

Psalm 115

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: 26 November 2017

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Well read and treasured in your heart, and turn with me to Psalm 115. Before I read, let me remind you that this is God's Word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. And we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name, give glory for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness.

Why should the nations say, where is their God? Our God is in the heavens. He does all that He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

They have mouths, but do not speak, eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear, noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel.

[1 : 02] They have feet, but do not walk. And they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them. So do all who trust in them.

O Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield.

You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. The Lord has remembered us. He will bless us.

He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great. May the Lord give you increase, you and your children.

May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth. The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.

[2 : 03] The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.

Praise the Lord. This is one of the psalms sung by the Jews at the feast of the Passover.

Which likely means that it was sung by our Lord on the night that he was betrayed and arrested. It is not certain who or at what time this psalm was penned.

And therefore I'll refer to its writer as the psalmist from here on. But we can, however, see from its contents that the occasion for its writing is summed up in the question of verse 2.

Why should the nation say, where is their God? It would seem that God's people have once again found themselves afflicted.

[3 : 05] And the psalmist implores God to make himself known for the sake of his name. In the midst of their suffering, whatever that was, whatever the occasion was.

The psalmist does not wish that God's people would be given glory. That their name would be made great. But that God would be given glory. That he would be beheld as the loving and faithful God that he is.

The psalmist writes in verse 1, Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

The psalmist pleads with God to act. Not on any merit of God's people as they have none. But rather on the merit of God's character and zeal for his own glory.

John Calvin in writing concerning verse 1 of Psalm 115 said, This is a point to which we ought carefully to attend. That altogether, unworthy as we are of God's regard, we may cherish the hope of being saved by him.

[4 : 26] From the respect that he has for the glory of his name. And from his having adopted us on condition of never forsaking us.

The psalmist answers the question, Where is there God? With confident and holy derision in verse 3. He writes, Our God is in the heavens.

He does all that he pleases. God is in a place where he cannot be seen. But all of his loving kindness and faithfulness toward mankind can be seen.

And he does all that he pleases. What an astounding statement that is. What a limitless statement. Our God does all that he pleases. If God wills that something should happen, it happens. If he does not intend for something to happen, it will not happen.

[5 : 33] Beloved, this reality is such a comfort to the afflicted church. The church militant. Nothing happens apart from God's providence.

Nothing. We worship the one true and living God. There are no other gods. And the psalmist is going to show us the futility of worshiping any other than our God.

But before we consider verses 4 and following, I want to show you something about the structure of Psalm 115. We've looked at verses 1 through 3 in brief.

Verse 1. The psalmist makes an appeal for God himself to glorify himself. For him to act in a way that brings his name honor.

In verse 2, we see this expression of wickedness. The wicked, the nations say, where is your God? And in verse 3, we see a declaration of God's place, where he is.

[6 : 45] He's in the heavens and of his power. He's sovereign. He does whatever he pleases. Now look at verses 16, 17, and 18.

We find these three points made in verses 1, 2, and 3 in reverse in verses 16, 17, and 18 with some small variations.

In verse 16, so track me backwards, we see a declaration of God's place. The heavens are God's heavens. With the addition of man's place, right?

It's granted to him by God. So man is in the earth. The earth has been given to man. In verse 17, we see.

In verse 2, the wicked ask this wicked question. Here we see that they do not worship God at all. In no way at all do they worship God. And then verse 18, in verse 1, there is an appeal for God to glorify himself.

[7 : 52] But in verse 18, we see that God's people are meant to, are created to, ascribe glory to God in the praise of him.

So you see how it's reflexive in that way. So in verses 1 through 3, we see the sovereignty of God bringing about the praise of his name. And in verses 16 through 18, we see, as God's people, our image-bearing responsibility to do the same.

There is much talk today about finding God's purpose for your life. Here it is in this text. That we would bring him great glory.

That we would leverage all that we have and do in order to show God more as he is. You are never more as God intended you to be than when you are working in his strength for the praise of his name.

You are never further from God's intention for you when you are worshiping lesser things. These two sets of three verses each serve as an inclusion.

[9 : 11] There's a literary term for you today. As an inclusion bookends for verses 4 through 15.

And they bookend a juxtaposition between the worship of false gods and the strong confidence that we can have in worshiping the one true and living God.

So, this has been my prayer for you this morning. If you are of the nations, one of those who do not belong to God, who worship the creation rather than the creator, my prayer for you is that you will behold the steadfast love and faithfulness of God this morning toward his people, and that you will be moved to place saving faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

If you are of God's people, if you have placed saving faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, my prayer for you is that you will behold the steadfast love and faithfulness of God afresh this morning, and that he will show you how inclined you still are to worship at the feet of the creation. Having been adopted into the family of God, how likely you are to turn back from him to lesser forms of worship. So, in order to do that, in two points, number one, verses four through 15, the futility of false gods, and number two, the glory of the one true and living God.

So, number one, the futility or uselessness of false gods. Look what the psalmist says about them. Their idols, the nation's idols, are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

[11 : 19] Idols are created things. The psalmist tells us in verse four, they are the work of human hands. They are made of precious metals in this case, the specific idols he's referring to, but they

are made all the same.

And he goes on and he elaborates this point with accusations of their uselessness. Verse five, beginning, they have mouths, but they do not speak.

These graven images have the image of a mouth, but they say nothing. Genesis chapter one tells of God creating the world with mighty words.

But idols are dumb. They can utter nothing. They cannot speak words of promise or encouragement or warning. They have, verse five, eyes, but do not see.

When Hagar is told by an angel of the Lord that she will bear a son, it is recorded in Genesis 16, 13. So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her.

[12:29] You are a God of seeing. For she said, truly here I have seen him who looks after me, who is caring for us as he observes us and then interacts with us.

It is a contradiction altogether to have a God who cannot see. Verse six, they have ears, but they do not hear.

There is no sense in offering up prayers to a God that cannot hear your prayers. Exodus 2, 24 records that God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Our God is a God who hears. Idols hear nothing. On in verse six further, they have noses, but do not smell.

This is likely a reference to God's acceptance of sacrifice. Genesis 8, 21 records, verse 7, and when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma of the sacrifice, the Lord said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

[13:51] Neither will I again strike down every living creature as I have done. A God who cannot smell cannot receive an acceptable sacrifice.

Verse 7, they have hands, but do not feel. False gods cannot sympathize with our weakness, nor can they bring us comfort.

The writer of Hebrews, in Hebrews 4, 15 says, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Our God became a man in order that He might sympathize with us, understand our suffering, and come to us in it. Further in verse 7, they have feet, but they do not walk.

False gods have no activity. They just sit. The one true and living God does all that He pleases. But false gods do nothing.

[14:58] Isaiah 41, 7, the craftsman strengthens the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer, him who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, it is good, and they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved.

The idol gets nailed down to the floor so it cannot be taken. They have feet, but they do not walk, and they do not make a sound. In their throat.

More literally, I think, they do not muse. They do not have thought. False gods are lifeless and useless.

This is a comprehensive charge list. There are seven charges that are being made here. Idols are utterly useless, useless, and the worship of them is an exercise in futility.

In studying these charges against false gods, my mind was drawn to the taunting words of Elijah to the prophets of Baal. You may recall 1 Kings 18, 27 from our reading together not too long ago.

[16:12] Elijah says, I'm sorry, that's in the future. It's been one of those weeks. He says to the prophets of Baal, cry aloud, for he is a God.

Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.

False gods have nothing to offer us. But the psalmist continues by telling us in verse 8, those who make them become like them.

So do all who trust in them. This is the one-two punch of the point that the psalmist is trying to make about false gods.

Let me elaborate on that a bit more. There's lots of this kind of language in the Scripture about having eyes but not seeing, and ears but not hearing. Let me give you a couple of examples of this.

[17:19] Jeremiah 5, 21-24. God says, Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but see not, who have ears but hear not.

Do you not fear me, declares the Lord? Do you not tremble before me? I place the sands as the boundary of the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass. Though the waves toss, they cannot prevail.

Though they roar, they cannot pass over it. But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart. They have turned aside and gone away. They do not say in their hearts, Let us fear the Lord our God who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.

But God says to people of Israel, as rebellious people of Israel, You have failed to see me as the creator, as the emphasis that He's making throughout this passage in Jeremiah.

Who has held the sea in its boundaries? Who set the shore? And no matter how hard the sea tries, it cannot come past the place I have told it.

[18:27] I give the rain in its season, the autumn and the spring. I schedule out when the harvest will happen. Verse 21 says, You are a foolish and senseless people.

Have eyes, but do not see. Have ears, but hear not. You are like the very things that you worship. Another place, Ezekiel 12, 2.

Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not, for they are a rebellious house.

All of us were once these people. Eyes that did not see. Ears that did not hear.

Praise God that by His Spirit He works faith in blind and deaf people. We once were blind, but now we see.

[19:30] We once were deaf. I'm going outside the song now, but now we hear. In Matthew chapter 13, verses 11 and following, Jesus responds to the apostles asking why He speaks in parables, and He says this, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they do not see, and hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Indeed, in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says, and this is Isaiah 6, 9, and 10, you will indeed hear, but never understand, and you will indeed see, but never perceive.

For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed. Lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

[21:04] Oh, beloved, we have much reason to praise God for his grace to us in Christ. He has caused us to be born again.

He has given us our sight, and given us the ability to hear. He had made us not like idolaters any longer. He's restored in us our imago Dei, our willingness and our ability to praise him and worship him as we should.

Now, most of us I would presume to think all of us do not find ourselves in a position to bow down to carved images.

I did not grow up in a house where as a follower of Jesus Christ I had to neglect the shrine that was held someplace. However, the Bible is relentless about the idolatry of our hearts because we were created to worship God alone.

and idolatry takes all types of forms. God says to his people, good command, a command we need to keep, Exodus 23, you shall have no other gods before me.

[22:25] Charles Spurgeon said, and this is on your bulletin if you want to look at it, if you love anything better than God, you are idolaters. I'll repeat that part of it. If you love anything better than God, you are idolaters.

If there is anything you would not give up for God, it is your idol. If there is anything that you seek with greater fervor than you seek the glory of God, that is your idol.

And conversion means a turning from every idol. It means that we take all things and count them as loss for their surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And beloved, our hearts are so inclined to idolatry. And I believe that Satan loves nothing more than to get in the mix and have us be acceptable of our idolatry.

To think, yeah, yeah, Jesus, and, I can still have, I can still enjoy, I can still do, and in that we so regularly put those things in places of prominence in our lives.

[23 : 40] Most of us, again, I would dare say all of us, don't have a closet in our home with a shrine set up, a thing that we bow to. It's not so on the surface for us, but it's rather more about the attitudes and the intentions of our heart.

What are your affections set on? What do you seek, as Spurgeon said, with fervor? What do you talk about? What do you spend your money on?

Where is your time aimed at? If it's not the glory of God, then it's an idol. An idol is anything that we place as the primary focus of our lives.

And we regularly take good things, good things, meant to be good, meant to be given as gifts from the creator for our enjoyment. And we make them idols by loving them above God himself.

And this comes out of us in all kinds of ugly ways. Let me give you just some examples of some things that can be good, but can be idols in your life.

[24 : 52] security. Feeling safe can be an idol in your life. Material possessions of all kinds. Aren't we Americans? Revving up into Christmas season.

Really watch our hearts, beloved. What is it that we worship? Knowledge. Knowledge can be an idol in your life. You can worship how much you know or how much you don't know but want to know.

your political ideology can be an idol in your life. Having control of the situation can be an idol in your life.

Comfort and leisure can be idols. Good health can be an idol. Hear me, those of you, our family included, who strive to be healthy and to eat healthy, this can become idolatry for us.

pleasure, success, our physical appearance. Guys, I know some of you really want to be swole. That could be idolatry.

[25 : 59] Your ambition and dare I even say your family seems to be the last acceptable idol often in the church.

Anything that's placed above the prominence of God in our lives can be an idol. And beloved, it comes at us from all directions all the time.

The Christian life is meant to be a life of repentance and faith turning from our sinful idolatry into God. We will not be done with this in this lifetime.

But, I can tell you, by faith, by the grace of God, we can get better. We can improve upon true worship of the one living God.

We can put away our idolatry. And I want to show you just a little bit, just a brief glimpse of how it is that we identify idolatry in our lives and how it is that God works to strip idolatry out of our lives by looking at James chapter 4.

[27 : 06] So mark somehow Psalm 115, your finger, bookmark it, and turn to James chapter 4. In verse 1, James asks an astounding question.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? What causes our relational disagreements?

And this isn't necessarily just what's happening inside of a church fellowship. This is with our spouses. This is with our co-workers. This is with the guy that pulls out in front of you on the road. What's causing the quarrels and causing the fights among you? And he says this, is it not this that your passions are at war within you?

Your passions. Things that you desire to have and it's not being had the way you want it to be had. And so things happen as a result of that.

[28 : 31] anxiety or anger which we mask with terms like frustration and stress. These are not things that God's people are meant to be living in.

These are not emotions that are meant to be felt by God's people. Your passions are at war within you. Verse 2, you desire and do not have so you murder your anger in your heart.

You covet and cannot obtain so you fight and you quarrel. You do not have because you don't ask.

You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.

You don't aim these things at the glory of God. You aim them at your self. You adulterous people.

So here's a people turning back from their God to their idols.

Right? This is in our Bible reading. We've been in the book of Judges. We've just gotten through the book of Judges. And you see a people devoting themselves in worship to God.

[29 : 37] Things get restored. A judge comes along and sorts things out. And then how quickly do they go back to the idols of the land? They go back to the Canaanite Baals to worship them once again.

That's what's happening here. You adulterous People! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

As people who have been delivered by God, who are his people, we are so very apt to do this. Let me to make the point.

I had another example in mind at this point in the sermon, but I thought because it was yesterday, it was a better example. This was a really tiring week for me.

It was an exhausting week. A great week, but it was a go, go, go, go week. We had across two days, three different Thanksgiving events. On Friday, I've got family from in town.

[30 : 38] Chris is going to come share with us in just a moment at the end of the service. We decided to do some work out of my parents' property. They had a huge oak tree come down. It was like four oak trees it seemed like from that wind storm.

We used chainsaw all day. I was really sore, really tired at the end of all that. Saturday, I worked up here trying to get ready for this morning. All I wanted to do was sleep or soak in a hot tub.

I was tired. Saturday evening, the plan was to go home and put our Christmas tree up. Put our tree up at the house and spend some time decorating it, watching elf and drinking cider while we put together the tree.

A good plan, an enjoyable time to spend with the family. I was frustrated because I really wanted to be comfortable. I just really wanted comfort. I wanted to be done with the project of it all.

Our Christmas tree stand has been a frustration to me. It's not a stand I have particularly enjoyed across the years. I go through all the work though, get the tree trimmed up, get it put together, get it in the house, water in the tree, get the lights on the tree, and I look down and there's a puddle on the floor, and the stand was cracked.

[31 : 48] Apparently, I hit it with a hammer a little too hard, and I cracked the bottom of it, and it was leaking everywhere. So, we had to take the tree with the stand now with water in it standoff, discover what's wrong with it, go to Walmart on a Saturday night in Gainesville, which is super fun, buy a new tree stand, come back, put the whole thing back up again, go through the process.

So, you're picturing what's going on. We have little ones running around who are bouncing, jumping off things, really excited that the tree's back in the house now, and Sam, with a great deal of foresight and thoughtfulness, had already gotten a cup of water.

She's concerned about now water being back in the stands, so the tree doesn't die. So, she brought this big cup of water, and she set it down next to the edge of the couch, and then she stepped back to make sure I was getting the tree right, and our one-and-a-half year old walked along and kicked the cup of water over.

So, in the place that we had already cleaned up water, now there was a whole other cup of water on the floor, and I went, really, in the middle of the floor, water, like that.

And Sam said, you go sit down, I'll clean it up. Okay, so what came out of me, right, this anger that came out of me, which she certainly did not deserve, was my frustration, my inner brewing, with my desire to be comfortable, right, I wanted to be done, I wanted to sit and do nothing, and confounded, all of these little things were getting in the way of that happening, and it made me mad, because I wanted my, you see how I'm worshipping myself, and this comfort that I have, right, so these little events, I have this little effigy of me built, and these little events are coming along and hacking the leg off my idol, and it's starting to fall over, and it made me mad, right, clearly, sin, and the temptation in me is to immediately justify it, right, and we all do this, well, of course, of course I'm upset, this is taking forever, I'm so tired, I've had so much work to do this week, I can't believe, the water, right, and the proper response, which I'm thankful by the grace of God,

[34 : 02] I got to in the span of time, because I've practiced this a ton, was to apologize to Sam, I'm really sorry, I'm really sorry, I'm so tired, but that's not my excuse, it was sin, right, you forgive me, she said, yes, of course, I forgive you, because I know you're beat down, I know you're exhausted, all the same, right, what is going on in my heart when I get upset, like that, it's idolatry, it's idolatry, right, so how is it that God exposes our idolatry, right, how is it that we come to realize, how is it that

I've learned, like when I fail in that way, to go, wait a second, this is not justifiable, I can't just go around saying, well of course I'm getting upset, right, I want to give you four quick ways that he does it, and I know we're getting short on time, so I'm going to move pretty quick here, how is it that God exposes our idolatry, number one, by his word and his spirit, by his word and his spirit, beloved, if you want to be a true worshiper of the one, true, only God, you must read his word, right, he's not a dumb God, he's spoken to us, he's given us a text, he's handed it to us, and we have it in plenty, right, know this word, it will begin to sift you like sand, it will begin to help expose your idolatry,

Hebrews 4.12, for the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart, so as I'm dealing with this emotional response, what's running through my mind is James 1.8, that I'm meant to be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God, this is what pops into my head, right, the spirit of God goes, I got one on file for you, right, you've read and studied it, you've memorized it, and it's right there, and he throws it up, and I go, ah, idolater, right, I need to repent, I need to turn from my sin and back to God, the word of God does this, so God exposed our idolatry by his word and his spirit, secondly, he may expose our idolatry by frustrating our idols, by withholding them, the things that you want, things that you think you need to make you happy, for you to be fulfilled, he may not give you, or, giving them to us and allowing us to experience their futility, letting you have the thing you asked for and run it out to its very end and to say there's no value in this thing that I thought was a thing worth worshipping.

In Psalm 106, verse 13 through 15, this is in referencing to Korah's rebellion from number 16, the psalm says, but they soon forget his works, they did not wait for his counsel, but they had a wanton craving in the wilderness and put God to the test in the desert.

He gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them. Let them see the very futility of the thing that they worshipped.

God exposed their idolatry by frustrating our idols, by withholding them, or allowing us to experience their futility. Third, God exposed their idolatry possibly by giving us an example of true worship.

[37 : 52] So this is where the church is extremely helpful. We come around people who deal with the same things that we deal with, who are willing to share with you their very experienced.

Let me tell you about my idols, that you might not be an idolater, that you might learn to purge idols from your living. This is a wonderful place in which to read biography, to see men and women who have gone before us, who have been faithful worshippers, of God.

We also get wonderful examples from the scripture. 1 Kings 18, 36. This is back to Elijah, as I mentioned earlier. At the time of the offering, Elijah the prophet came near and said, O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word.

And we know that he called down fire of God that lapped up the water and lit the sacrifice on fire.

We see that he had devoted himself to the one true living God and had obeyed his word.

So God can expose our idolatry by giving us examples to look around at people who were godly and serving God well. God also exposed our idolatry, number four, and this is the last one, by administering loving discipline.

[39 : 15] If you belong to God, you will experience the discipline of God. The writer of Hebrews says in chapter 12, verses 5 and 6, verse 6, and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.

So God in his great, steadfast, loving kindness toward us disciplines us to expose those things that we pick up and worship that are lesser things and therefore damaging things.

God is our greatest and highest good and so God helps to strip away idols in our lives. So, the four ways that he works at that.

Go back to Psalm 115. So what then is the remedy of this idolatry? How is it that we're not idolaters when we worship God?

[40 : 32] We aim our worship as people will worship something, so we aim our worship where our worship belongs, the one true and living God.

So this is the second overall point, the glory of the one true and living God. The psalmist tells us that the remedy of this idolatry is to trust, to place our faith in this God.

Our God who is in the heavens who does all that he pleases. And we get these wonderful repetitions. O Israel, O house of Aaron, you who fear the Lord, so the people and the people set aside for the specific task and then all of us who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.

Place your faith in the Lord. Believe in his promises to you. He is their help and he is their shield. He is both actively pursuing our good and he's also shielding us from harm. He's passively pursuing our good as well. He's stopping things that would be to our detriment.

[41 : 41] And we are so quick to define our good or our bad in human terms. We must get it clear in our minds that as we worship God, as we set our aim on him, as he works our good, that it's his good he intends to work in us.

It's for our good, it's his good. Romans 8, 28, 29. I hope this doesn't get old to you. And we know that for those who love God, all things, this is our God who's in the heaven, who does all that he pleases, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. A lot of people love 28, right? And then they walk around trying to figure out what the good is, right? Oh, someday I'll figure out the good. In hindsight, I'll understand the good. But Paul tells us in verse 29 what the good is. We don't have to wonder about it, just like we don't have to wonder about our purpose. Our purpose is to glorify God. What is the good that he's seeking in our living, right?

Verse 29, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. That's the answer. What's the good that God is seeking in all of our circumstances, all of this working in us, seeking our praise, Christlikeness.

[42 : 53] This is what he's working in us, trying to work out of us, is Christlikeness. So this is the way that God works as both our help and our shield. And certainly, God has not forgotten us.

The Lord has remembered us. He has blessed us, both now and forever more in Christ. Christ. I hope that you've experienced this morning that you can say with me, yes and amen, God has blessed me in Christ.

I have joy and satisfaction and identity. I can say, yes, the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of his glorious grace. I can see and have seen in my life that I want to turn away from idols. They are, in fact, lesser things and I want to turn to the living God. I want to leverage all that I have and all that I am for his glory.

He has blessed us. May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth and may we bless his name forever more.

[44 : 03] Just as God promised Joshua in Joshua 1. This is from our recent Bible reading. I will never leave you or forsake you. He has promised the same to us who believe in Christ.

Hebrews 13 5 says the very same. I will never leave you nor forsake you. And in closing, let me put that phrase from Joshua 1.

5 in its context in Hebrews 13. 5. Let's know what the writer of Hebrews says. Keep your life free from love of money. He's talking about a particular form of idolatry.

So read that. Keep your life free from idolatry in this particular form and be content with what you have, who you have. I think the writer of Hebrews could have said with who you have.

For he has said, I will never leave you. nor forsake you. Let's pray together.