

One in Words

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[0 : 00] We're coming towards the end of our Refugee study, there's not that much more to go, but it's a great last section of the book, very practical and very down to earth and so I hope that the sermon will reflect that practicality.

Preaching among other things, preaching is here, whatever else it does, preaching is supposed to be here to help you, to help us in our Christian life, that's the aim of preaching.

So you come to hear the preaching of the word as one of God's ordained means of helping us live our Christian life. So you come to hear the preaching, there's many other means of helping you live your Christian life, but preaching is meant to be a help, it's meant to be significantly important in your Christian life as God uses it to teach us.

And so what I want you to take away, what I need to take away today which I hope you'll take into the rest of your week and the rest of your life just as a refocus is that in Christ as a believer you're a new person, okay, all of us in Christ, that's what we are.

So I want to take that away with you, that you're a new person, right, and also, well we reminded that in verse 24, it's a couple of verses before we read, put on your new self created in the likeness of God.

[1 : 34] So you're a new person as a Christian, but also we are together a new people, okay, so that's part of what I want you to take away today from this passage which we'll unfold, that we are new people as Christians, new people, and we are also new individuals as people.

We're a new community and we're new individuals, okay. Verse 25 says, for we are members therefore and so on, but we are members of one another, okay.

So we're a new community about the gospel that we, once you were not a people now you are a people. So that's a very significant truth and can I just by way of introduction, I've got a real long introduction today, sorry, but by way of introduction on this point about being a new people and new community, that is a huge presumption throughout the New Testament.

All the New Testament epistles are written to churches, they're written to gathered peoples, they're written to this new community of believers and there's a presumption within that of intimacy.

There's a presumption that your gospel is worked out in this community. It is in many ways it's a really big mind shift from what we're used to because we've grown up for centuries really in many ways, particularly in the cities of thinking church this is something you come to on a Sunday, it's the hour we go to church, we go to church and that's what we do, we go to church, we go to this event once a week whereas the, and we maybe never see each other sometimes or traditionally might not see each other till the next time we're in church and that's what we do, we come when we plug into church for an hour, a boost and then we plug out and we go away again.

[3 : 35] Because the whole New Testament model picture and the ethics and the morality and the imperatives that we've been looking at or been speaking about of the gospel are to be worked out in relationship to one another in a community.

That's why for 15 years which Corrie mentioned in his prayer, we have worked hard at making what is not a natural community but it's just really a natural gathering on a Sunday morning, working to make that a community, working to be in each other's lives, working to learn from one another, be honest with one another, to meet as a community groups to have connect meals, these things aren't kind of icing on the cake, they're not added extras for us, they are fundamental for allowing, giving us the structure and the framework and the scaffold to be a community of people and new people.

And the goal of that newness individually and corporately is unity. That's the theme of the book of Ephesians which you've looked at in 1.10, is that God is working all things, bring all things together and heaven and earth is glory.

So it's unity with God, we're new people because for the first time in Christ we're united very powerfully to God because we're indwelt by His Spirit and also we are to be united to each other.

So the goal of our Christian lives is to be united, ongoing to unite to God and to one another. Now that is a huge, these are huge practical implications which we'll go on to look at today but I'm still in the introduction, okay?

[5 : 19] Because we're to be new people, right? But how are we to be new? And what way are we to be new people? Well verse 24, again we didn't read verse 24, we doth, Athel dealt with that last week but it's important as a link because we're put on a new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

And then in chapter 5 which we did read and it's on your sheet, verse 1, therefore, there's two therefore's, we've done one therefore, the second therefore, therefore be imitators of God as beloved children.

So we're to be like God in true righteousness and holiness and we're to imitate God. So we are new, that is why we are new people because our lives have changed and we have an astonishing new standard through grace, empowered to live this way by the indwelling of the Spirit, to become like God.

The Christian life isn't a sign up and then shut down concept. It's not that you signed up to become a Christian, hey, I'm a Christian now, woohoo, and that's it.

It's not sign up and then live the rest of your life as an old kind of person, the old life. It is that we come to Christ and we don't shut down, we deliver lives with a new morality and a new focus and a new direction and a new perspective which is radical.

[6 : 51] It's a radical ambitious, you're ambitious here, you're a lot of young professionals here, you're all hugely ambitious. But are we ambitious for Christ? For this most ambitious of all goals to be like God, to imitate God.

You know if you imitate someone and you need to follow them closely, you need to know them. I remember very vividly my father-in-law who was a shepherd in the Highlands and the fact that he was a shepherd is irrelevant.

But he had children and grandchildren and he was a bit deaf. So occasionally when he didn't hear you, he would go like this and it was a very good and visual way of saying, I didn't hear what you're saying, what are you saying?

But I remember one time his grandson, my nephew, was really working on the farm from a very early age, he lived in the family house and just a toddler, he was working on the farm.

And remember just all of us just falling about laughing one day in the house when someone said something and Gavin, this little boy, didn't hear and so he went like that. He was only five and he went like that, he didn't hear.

[8 : 00] Now it was great because he was just imitating his grandfather. It was such an old man thing to do, five-year-old. And it was great and he was just imitating his grandfather.

That's what his grandfather did and he'd watched him closely. And that's the picture of what we were to watch Christ closely. Got where to imitate God, where to become like God. That is a hugely significant standard.

That's a hugely significant thing that you and I are to do with our lives. It's a high calling that we have to be like God and we're to become like God in being new people in a new community because of Christ.

So again we've got these there for's which link back to all the theologies. Cody was saying of the early chapters, all the theology that says the wonder of Christ and the glory of what he's done.

And then in chapter five that you have in front of you, if you look at it, verse two, walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

[9 : 03] So our motivation today, your motivation is because as a Christian you recognize that Christ loved you and gave himself up for you a fragrant sweet smelling sacrifice that was pleasing to God.

Christ's love and Christ's service are to be the motivation for us being new people and a new community, new individuals and a new community.

So I'm saying even by way of introduction theology matters hugely because all the implications of the truths that Paul is sharing in Ephesians in the early chapters, the glory of Jesus on the cross and the wonder of what God has done is what triggers the therefores of practical Christian living.

If we don't have that motive and if we don't have that understanding, we will find that we're probably not living that new Christian lives that we're really, maybe I've just signed up and then shut down.

So we are to live as new people because of what Jesus has done and it looks like becoming like God. Well, what does that look like?

[10 : 18] What does it look like for us to imitate God and to become in the image, the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness?

Well, all I can do today because of time is just give you a summary, a very quick summary of the passage that we've looked at and I hope that you'll go away and meditate over it.

I read this week that to get the best out of the food that you eat, the best thing to do is to take 40 chews over each bite.

Try it. Try it. Your jaws will ache and the food will just crumble into nothing in your mouth but I'm sure you'll learn to do it properly and the 40 chews per bite is a way which we get the most benefit out of food.

Food barely touches the side of my whole mouth and throat and goes down so I'm sure it doesn't do me much good and I'm sure that's why I've got bad guts but I'm learning.

[11 : 18] I'm trying to learn. It means that the table meal takes much longer but anyway, it's a good idea but spiritually I think that's good as well. I can only set the meal before you today.

You're going to have to spend time chewing it and going back over it and learning from it. I hope you don't get spiritual indigestion in the short term.

But if I was to take one word that's summed up the practical ethics of this section that we're looking at, what it means to be a new creation, what it means to imitate God, what it means to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, I would use the word that Corey's already used today which is honesty.

Honesty. And as a presupposition, I'm going to begin with the first point which is that if we are going to be like God, if we're going to serve God and be new creations, it involves being honest with ourselves, being honest with yourself.

That's the presupposition. It's the presupposition of all of Scripture again is that we have dealt with our own hearts honestly and that we've looked at our own hearts in the mirror of Scripture and seen the sin and seen the blockages and seen the failures that are there and come to God.

[12 : 32] We need to be people as people both individually but particularly in community who stop comparing ourselves with one another as if that is the standard.

It is not about comparison. It is not having our own standard by which we think, oh well, I've reached my own standard this week, I've done quite well.

It's not about deflecting from our own hearts and our own bitterness and our own weaknesses and our own lusts and finding our energies in condemning others.

It is not wishing that everyone else in life would change my wife, my husband, my children, my boss, my colleagues, my lecturers. I wish they would all change so that my life was easier.

It's not that that Christ demands of us, what He asks is that we are honest with ourselves and first look at our own hearts. If we are to be new creations, it doesn't come from the world around us and the people around us and the churches around us and the ministers around us changing.

[13 : 42] It comes from us dealing with and being honest with our own hearts. So that heart, the light of the gospel shining into our own heart, which may I say, as you will all know, can be very, very bright and challenging and even hurtful because it reminds us of who we are but also hugely healing.

We must be honest with ourselves. Honesty begins with ourselves. It begins with looking at God and looking at the scripture and looking at Christ and looking at our hearts and accepting what He says and repenting and changing rather than demanding everything else and everyone else and all our circumstances around us change.

Honest with yourself. But then, okay, finally we come to the passage more in more detail or at least covering that passage.

We've been avoiding that passage but rather bringing it by way of a hugely long introduction in many ways. Honest with ourselves. Honest then in our relationships. Verse 25, therefore having put away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth with his neighbour for we are members of one body.

Okay? Holiness is about this. Okay? I think often we still regard the word holiness, the concept holiness in a monastic way or if not in a monastic way, at least in an individualistic way.

[15 : 19] This guy is a really holy person. I want to be a holy individual and that's good. But the outworking of being a holy individual is monastic.

It is worked out in our relationships within the Christian church so that we have honest Christian relationships. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let's each of you speak the truth with his neighbour for we are members of one community.

Knowing God then is spills out into our Christian community and into our understanding of that and that's hugely significant. I think sometimes the New Testament has a very different understanding of church than we have.

We often even implicitly think of church as a venue, the New Testament thinks of church as a family. There's a great difference.

We often talk about coming to church and yet we are church and it is a family and in the outworking of this being honest in our Christian relationship, I want to jump forward to verses 22 and 24 which seems to be an outworking, sorry, 25 and 31.

[16 : 35] Verse 31 says, Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God and Christ forgive you.

That's the outworking of having honest Christian relationships in the church and it's formed in the imagery of putting off and putting on.

Earlier in the chapter it speaks about that, that we put off the old self which belongs to the former wavelay verse 22 and be renewed, put on the new self. It's this language of putting off dirty old clothes, putting on the new clothes that we have as Christians, the new life that we are in Christ and that is what we have here.

Put off bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour, put on kindness and tender heartedness, forgiveness as Christ forgave us and so that is what we, that is the practical description of honest Christian relationships within the church.

Get rid of falsehood. So we have a new quality of conversation and of friendship in the Christian church. We move beyond as Christians, listen, listen to this, listen to this because this affects me and I'm pretty sure it affects some of us too, that we move in our Christian relationships and conversations beyond talking just about work, about our holidays, about sport or about our lives in general and move towards spiritual truth in our relationships.

[18 : 15] Because falsehood involves that living as if that's all there is to live for, what everyone else is living for. But as Christians we are to seek a different standard.

We are not to be engaged in a life, a community that is mistrusting, shallow, separatist, divisive, gossiping, critical, shallow.

We are to put off that falsehood which so easily engulfs our lives and engulfs what we are as people and we are to be real. So we are to put off these things and we are to be like Christ which is kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving as in Christ God forgave you.

The spiritual speaking the truth in love. We are new people. Christ is our Lord. The way we treat one another is to reflect the way Christ treated us.

Have you rubbished Christ all week? By the way that we've treated him, have we ignored him, have we rejected him? I'm sure we have to a greater or lesser degree in our lives, I certainly have.

[19 : 27] And yet I know I come to him immediately and he receives me and he forgives me and he renews me as I come to him. And that is how we are to deal with one another.

The more we understand how Christ has dealt with us, the more we will deal Christ like with one another. That's why theology matters.

The more we know of Christ, theology, the knowledge of God, the more we know of God, the more we will live a life that is tender hearted, kind and forgiving.

Wouldn't that be a, isn't that who we seek to reflect and isn't that a great community? Even everyone loves to be part of a community that is in an ongoing way kind hearted, tender, forgiving.

That is great and that is attraction. It means we will be vulnerable. It means we will be accountable. But it means we are committed to one another because Christ was committed to us.

[20 : 25] Honest Christian relationships. That involves more than the hour of worship together. It involves sacrifice. It involves commitment because Christ is our head.

We have this amazing thing in common and it binds us because we are new people together. Okay. First, that's the first thing.

The second, I'm not going to tell you many things there because then you're going to think, he's not finished yet. The second thing is not just honest Christian relationships. The second thing is honest anger.

Okay, verse 28. Sorry, verse 26. Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down in your anger. Give no opportunity to the devil.

Honest anger. Okay. We are like God. We are Christ like. We are imitators of Him when we recognize that honest anger is a part of our lives as Christians.

[21 : 24] Love and anger are not incompatible. Many would think they would like to think, but ask any parent here or any anti-poverty activist.

Ask any parent who can love and be angry at their children at the same time because love and anger are incompatible. It's good to be angry at injustice and to be angry at violence and evil.

That is good. The worst thing to be is to be indifferent. As long as I get my salary at the end of the month. I don't care what happens in the world. I don't care about injustice and poverty.

I don't care about how other people are living their lives. Indifference is far worse in many ways. But what Paul is saying here to us here is that passion is good, but there needs to be a recognition of it being controlled and being understood by as unchanneled.

So I think anger against evil and against wrongdoing is great. And the best way to deal with that is first to channel it against our own hypocrisy.

[22 : 36] And be angry sometimes at ourselves for the way that we put ourselves up so much and put everyone other people down so easily with which we take the grace of God for ourselves, but we don't apply it to other people.

And all of these kind of things, angry at our own sin, but in so doing, not to paralyze us, but to take us to the God who redeems us and forgives us and gives us newness when we deal with that repentance.

But recognizing, I think that anger in our human natures is a very volatile emotion. And we really need the Holy Spirit and we need God to help us.

It's easy for us to slip into self-righteousness. Well, I'm very unjust about how poor the church is at everything and how badly they do everything. And that can easily become a kind of self-righteous if only I were in charge.

If only I was the person making all the decisions and it can become a self-righteous anger which doesn't take account to our own heart and also the hearts of each of us.

[23 : 44] Don't fester in anger, you know, he says, don't let the sun go down in your anger. Deal with it. Deal with it before God. Speak to Him. Deal with others if they have rightly caused you injustice and anger, if it's serious and important enough.

Love covers a multitude of sins. Remember that. Don't let it fester. Don't let it become a bitterness and a real chip on your shoulder about everyone and everything else and be aware, he says, in anger of the enemy.

Be aware of the devil who seeks to get a foothold in our lives, an opportunity. So it's just that spiritual awareness that he can take something that is sensitive and tender and fragile and can be good but can quickly and easily turn it into something divisive and separatist and bad.

So it's this case of being honest with our anger before God also. That's holiness. That's what it is like to be truly righteous and holy and imitating God.

Okay, that's the second thing, honest anger. We are getting on, honestly. The third thing is honest work. Honest work. To be like God, to be imitators of God is to have an honesty about our work ethic, verse 28.

[25 : 09] Let the thief no longer steal but rather let him labour, doing honest work, honest work with his own hands so that he may have something to share with everyone in need.

This is holiness. This is to be like God. It is that in our Christian lives that we are to make every effort to live and work to God's glory.

We may not always be employment but it discourages laziness and dishonesty. In the workplace or in the lecture hall it means trying not to steal time.

It might not be stealing implements, pencils or office equipment but it might be about stealing time. Time that is your employers or time that you ought to be doing things.

In recognising that hard work and good work is a God glorifying reality for us and very interestingly in terms of holiness, remuneration is significant too.

[26 : 19] Why we work and what we want to work for and what our ambition is. Often today the philosophy our day is work to get as much money as you can to spend it on yourself and give yourself a life of luxury.

Not always but that is sometimes the underlying motive but as new creations Christ encourages us to work not for self-indulgence, not only for a better home or better holidays or more toys.

None of these things are necessarily wrong but that we work so that we can help other people. Isn't that an amazingly new motivation for looking at your salary slip at the end of the month?

I guess the more I can help people with this month. He says that we are to not do honest work with his own hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

It is this holiness having a corporate reality, not just you and me God. We do things ourselves. It is about having a responsibility to one another and looking and knowing the presumption as we know those who are in need.

[27 : 26] And we care for those who are in need primarily among the family of faith and that we think why I can help them? If I do another couple of hours over time, he will give me a little bit more to help the gospel work in Edinburgh as I can help someone who is in need and I can show the grace of Christ in the honest work.

Generosity, self-denying in the same way as Christ gave himself a fragrant offering and sacrificed to us. Now, you are not telling me that is not a new motive for work?

You are not saying that is not something that makes such a part as a new creation because of what Christ has done? It affects the end of the month for us?

We are a new in our attitude to work. And also lastly, we are new in our morality. It talks about work and then it goes on in chapter 5 in the section we read from verses 3 through to verses 6 and 7 is that we are to have a new and honest morality.

Let's say immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not be named among you as proper among saints. No filthiness, no foolish talk, no crude joking which are out of place but instead there should be thanksgiving.

[28 : 46] We should be sure of this that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, who is covetous has no inheritance in the kingdom of God. These are no empty words. God through His Spirit says to us that there is a newness that comes from our understanding of the whole of God's revelation and the whole of our place within God's revelation and are being made in the image of God and that sexuality comes under that image of God also.

And that He gives us the moral framework in which to live out our lives sexually and that we are to be new. In many ways probably this will set us apart more than anything from the world in which we live today.

God justly hates when His moral framework is rejected because He sees the chaos, the confusion, the loss of identity, the cheapening of sex, the meaninglessness and marginalisation of marriage, the objectifying of women and the question even of the image of God at any level where the fluidity of our gender identity is not linked even to our birth sex now.

So that all of that speaks into the way we live our lives. It's a gospel that is being preached today, a gospel of confusion and of hurt and of division and of separation, this unity that we find and that we have.

And what are we to do as Christians in that? How are we to respond as new creations? Is it to compromise and say, well, that's such an old ethic.

[30 : 30] It's such a, it's so outdated. We've learned so much about humanity and about human beings that we can just compromise and go along with all that matters is love.

Or do we complain and have our placards up and say, no, this isn't how it must be done, burn in hell? No, no.

We live consistently godly standards of morality ourselves. That's how we work out being new creations and having a new honest morality.

It's one that doesn't decry sexual activity in its right context. It's one that gives thanks for it and rejoices in it.

It's one that recognizes the temptations and the battles and the struggles that sexually people have and doesn't reject them. It embraces people and it encourages people as with all of us to work through these issues and to bring them to the foot of the cross.

[31 : 37] But we are to keep our standards Christ like and in true righteousness and holiness live out our lives as new creations.

Not because of some fear or some oppression, but out of love because we know God is good and we know God loves us and we know what God reveals to us is best.

Not easiest, but best. So we work to protect our marriages. We work to be pure outside of that covenant bonded marriage.

We watch how we speak to one another. We watch how we act with one another, how we joke to one another. We're careful about the way we look at other people in the church, people of the opposite sex.

We try with all our heart and mind and soul not to covet someone else's wife or someone else's husband. We seek not to be smutty or to be leering in any way towards the opposite sex.

[32 : 49] We have a high standard because that is what Christ encourages us to have as new people because that is good and we value the importance of our bodies.

We value the importance of what other people have and what we have and what we don't have. And what kind of summarizes it all, but particularly I think with regard to this section, but I think it summarizes it all, is that in living our Christian lives it is to do so with an attitude of thanksgiving.

You know, let there be no filthiness or foolish talk or crude joking there out of place, but let there be thanksgiving. But that's the response. It's kind of different from maybe what we would expect, but thankfulness.

And that militates against all the other things that separate us from one another. Be thankful today for our lives.

Be thankful for our marriage. Be thankful for our singleness. Because being thankful is the opposite of complaining, isn't it?

[34 : 09] It's the opposite of dissatisfaction. It's the opposite of coveting sex outside of God's prescription for us.

It's about not coveting other partners. Oh, I wish I had her as a wife, or I wish I had him as a husband, or I wish I could go out with that person, and I really dream to go out with that person, but they don't seem to like me, and I'm envious that I wish I could have that, and I want that at all costs.

It keeps us from being covetous about other people's jobs, or other people's bank balance, or other people's situations. I really, this is, I can't stand coming to church because everyone has it together.

My life's a mess. I wish it was different. I wish I was like them, because you come in and when you look like that, you're looking, and this is a hard thing for me as a hip support to say, but you're looking at everything with green eyes.

You're looking at everything that the grass is greener on the other side. Other people have got it better than me. I always want to live across that fence. That field is beautiful.

[35 : 21] The grass is so green, and my life is so muddy. I'm knee deep in mud, and the grass doesn't grow, and it's full of weeds. Why has God done this for me?

And yet understanding what Christ has done, theology, understanding His love and His commitment, and His saying, I hold you in my hand. I love you so much.

I gave everything in order to be your Savior and your Lord, and I have a purpose for you, and I have you exactly where I have you for a purpose, and I want you to be thankful within that purpose because I'm taking you home.

I have a great future for you, and I love you more than you can ever imagine. God has us where we are, and to be holy, to be truly righteous and holy and imitators of God is to be thankful for our lives.

Be thankful for having, seeking an honest morality and an honest work ethic and honest anger and honest Christian relationships. And I close with this, it takes you back to verse 31, which is to remind us that we are in a spiritual relationship.

[36 : 40] We're not religious in the sense that we just believe in a set of ideals. We're not religious in the sense of our cultural identity, just that this is what we've always done, not religious because just the way we've been brought up, but we are indwelt by God's Holy Spirit as believers.

That's why we're new creations. We were spiritually dead, and in coming, trusting in Christ, we are indwelt by the person of God. And so he says that all of this is in relational terms.

He says, live this way because I'm God, and I'm right, and I love you, and I'm good. And he says, please don't grieve me. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

In other places, it talks about not quenching the spirit, not resisting the spirit. And these are personal terms. It's about the way we interact with one another.

You're your best friend. You know your best friend. You don't want to grieve him, do you? Your best friend, the person you've loved. Well, your life, I'm speaking in human terms.

[37 : 50] It might be your husband, it might be your wife, it might be your son or daughter, it might be a colleague from work, it might be a school child, a friend that you've had since your school days. You don't want to grieve them by the way you live, by the way you act towards them.

You don't want to hurt them. You don't want to live in a life that is careless in respect to your best friend. And how much more, that is the language that we're given here of our relationship to God is to be spiritually sensitive, that we don't grieve him by our lifestyle and by being old spiritually in our thinking, by being separatist or monastic or caring less about the community or gossiping or talking about them or putting them down and putting me up and not being forgiving and not being pure.

No one says that's easy, but he provides us with his spirit in order to do it and he loves us greatly because it's the pain of healing.

It's the pain of becoming whole and it's the self control that the Holy Spirit gives us in our lives. Don't be deceived. Always see here the underlying spiritual truth of who we are, indwelt with the spirit, but with the evil one constantly on the outside looking for ways to have an opportunity to disunite us from God and disunite us from one another.

You walk away from God's people and if you walk away from God, you do the devil's work because that is what he wants.

[39 : 33] He is there to spoil, to deceive, to destroy. That's his work and it's in the local church context and it's in the individual relationship you have with your God.

So let us not be people who grieve the Holy Spirit. I rejoice that he is forgiving. I rejoice that Christ gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrificed to God.

I rejoice that I need to go to him every day and say, Lord, forgive me for being useless and for not being new. I rejoice when you enable me to see clearly that newness is the best way and is the way he intended us to be with all the struggles and all the battles and all the difficulties that this fight in which we're engaged is one in which he is the victory and in which he empowers us to work out.

So may we do that as a community, may we be a community and may we individually also be imitators of God. I hope that you are able to chew on that 40 times over and benefit from God's word as you meditate and think on it.

I mean, let's pray. Lord God, we ask and pray that you would show us your way, that we would follow you with love and with tenderness and with gentleness.

[41 : 01] We rejoice and give thanks that you give a beautiful picture of community kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as in God, as God in Christ forgives us.

And we thank you that you give us a new way of thinking, a new ambition, a new perspective, a new value, a new preciousness that our lives, whoever we are, whoever we are, whether we're employed or unemployed or students or retired or in the midst of a heavy schedule of work or of exams, home with our children, ill in bed, whatever good, bad or indifferent situation we find ourselves in as we measure it.

May we be able to find reason as believers for thankfulness. And for any who might not be committed to Jesus Christ this morning here, I pray and ask that they would hear the voice of Jesus Christ and would see the benefit and the value and the glory of belonging to Him.

Yes, there is a great cost and we know that, but we also know you have paid the price and you provide us with all that we need. May we rejoice in that and be glad. And this is the day of the Lord.

May we rejoice in it and be glad for Jesus' sake. Amen.