

Conversion and It's Fruits

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 May 2023

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 0 0] Turn in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 1. 1 Thessalonians, right after Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.

We're going to read chapter 1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction.

You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord. In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 1 8] And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia.

Your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it. For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us.

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

I'm beginning to receive the written testimonies of those who have applied for membership here at Grace Fellowship Church. And they're a joy to read because the conversion of each one is as much a supernatural work of God as the healing of the man born blind in John chapter 9.

It was this that raised the Apostle Paul to joyful thanksgiving whenever he thought about and prayed for the church in Thessalonica. How that before time God had set his love upon them and had chosen them to be saved.

[2 : 4 2] And then in their own lifetime had brought the gospel to them, not simply in word, yes that, but more than word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction, with the very life-changing power of the Holy Spirit that healed their spiritual blindness.

For they too, they too were born blind, just like that man was physically born blind. They were born with spiritual blindness. And the Holy Spirit healed that spiritual blindness.

He put right their disordered affections, and he conquered their rebellious wills and enabled them to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. United them to Christ.

So that even though they suffered severely for their newfound faith in the Lord Jesus, they nevertheless continued to welcome the word of God with joy.

And soon they were bearing the likeness of the Lord Jesus, whom they beheld in his word, to the point that they became a model to all the church, to all the saints throughout Macedonia and Achaia, which is present-day Greece.

[3 : 55] And they didn't keep the good news to themselves either. Rather, the message of the Lord rang out from them near and far. Their faith in God was known everywhere, such that when Paul traveled throughout Europe, before he could say, have you heard what God has done in Thessalonica?

They were telling him about the reception that they gave to Paul and the gospel when he had gone there and ministered to them.

No doubt there were many stories shared and testimonies of individuals that were saved. They were told they were told they were saved.

This person and that. But it's their summary report to Paul that I want to focus our attention on tonight. Yes, there were individual stories to tell about what happened in Thessalonica, but here's the summary report.

And it's verse 9b to the end of the chapter 10, verse 10. They tell, that is these people, wherever Paul was going, they tell how you Thessalonians turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

[5 : 25] Now, this report easily divides itself into two parts, their conversion and their resulting new life. So the report, first of all, of their conversion, they tell how you turn to God from idols.

Conversion is turning. It's a change of direction. It's an about face. We were going this way, and conversion is a new direction in life.

It's a change of orientation, that which we ordered our life around. It's not the same. It used to center on other things. Now it centers on God.

It's a change of our supreme loyalty and love, our trust and our obedience. And so here's the first important truth to remember, and it's right on the face of the text, that any true conversion always involves a turning to and a turning from.

A turning to and a turning from. You turned to God, to God, from idols. Now, it's not genuine conversion just to turn to God without turning from our idols.

[6 : 50] I'm told that in Japan, there's this disposition generally among the people to save face. And so if you're witnessing to them and urging them to trust in Christ, they may accept your Jesus, and they just add him to their Buddhism and their worship of their idols.

We have a similar thing here. People just adding Jesus to their lives. But what's missing? They're not turning from their idols. Jesus will not agree to be an addition to anyone's life.

He will be a replacement, or he will be nothing. And so it's not enough just to turn to God without turning from idols. But on the other hand, neither is it enough just to turn from idols without turning to God in Jesus Christ.

Why not? Because trashing your idols doesn't save you. You can throw all your idols and your religion away and become an atheist and believe in no God. That doesn't save you.

No salvation is only found in Jesus. So you must not only turn from your idols, you must turn to God in Jesus Christ. So it's neither one or the other.

[8 : 13] It's both. And this is so important. It's just another way of saying that the two things you must do to be saved are you must repent, turn from your idols, and you must believe.

Turning to God in Jesus Christ. Trusting Him to save you. And here's the text that we have for that. The proof text. 1 Thessalonians 1.9. It's a helpful text.

Now, why do we need to turn at all? Why is it that we need to be converted and need to turn to God? Because as we hit the ground at birth, our backs are toward God.

And our face is away from God. Isaiah says, we're all like sheep who have gone astray. We have turned each one to his own way.

So we've turned away from God and we've turned to our own way. We've all adopted our own chosen idols. Those God substitutes.

[9 : 16] Those things that we give a God-like status to in our lives. And we treat them with the highest priority. And we love them. We live for them.

We treasure them. We look to them to give us pleasure and joy. Purpose, meaning, help. We make a God of those things. It's an idol. And that's the way we come into the world.

And oh, the pitiful things we replace God with. Things that are useless in really being able to perform what God alone can perform.

Things that promise far more than they can deliver. Romans 1.23 says, they exchanged the glory. So here's the glory of the immortal God. And they exchanged that glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, birds and beasts and creeping things.

Now that's a trade down, wouldn't you say? The glory of the immortal one, the immortal God for those kind of things. You'd only make that trade if you were spiritually blind.

[10 : 32] And that's exactly what we were. So we come into the world worshiping ourself, worshiping what we want, whatever those idols are. Now the Thessalonians had their Greek pantheon of gods, idols that they served.

And they did to them what we do with our God. They looked to them for help. When they were in trouble, they would look to their idols. If they needed success in business, if they needed success in health, in fruitful fields, if they needed protection, military victories, they trusted in their idols.

They cried out to their idols. And in turn, they did whatever they were told the idol wanted them to do. So they would sacrifice to it or they would pray to it.

They would praise it and give the glory to it for every good thing that they had and that came their way in life. It was their way of manipulating their God.

That was life for these Thessalonians. But then they turned from their idols to God.

[11 : 47] They repudiated them. They renounced them. They emptied the shelf of idols in their hearts. And instead they replaced them with the living God.

They turned to God in Jesus Christ. Verse 8 says, their faith in God has become known everywhere. Yes, it was faith in God.

So they turned to God in faith and from God in repentance. And those are just two sides of the coin of conversion. Wherever you find conversion, you always find those two things.

Now both faith and repentance are actions of the heart. Indeed, the most common word for the word repentance in the Greek is metanoia. It's a change of the mind.

It's an inward change that happens in our heart as it thinks. Our heart as it desires. And our heart as it chooses.

[12 : 48] It's a change on the inside at the control center of the person. The old master is there renounced and forsaken. We say, we're through with you. And then faith is also an inward action of the heart.

It's believing on Christ. It's trusting in him to save us. It's receiving Christ with the empty hand of faith. It's looking to Christ.

It's leaning on Christ. Those are inward actions of the heart. So before faith is ever a working faith, a working grace, it is first a resting grace.

We rest and rely on Jesus Christ for salvation from the heart. These are inward activities of the heart.

Now it's, they're not natural to the dead and sin heart. Idols are what's natural to the fallen heart. As Calvin says, the sinner's heart is a factory of idols.

[13 : 51] So through repentance, though repentance and faith are our activities, we repent, we believe, God doesn't do it for us. Yet they're both supernatural gifts of God's grace whereby he enables us to repent and to believe.

No wonder Paul thanked God for these Thessalonians because God was the one who was responsible for this conversion of turning from God or from idols to the living God.

And that recreation of those men and women, boys and girls, is even greater than his first creation. As in the first creation, there was nothing to resist him but in the depraved heart of a man or woman, boy or girl, there is resistance.

And yet grace is irresistible grace as it comes in conversion. So conversion is a new inward direction. It's a new orientation of the heart.

Inwardly we have turned so that now we're facing Godward. We're looking Godward by faith. But conversion is only the beginning. And here's the second important truth from our text.

[15 : 12] Genuine conversion always results in a new life different from the old life. Genuine conversion always results in a new life, a life that is different from the old one.

So though repentance and faith are activities of the heart and inward changes, they both bear fruit in the life. And this is the second part of the report that these people throughout Europe were giving about those Thessalonian believers.

They told how, about their conversion. And then they told Paul about their changed lives. They tell us, verse 9b to 10, they tell us how you turn to God from idols, there's conversion, to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

There's the new life, serving and waiting. You see, we're converted, we're turned inwardly, now Godward, away from our idols, but to what end?

For what purpose? What result? Well, to live a new life, to walk a new way. The turning is just the beginning.

[16 : 34] There is a life to be lived and a new life at that. And the two things that mark this new life is in order to serve the living God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

These are both present action verbs or infinitives whereby it's denoting that this isn't something that's just done once and it's over.

No, these are ongoing, continuous activities. It's part of the life of the believer that they're serving and they're waiting. So let's look at those two.

And you turn to God from idols to serve, first of all, to serve the living and true God. The word here for serve means to be a slave to someone, to do service for someone, to give yourself up to, to obey them.

It's the same Greek word for the word slave, *doulos*. It comes from the same root. And so to serve is to be a slave of. Now sadly, sometimes the Christian life is regarded as just a list of heavy duties to perform.

[17 : 48] Oh, we have to serve the Lord. Well, to be sure, service toward God is our duty. He's the potter. We are the clay.

He's made us to serve Him. It's commanded. So it is our duty, but it is so far more than just our duty.

It is our high privilege to serve the King of Kings. And that's the reality I want you to see and live with from this text tonight. I think it was John Owen that said one of the Christians' biggest problems is that we don't live up to our privileges.

And sometimes we don't even recognize them. Like serving the Lord. Okay, that's our duty. Well, yes it is. But I want you to see tonight from what Paul says that it's also the highest privilege that any human being could ever have to serve in the court of the King of Kings.

Let's be clear. The Bible teaches that everyone is serving someone or something. No one is completely free of serving some master.

[19 : 00] The sinner is serving Satan and sin and self, his idols, his God substitutes. He's not free. Though he may tell himself he's free, I can do whatever I want to do.

And yet, funny thing is, is the things he wants to do are exactly what the devil wants him to do. He's a slave to the devil and doesn't even know it. And that's the worst kind of slavery of all.

To be a slave and think you're free. Like the Jews in John 8 who said, we have never been slaves to anyone. Really? Wasn't there a Pharaoh one time and then a Nebuchadnezzar and on we could go for four or five hundred years.

We've never been a slave to anyone. Jesus said, whoever sins is the slave of sin. So before your conversion, before my conversion, we were serving Satan, we were serving sin, we were serving some idol that we gave God-like importance to.

Listen to what Romans 6, 16 to 23 says. Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you're slaves to the one that you obey?

[20 : 19] Whether you're slaves to sin, which leads to death, or slaves to obedience, which leads to righteousness, which would you rather be? You're one or the other.

Well, you were slaves of sin that led to death. But thanks be to God that though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, you've been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

That's right. You're still a slave, just not to sin anymore, now to righteousness, that thing that you hunger and thirst for because God has planted that in your heart as we heard in the Sunday school hour.

When you were slaves to sin, what benefit did you reap at that time? All things that you're now ashamed of, things that result in death. But now, now that you've been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, righteousness, you see.

And the end, eternal life, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. God is eternal life and so in His service, we now find perfect freedom.

[21 : 39] We once thought we were free perhaps to do what we wanted, but we were really slaves to sin and Satan. Now, in being slaves to God, we find perfect freedom because this is what we were made for, to serve God.

So we walk about in freedom as we run in the way of God's commands. That's where the freed heart loves to run. And to the renewed heart, His commandments are not burdensome, 1 John 5.

And with Christ in the yoke with us, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. That's freedom in serving and being a slave to God.

So everyone's serving a master. Giving service, obedience, loyalty to someone or something. Back to our text then in 1 Thessalonians. You turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

I want us to think of the sheer privilege of it tonight. You get to serve the living God instead of dead idols. You get to serve the true God, the real God instead of fake gods.

[22 : 58] that only exist in people's minds. Imaginary gods. As Romans 1 said, to exchange the living God of glory for worthless idols was a huge loss, wasn't it?

But in conversion, we turn from our useless idols to the living and true God. What a gain that is. What a privilege to serve the living and true God.

So let's think about that this evening. The sweet privilege of having this God, this living and true God as our God rather than dead idols. sometimes we need to look at the alternative to appreciate what we have.

I was talking with the Wessner boys before the service that, you know, the timing of Evie's trip to Brazil for three weeks was a bit suspiciously close to Mother's Day.

that they had to experience three weeks without mom that they might appreciate her more on Mother's Day when she got home.

[24 : 11] And that's what I'm talking about, that the creatures that we are, we often take for granted what we have. And one of the Bibles helps to us is to think, well, what would it be like not to have it?

That's Psalm 124. If the Lord had not been on our side, He is on our side and we've lived with Him on our side perhaps for so long that we can't remember or even think what it would be like not to have Him on our side.

But we need to think about what it would be like. And Psalm 124 is there to help us. If the Lord had not been on our side, well, we'd have been swallowed alive, we'd have been destroyed, on and on it goes.

And so I want us to think, what if we weren't serving the living and true God and we were left with dead imaginary idols? Now the Old Testament prophets help us in this because they often contrast the living and true God with the idols that men trust in.

The God of Israel, Yahweh, the I am that I am, and these worthless idols. Isaiah 44 speaks of the blacksmith or the carpenter who makes idols, quote, which can profit him nothing.

[25 : 34] Well, that's a pretty worthless event, isn't it? He cuts down a tree, half of which he burns in the fire to warm himself and bake his bread. And from the other half, he makes his God, his idol.

He then bows down to it and worships it and prays to it and says to it, save me, you are my God. And all the while, he doesn't realize half of it I burned in the fire and now I'm bowing before the other half.

And for all of his skill in dressing it up and covering it with gold and silver, it remains a block of wood. But he's spiritually blind and he gives himself to that idol.

Jeremiah 10, 3 to 16, they cut a tree out of the forest and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold and they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter.

Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak. They must be carried because they cannot walk. Don't fear them, they can do no harm nor can they do any good.

[26 : 46] Indeed, they're often called the do-nothings. Worthless do-nothings. Oh, but the Lord is the true God. He is the living God, the eternal King. Paul is probably thinking of Jeremiah 10 as he writes our text.

We turn from idols to serve the living and true God, the eternal King. When he's angry, the earth trembles, the nations cannot endure his wrath. No one is like you, O Lord.

You're great and your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. And then Psalm 115, 3 to 9. Again, contrasts our God and their idols, the idols of the nations.

Our God, he's in the heaven. He does whatever pleases him. He's not a do-nothing. He's a doing God and what's he doing? Whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold made by the hands of men.

They have mouths but cannot speak. Eyes but cannot see. Ears but cannot hear. Noses but cannot smell.

[27 : 53] Hands but cannot feel. Feet but they cannot walk. Nor can they utter a sound with their throats. And those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them.

O house of Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. So let's let's cherish the idea the fact that we serve a living and true God.

We get to serve him instead of lifeless idols. We could be praying. We could be gathering to pray to a God who cannot hear us when we cry.

We could be praying to a God who cannot see us when we're in trouble when temptation is around the corner and Satan has laid a trap for us. Oh, but the eyes of the Lord Yahweh are on the righteous.

He does see and his ears are attentive to their prayers. He does hear. We could be like Moab in Isaiah 16, 12.

[28 : 58] When Moab appears at her high place she only wears herself out. What a sad summary of someone's religion.

It doesn't accomplish anything. It just makes you tired to keep doing all that you've got to do in your religion. And when she goes to her shrine to pray it is to no avail.

But the prayers of a righteous man avail much. They're powerful and effective. Why? Because they lay hold of the living and true God who's no block of wood who does nothing.

No, he's a God who hears and answers prayer who acts on behalf of those who wait for him who comes to the help of those who gladly do right. This is the living and true God.

We could have been one of those prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel praying to Baal to send fire from heaven to prove that he's God. They called on the name of Baal from morning till noon.

[30 : 02] How about wearing yourself out? That's a lot of crying. Oh, Baal, answer us! They shouted. But there was no response.

No one answered. They shouted louder, slashed themselves with swords and spears as was their custom until their blood flowed. That's what these gods require of them.

They went on frantically calling out to Baal until the evening sacrifice. But there was no response. No one answered. No one paid attention.

Because Baal is just an imaginary God and not the living and true God. God's servant Elijah cried once to the living and true God, answer me, oh Lord, answer me so these people will know that you, oh Lord, are God.

Fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the altar, the wood, the stones, the water in the trenches, the dirt, the whole thing.

[31 : 11] Brothers and sisters, what is our privilege that when we call, he hears and answers us? David said, that's one reason I love you, Lord, because you answer when I call.

What a privilege that our prayers are not a bother to him, even though he's heard from us a dozen times before noon and we're still crying for help.

The prayer of the upright is his delight, Proverbs 15, 8. It's his delight. He loves to hear it, loves to answer it.

He does not chide us for asking, not you again, like we might for someone that keeps coming for a donation. Spurgeon says, though the angels may say, oh, it's only Charlie again, our God never wearies to hear our cries any more than a mother wearies and puts off the cries of a sick child.

Not even our groans too deep for words to express are ignored but are understood and listened to and answered. The very desires of our hearts have a voice that he hears and answers.

[32 : 31] So when we're in trouble and needing help, or when anyone is in trouble and needing help, they have dead logs dressed up in gold and silver to call on. We have the living God who is an ever-present help in trouble.

Their idols can't even help themselves. They've got to be carried. But when God's people call out to him in their distress, he lifts them up and carries them.

As he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old, Isaiah 63, 9. Their idols can't even keep themselves from falling over but must be secured with silver chains nailed down so they won't topple.

But our God is able to keep us from falling because he's the living God. When discouraged and feeling down, their idols don't know. Their idols don't care. But in all our afflictions, he too is afflicted.

Our Savior Jesus is able to sympathize with us because he's been through it and so pities us in our weakness and lifts up those who are bowed down. An idol is not one you can know and come to love and be known by and loved by.

[33 : 41] But the living God is love. And he makes himself known to us. And to know him is eternal life. In his love and mercy, he redeemed us.

And he's promised that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life and then we go and live in the house of the Lord forever. Perfect, eternal communion with him. what a privilege to serve the living and true God.

Think of this the next time you pray. The alternative. Think of it the next time you need help. You cry to heaven and your prayer is just four letters.

Help. Help. someone who hears and helps. What did our idols ever do for us compared to what the living and true God is to us?

And so we serve him with gladness. And our whole life is now oriented to him. It's to him we run. It's to him that we go and praise and worship and trust and obey.

[34 : 51] we live with him we live for him. But then we're not only turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God but also to wait for his son from heaven the second aspect of this new life.

To wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead even Jesus who delivers us from the coming wrath. Jesus that's his human name Jesus of Nazareth he's the eternal son of God.

And Jesus means the Lord saves that's why he died. That's why there needed to be a resurrection because he died to rescue us from the coming wrath eternal wrath that is coming.

None of our idols could have done that for us. Rather it was because of our idols that God's wrath was coming for us. We were giving to our idols the praise that was due to God alone.

I will not share my glory with idols my praise with these man-made things. And so his wrath was coming for us. But the heavenly father sent his son to die under his wrath as we sang so helpfully tonight.

[36 : 06] And in doing so in dying under God's wrath to save us from it. But it's a wrath still coming for all who are unrepentant and outside of Christ.

And so this Jesus who in dying for us rescued us from the coming wrath he's no longer dead. He rescued us by his death but he's no longer dead for God raised him from the dead.

That's the text. We're waiting for his son from heaven because he's alive and he's in heaven. If he had not raised his son from the dead we wouldn't be waiting for him to come from heaven.

We'd be worshipping a dead savior like every other religion worships. But no we're waiting for the God's son from heaven whom he raised from the dead.

And he's alive so we wait for him. We are waiting for him to come from heaven just as surely as we're serving the living and true God.

[37 : 10] So this waiting is a present tense. It's denoting a continuous action. We're always serving we're always waiting. Always serving always waiting. In fact all of our service is to be done with that expectant waiting for the son from heaven.

This waiting is not passively waiting like you wait at the doctor's office just twiddling your thumbs and doing nothing or playing with your phone. This is an eager expectation a longing a longing look to heaven that can't wait to see the son return for us.

Philippians 3.20 having spoken of the enemies of the cross says their mind is set on earthly things and Paul says but our citizenship is in heaven from which we wait eagerly wait for a savior from there who when he comes by his power will be able to bring everything under his control and transform our lowly bodies that they might be like his glorious body.

And I'm afraid that first century Christians had this more on their minds and hearts than we do. Maybe it's because life was harder. Maybe it's because they were being persecuted.

And so life here was really tough. Their properties were being confiscated. They were being put out of the synagogue. They were being shunned and avoided in their businesses and mistreated.

[38 : 41] And maybe that's why they were waiting with eager longing for the savior to come and to rescue them. And maybe it's because we've got it so comfortable here.

And life can be so good here even in a fallen world that, well, we're not really eager to have him come back.

It's amazing that every chapter in this letter, five chapters, ends with a reference to the return of Christ. I think it speaks to what he's saying that we were converted in order to serve the living and true God and in order to be waiting for his son from heaven.

Why wouldn't we be? This is the one that saved me from everlasting torments by bearing the wrath of God. Why wouldn't I be eagerly longing to see him and to bow at his feet and to praise him?

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed in us. So, it's never to be far from our minds, from our hearts, from our, even our lips.

[40 : 10] We sing of it. Christ is coming. Christ is coming. We ought to be reminding each other of it. This is just for a while.

It is only till he comes. and then the glory days that will never end. Think of a book filled with any good novel, filled with unresolved tensions that just pile up chapter after chapter.

This problem, that problem. But all of them are resolved in the last chapter. And, can you even imagine someone not wanting to read the last chapter?

And so you just end with all the unresolved tensions. Well, this is the history of the world from the Garden of Eden.

It's a living story that we're a part of. And there are many unresolved perplexities in our world and in our personal lives.

[41 : 17] But you know, they're all going to be perfectly resolved when Jesus comes back. So just as we can't imagine someone not wanting to read the last chapter of that novel, is it not a bit strange that we're not fixing our eyes on that day?

He's coming and all that is wrong will be put right. And all of our tears will be wiped away. And there will be no more sorrow and suffering and death.

No more problems with these bodies. They'll be transformed like His glorious body. There'll be no more devil to tempt us. No more world to allure us. No more flesh to say yes to what is alluring in the world.

That's coming. Perfect fellowship with God in a way that we've not yet enjoyed it. We have just the down payment of the Spirit.

Just the deposit. But the full thing is coming and we'll see Him face to face. And I'll know Him by the prints of the nails in His hands.

[42 : 33] And His smile will be the first to welcome me. Do you want to see that happen? That's what Paul's saying. We were converted to now be serving and waiting for the Son from Heaven.

Even Jesus. The importance of this hope can hardly be overstated. It's everywhere in the Scriptures because hope in Jesus' return is a stimulating grace.

It stimulates all the good things. Let me just give you three and we're done. It stimulates our endurance in difficulty. Look back up to verse 3 in our text.

He talks there at the end of verse 3 of your endurance inspired by what? By hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Endurance is inspired by hope.

If a man has hope he can put up with a lot. Take away a man's hope and he's ready to give it up. hope. Oh.

[43 : 42] This hope. Yes, this is our hope. Jesus is coming. Secondly, there's joy in all circumstances.

That's what this hope does for it. It stimulates our joy. You know what it's called? The return of Christ is called the blessed hope. The happy hope. The joyful hope.

The thing that gives us happiness in life. So we're called by the gospel. The grace of God and the gospel to live holy, upright lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope.

The glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And so it's that hope that gives us joy because we know what's coming. As that old janitor said, I've read the end of the book and we win.

I've read the end of the book and all of our problems are resolved. Joy. And then also this hope stimulates purity of life.

[44 : 46] Charlie opened with 1 John chapter 3 and verse 1. What kind of love is this that the Father has lavished on us? That we should be called the children of God and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it does not know Him.

It did not know Him. But we know this. We don't know what will be when Christ returns but we know this that when He returns we will see Him as He is and we will be made like Him.

Whoever has this hope in himself purifies himself even as He is pure. One day I'm going to be as pure as Jesus and that's my sure hope.

It's there. 1 John 3 1 to 3 it's there. Verse 2 I'm going to see Him as He is and beholding Him I will be made like Him. And that sure hope that confident expectation that joyful looking to that day stimulates a desire for me now to be purifying myself even as He is pure and as I will one day be pure.

Now if you're not right with this living and true God I can understand why you'd not be eagerly awaiting Christ's return because He's coming with everlasting wrath for impenitent sinners. Turn now.

[46 : 08] Turn from your idols. Join us in serving the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven even Jesus who saves us from the coming wrath.

And believers let's remember this world is not yet our home. It will be our home one day when it's made new. But it's not yet our home not as long as Jesus is not here.

And when He comes to judge the world in righteousness and to create a new heavens and a new earth then we'll be forever at home with the Lord. Until then let each day find us serving our living God with a sense of privilege and a sense of wonder that we're not serving wood and stone we're serving the living and true God and He set His love on me and He has saved me from the coming wrath.

And then let's be eagerly awaiting that day when we'll see Him face to face. As we seek to make a response to God's Word to us tonight take your hymnal and turn to number 579 579 Be Still My Soul This is a song for those unresolved tensions in your life here and now and what it's doing it's reminding us of important promises and realities that are true of the true and living God and His relationship to us but it's also pointing us to that day as the last verse says Be still my soul the hour is hastening on when we shall be forever with the Lord when disappointments grief and fear are gone sorrow for God love's purest joys restored be still my soul when change and tears are past all safe and blessed we shall meet at last you see how the living hope enables us to endure even in the midst of difficulties now so let's stand and sing 579 let's do verses 1 2 and 4 here in the hope it's

Catherine wow comes if a hundred child em Twitter out ■ being Chang'ed dep H to through fur