

Catford Lectures 2008-2009

Part 6

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[00:00:01] Now we might commence our evening session by singing the words of hymn 373. All the path, the saints are treading, trodden by the Son of God, all the sorrows they are feeling felt by him upon the road. Verse 4 says, whither joy or whither trial, all can only work for good.

We'll sing the whole hymn please, 373. All the path, the saints are treading, trodden by the Son of God, all the sorrows they are [00:01:23] feeling felt by him upon the road.

All the path, the saints are treading, trodden by the Son of God, all the sorrows they are feeling felt by him upon the road.

[00:02:06] He is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed [00:03:04] path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, [00:04:25] thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, [00:05:23] thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, thus to tread the blessed path, he is able thus to suffer, [00:06:22] amen. After the word this afternoon, I want to read seven scriptures, and I'm going to divide them very nicely. Three plus four. I want to speak about God in everything, and about finding everything in God. First of all, then, in the Old Testament, in the book of Daniel, chapter 4, [00:07:06] verse 34, and at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes onto heaven. It's good to lift our eyes onto heaven sometimes, because that's how we get understanding. Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes onto heaven, and it says, mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is a neverlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, and all the inhabitants of the earth [00:08:07] are reputed as nothing, and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou? Then, please turn with me to the book of Jonah. Chapter 1, and it's in verse 14.

[00:09:05] And it's the last clause, particularly. It's the mariners, wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, we beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and they not upon us innocent blood, for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.

Then, a well-known scripture in Romans chapter 8, and verse 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called [00:10:11] according to his purpose. Those are the scriptures in connection with God and everything. Now, we could turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And verse 28. And when all things, we have the all things again here. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, [00:11:04] that God may be all in all. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And verse 17.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, or there is a new creation.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Colossians chapter 3, verse 11. Now, for the sake of connection from verse 10, [00:12:27] and speaking of believers, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Christ is everything and in all. And lastly, in the book of Revelation, [00:13:04] and chapter 21, and verse 5. He that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new. Verse 4, for the connection, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor cry, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. Behold, I make all things new. And in verse 6, he said unto me, it is done. So, I think, dear brothers and sisters, [00:14:13] from these scriptures, you will see that I have in mind how we should see God in everything.

God in all things, in the detail of our daily lives, as we pass through this scene.

Leading on to that time when we'll find everything in God, we'll find everything in God. When all things will be of God, when Christ will be everything [00:15:01] and in all. And when God says, behold, I make all things new. What a privilege for us as believers to know that the end is secure, that the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more onto the perfect day. But you know, dear ones, sometimes we get discouraged by the outward weakness, because we're at the close of the dispensation. We're not in the days of the acts of the apostles when everything's in freshness and in power. The last days, difficult times will come. Men are lovers of their own selves and lovers of pleasure. The love of many will wax cold, confusion all around us. Sometimes we switch off. [00:16:06] That's why the writer of the Hebrews had to give the exhortation. He said, not forsaken the assembling of yourselves together. There's a danger of staying at home and not coming out to the meetings. Oh yes, Lord's Day morning, we go to remember the Lord. But when it comes to weeknight for the prayer meeting or the Bible study, perhaps we find home comforts more congenial, or perhaps we find something else more absorbing. And we need a little reminder, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves. It's the manner of Psalmist. And so much the more as we see the day approaching, the day of Christ's glory, the day of review and reward, the day when everything will be taken into account. And when God will be the absorbing object of our heart, surely Christ [00:17:07] will have that place in our hearts, then will not be room for anything else. But even here and now, he ought to have that place in our lives. And in connection with that, I want to look at how God is in everything. And we

sang, whether joy or whether trial, all can only work for good.

I was very encouraged when Mr. Cyrus referred to that verse, at least I think it was that verse, in prayer in the upper room before the meeting, because it was a confirmation of the scriptures that I had in mind for this meeting. But to go to Romans chapter eight, the great mainstay for our souls, all things work together for good to them that love God. [00:18:06] And when things are going smoothly, things are going along nicely, we are comfortable in our circumstances, we can quote that verse very easily. You know, once, a good number of years ago now, someone crashed into our car, an elderly gentleman crashed into our car outside our house. Bang! One stroke, his car was destroyed. Our car was destroyed.

Stopped, never to go again. And I had some gospel tracts in the boot of the car, not just for individualist distribution, commercial quantities, and the force of the impact, they went everywhere, like confetti. It gave a new meaning to blanket [00:19:06] coverage of an area with tracts. And the road was blocked, and the fire engine, fire engines came, and the ambulance came, and the neighbors come out. Everybody gathered around. And the amazing thing was, this man was sitting in the midst of all this chaos. He wasn't even injured, thank the Lord. So we brought him into the house and sat him down. There must have been something about the home that indicated to him that it was a Christian home. And he himself was a believer. And we started talking. And I ventured to quote to this poor, unfortunate man, Romans 8, 28, all things work together for good to those that love God. And he looked at me and he says, do you think so? Well, there's a right way and a right time to say a thing.

[00:20:10] And we need to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. And I learned perhaps there might've been a more appropriate time to bring that scripture underneath his notice. But you see, that's an example when sometimes it's more difficult to accept the truth that God is in control in our lives and in our circumstances. Nevertheless, it says it. And in Thessalonians chapter four, chapter five rather, the last chapter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul says, in every thing, give thanks.

Now in our authorized version, it says everything, everything, two separate words. [00:21:08] So we're looking at our individual circumstances. But if we turn to Mr. Darby's translation, he puts the words together. He says, in everything, one word. Well, this may not be the time to go into the intricacies of the English language. And someone actually will maybe tell me what more closely approximates to the Greek. But isn't it approximate to the Greek? But isn't it good if we take specific incidents in our lives, specific occurrences? Wouldn't it be good to be in a state of soul where we can give thanks to God? And if we look at the more general picture, the overall view, [00:22:02] in everything, give thanks. It's no accident that in the preceding verse, it says, pray without ceasing. Pray without ceasing. Because if our prayer life suffers, if we're not in touch with headquarters about our daily lives, it's going to be difficult to give thanks. Pray without ceasing. In everything, give thanks. Now to turn to these Old Testament scriptures, I thought in Daniel, this was an amazing commendation of God as the most high and of his wisdom from a man who was a heathen king until such times as God had dealings in his life. [00:23:03] In fact, chapter four of Daniel is really Nebuchadnezzar's conversion story. And I do trust that each one here, young and old, does have a conversion story and is able to tell about what God has done in their lives. God did something in Nebuchadnezzar's life, and Nebuchadnezzar was able to write about it. And he blesses the most high, and he's able to save them. He does according to his will in the army of heaven. We might expect that in the Lord's prayer, as it says, as we say, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We might expect to see God's will done in heaven, [00:24:10] but we should also see it on earth and in our lives. And so he says, he does

according to his will in the army of heaven. But then he adds, and among the inhabitants of the earth, that's very wide sweeping, none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou?

It's a tremendous scripture to point out to us the sovereignty of God and the fact that God is still in control, even among the inhabitants of the earth. And Paul tells us we should pray for kings and for those in authority. [00:25:04] All these matters are in God's hand. Catford, forever in this world, you want to look, he does according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and who can stay his hand? That's the big picture. Oh yes, Nebuchadnezzar was writing from the point of view of his own experience, but he gave the big picture. When we come to the book of Jonah, we have a very remarkable illustration of God in everything, in relation to one man, to one believer, to someone such as you and I. [00:26:05] We're not here this evening for an ancient history lesson. It's not stories from the past. It's not just about Jonah. Paul, in writing to Timothy, wrote to him about how one should behave or conduct himself in the house of God, which is a living God's church, the church of the living God. Things in the living God, things in Christianity are living. These experiences of Jonah were real. God wants us in our daily lives to have real experiences. First thing I want to notice about Jonah tonight is he was going in a wrong direction, because [00:27:03] God told him to arise and go to Nineveh, preached it. Jonah turned and went in the opposite direction. Instead of going to preach, he fled. Anyone here tonight going in the wrong direction?

Anyone here tonight just going along with the thing outwardly? Just going with the flow? Because of parents, or circumstances, or background, or family, or whatever it might be, because of parents, or circumstances, or background, or upbringing, Moses had to make a decision. Moses, when he was come to years, some of you here have come to years, or are coming to years, [00:28:09] might be reaching, you might have reached the stage where you can go into a shop and buy tobacco. For yourself, or some of these other things that you need to be a certain age to do. What about tonight coming to a certain age and making it the bent of your life to live for God? Moses, when he was come to years, chose, he made a definite decision and choice to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Plenty of that in Catford, plenty of that in London, plenty of that on the television, or whatever other form of entertainment you go in for. You can be very happy in your sins. You can get absorbed in things here. But what's there going to be in your life for God? What's there going to be in eternity? You know, [00:29:05] I read something, someone was speaking, and they said about men, he said, there's nothing in their lives for God. He said, they live their lives and God takes no pleasure in their lives. And he said, God takes no pleasure in their death. He said, they go to meet the penalty and the judgment of their sins. As we've come up to London on this occasion and gone by public transport and been about the place. So many people all around us, there's nothing in their lives for God. The fact that you're here this evening, just a few of us together, is surely an indication perhaps that there's a desire in your heart that there might be something for God. And so we can learn from Jonah. And so we can learn from Jonah. The first thing here is, he's going in a wrong direction. [00:30:10] When I was a student, they didn't have these iPods and MP3s and they didn't even have compact discs. It wasn't even cassette recorders. It was these vinyl things that turned at so many revolutions per minute. I was a student, there was a John Denver song someone used to play a lot, my acquaintance. I think it was about a preacher's son. It said, he's a walking contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction, taking always wrong direction in his lonely path back home. Is that you? Are you a walking contradiction? Are you taking always wrong direction? Your lonely path back home, perhaps the end's secure. Jonah went down, he was on the wrong [00:31:01] pathway. It says in verse three, he went down to Joppa. He went down.

And not only that, in verse five, it says when Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship. And

then in chapter two, verse six, he gave his experience. He says, I went down to the bottoms of the mountains, down into the depths of the ocean. How did Jonah know incidentally that there were mountains underneath the sea? Wasn't a scientist. Of course, it's a proof of a creator God. It's a proof of creationism. [00:32:01] It's scientific. He went down into the weeds, into the depths of the sea. He went down to the bottoms of the mountains. Anyway, it was all downward.

Down to Joppa. And then he went down into the ship.

He didn't expect to go down into the depths of the sea. You realize that, dear young people? Sin takes you further than you want to go. You might have a cutoff point. It says, okay, to do this, go to that place. I can get into that ship. [00:33:04] I can get into that ship. I'm grown up now.

I can decide which direction. I'm going to go to Tarsus. I'm going to get into a ship going to Joppa. I'm going to go down into the ship. I'm in control. Sin takes you further.

As the song says, than you want to go. Jonah ended up in the belly of the whale. He entered up in the depths of the sea. So there's a lesson in Jonah as to the direction of our lives. Christianity, you don't stand still. You're either going against the current or else you're floating down with the current. In Christianity, if you're not advancing, you're regressing. [00:34:05] That means to say, if you're not going forward, you're going back. As we start a new year, review your spiritual history. Review your spiritual progress. In the year that has passed, have I been going forward? Has it been onward and upward and heavenward? Or have I gone astray? Have I got sidetracked? I can remember years ago, I got on a train to go somewhere in a country called Belgium. At least I thought I was going somewhere. And it turned out my sense of direction or my knowledge of French, call it what you will, ended up very far from where I wanted to go. [00:35:05] And one of the station attendants or conductor, he gave me a ticket. He gave me a special pass. And the ticket, the pass said in French, passage de voyer. That means you've got completely off track. I don't know how to translate it into English. You've got off track. You are derailed. So many Christians are derailed these days.

Christopher Willis, he wrote a little book on wrecks on the Burma road. I see Edwin nodding his head, so I have to say you can purchase it from chapter two. And it told about during or after the war, Christopher Willis going on the journey on the Burma road down from China. Fantastic journey, descending thousands of meters. [00:36:04] And he saw all these wrecks of different vehicles that had gone wrong and that road engine blown up or they'd gone over the ditch or something had happened to them. And he wrote a very, very interesting and very moving little story called wrecks on the Burma road and its applications to Christian. You can get knocked off track. You can go wrong. First lesson from Jonah tonight, God and everything. In spite of Jonah's failure, God was in control because it says God sent a great wind into the sea. It says later down, God had prepared a great fish. In the last chapter, it says God had prepared a gourd or a plant. A gourd or a plant. And then it says God prepared a worm. God prepared a vehement east wind. [00:37:10] You can call that four times or five times, depending on how you want to put the numbers together. The first time it was God sent out something. The four subsequent occurrences, it was God had prepared things in Jonah's life. Do you see the hand of God in your life? Do you see the hand of God in your circumstances? Do you see God's control? God in everything? Because in connection with Jonah, certainly God was in everything here. And although he was going against God's will and God's instruction, God had his eye on him. And thank God he has his eye on us tonight. Perhaps there's something in your life that God has been speaking to you about. [00:38:04] Something you should be doing that you're not doing.

Or perhaps it's something you shouldn't be doing that you are doing. God spoke to Jonah. Jonah resisted. I went off in his own way, in the opposite direction.

And then God had to act in his life in a very powerful way, in the way of discipline, in the way of discipline, and in the way of chastening and in control. It was all, in the latter end, it was all for Jonah's good. But it raises the question, [00:39:02] is there something that God has been speaking to me about and I've been resisting it? May God give you the grace tonight to answer to his will, if that's the case. The other thing about Jonah is that he was a passenger. You know, sometimes in our meetings we have a lot of passengers. A lot of passengers. And they sit back and they let others take the responsibilities and they let others do the work.

You never even hear them until there's some problem, some difficulty, some onward occurrence, [00:40:01] and then their voices heard. But you know, in Christian things, in Christian things, God doesn't want us to take a back seat.

He doesn't want us just to lie down and go to sleep. He wants us to be active for him.

So we can ask ourselves that question. In relation to our local setting, in relation to our local responsibilities, in relation to the local assembly where the truth is practiced, where we have the opportunity to work things out on a weekly basis, on a weekly basis, are you a passenger? Or are you part of the crew? Are you active? Are you doing anything? Are you getting involved? [00:41:08] Are you praying in the prayer meeting? Are you taking part audibly, the brothers, when it comes to the remembrance of the Lord? Are you reaching out with the gospel, perhaps with tract distribution or in other ways? Are we going to be passengers?

Or are we going to be active? There are so many things about Jonah that we can learn.

And another thing was that he was asleep. He was asleep.

[00:42:02] It would seem. He was gone down into the sides of the ship. You know, we talked about this downward process. And he lay and was fast asleep.

I wonder, is anybody asleep tonight? I don't mean literally, I'm speaking metaphorically. Sleeping amongst the dead. No different from anyone else if you're asleep.

Is that how it is at school with you? Are you no different from anyone else? Or is there something different about your life that tells people I'm a Christian, that I'm from a Christian family, that I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ? [00:43:04] And when your friends say, I'm going to such and such a place, are you going to come with me? I'm going here. I'm going to the theater. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that. And you just say, oh, no, no. I'm going to wash my hair tonight. Or I've got a Nessie to hand in. Or some excuse out of your pocket. Or do you fly the flag of the kingdom? Do you take matters into your own hand and say, I'm sorry, I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. He has a prior claim on my life. He died for me. He washed my sins away in his blood. I don't go to such places. I've got better things to live on. Or are you just sleeping no different outwardly, no different externally to people of the world [00:44:05] that are all around you? Jonah was asleep. Paul gives the exhortation in Ephesians 5, awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light.

There's abundant light in Christ to guide and direct your steps. And then it says you have to walk carefully. It's talking not just about what way you put one foot after another. It's talking about your behavior in this world, your deportment, your appearance, your way of living, your walk.

Says you have to walk carefully. He says you're not to be unwise. You have to be wise because [00:45:05] you've got to buy up the time. You've got to redeem the time. You've got to seize every good and favorable opportunity because the days are evil. Because the days are evil, we need to be wide awake and we need to be careful in our lives and we need to be different in our lives and we need to understand what the will of the Lord is. And then he gives it in more detail, not to be drunk with wine in which is debauchery, not excess of drink, but be filled with the Spirit. That's a challenge to me. I'm sure to you. Are you living a Spirit-filled life? Are you awake spiritually? Here's Jonah, servant of the Lord that he was, prophet of the Lord that [00:46:04] he was. And he decides to go off duty. He goes off to sleep.

Another thing we can learn, we need to sleep with our boots on. I was reading about the Israeli army in regard to Gaza and a possible invasion. One of the soldiers said they were sleeping with their boots on. See, because one of the figures that Paul uses of us as believers is that we are to be as soldiers, not just indeterminate soldiers or mediocre soldiers, he says, as good soldiers. Not to be good soldiers, he says, endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. We need to be ready at all times to give an answer for the hope that is in us. [00:47:06] Paul says, preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season. To be well-rounded Christians and the possibilities for us and knowing the Word of God, the Scripture which is given by inspiration of God is that we might be complete, that we might be kitted out, that we might be fully fitted onto all good works. So what sort of works, what sort of things have been seen in our lives? We should be ready at all times. We should be active and we should have in view the needs of others. We should not be like Jonah and just switch off and go off duty and say, thank you, Lord, but it's not for me tonight.

[00:48:08] So with all these circumstances in Jonah's life that we can learn from, we can see God in everything, how God prepares things, how God was in control of the circumstances. Another thing, he got into trouble with the crew to such an extent that in a God-fearing way, they put him overboard because they recognized God's claims, especially when he told them that Jehovah was the God of the sea, who had made the sea and the dry land because deities in Palestine and Philistia, pagan deities are associated with a certain geographical area and especially with land. And here they were in a big storm. And Jonah says, oh, Jehovah, that's our God. Jehovah is the God of the sea. They're still in his testimony. In spite of the circumstances, they could still recognize [00:49:05] the claims of God. They say, oh, Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life. For thy, oh Lord, has done as it has pleased thee. We beseech thee, oh Lord, we beseech thee. There was an earnestness about their prayers, even though they were heathen. Is there a similar earnestness about our prayers? Anyway, Jonah got into difficulties with the crew. There was an allusion to the brethren being like the clock, you know. We get out of sync with each other. Someone once said, there's no trouble, no trouble is bad, no trouble like meeting trouble. Here, Jonah was a problem to the crew. Sometimes we may be a problem to our brethren. We may have difficulties, even over a period of years. And yet, in spite of circumstances we go through, and in spite of that, which sometimes even we [00:50:09] bring upon ourselves, because Jonah brought all this trouble upon himself. But you know, what we do does not just affect us individually. There's collective responsibility. That's very clear in 1 Corinthians 10. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of the Christ? It's what we bless. It's just one brother gives thanks, but he's doing so on behalf of the company. It's a collective thing. So our individual behavior affects others.

Wherever we go, we take our brethren with us. Our activities, our actions, our lives has a bearing on the Christian company. So he was in difficulties here with the crew, and they had to ditch him. [00:51:04] But God had prepared a great fish, and now he's in the belly of the whale, or the great fish.

Some of these other things were minor compared to what Jonah's confronted with now. What do we do in the circumstances of life? When our wife stops talking to us? Well, that's minor. When there's marital problems, or marital unfaithfulness, one of the partner walks out, takes up with someone else. We're not inventing stories. We're talking about real life situations. [00:52:03] What do you do if you're in a head-on collision, and your husband dies right in front of your eyes, even with all the medical help that you can bring, and leaves you a young widow with a young child? What do you do if, in extreme situations, your partner of many years is taken away? Or if you or your family have to cope, someone has to cope with a serious degenerative illness for a long period of suffering? What do you do if your mental and emotional equilibrium, your nervous system gets messed up, and you want to go and throw yourself in front of a train? [00:53:07] You say that such things don't happen to Christians. Actually, they do. Not so long ago, I had a young man in my bookshop, and he was in a very distressed state of mind because a friend of his had taken his own life. And he wanted to be assured that he could truly be the Lord's, because previously he'd had a credible Christian profession. I could only tell him, you know, that there's physical illness, and there's mental illness, and they're both forms of an illness. And if people are ill, in one way or the other, God still cares for them. That's what Peter says, he careth for you. Or if your bank balance goes into the red, or if you lose your job, there's so many, many serious situations [00:54:10] in life. Sometimes when we're young, we don't think about these things. Those who've had experience know about the difficulties of the way. Maybe family members have no interest in Christianity or the things in the Lord, and we've been praying for many, many years. Others fall in a little white coffin, burying a 21-month-old child that was near and dear. These are real life living situations, and we're only skimming the surface here. We're not, you know, these are just some of the situations that people have to go through. [00:55:06] Well, none of our situations are as desperate as Jonas in the belly of the well. In the belly of the well. Truly, he was at wit's end corner. He couldn't help himself. He had no outlet. He had no recourse. The only person he could appeal to there was God. And sometimes God puts us in these situations in order that we have the realization that he's in charge, that he's in control of circumstances, and that he's in control of our lives, and that we have to do with him. He's the one with whom we have to do. And sometimes we wonder why things have to go on for so long, maybe a course of years. [00:56:03] Smyrna, they were going to have tribulation 10 days. Okay, it's symbolical, but it was a specified period. God had prepared the fish here, and you would think, well, why did the fish not just God had prepared the fish here, and you would think, well, why did the fish not just vomit Jonah up immediately? Why does God not intervene? Why does he not change our circumstance? Why is heaven silent? Jonah had to learn he was shut up completely on God. He talks a lot about himself. It's I, what I've done, and I went down, and I'll make my vows, and I'll remember the Lord, and I'll sacrifice, and I will pay. So many I's. It's just like the man in Romans 7. How many times is I mentioned in Romans 7? [00:57:04] Someone can look into it and study it a little bit further. It's all about self there. I, me, and mine.

Jonah 2 here, it answers to Romans 7, and then Jonah reaches the end of himself, and he says, salvation is of the Lord. He says, it's not about me at all. He says, it's the Lord. It's Jehovah. Salvation is of the Lord. That's exactly the lesson in New Testament words of Romans 7. Oh, wretched man that I am. The problem of indwelling sin, the problem of desiring to do that which is right and always doing the wrong thing. Who shall deliver me? Didn't say what. He said, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And the answer comes, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[00:58:03] And here Jonah says, salvation is of the Lord. It's good if we too can come to the realization that we're in God's hands, for God to deal with us, and for God to bring the answer or answers to our specific problems. The whole catalog of things in Jonah chapter 1 and chapter 2, we've looked at some of them. The answer comes from God. Salvation is of the Lord. And we could go on, but I'm afraid we're out of time. Creature comforts. God had prepared a gourd or a plant, made it come up over Jonah. It was a shadow over his head. He was comfortable. It's nice to be in a comfortable situation. And Paul could say he knew how to be abased and he [00:59:05] knew how to abound. Nicer to be able to abound, but sometimes God will remove that prop. Sometimes whatever it is that's giving us an easy time, God has ways of working. With Jonah, he took this support, this plant, this shelter, this comfort away from him. And then we find Jonah says, thank you, Lord. We can see how wise you are. No, he didn't say that at all. It says he got angry with God. He'd already been angry with God because, strange thing, this, he knew that God was a gracious God. And if he'd gone to Nineveh to preach, the people would repent, and then God wouldn't act in judgment upon them. That's actually why he went away. [01:00:01] And then God prepares the gourd, the plant, and he's comfortable under it. But then God prepares the worm that takes it away. And God prepares the east wind. And then God says, I'm going to take you away. And then God says to him, doest thou well to be angry for the gourd. Jonah was quite a bitter man at this stage. He says, I'm angry even unto death. Well, we shouldn't get angry with God. But sometimes that's what happens in God's dealings with us. But God was working in Jonah's life to bring him to a knowledge of himself in spite of his circumstances. And God works in our lives to show that God is in everything. That's the lesson that we need to be taught down here. But then there's another thing, and we haven't time to [01:01:03] develop it. It's not that God's in everything in regard to our circumstances, but God is bringing us on to a time when he will be everything. And it's new creation. God works in us. God provides Christ before us as the object for our hearts, that he might be everything to us. He tells us of a time which is coming when God will be all in all, when we'll be completely focused on God, and when we'll be completely focused on Christ, when nothing of the old Adam, nothing of the original creation will remain, but all will be new creation. All will be brought into reconciliation in regard to ourselves and in regard to the former things will be passed away. And God says, behold, I make all things new. What a wonderful moment that will be when we're with Christ and like Christ in glory, [01:02:01] and when indeed Christ and God will be everything to us in our circumstances. He's with us in our circumstances. He controls, he overrules, he teaches us the lessons, the discipline of life. It comes to our side, but it's an order to bring us over to his side, where Christ will be more precious to us and where Christ will be everything to us. May God grant it for his namesake, and we might just sing in closing hymn number eight. Number seven, rather. Verse four says, when all things filled by thee are wholly blessed and God's deep love eternally shall rest in that whichever speaks to him of thee, thy greatness, Lord, the universe shall see. The first, the fourth, and the fifth verse of hymn number seven. [01:03:54] When all things filled by thee are wholly blessed, [01:04:08] and God's deep love eternally shall rest in that whichever speaks to him of thee, thy greatness, Lord, the universe shall see.

Thy beauties, Lord, thy holy, precious blood, [01:05:05] still passing through the deepest joys of earth, Lord.