

# What Are You All About?

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[ 0 : 00 ] As I said, we'll be looking at the book of chapter 5 in 2 Corinthians. I'll be turned back there with me. And I was asked for a title for the sermon, so I thought we could call it, What Are You All About?

It's a phrase that you sometimes hear, or you mostly hear, I guess, somebody saying to you with a slightly aggrieved voice, like, What Are You All About? Usually when you just irritate somebody. And they're questioning what you've just done, or your motives, or whatever. This is, 2 Corinthians is in many ways quite a personal book, a letter written by Paul, to people that he knew he had visited before.

And it's a letter that, in which Paul explains quite a lot about himself. He talks about, as well, obviously, as the Gospel of Jesus.

He talks about his own actions, his own motives, and his own ministry. And this chapter, chapter 5, is a chapter that can be very personal for us, that asks us questions.

[ 1 : 13 ] Certainly, it asked me questions and challenged me when I read it, first a wee while ago. And it asked us the question, what are we all about in three main areas that we'll look at?

Three areas of Christian life, I suppose you could say, elements of the Christian life that apply to us all. And there are challenges that apply to us whether we're Christian or not Christian, as well.

I don't know how you would respond, you know, when you read a magazine interview with a celebrity, or say, for example, the St. Columba's newsletter, and it asks that question of whoever's being interviewed.

Describe yourself in three words, and you either think, like, oh, no, oh my God. Or you think, oh, great, you know, exciting, kind of adventurous.

Most people just kind of think, although I sum up my life in three words. How would you describe Paul in three words? The Apostle Paul, if you had to describe the Apostle Paul's life, character, some of the words that came to mind for me were missionary, obviously.

[ 2 : 22 ] Discipler, encourager, a rebuke her, depending on who he's speaking to, a traveller. I also thought sufferer.

Suffering is something that was very real. Hardship was something that was very real to Paul, many times in his life. And that's very relevant to the first thing that I want to look at.

As I said, there are three main challenges, I suppose, in the Christian life in this passage. And the first one is to do with the body, how we think about our bodies.

And we see this in verses one to eight. So the first kind of little section we'll look at is verses one to eight. And what this section tells us, what Paul is saying here, and it follows, the argument that he's using here follows from chapter four, kind of, kind of, how he's through from the previous chapter, is that we look forward to being given a new body in glory.

The Christian looks forward to, Paul is saying that he actually actively looks forward to being given a new body, one day, in glory. That's a pretty remarkable thing to think about, and look forward to in many ways.

[ 3 : 38 ] And I think quite a challenging thing. If we're to consider Paul's life for a short time, before he became a Christian, he maybe had great prospects.

He was somebody who was key in his own little society. He was educated, he was bright, he was, to some degrees, an enforcer.

He was going to go far. It seemed like it could all have gone well for him. If you imagine the kind of scenario, Paul's kind of 18th, his parents and his peers looking on, again, this guy is going to go far. It's going to go well for him. And yet, if we look a little bit further on in this book, Second Corinthians, he returned to chapter 11. He's been a Christian, and his life has turned out very differently to how

he might have expected it.

Second Corinthians 11, verse 23. This is a famous passage where Paul details some of the things that he's been through.

[ 4 : 49 ] And he says halfway through verse 23, I've worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, been exposed to death again and again, five times I received from the Jews the 40 lashes, minus one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked.

I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I've been constantly on the move. I've been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from gentiles, in danger in the city, and it goes on.

Now, this is a passage where Paul has been quite frank and said, look what I've had to put up with. Look at the kind of things that have happened to me in my life.

Probably not many of us could keep up with that list in terms of the kind of physical hardship that he had to go through. Pretty tough stuff. But we all know that we all go through times that trouble us, whether just weakness of the body, illness to ourselves, the worry about illness from our family or our friends, or first the troubles of life, the people that get in our way or the consequences when we get in other people's way.

There are many things about this life, the physical life, the body, the actual experiences that we go through that really trouble us. And back to where we are looking at in this passage, this is something that Paul has been talking about in chapter 4.

[ 6 : 20 ] Let's look back briefly at chapter 4 to verse 7. He describes how we have this treasure in jars of clay to show us that this all-surpassing power from God is from God and not from us.

We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed. So, this is very real to Paul.

Being able to talk about the hardships that he goes through, that he faces. So, how does he deal with that? How does he deal with the fact that he has many hard immediate troubles to go through? And he has the burden also of all the people that he's responsible for. Is he precious about his life? Is he precious about his own body? Is he thinking, well, I'm really important. I was going to be a big shot in the world of my old culture, my old religion, and I am a Christian but I'm a key apostle.

I need to be protected. I need to be looked after. People should listen to me. I have a message from God. He's not precious about himself, is what's really interesting. Because if we look into the chapter that we're looking at here, look how he starts off in verse 1.

[ 7 : 31 ] Now, we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands. Now, language here, when you first read it, you may say, what's he talking about?

If the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God. He's likening his own body to a tent. And what do we know about a tent? Particularly in this culture, a tent is not permanent. I would not live in a tent for any money in this climate. We go camping for a short time, then get too cold, pack it up and move on again. Usually is what happens in this culture.

And Paul's describing how his confidence is not rooted in himself, in his own strength and in his body, and in his own physical capacity to get through life, in his own mental capacity to deal with the things that he has.

Specifically what he's talking about here isn't just the idea of, I'm looking forward to heaven, although that's part of what he's describing here. Specifically what he's talking about is he's actually looking forward to being given a new body.

[ 8 : 42 ] I don't know how often you think about that as a Christian. That is something that the Christian has to look forward to. Probably not something, even like me, it's not something I think about very often.

When I go through difficulty, it's probably not one of the first places I turn to for comfort, is that I have a hope that my body is not everything and that I will be given a new body.

One day. Look at what he says. Not just that, okay, if our earthly tent, or in other words, our physical body is destroyed, we look forward to being given a heavenly one.

But if we move on, verse 4, for while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened because we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed with a heavenly dwelling.

So there's a sense in which he's actually looking forward to it. And he's actually looking forward to the fact that this is a reality for him. Again, very like what Lackey was saying this morning about the hope that we have as Christians, we're to be people of hope, and this is part of that hope.

[ 9 : 51 ] That we are not just the sum of our parts, we're not just this physical entity that is here randomly for a period of time, and then it ceases.

But we have a much greater hope. And is that the way that we think about ourselves? I think that's a real challenge because much of our culture challenges us to think about even just our bodies, us ourselves, the way we present ourselves, as really important.

How physically fit am I? This is a great time of year for joining a gym, right? And in February, how many will be empty again? There's a lot of pressure to present ourselves in a certain way, to look a certain way.

And we can get so drawn into thinking about just the way we look or feel. And so on one level, the way we deal with the whole issue of our bodies can be very much about putting confidence in it, so that either our looks or the way we present ourselves is everything, or our health is everything. And if our health starts to go, our foundations are taken away from underneath us. We can go the other extreme, though, I suppose, as well, can't we, in the sense that our bodies can be the thing that we just cling to.

[ 11 : 06 ] And we think we invest, we rather invest everything in our body, or we invest nothing. So that when we get ill, when trouble comes, when we start to feel the hardships of life, we start to say, well, this is just rubbish.

I don't want this. And even say I'd rather be at home with the Lord. But in a sense for the motives of just, I don't want to deal with this anymore.

I just want to be away from here. And that is something that we can get to that point. So this whole thing that Paul's looking at here, looking forward to being given a new body, isn't easy.

Each of the three areas I want to look at tonight, when I first read this, when I first thought through this passage, I thought, that is hard. I don't find that easy.

It's very easy for us to be distracted. It's very easy for us to be channeled a certain way when we think about our bodies. So the first thing is, we look forward to being given a new body.

[ 12 : 12 ] Do we? Do I? Is that part of the hope that we have as a Christian, that our bodies are not everything? And that our life even is something which is here for a time.

But we look forward with hope very much to what we have in the future. Second thing that I want to look at is in verses 9 and 10.

Following on, Paul's in the mindset of looking ahead, thinking where we will be going. And so he arrives at this point in verse 9 where he says, So we make it our goal to please him, to please God, whether we're at home in the body or away from it.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Okay, so he's been saying, a body is not everything.

We look forward to being given a new body, but while we are in this body, what have we done with our life? So second big challenge, God will judge what we have done with our lives.

[ 13 : 21 ] If the first one had to do with our body, the second one has to do with our actions, what are we all about? What does our actions and our daily lives say about who we are, the kind of people that we are?

Sometimes, maybe I sometimes have shied away from this kind of subject because we're nervous about that whole idea of saying, yeah, being a Christian is about what I do. No, no, no, it's not. It's about being saved in Christ.

But yet, there is an emphasis, a big emphasis, on the Christian life, what we do with the life that God gives us. I was wondering about this whole idea of what happens to us.

Where do we go? Maybe stepping outside of this church building for a while and canvassing the people on the street, as it were. Take a straw poll of the people that you know, the people that you meet at work tomorrow.

What do you think happens to you when you die? And you get a whole load of different answers. But I wonder if the kind of common denominator between a lot of the answers would be something like this.

[14:26] I saw, I was reading a review for a film and I don't even, I wasn't that interested in it, I was just reading it. I don't know what the film was.

But there was a central couple in the film, these two characters. And they were dealing with a bereavement of some sort. And somebody else had come and spoken to them and in trying to comfort them had said something along the lines of, oh, God must have needed another angel in heaven.

That was the comfort given to this grieving couple. God must have needed another angel in heaven. There was no kind of foundation for that statement. There was no real kind of idea behind it except for the fact that it's nice.

And it is nice. And it is the kind of thing that we want to think. A lot of people want to think. The people are generally speaking good. They're generally speaking if there is a place that we go after death, it's a nice place and the most people should go there unless they're not really bad.

Unless they've done something obviously evil, then most people should go to this place. Do any of us have any inkling of thinking like that?

[15:39] If we can't say tonight, I know where I go when the Lord decides that my life is over. If we're not Christians, what do we think happens to us?

Because it's not the idea that the Bible gives us. This passage that we're looking at in this particular section here, verses 9 and 10, is specifically to do with God looking at and assessing and judging the Christian's life.

But we know as well, don't we, that all will come before the judgment seat of God. This is not the kind of judgment that we get in. Say for example, in Daniel, remember in Daniel chapter 5 where we read, in some ways terrifying words, your kingdom is divided and given to the means and persons. You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. As a message from God to a king, your life has been weighed on the scales. You're standing before me, a man, a king, with all your, what you think is goodness, but with all your sin, and you have been found wanting.

You do not in yourself please me. You cannot reach my level. Now that is the kind of judgment that we all face. We all face coming to God with ourselves and our sins and trying to account for that.

[17:13] And so that is something to take account of tonight. But this, as I said, is to do with the Christian. So it's important for the Christian to say, okay, well, why is my life all about?

How am I using the life that God is giving me? And what am I doing with it? And I don't know whether you find that even a scary concept as a Christian, but it's not something that you think about very often.

I will stand before God and he will weigh my life in the balance. And he will say, what have you done with your life? If you look into 2 Timothy, we get another example of this.

2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 7. You sometimes get a sense of the amount of times Paul seems urgent in his writing.

And he also writes in a very challenging way to exhort the people that he's writing to in their lives. And he often, you'll notice in his letters, having written some doctrine, some truth about God, then says, okay, therefore, because of this truth, this is what you should do.

[18:28] And so the idea of us doing, of us living, of what we do in our lives is very important. Look at what he says in 2 Timothy chapter 4. Now, verse 7.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day. It seems kind of wrong sometimes, we think when we're Christians, to read that kind of thing. Like he's saying, we'll be rewarded. I fought the good fight. I've finished the race. Now I will be rewarded. And yet this is something that we have to think about as Christians.

That we are given tasks to do from God. We're given people around us, folks that we know to witness to. And we are given our own personal walk with the Lord.

And how we get on with that isn't something that doesn't really matter. We know that the Bible speaks about that elsewhere. It's not like we can say, well, I'm a Christian. So I trust in Jesus. So it's okay. I can kind of just sit back and, you know, let him work out goodness in my life somehow, passively, as if it's all just going to happen.

[19:42] What we have here is we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Each one may receive what is due to him. Again, how does that make you feel? It can be a real burden.

As a Christian, we can so easily get into the whole thing of, I'm just not good enough. If you look at it from the wrong perspective, we can so easily start thinking, but I failed then, and then, and then. So how can I be a Christian? How can I keep? How can I stand before God and keep a consistent witness when I know myself and I know all the ways in which I struggle?

Christians can struggle with this. Generally speaking, the whole concept of judgment loads of people struggle with now, and it can seep into our Christian lives. But I don't know how many people you know who aren't Christians who like the idea that God will judge everyone.

It's not very popular. It's not the kind of thing that you can just say, I'm a Christian. This is what I believe in. I say, oh, that's good. I agree with that. Most people do not like the idea that we are to stand before God and be judged by him.

[ 20 : 48 ] So the second truth, God will judge what we have done with our lives, can also be a trouble, can also be difficult for us to deal with. The very concept of us moving through this life, looking to heaven, by knowing that we will stand before him and have our lives weighed in the balance.

It's something that can be a trouble for us. Third thing, last section of the chapter, you'll see from verse 11, we have a new heading, the Ministry of Reconciliation.

If we've had how this affects our body, how this affects our actions, this has to do with our witness.

Again, what are you all about? What is your witness? Who are you to the people that you know?

In verse 11 we read, since then we know what it is to fear the Lord. In other words, in the light of this concept that we're moving towards a time when we will be with God again, He will give us a new body and He will weigh our actions and judge us.

Since we know that, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

[ 22 : 03 ] Paul lays great importance on making sure that we have this sense of ministry and that we have this sense of being able to speak to others and convince others that what we believe isn't just true for us.

Again, you'll maybe meet a lot of people now who'll say, you're a Christian, good, fine, keep that there with you. I don't want to know, because you can be a Christian and I can be whatever and that's fine and we just have tolerance.

But the Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible doesn't teach that we can be Christians and believe in that and just leave everybody else to do what they want because we know that everybody will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Even if we say, well, this is about Paul. Paul was a missionary. Remember you said yourself at the start, he's a missionary. He's an apostle, specially commissioned by God to take this word.

That's for him. We try and persuade men, that's Paul's work. Yet we're also encouraged, aren't we, to be prepared. Remember the references in 1 Peter 3, always be prepared to give an answer.

[ 23 : 11 ] So even if we say, I'm not going to be a missionary. Even if we say, I'm not a professional Christian as it were, I'm not a preacher. The Bible also says, when challenged, when asked about your faith, why do you believe that you will go and meet God?

Why do you believe that? Why do you believe that you'll be given a new body? That's weird. Always be ready to give an answer for the faith that you have. And we see, don't we, as well, we move through this section here, the extent that it goes to.

So from now on, verse 16, so from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Paul's saying that his attitude towards who Jesus was used to be all wrong.

Paul was out to get Christ, Christ's followers. Paul was out, as so, to destroy it. And yet his whole attitude towards this was shifted. And now he knows who Jesus is. And now he worships Jesus.

And you see what it makes him say? We regard nobody from a worldly point of view. Nobody.

Nobody that Paul came across, he just said, ah, they don't come into my sphere of reckoning.

[ 24 : 25 ] I kind of don't really want to, you know, they're not important to me. He says, everybody who I come across, I have to know and speak to and filter through the consciousness that I am a Christian.

And the Christianity that I believe in is true. It affects them also. He wasn't saying that he grabbed everybody and screamed at them as soon as he met them. But nevertheless, the way that he associated himself with people around about him was that this message was true for them also.

So this affects us. It means that the people that we know, if we take this challenge on board from now on, we regard nobody from a worldly point of view, this impacts how we think about that. It doesn't mean that we get aggressive. It doesn't mean that we judge people. It doesn't mean that we look down at everybody and say, you're all horrible, therefore we keep away from you. Nor does it mean that we go to people and grab them and harangue them until they listen to us. But it means that we don't say, they're just my work colleagues. I can be different with them.

[ 25 : 32 ] That's my family, you know, so that we set boundaries around who we decide to witness to. Even the concept that they're unwitnessable too. I can't speak to them because they won't listen.

We at least bring them before God in prayer and let him deal with them. So the final section here is that we have this ministry of reconciliation.

That our ministry, the concept of being a Christian is not, okay, I keep that to myself, but that I am reconciled to God. I want everybody else to be reconciled to God.

Now again, this could be a challenge. I used to, I remember when I first went to the Christian Union when I went to university in Glasgow. And they had, and of course, CU is all about, what should be all about, mission on campus, witnessing to the world at university.

But I wasn't very aware of that and I just kind of went along hoping to meet a few friends, probably not a very strong Christian in those days, but a young Christian probably, and I turned up and they said, okay, soon it's mission week.

[ 26 : 43 ] And my immediate feeling was, head down, try not to get involved, scary stuff. I have to go out on campus and tell people about Christianity, which I wasn't even very comfortable with.

So for Christians this can be a burden on us. I have to tell people about this. I find it hard enough understanding it myself. It's difficult, I struggle with it, I have many difficulties.

How can I tell other people it's somebody else's job? There are people who are good at it, but I'm not. Again, our society sees this whole issue as a sticky issue.

You know, you get accused of proselytising, don't you? Kind of making people believe. Missionaries are kind of looked down on nowadays. They go into another country and just make these focus of other faith believe.

Why can't you just leave them alone? Let them believe what they want to believe. So another general consensus nowadays is, let's just let everybody kind of believe what they believe and what they were brought to believe. Just leave them alone.

[ 27 : 45 ] So the Ministry of Reconciliation, our witness, my witness to the people around about me, am I comfortable with it? Is that what I'm all about? Am I a Christian who witnesses to the world?

All of these things can bring us grief in a sense. They can be difficult for us to deal with. We can go through our Christian life sometimes feeling, when I look at this passage, when I look at the different elements that make up this passage about Christian life, I'm failing. I find it too hard.

I don't know what to do about this. It can be like that. It can be the case. So what's the answer?

How do we deal with that when we find these kind of things very difficult?

And the answer has to come with just the remainder of the chapter, but particularly the last verse of this chapter. The answer has to come in verse 21. How do we deal with the difficulty we have with these things?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us. So that in him, in Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 28 : 56 ] In order for these things, for us to deal with these things, we need to know the Gospel. I was reminding myself of this over the holiday period, again and again, just coming back to the fact that we need to know Jesus again and again, in a new way, in a fresh way in our lives, to know that he died for us, and that he gave up his life for us.

Because if that part of our life, now we can, even as Christians, with the Gospel, the core of Jesus aside for a time, we become distracted, we become down, we become slightly disaffected.

If you take your eyes off the cross, all of these things, even the hope for the future, even how you witness to your friends, can just become something that you do as an identity badge.

You technically believe these things. You technically should be doing these things, but it's like a weight around you. Because we can do them in our own strength.

And so again and again, we need the Gospel. We need to remember, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us. I wonder if we know, at the start of this year, in a fresh way, what it means to be a Christian.

[ 30 : 12 ] What it means that Jesus Christ knows us, knows all about every failing that we have. And every time, as a Christian or as a non-Christian, before we became Christians, we just ignored him, we went deliberately against him, we've let him down, and yet went to the cross for us, knowing us, knowing our sin, bearing our sin on the cross.

We need a Gospel perspective. I was thinking back to a time when I did a bad thing. I worked at a library when I just left school.

And I had this job which was like general library assistant. And I helped out on the library floor, and I served people and gave them books and stuff. But I also did stuff like caretaking, and I had to lock up.

I was the first key holder, and I'd get kind of interesting jobs. I used to have to go on the roof and fix things. And once they told me, go and drive that van to that place and deliver books and then come back. Big van, never driven a van as big as that before.

Drove it, got there, fine. Delivered stuff, got back in the van, reversed into a wall. Slightly broke the van, had to go back to the library and tell the boss that I'd broken the van.

[ 31 : 30 ] Now, I was very nervous because I was quite young. This was quite a new job for me. And I had to go up to the big office and knock on the boss's door, head librarian for Perthshire or something like that.

And him and the second boss were there, both of them looking at me. They're having a meeting. And I had to confess what I had done. I was terrified. Now, I didn't know how to react.

I had no idea how they would react. They could have got really mad at me. I've been in a situation in another workplace before where I've done something not quite as major as that, but I have to take personal responsibility for that.

But the way they reacted was, it's okay. You weren't supposed to be driving the van anyway. You're not. It's not really your job. We just made you do it the last minute. It's okay. Don't worry.

Now, the sense of relief I felt was massive. I went out of the room kind of shaking, you know, like this. To know that you go before Jesus, to guarantee that your life of sin is wiped away is something that we must never let go of.

[ 32 : 40 ] To know that Jesus Christ guarantees that his work on the cross was for you and was for me is the thing that changes our perspective on the way we view our Christian life.

So that, it means when we go back through these different issues, we say, okay, Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. I am saved. I am transformed. Therefore, I long to be with him.

I do not invest everything in this body because I see it as having been given to me for a time. And when that time is up, I will go to be with my Heavenly Father.

If you look in chapter 5, verse 5, look at how Paul has perspective on this whole issue of the body. Now, it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit.

This is the purpose of God. He's reconciled us so that he's taken us and changed us so that we're to be with him. That's what we're for.

[ 33 : 46 ] We're not just for this life. The second issue, being held to account what we've done in this life, how do we deal with the sense of, how can I bring my life before God with all my faults and failings in who I am?

Ultimately, this is a matter for rejoicing because our sin, we can go confidently before Christ, known that our sin has been dealt with, it's been taken and we go in Jesus' name with His righteousness covering us.

And that surely is an inspiration for us to live for Him now. If I forget that He has died for me and He has given up everything for me, then my perspective on how I live my life now will be affected.

I will maybe do what I do from a sense of duty or simply ritual, but I must maybe remember, I need to remember more to do it out of love because Jesus first loved me, because He gave up His life for me.

And thirdly, how do we witness? How do we, in a culture where most people think it's stupid or that we're ignorant for believing in Jesus, how do we actually tell them that what they need is Jesus Christ is to know again the love of Jesus Christ for us, that He came into the world that was so rejected and yet fulfilled His ministry and gave up His life for us, therefore we must tell other people.

[ 35 : 19 ] And we feel a sense of, as the more we know Jesus, the more we know His sacrifice for us, it bursts out of us. And we don't want to offend and we don't want to grab people and harangue them, but we just want to share the love of Jesus.

It's nothing new, but it's what we need is to know the Gospel of Jesus and to be filled with His love again and a sense of all that He has done for us, so that all these different issues of our Christian life, which can be hard, can be brought into perspective.

One example of this, I think, just to finish off, is elsewhere in Paul's writing in Romans, Romans 11. Just want to finish with this. Paul has been writing about the Gospel, he's been writing about the way that God saves, he's been writing about all the many ways in which God has dealt with us, people, humanity.

And look at verse 33. This is like the bursting forth of Paul's admiration and amazement and love for God in response. Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable His judgments and His paths beyond tracing out.

Who is known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? Who is ever given to God that God should repay Him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever.

[ 36 : 39 ] Amen. So, as we look down the calendar another year, Christian life might be difficult, it might be good.

But in order to maintain our focus and to know peace, we need to know the Gospel. I need to know the Gospel, I need to be convinced of it again and again and to understand its healing power for my life, to help me deal with the kind of issues that are brought up.

Looking forward to the future, what will happen to my body, how will I deal with being brought before God, and how will I deal with where I am now, and how I am supposed to witness to the people around about me.

We remember all that Jesus has done for us, and in that we take confidence. Let's pray. Lord, we pray that You'd help us. We often find that we get stale, we find that when we have a high point in our Christian life, it doesn't necessarily last as long as we want it to.

We find questions coming in from all sides, which we try and shake our faith, and we pray that You'd help us to know the Gospel, help it not to be dry to us, or over familiar.

[ 37 : 51 ] We pray that the fact that Jesus Christ knows us and loves us, and wants us all to trust in Him, is real for everyone of us in this room tonight, and it is necessary for everyone of our friends and family that we know, help us to deal with this and try and witness to those we know.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.