

G Weeks Biblical Living Pt 1 20180821ct

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[0 : 00] Now the reason I haven't got one passage to read to you is that this sermon, this talk was a bit unusual for me in that I was invited to speak to a small black Pentecostal church on their copley close in West Ealing and they did two very unusual things.

First of all they told me I could preach for 60 minutes, which I'm not going to. And then they told me, and here's what you're going to preach on. Well I'm used to being given a text or a title, but I was given a title, headings for the sermon and a number of texts.

You have not got the 60 minutes, you've got two Tuesdays. What you have got is the title that I was given and you're getting five headings, five points and some texts, some of which I was given and some I managed to find myself from God's word.

And the not reading one passage is somewhat ironic in the light of my first subheading, which you will see is take God's word seriously.

But, what is our title, what is our subject, and we're having it this week and next. How do you have victorious living here on earth? We all want to be happy. We all want to live well. We all want to live well. We all want to be on the winning side.

[1 : 41] And if you're a Christian, you're in a minority group. And increasingly I would say despised minority groups. You're counter-cultural. So how do you have victorious living here on earth as part of a Christian minority?

In a country that has largely turned its back on the Christian gospel. And how do you live victoriously and not be dragged down by what you see around you?

And as I said, I've got five headings that I was given. And the first one is, if you don't want to be dragged down by the world, you want to live victoriously. Take God's word seriously.

Take the Bible as your text. Take it as your standard and find out what truth is. Truth is reality and the Bible describes reality.

The Bible is true. It is God's word. Take it seriously. Now my first text on that is from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 66, verse 2.

[2 : 56] But this is the one to whom I will look. He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. God wants you to tremble at his word.

Those who are from our church would have heard this story before. But I'm going to repeat it. When I was a student studying theology and missions at All Nations Missionary College in the 60s, I was studying for the London Diploma in Theology, official academic qualification.

In the middle of the exams after one year's study, I walked out. Why? Why walk out in the middle of an exam? The answer was because I was being examined by London University academics who didn't tremble at God's word.

They wanted me to discuss, well how many Isaiahs were there? Could there have been three? No, I said it's a non-question. Jesus referred to the prophet Isaiah.

There was one Isaiah. End of discussion. I was being examined by people who didn't tremble at God's word. I was only prepared to study the Bible on the basis that God is.

[4 : 07] He's revealed himself in Jesus Christ. And the Bible is a trustworthy record of that revelation. I wasn't interested in a London diploma. I already had a degree from them anyway.

In a respectable subject of pharmacy. So I could afford to say goodbye to there what I described as wrong theology. I'm not anti-academic.

I will study the Bible and study what the critics say, etc. But as far as I'm concerned, it's light and darkness. It's God's truth versus the devil's lies. And the Bible is God's truth.

Take it seriously. Take it as your standard. Of belief. And of life. Life. That is the way to be.

Why? Because our next text, 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. All scripture is breathed out by God. And profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.

[5 : 09] That the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. Why is scripture there? Not to give somebody academic letters after their name.

Not to make them feel clever. It's there because it's come from God. It's God's word. It's been breathed out by God. Yes, written down by human beings.

It's truly their words. But it's truly God's word. It's breathed out by God. And it will teach you. It will reprove you. It will correct you. It will train you in the right way to go.

That the man of God, the woman of God, should be equipped for any good work. How to live victoriously. How to live well. Follow what God's word says.

It's the word that's come from God. Job 23.12. Job says, I have not departed from the commandment of his lips.

[6 : 10] I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my very portion of food. Job was up against it. He'd lost everything. It had all been taken away from him.

All his possessions, his family, his health, the lot. But he treasured the words of God's mouth more than his food. Some of us show the evidence of liking our food rather a lot.

But here is something more important. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God's mouth. And God's words, the scripture, are sweet to our taste.

Psalms 119. How sweet are your words to my taste? Sweeter than honey to my mouth. Remember in those days they didn't have any sugar to sweeten things.

Only honey. Through your precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way. How do I know to judge what's going on around me in the world?

[7 : 16] By what God has said. How do I know the right way to go? From what God has said. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. They didn't have any street lighting.

Ours is increasingly poor. But they, if you wanted to go where to go, you had to have a lamp. And having a lamp was very important. Some of us have lived in Africa. There are snakes who don't go out in the dark without a light.

Because it's not safe. The snakes. God's word is a lamp to our feet. A light to our path. To show us the way to go.

And God's word isn't just words. Isn't just words. It is powerful. Hebrews 4. The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword.

Piercing to the division of soul and spirit. Joints and marrow. And discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Just like a sharp sword can go through flesh.

[8 : 17] So God's word can go straight to our heart. And the heart of our matter. It's powerful. It's active. It's a living word. It will accomplish God's purposes in your life.

But if you don't read it. How are you going to know it? How are you going to obey it? There isn't a law in the Bible saying you must read so much of the Bible so often.

It's just quite simply. It's like food. If you don't eat. Eventually you won't live. And if you don't eat and study God's word regularly. You won't be healthy and victorious spiritually.

So you need to take God's word seriously. And take it in regularly. And study it. But don't think that because you're clever. It's going to do something special in your life.

It doesn't depend on you. Well it does depend on you. You need to immerse yourself in God's word. But it needs more than you. And your attention. And your intellect. It needs the spirit of God.

[9 : 21] To make the word active in your heart. And your life. John 6.63 It is the spirit. The Holy Spirit of God. Who gives life. The flesh is no help at all.

The words that I have spoken to you. Are spirit and life. The word of God. Brings the life of God to us. By the work of the Holy Spirit.

In our hearts. That's the way it works. And that's the reason we have to take God's word seriously. We have to believe it. We have to study it.

And we have to pray it. That God makes it effective in our lives. That's the first thing. Get your light from God's word. Set your watch.

By the Son of God. Not by the town clock. You know there were times in the past. There was no time signal. There was no internet. How did you get to set your watch?

[10 : 24] You could do it by the town clock. But it might be wrong. The sundial. That told you. So we have to set everything. According to God's word. The word of the Son of God.

And the second point for us. About how to live victoriously. Is to be established in who you are in Christ. Christian.

How many times in the New Testament. Are those who follow Christ called Christians? Do you know how many times? I think there might be up to four.

I haven't. I didn't actually check this out. My source says four. What is the normal designation of Christians? What are they called? Paul uses the phrase over 80 times.

What is it? In Christ. I would suggest to you. Christian is an anagram. Of what you really are. Forget Christian.

[11:25] You are A in Christ. A in Christ. Same letters. But it speaks about.

Your real position. If you are a Christian. What is a Christian? A person who is in Christ. Linked by faith.

To the Lord Jesus Christ. And when God looks at us. He doesn't see us and our sins. He sees his Son. The Lord Jesus Christ.

His righteousness. His goodness. And we are hidden under it. A great exchange has taken place. Christ has taken our sins. He has given us his righteousness.

And we are hidden in him. So Paul uses this phrase in Christ over 80 times. That is the real designation as to who you are.

[12:22] A in Christ. And I've just listed some of them here. Because seeing yourself as A in Christ.

has a revolutionary effect on how you view yourself. In short. To jump to my conclusion. If you compare yourself to the world around you.

To other people. And you measure yourself by your success. By your achievements. By how good looking you are. How good your family is. Etc. Etc. You will become downcast and depressed.

You are to measure yourself. By the fact that you are. In Christ. And what matters is not how the world sees you. How others see you.

Even how you see yourself. What matters is how God sees you. And God sees you. In Christ. And that is the most important thing.

[13:21] I want you to take home today. You are. Yes you are a Christian. But change those letters round. You are a in Christ. So I give you some of the texts here.

Romans 3.24 You are justified by his grace. God's unmerited favour as a gift. Through the redemption that is in.

Christ Jesus. What have you got in Christ Jesus? Redemption. The word means freedom. Freeing slaves. That is what redemption is all about.

It says we are justified in Christ. Justified. God the judge declares us not guilty. Because Jesus has taken away our sin.

And our punishment. And God's wrath. We are in Christ. Justified. Redeemed. Freed. So therefore there is no condemnation.

[14:19] For those who are in Christ Jesus. Do you feel condemned. Because you are sinful. Well you should. You are sinful. God is not happy.

With your sin. With your rebellion. Against him. God is sinful. But if you are in Christ. If you are in Christ. If you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are no longer condemned.

God has looked on his son. And his sacrifice. And said my son. Died for sinners. Like you. You trust in him. And you.

Will go free. You will not be condemned. There is no condemnation. For those who are in. Christ Jesus. Yes. No condemnation. What a transformation.

How has it come about? Because we have done something good. No. Because we have had faith. No. Faith doesn't save us. Christ saves us. And if we have put our faith.

[15:17] And trust in Christ. We are hidden in him. And we are made right with God. And there is no condemnation. The next text. 2 Corinthians 2.14.

We are going to get more of it. In my conclusion. Next week. I will just mention it. Thanks be to God. Who in Christ. Always leads us. In triumphal procession. And through us.

Spreads the fragrance. Of the knowledge of him. Everywhere. In Christ. We are part. Of the victor. Emperor's. King's. Triumphal procession.

We will look more of it. Next week. But just in brief. The Roman general. Came back. Into Rome. And in the procession. Were all those.

Who captured the slaves. From different places. There would have been. Some English there. Because the Romans. Had taken. These islands.

[16:12] Those of you. From other countries. You wouldn't have been there. Because the Romans. Hadn't taken. Your countries. But they had taken. This one. And you would have been. In.

A slave. In the triumph procession. But you are being taken. In the triumph procession. Of Jesus Christ. And you are his. And you belong to him. You are in Christ.

More of that. Next week. Because it is a triumphant procession. As we will see. Galatians 3.26. In Christ Jesus. You are all sons of God.

Through faith. In Christ. You are adopted. You are adopted. You are adopted. Into God's family. There was an old. Poor. Cornish miner. Called Billy Gray.

And Billy Gray. Was known for his cheerfulness. And he used to skip down the road. Shouting. I am the son of a king. I am the son of a king. How come?

[17:07] He knew he was adopted. In Christ. And by the way. Adoption in the Bible. It says sons here. Because sons were the ones who inherited.

It isn't that Paul didn't use modern politically correct inclusive language. No. Sons inherited. And daughters didn't. Unless there weren't any sons. But more to the point.

The point of adoption in the ancient world. Was not for the sake of the children. The point of adoption in the ancient world. Was for the sake of the father.

That he had those who would inherit his name. And that transforms your view of adoption. You are adopted into God's family.

Because he wills it. And he wants you. And he wants his name. The name of his son. On you. So that you will be an inheritor. With Christ Jesus.

[18:06] Of all God's blessings. Adoption. And that's in Christ. You are all sons of God. Through faith. And what's more.

It doesn't matter where you come from. What your ethnicity is. Even what your religion used to be. If you are in Christ Jesus.

You become part of God's one new people. Galatians 3.28 There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female.

You are all one in Christ Jesus. Of course it doesn't mean. That there are no distinctions. After you become a Christian. What it means is.

They don't matter. They don't count in God's sight. What matters is. You are in Christ Jesus. What was the big division. In the world.

[19:00] To which Paul was writing. It was between Jews and non-Jews. The Jews looked down. Upon the Gentiles. The non-Jews. As dogs. They despised them.

They wouldn't meet with them. They wouldn't eat with them. They had nothing to do with them. The Jews. Were the circumcised. They'd had the operation.

The men. Anyway. The Gentiles. Were the uncircumcised. And Paul says. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Whether you're Jew or Gentile.

Circumcised or uncircumcised. What matters is a new creation. Are you in Christ? That is the question. So he writes to the Ephesians. Paul an apostle.

Jesus. By the will of God. To the saints. Who are in Christ. And are faithful. In Christ Jesus. You are struggling Christian. Are you worried.

[19:54] About. Ongoing sin. Confessing. And rejoice. That you are forgiven. And God. Looks upon you. As his faithful child.

In Christ Jesus. That's how Paul writes. To the Ephesian Christians. You are faithful. In Christ Jesus. Not because you're good. But because Christ is good.

And he is the faithful one. And in Christ. We have everything. Blessed be the God and Father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us in Christ. With every spiritual blessing.

In the heavenly places. Are you lacking any blessing? It's yours in Christ. If only you know. If only you knew. How rich you are. You need not be downcast.

Peter doesn't use. In Christ. He puts it in a different way. In 1 Peter 2. You're a chosen race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people for his own possession.

[20:52] That you may proclaim. The excellences of him. Who called you. Out of darkness. Into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people. But now you are God's people.

Once you had not received mercy. But now you've received mercy. Why? Because you are in Christ. Because you've been linked. To the Lord Jesus Christ. And you.

Are a special people. I do recall. There's a certain advert. On the television. Which says. That you should have something. Because you're special. A load of rubbish.

You're only special. In Christ. I'm not special. You're not special. We're all special. If we're in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're a new people. Last text.

Romans 6. We know our old self. Was crucified with him. In order that the body of sin. Might be brought to nothing. So that we would no longer. Be enslaved to sin.

[21 : 47] For one who has died. Has been set free. From sin. Who's died? Jesus. His death. Becomes our death. When we are linked to him.

By faith. And just as the resurrected Jesus. Isn't going to go around. Sinning. If you're in Christ. You're raised up in him. And you shouldn't be going around.

Sinning. Either. Because you're under no obligation. You have been freed. Yes. You still sin. In thought, word and deed. Yes. You need to confess it. But you don't need to go on.

Doing it. Thinking it. Saying it. No. No. You are a new creature. In Christ Jesus. So. The application is. Judge yourself.

Not by the standards of the world. Not by looking at other people. Not by your achievements. Your wealth. Your status. Your career.

[22 : 48] Your family. Your love life. Whatever. You are judged by none of those things. Judge. By whether or not you are in Christ. And see yourself as God sees you.

And the rest doesn't matter. God. Will care for you. And provide for you. We need not be anxious. For we are in Christ. And link to the God who controls all things. By faith. So there you are. My first two rules.

For. How do you have a victorious living here on earth. Take God's word seriously. Be established in who you are. In Christ. Don't tell people you are a Christian.

Tell them that you are. A. In Christ. It should be a start of a good. Conversation. Let us pray.