

And I love the word that Paul uses here for cancelling. If you're using the authorised version, you'll see that it means blot out. That's what David was saying in Psalm 51.

He was talking about his sin and his record of debt against God. And David said, After thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me for thy compassions great blot out all mine iniquity.

But this phrase to cancel the record of debt or to blot out the handwriting. Paul is, in this bit, he's drawing our attention to the idea of a scroll in the ancient world.

The scroll upon which sins were recorded. In the ancient world, when someone transgressed God's law, it would be written down by the priest.

[ 26 : 57 ] This sin would be written down by the priests on a leather scroll for everyone to see it. And a record of all their trespasses were made. But if the transgressor's sin was to be blotted out, the ink that had been written used to write on this specific leather scroll, the ink was, well, all it was taken was a wet cloth and it was just wiped over.

Just like a whiteboard, if you want to make it more modern. Just a wet cloth and it's just wiped over and all made clean. But you know, what's interesting is that when you look into what actually happened, in Numbers chapter 5 it tells us that if these acts of transgression were blotted out, when this leather scroll was cleansed, it was only to be cleansed using bitter water.

And when the ink had been blotted out, they would wipe the leather, this leather scroll and wipe all the ink of it and they would catch the water in a jug or in a container.

And the person who had committed all these sins, they were then to drink that water. They were to drink the bitter water in order to be completely forgiven.

And you know, with this imagery that Paul is using, I can't help but think of the bitter cup that was given to Jesus in order to blot out our transgression.

[ 28 : 33 ] Because instead of drinking the bitter cup of our sin, we didn't have to drink it. he had to drink it. And he drank it all on our behalf.

And it wasn't an easy task because when, as you know, when Christ came face to face with the bitter cup of our sin, we're told that his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.

And you hear him saying in the garden of Gethsemane, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

It was the cup of the Father's wrath. That was the portion that was assigned to Jesus. And it was poured out upon him at the cross. It was the wrath and hell that was due to us as his people.

That was the bitter cup that was assigned to Jesus. And you know, what we've been reminded of here in this passage is that our Jesus drank that bitter cup in order that our transgressions would be blotted out.

[ 29 : 41 ] He drank it all to the last drop. He drank the bitter cup. And in doing so, Paul says, he nailed our record of debt to the cross.

And so, with this, Paul is saying to us, we have no reason to lack confidence. We have no reason to lack assurance in our Christianity.

Because when we are in union with Christ, we are complete in Christ. And our sin is cancelled by Christ. And because of this, he says, lastly and more briefly, we are to be content with Christ.

We are to be content with Christ. Look at this last section in verse 16. He says, therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

[ 31 : 07 ] If with Christ you die to the elemental spirits of the world, why as if you were still alive in the world do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch.

Referring to things that all perish as they are used according to human precepts and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and ascetism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

And in this concluding section, Paul says to the Colossians, he says that, and what he says just follows on from what he was talking about with circumcision. The Jewish Christians and the false teachers that they demanded that the Gentile Colossians be circumcised in order to be the proper Christian.

Because for Jewish Christians and the false teachers to be circumcised meant that you were not only the proper Christian, but you were also going to keep the law in its entirety.

You were going to uphold what is called the threefold law. the moral law that applies to everyone, that's the Ten Commandments, the civil law which only applied to the Israelites as a people, and also the ceremonial laws of sacrifice.

[ 32 : 26 ] So the moral, the civil, and the ceremonial laws. But you know, what Paul makes very clear here is that to insist and to impose upon Gentiles, to impose and insist to keep a civil law that only applied to Israelites, and to uphold a ceremonial law that had no efficacy because, well, Christ had already died as the ultimate sacrifice.

And so to impose these things was completely wrong. And to claim that upholding these laws and these traditions would make the Colossians proper Christians, you know, it only undermined the work of Christ.

Because it implies that the cross of Christ is not enough. And that the Colossians had to do something in order to have faith in Jesus Christ and in order to merit their salvation.

And you know, there's always the danger that we can think along the same lines as them. There's the danger that we can convince ourselves that we have to do something or we have to be something in order to be good enough and to be accepted by Jesus.

and we can convince ourselves that if I read my Bible and if I pray and if I go to church and if I make the prayer meeting and if I give to the church and if I do this for the Lord, then the Lord will love me more and the Lord will accept me better and I'll be more worthy and I'll be a better Christian.

[ 33 : 57 ] But you know, the problem with thinking along those lines is that what if you don't manage to read your Bible? What if you don't manage to have time to pray during the day?

What if you don't, you can't make it to church? What if you can't, don't have enough money to give to the church and all these things? And when you think about it, if you start thinking along those lines, you'll conclude that you can't maintain all these pressures that are on you and you think, well, the Lord doesn't love me and he won't be happy with me and I'm not a good Christian.



It's just a downward spiral. But Paul is saying here that if we think that we have any part to play in meriting our salvation, then it will only feed personal pride and detract from the cross of Christ.

And Paul's point here is that we need to be content with Christ. We need to be content. We need to continually rest upon Christ alone for our salvation.

We need to be content with Christ and just realise that Christ is enough and that there's nothing we can do to make him love us any more than he already does and there's nothing we can do to make him love us any less.

[ 35 : 20 ] And you know, this is why Paul says in verse 20, this is a key verse, if with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why?

As if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? And what Paul is saying is just what he had said earlier on. If you died with Christ, if you were crucified with Christ, if you died in union with Christ, if you were buried in union with Christ, if you have been made alive in union with Christ, and if you have received all these benefits and blessings because of your union with Christ, he says then, why are you trying to live like the world?

Why do you think that you have to try and please God? Why do you keep trying to please him by all your works?

And you know, Paul's point is so beautiful because what he's saying to the Colossians and what he's saying to us is that you already please God. You're already loved by God.

You're already his children. That's not going to change because your union with Christ, it has made you a child of God.

[ 36 : 39 ] You're adopted into the family. You have brothers and sisters all around you. Your union with Christ has made you as righteous as Christ himself.

You're justified. Your union with Christ is making you more and more like Jesus Christ because you're being sanctified every day. Your union with Christ is keeping you by the power of God.

You're being kept by the power of God through faith and to salvation, to the completion of your salvation. Your union with Christ, this is the guarantee, one day you will be presented faultless before his glory with exceeding joy.

That's glorification. And so what Paul is saying to us tonight is stop trying to be something for God. Just be what God has made you and enjoy what God has made you because he has made you a trophy of his grace.

He has made you a trophy of his grace. And you know, what he's saying is you just need to be content. Be content with Christ because you have no reason to lack confidence.

[ 37 : 57 ] You have no reason to lack assurance of your salvation because Christ has done it all on your behalf. And so I just want to conclude with the question that we began with.

Paul is asking us in this passage. Do you live like a Christian? Do you live like a Christian? Do you live in the assurance of your Christianity?

Do you live in the assurance that you're following Jesus Christ? That you belong to Jesus Christ? That you're bought by Jesus Christ? And you are in union with Jesus Christ?

Because Paul has reminded us this evening that when we are in union with Christ, when we are united to Jesus, we are complete in Christ. Our sin is cancelled by Christ and therefore we must be content with Christ.

We must be content with Christ. So complete in Christ, cancelled by Christ and content with Christ. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

[ 39 : 03 ] Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, that we are unworthy of the least of thy mercies, but we bless thee, O Lord, that thou art one who is so merciful to us, and that we are known to thee as thy children, that we are loved with an everlasting love, that we are as righteous as thy Son, Jesus.

And help us, Lord, we pray, to know that we are those who were crucified with him, that we are those who died with him, we are those who were buried with him, and we are also those who were raised with him, and that one day we will be seated in these heavenly places in Christ.

We bless thee, O Lord, for the union that we have with Christ, and help us, Lord, to realise that that union is so precious, to know that every day he is with us, every day he is upholding us, every day he is reminding us of his faithfulness towards us.

Help us then to rest in him, to wait patiently upon him, and help us, Lord, we pray, to share this Christ with others, that they too would realise what they are missing out on, that they would see the beauty of Jesus, and the glory of this Gospel.

O Lord, uphold us, we ask thee, keep us, we pray, for we know that we cannot keep ourselves, but we thank thee, Lord, that we are not to look to ourselves, but to look to the author and the finisher of our faith.

[ 40 : 43 ] Cleanse us then, we ask, go before us and do us good, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing the words of Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, page 229. We'll sing the whole Psalm.

So we're saying, Paul reminds us of the fullness that we have in Jesus Christ, that we lack nothing, and this is our testimony, when the Lord is our shepherd.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, he makes me down to lie, in pastures green he leadeth me, the quiet waters by. The whole Psalm to God's praise.

the Lord's my shepherd, the Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, he makes me down to lie, and pastures green he leadeth me, the quiet waters by.

[ 42 : 15 ] My soul he doth restore again, and he do not have made, within the path of righteousness, in for his own sake.

yea, yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear not ill, for the Lord's love with me and I walk and stop me comfort still.

my table thou hast furnished shed in presence of my foes, my feather dust with oil and heart and my cup overflows.

my cup overflows goodness and mercy all my life shall surely be truly follow me and in God's house forever more my dwelling place shall be the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.