

The All Sufficiency of Christ

Part 4

Speaker	Michael Johnson
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[00:00:00] All to the Galatians, Galatians chapter 1 and verse 1. Chapter 2, verse 19, 3 and chapter 5, verse 1.

For anybody who hasn't been here during the preceding days of the week, we've been looking at the scriptures, trying to highlight the fact that Christ is all sufficient.

And there are many ways in which you can do it, wherever you look at Christ is all sufficient. We could have spent the week looking at his priestly grace in the epistle to the Hebrews. [00:01:02] But what we've been doing is looking at the New Testament assemblies where there were problems, and looking at the way in which the Apostle Paul, for all of them that we've looked at are written by him, the way in which by a simple and direct ministry of Christ, the problems which could have resulted in the testimony of God from his people becoming distorted, was given the answer to the problem, and it's found in the fullness which exists in the Lord Jesus.

And tonight we're coming to look at probably what was the most serious problem of all. It's a strange thing, I don't know why it is, but in our local assembly we've once in thirty years [00:02:01] looked at the Galatian epistle, and in fact when it was suggested, it was suggested at the beginning of the reading, but after the reading a brother said, it doesn't apply to us, it's talking about the law, we're clear about the Ten Commandments, and as far as he was concerned the Galatian epistle was written off.

The fact of the matter is we probably have more rules and regulations individually amongst brethren, many, many times over the Ten Commandments, and the problem is they're not written down, and so you don't know them, and if people have those kind of rules and regulations in their own lives, and for the assembly, they get upset and irritated when people break them. The principle is the principle which is found in Galatians. [00:03:01] Some years ago I visited an assembly, and I was spending the day there, and after the breaking of bread, which I found very sweet, why should they not always be precious occasions of foretaste of heaven, they should be, I was sitting alongside the brother who was driving, and he said, you're a bold man, well, I don't think you know, but when people say you're a bold man, that's the way in which a Freemason says to somebody else, I'm a Freemason, so I said to him, I'm not a Freemason, he said, I didn't mean that, I said, well, what did you mean? He said, well, you read the scriptures this morning at the breaking of bread, I couldn't believe my ears, and I said to him, are you seriously suggesting that the scriptures should not be read at the breaking of bread? I said, I never ever thought the day would arise when in any assembly gathering [00:04:05] it should be suggested that the reading of the scriptures was inappropriate. He said, we don't like

ministry of the word at the breaking of bread, and so I said to him, would you accept an open ministry meeting where three brothers walked up, read the scriptures, and sat down, and the conversation ended, but obviously he'd been irritated by what had happened, and when you go round, you'll find people have all sorts of rules for themselves, and all sorts of rules in the assembly, and get very upset when people break them, that's the principle of the Galatian Assembly. Many years ago I used to preach in the open air with a brother called Anthony Docherty, he was a gifted evangelist, he was Roman Catholic, and in the big market there was a man called George Morton, George Morton was convicted of manslaughter in a drunken brawl, he was a minor, [00:05:05] and when he was in prison, one of his fellow inmates said to him one night, you know Georgie, there is a possibility I'll get to heaven, but he said, you're sure to go to hell, and those words stuck with him, and when he came out, he tried to turn over a new leaf, but the more he tried, the worse it got, and he was on the way to the Tyne Bridge to throw himself off, and he went past the open door of a gospel meeting, and the brother who was preaching was just reading these words, going about to establish their own righteousness, and he clicked, and he went in, and he got saved, and as he walked out of that meeting that night he said, if God loves a man like George Morton, the whole world will know about it, I never ever heard of him because he'd gone to be with the Lord long before I was saved, [00:06:01] but every time he preached, he preached on the same verse, John 5 verse 24, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment, and this is what he said every time after he preached, he said, I could not go to hell if I tried, and Anthony Doherty was walking past the big market one night, and he heard those words, and he said, I was trying to get to heaven, and I knew I was slipping to hell despite what the church said, he said, if that man could not go to hell if he tried, he's worth listening to, and he listened, and he said to somebody there, whereabouts is that verse in the Bible, and they gave him the text, and he went home, and he said to his wife, can I have the Bible, and she refused to give it to him, because she thought he was going to take it out to pawn it, but eventually he persuaded her, [00:07:04] and she brought it, and they sat down together, and he said, I want to read you a verse from the Bible, he read it to his wife, she said, there's no verse like that in the Bible, he said, listen, he said, this is what the Bible says, and if that's the grace of God, that's what I want tonight, what Anthony Doherty got hold of on that day is the fact, it is by grace that we are saved, it is by grace in which we stand, and it is by grace that we get to glory, and it is by grace that we live, it must be of tremendous significance that when Paul writes to the Galatians, he says things he never ever began to say to the Corinthians, now you might look around and you say, if you see a Christian company that has all sorts of favourite leaders in its local assembly, [00:08:05] and it's prepared to live with immorality, which even the city where it was wouldn't countenance, and they were by no means moral, and it accepted appalling behaviour at the breaking of bread, and they actually seemed to accept, tolerate teaching which was fundamentally destructive of the faith, but Paul never ever said to them words like he said to the Galatians, chapter 1, he says, what has removed you to another gospel, we'll look at that word in a minute, and he uses words like these, who hath bewitched you, and then he speaks about being entangled in a yoke of bondage, and eventually he says to them, and these are terribly serious words, he says, ye are fallen from grace, it must be of tremendous significance what is raised in the Galatian epistle, [00:09:09] and it must be of greater importance how by the direction of God the apostle Paul met such an appalling error, which in principle would be destructive of Christianity, and what I want to do is to just look at three particular things, well four, because I think as we're coming to the end of looking at this brief series of addresses, we ought to look at the matter of practice very briefly, and for that reason I read to you the verses at the end of chapter 2, but what I want to do is to speak firstly about the gospel of Christ, what is the gospel of Christ, who's at the heart of it, what is the end of it, and then secondly this matter of new relationship and new power, and then lastly looking at this whole issue that divides us in thought from our loved brethren in the reformed faith,

[00:10:10] and this is the matter of whether the law is our guide for living or whether Christ is our guide for living. I'm always conscious, I don't ever think it necessary to apologise for reading a lot of scripture, for this reason that I don't think we can always count on the fact that people know the context of them, and at the end of the day it isn't really all that important what I might say about scripture, what is important is that God's word gets into our minds, and let's be very clear about this, God has given us divinely renewed minds that we might be able to understand the scripture. You know we have a brother in our meeting who's in his forties and he is mentally retarded, [00:11:02] but he has an incredible ability to give out hymns which are a critical part in the meeting, if you did not know that God's spirit dwelt within him you would be absolutely amazed, it wasn't very long ago we had a visitor who was passing through and it was rather a slow start to the meeting, and this brother gave out a hymn and I thought to myself what a critical and good contribution to the meeting at that stage, and as the brother was going out quickly he was going south I nipped out too to shake his hand, and as he was getting into his car he said you're well placed to have a brother that can give out hymns like that, not knowing that you look at his mental age and it's probably twelve or thirteen, but the fact of the matter is we've received the spirit of God firstly, that with divinely renewed minds we might understand what the scripture says, but it's not sufficient that it just gets into our minds, [00:12:05] it was a very deep and bitter experience that David speaks of in Psalm 51 when he'd committed adultery, and in that Psalm he underlines a principle which holds good in all dispensations, and the words are thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and it's only when that divinely renewed mind of ours gets hold of God's truth, and by prayer and meditation get it into the very centre of our spiritual beings, truth in the inward parts, that it will then produce in our lives what is for the pleasure of God, and for the praise and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus. There isn't any doubt that the thrust of teaching in the New Testament about the body of Christ, it's saying simply this, that when the Lord Jesus personally was here, everything for the pleasure of God was found in him. [00:13:04] You know some of our hymns have words that come close to inspiration, I don't know how often you use this hymn, but one of the new hymns we got in the hymn book in 78, was hymn number 50, it's a lovely hymn, and it has in it these words, each holy footstep brought thee fresh delight, when Jesus was here everything for the pleasure of God was found in him, when he went on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit of God came down, and the body of Christ was formed, it was formed with this intent, that what was seen perfectly and fully in Christ might be seen in his body, and it takes every member to fill it out, that's the thrust of the teaching about the body of Christ. So let us be very clear that when we look at these, all of us have the ability to understand it, [00:14:01] in the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We all have the ability to pray it in.

Some while ago somebody was speaking on the platform and reminding us of something the late King Thompson used to say, and he had five things, he used to say, take it in, there's something about enjoyment, but then he would say, dig it over, live it out, thank you, and the last one was tell it forth, it was an excellent chain of statements, because that's exactly the way that the epistles are written, truth to instruct our divinely renewed minds that eventually it comes out in the grace of Christ. Chapter 1 that we read is remarkable, I'm just looking at some verses selectively, [00:15:06] but I would like to point this out right at the beginning because it occurs a couple of times. Paul says, he was firstly in chapter 1, he was an apostle, not of men, that meant the source of his apostleship was not by man, the idea of passing on the mantle is absolutely wrong, it was wrong in the Catholic Church, it's wrong amongst brethren, but the idea still permeates that God passes on the mantle from one man to another, the mantle has only ever in Christianity rested on one man, and that's God's beloved son, and every simple believer who imbibes the truth of God and lives it out, that's the person that

you want to be alongside of, because when truth is seen in the inward parts and is expressed in the life, [00:16:05] that's exactly the intention of God. But he says also about it, it wasn't by man, and before that he says it's not of man, that means it's not according to man, it's a striking thing, all the cults and many of the professing churches press this idea of what you have to do, actually last Saturday I was out tracting by our local meeting, and I ran into a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses, and when I got to them I said, could you tell me please how to be saved, and one of them said, well you better start getting the knowledge of God from the Bible, I said I haven't got any time, I might die in seconds, can you tell me how to be saved, [00:17:01] he says well I'm telling you, but I've only got seconds, and I might be out of time into eternity, how can I be saved, and it's not just in the Christian countenance as well or in the cults, it seems to be a theme through all of the pantheistic faiths as well, it rests upon what you can do, it rests upon you, Christianity starts off with this, that you can't do it, and it's the utter, sovereign, undisturbed grace of God, and when Paul begins to speak, and it must be remarkable that he has a very very short introduction, and he doesn't begin to say anything about what is commendable in Corinth, he launches straight off into the error that was found there, and so in verse 6 you find him saying these words, I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, [00:18:05] unto another gospel which is not another gospel, the language of the New Testament being far richer than English, has a lot of words where we have to start introducing extra words, and it's not apparent, actually it's well worth looking up this is through the scriptures, when he says in verse 6, unto another gospel, he's using a word which gives rise to our English heterodox, what he's saying is, it's a gospel of a different kind, and then when in verse 7 he says, which is not another, he's saying it's not another gospel like the one that I preached, and you say Paul, what was the character of the gospel that you preached, and you go back to verse 6 and he says, it's the gospel that calls you into the grace of Christ, it's unmerited, it's undeserved, it's sovereign, it never will change, [00:19:05] but it's the unadulterated sovereign grace of God, now when I was a young believer I used to listen to brothers like George Davison, and many other godly men, and I'm very happy to say that many of the things that I learned, I learned from their mouths, not just because they said them, because their lives reflected exactly what they taught, and I can remember the first time I heard somebody ask the question, what's the difference between mercy and grace, and George Davison said, If you have a look, the answer by the Lord to the request of the thief, [00:20:01] when he was on the cross, actually embodies this, I'm not going to do any more than to say this, the man asks for the time of the blessing, he asks for the character of the blessing, and he asks for the place of the blessing, the answers from the Lord to him are absolutely remarkable, the man's words underline mercy, the answer by the Lord Jesus underlines grace, He said to the Lord, 2000 years have gone now, the Lord said to him, Christianity is present blessing, when we preach the gospel, we don't say to people, you'll get moulded in it, we say exactly what Paul said to the Philippian jailer, Was Paul right to be so stern in what he said to the Galatians, [00:21:07] that they were removed, entangled, hindered, bewitched, he was absolutely right, because the very basis of the gospel had gone, the moment you begin to think that you have some part in salvation, the gospel of God has absolutely disappeared, when Paul gathered the elders from Ephesus at Miletus, and he begins to talk about the content of his ministry, the first thing he says was, I preached unto you the gospel of the grace of God, sometimes it would do us good to sit down for 20 minutes, and read the epistle to the Ephesians, the first 14 or 15 verses, and just to take in the wealth and the breadth and the depth, [00:22:02] of the sovereign grace of God, I remember when we were preaching with Anthony Docherty one day, he didn't often do it, but he actually spoke about his own conversion, not just about the way that he was brought to the Lord, but what it did immediately to him, and after he and his wife got up off their knees, he said to his wife, all this, and I did not have to do one thing to get it, Paul's emphasis was absolutely right, and maybe the two things, the top stone of it is the penultimate verse, before I finish reading, a quick look at verse 12, he speaks about that gospel and its character,

it has Christ at the heart of it, and he says, I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, [00:23:02] but by revelation of Jesus Christ, and as last evening, we were looking at that truth that the Lord communicated to him, about the gathering of his saints, the rapture as we speak of it, so here he says again, he got it directly from the Lord in heaven, he didn't get it by an intermediary, if you go back to the next chapter, he says, I didn't get it from Peter, in fact he had to rebuke Peter on occasion, when he didn't walk consistently with the gospel which he preached, he got it directly from the Lord in heaven, and the top stone of that gospel is found in verse 16, just one reference to verse 15 before we pass, when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, [00:24:01] and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, I cannot help but think, that it's saying something about the fact, that before the day, when we were brought to personal faith in the Lord Jesus, the superintending hand of God is upon our lives, I've heard a lot of people say this, I can only speak of my experience, I was brought up in a home, where although my parents at that time never went, we went to an Anglican church, and we lived in a village, and it was three miles away from the church, so we walked 12 miles on the Lord's day, to go to the Sunday school and to the evening service, I'm very thankful that in the Sunday school there, the teacher was a lady called Miss Buchan, and when by God's grace I was saved, [00:25:02] I looked back and I thought to myself, Ethel Buchan was a believer, and when I was passing on the motorway a few years ago, it's a crew and it's on the way to Sandback, so it's only a couple of miles off the motorway, and I went into this church and it was totally overgrown, and I was totally unaware as I was looking, I could remember roughly where this grave was, by a yew tree, and as I was sort of parting all the grass, this boy said, what are you doing? And I explained to him, he said come inside we've got a record of where the graves are, and he found it, and then we went out and when we got all the grass away from the headstone, it said Ethel Buchan departed to be with Christ, I thought that's what she did, and what she said, she read the Bible and she spoke to us about it, and I have a deep conviction, [00:26:02] that right from the moment that we are born, the superintending hand of God is upon us, a variety of ways in which people are brought to personal faith in the Lord Jesus, but when Paul says, God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, when I was a young believer, and listening very keenly to what was said, I used to mix up all sorts of things, and I thought these words, when it says to reveal his son in me, was that truth which Paul was communicating, so when I was preaching or trying to preach, one night in Ashington, I thought that what I'd said was pretty good, but afterwards Robert Nelson, dear brother Robert Nelson, came up and he said to me, [00:27:03] he says, Michael, he said, if that statement that you made was true, it would be limited to one apostle, he says, it isn't that at all, it's for every believer, and God wants to bring to light Christ in you, isn't that marvellous really, it's actually a bridge to look at chapter 5, but what that verse is saying, reveal his son in me, it's that every believer might radiate Christ for the pleasure of God, and for the blessing of a needy world round about us, and the bedrock of it all is a gospel which has Christ as its centre, and it is the grace of Christ into which we are brought.

I read to you the words in chapter 3, running on into chapter 4, because these are absolutely key verses about this matter of the place that the law has, [00:28:07] what it's saying is, there was a time when faith came, before faith came, the law was there, it's a great shame that in their desire to explain scripture, and I think it's worth saying this, I try to say what scripture says, I think every servant of the Lord tries to say what scripture means, we may not be right, we're often not right, in fact I think sometimes, I quite understand that, and then a few months later, I listen to someone else, and I begin to see a brilliant shaft of light in that verse, and I say however could I have missed it, but after that's happened 20 times, who's to say I'm anywhere near the fullness which is found in the verse, and with all due respect to translators [00:29:01] down through the years, who've tried to explain what scripture means, keeping themselves to what the manuscripts say is their job, and I'm not

criticising any versions of the Bible, but somebody said about the authorised version, you will never get an occasion when five words in the original manuscripts are translated by 20 words, nor vice versa, and this was brought home to me some while ago, it was a fellowship meeting in Wollum, and we were having a reading on Ephesians 3, and it was a good reading, and we got to the verse where it speaks about the length and breadth and depth and height, and our brother King Thompson was there, and he made a lovely contribution [00:30:01] speaking about the height and the depth and the length and breadth of the Lord's love, very precious it was, but I'm not sure that it is speaking about the Lord's love in the way that it speaks there, that ye may know, part of the second prayer of the apostle, he says, that ye may know what is the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, so I thought I would venture a comment, and I said, is it possible that the dimensions could also refer to the purpose of God, and our brother Willie Kerr took up that much better than I could, and highlighted it, and then the reading passed on, but in the interval a woman came over to me, and she said, you're wrong, and I said, I've been wrong many times, and I'm sure I'll be wrong many times again, but what particular time, she said, the love, she said, let me read these words to you, and these were the words she read to me, that you might know how broad and how wide [00:31:02] and how long and how deep is the love of Christ, and I thought to myself, that's inaccurate translation, and when you think of our authorised, that you might know the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, knowing the love of Christ is something more, this is well worth looking at, I got this from George Davison again a lot of years ago, Genesis 13, length and breadth, Revelation 21, length and breadth and depth, Ephesians 3, length and breadth and depth and height, and it's all talking about the person of God, who deals with us in grace, and in chapter 3, where you get the words in verse 24, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, the law never brought people to Christ, it didn't intend to bring people to Christ, it tells us in verse 19, [00:32:02] which I did not read, wherefore then serveth the law, it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, there was a period when law obtained, but when Christ came, that's when faith came, when Christ came, then the law was set aside, we'll look at that particularly, in relation to Christian living, but that's taken up in these verses, and what it says then is, there was a time, this is verse 25, after the faith was come, we're no longer under a schoolmaster, for you're all the sons of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, and then it uses an extremely powerful contrast, in chapter 4, it talks about a child, a very young child, and it says he's no different to a servant, because he's under governors, [00:33:02] and he's under tutors, and then you get these marvellous words, when the fullness of time was come, God sent his son, come of a woman, come under law, that he might redeem those that were under law, the Jews, that we might receive sonship, and he says because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son, into your hearts, crying Abba Father, the contrast is, under law, it was being like a slave, that is verse 7, of chapter 4, thou art no more a servant, no more a word for bond slave, and you're not an infant under governors, and tutors, you're in the place, you're in the relationship of sonship, and more than that, because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son, [00:34:01] into your hearts, crying Abba Father, I often sit down, and read the 22nd of Luke's gospel, and when you consider the burdens, that were upon the heart of the Lord Jesus, at that time, the nation had refused him, and cried for his persecution, and he loved them, and he still loves them, and the promises on them, will be fulfilled, I don't know whether any of you, have the poems of Edward Denny, that they're difficult to get, but there's a rare poem at the end, it's called Zion, and it's talking about the Lord's, love for the nation of Israel, and in it, there's a verse, a most moving verse, it says, he sprang from thy chosen of daughters, speaking to the nation of Israel, [00:35:01] his star or thy hills arose, he bathed in thy soft flowing waters, and wept all thy coming woes, he wept, who in secret yet lingers, with yearnings of heart or thee, he whom thy blood sprinkled fingers, once nailed to the accursed tree, dark deed, it was thine to afflict him, yet longs his soul for the day, when thou in the blood of thy victim, will wash thy deep sins away, and they'd cried for his

crucifixion, he'd been betrayed by one, upon whom he'd lavished his love, he was about to be forsaken of them all, and on top of all that, the knowledge that unlike us, when we fear things, most of the mountains become mole hills, when we meet them, he knew from the very beginning, where it would all end, and it was in the garden, that he uses the words, [00:36:01] Abba Father, and you have to say, the words that were wrung in anguish, from his lips, and yet it says, of the believer, because he are sons, the spirit of his son, is sent forth into your hearts, crying Abba Father, wherefore thou art no longer a bond slave, but a son, and if a son, an heir of God, so it's not now talking about the Lord Jesus, at the centre of a gospel, that deals with grace, it's talking about grace, in relation to a completely new relationship, we're not bond slaves, and we're not children, children who are under governors, and tutors, we're sons, and we're indwelt by God, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of sonship, by whom we cry Abba Father, we now come to this very big issue, which sort of divides us, [00:37:02] or at least it's a bone of contention, this great issue, what is the true guide for Christian living?

I worked alongside for many years, a very fine believer, who is of the reformed faith persuasion, and at least twice a week, we had a good walk in the lunch hour, and we spoke about Christian things, we spoke about the Lord, and we enjoyed things, good to have someone to whom you can speak, you can open your heart, and know that it will be respected, and restricted, and I never would strike controversial things at all, but one day he said, what is the guide for Christian living? And I said, well the Bible says, Christ is the guide for Christian living, and he says, are you saying to me, that the believer is able to live as Christ lived?

[00:38:04] And I said, I'm not saying it, the Bible says it, and I've never seen this up in anybody's home, but this is a text, which we could well put above our doors, this is 1 John 2 verse 6, 1 John 2 verse 6, He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

He that saith, he abideth in him, ought also himself to walk as he walked.

Is that not what the Bible is saying? That we are to live our lives, as the Lord Jesus lived his life here.

You say to me, what a level it lifts things to, [00:39:01] and I say, it does, and then you might say to me, do you know very much about it? I said, no I don't, I confess I don't, I wish I knew more about it, and surely it ought to be a prayer, that if that's what God intends, and the verse is very plain, that that's normal to Christianity.

I'm always very reluctant to repeat things, if it's been given by word of mouth, but when I read things, when it's been put in black and white, you're on pretty safe ground, and I think this is in the book, Brother Indeed, which is about Robert Cleaver Chapman, the brother who lived in Barnstaple, I think he was 99 or something like that, when he went to be with the Lord, but a most interesting thing took place, after he'd gone to be with the Lord, I think until he was sort of 96 or so, he was preaching in the open air, actually I got a marvellous encouragement here last night, [00:40:02] Lois Addy met in the university recently, a believer, and she said to him, how did you get saved, and he said well, one night I was coming out of a pub, in Northumberland Street, one afternoon I was coming out of a pub, in Northumberland Street, and he says walking along the road, and I saw these two old men, and one of them was preaching, and I thought to myself, nobody's listening to them, but they must have something to say, if they're standing there, and he listened, and he caught part of what was said, and it led to him getting saved, the brother who was preaching, was Bill Kelty, who's now 96, and he would be probably 89, when this took place, he's preached outside Marks and Sparks, in Newcastle for years, with another brother Bill Forrester, [00:41:01] and so far as I know, they've never known of

somebody, who's been clearly brought to God, so I've got a marvellous message, when I go to visit him, when I go back, somebody's been brought to God, Robert Cleaver Chapman, was preaching in the open air, when he was in his 90s, and he'd gone to be with the Lord, and some others were preaching in the open air, and a couple of lads came, and stood in the crowd, and wormed their way to the front, and they listened for a while, and one lad said to the other, that man used to live in our street, he said which man, he says the man that they're talking about, his chum said, don't be silly, he's talking about Jesus, he says yes, he used to live in our street, what a marvellous testimony, to a man's Christian character, that he listened to Christ being spoken about, and he said that's the man who lived in our street, that's what 1 John 2 verse 6 holds out, that's normal Christianity, [00:42:01] I might know very little about it, but when you see a verse like that, we ought all to be saying in our prayer, oh God give us the power of that, enable us to live our lives in the power of it, and that's why I read to you the verses, I just want to pick out just one or two things, chapter 5 verse 1, stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith Christ has set us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage, in John chapter 8, the Lord Jesus uses these words, he says, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free, that's why we should always value God's word, because taken in through our divinely renewed minds, and prayed into our inward parts, that's what it produces, it produces truth that has set us free, the teacher that I spoke about, [00:43:03] was the first person who read to us, when I was about 7 or 8 years old, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and I thought Uncle Tom's Cabin was a story, and I was over in America about 15 years ago, and I was asked to go to preach in a black meeting, and I said I would be delighted to come, and I said to the brother with whom I was staying, they've invited me along to Braxton Street, and I could see he was reluctant to go, and I said to him, what's the problem?

And he says, there will only be two there when you start, and I said they'll be coming in in the last hymn, and I said it doesn't worry me at all, and it was obvious that this reluctance was there, and it took my mind back to Uncle Tom's Cabin, [00:44:02] so when I got back home, I went to the library, and I couldn't find a copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and I went to the desk, and I said I wanted a copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and the librarian said, I'm absolutely ashamed to say, we don't have a copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin, so it seems incredible, but stand there, and I'll go and buy one and bring it for you, and I read it again, and when I read it, I thought to myself, it's no wonder England has had some problems, because they played a large part in what they did, I hadn't seen the cassette, because a book came out about eight years ago, called Roots, and I believe it was put into a cassette, and it was how the descendant of a Negro slave, found his original tribe in Nigeria, and it occurred to me then, that if you were a slave, [00:45:01] and I can't remember all the names of the people, but there was somebody called Liza, and her husband was determined to get north, and America then was divided by the Mason-Dixon line, if you were set free, south of the Mason-Dixon line, you got free, but you were in a land where bondage dominated, but if you got north of the Mason-Dixon line, you were set free, and you were set free.

In meetings of brethren, are you ever disappointed with yourself? I'm not asking you to answer the question, but honestly answer the question before God, if you're disappointed in yourself, you haven't got past Romans 7, you'll never be a purposeful, happy believer, in fact you'll never really be a worshipping believer, [00:46:03] until you say, I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that's where Paul got, he got his eyes off himself, and he got his eyes on Christ, it turned from perpetual defeat, and in verse 17, he makes a statement of fact, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would, if that statement, so that you cannot do the things that you would, was the actual statement, it would be Romans 7, perpetual defeat, but it's very interesting that the interlinear, and

most other translations, read that, just one little change, it says, so that ye may not do the things that you would, when you get a new life, you get new desires, [00:47:01] there's actually a marvellous thing happened, about 30 miles south of Newcastle, about five or six years ago, there was a lad, who had been in constant trouble with the police for thieving, he got saved, on a Sunday evening, do you know what he did on the Monday, he took all the money he'd got, and he went round the doors, where he'd stolen milk, and he paid the people back, I don't think anything would have been said to him, in the preaching, about behaviour, and it's almost astounding, so how could somebody, who'd spent his life thieving, suddenly turn round, he got a new life, it gave him new desires, new life from Christ, gives you new desires, and there are things that you want to do, but the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, that you may not do those things, not that you cannot do them, because in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, [00:48:02] we're able to do them, and it's here, not a matter of perpetual defeat, it's a matter of beginning to experience a little bit of victory, verse 18, if he be led of the spirit, ye are not under law, grace and law are incompatible with one another, John chapter 1 verse 17 or 14, the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and the law does not have anything to say to the Christian, as in Romans 7 it says, ye are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye might be married to another, we're no longer married to the law, we're married to Christ, we're identified with him eternally, verse 18, if he be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law, I read to you the words about the works of the flesh, [00:49:05] they're very heart searching things really, and I particularly read them, because right at the end of the fruit of the spirit, in verse 23, is this matter of temperance, this matter of self-control, this matter of exercising self-judgement, the fruit of the spirit, there is no doubt it is the grace of Christ, it was seen fully and perfectly in him, and it comes to light in the saints of God, in the small meeting where I first remembered the Lord, there was an old brother, and I was washing up the dishes with him, I used to have lunch with him on the Lord's day, and I said to another lady who was there, he's a very gracious man, she said yes he is now, but she said when he was a young man, he was like a fox terrier, she said he used to get things in his teeth, [00:50:01] and shake them to pieces, but when God's spirit dwells within you, when you walk with Christ, when you keep your eyes in Christ in glory, there's a transformation, and the grace of Christ comes to light in his people, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, are as applicable to the words grace, grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are to the words, grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit, and we come to the last verse, the last verse is chapter 2, I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God, I am crucified with Christ and I live, but not I for Christ liveth in me, and the life which now I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God, [00:51:03] who loved me and gave himself for me, and there are four things there, one there is the law, and the law has nothing to say to the Christian, the standard of the law is not high enough for the Christian, the Christian standard is Christ, but by the law as Paul says, when the law came sin revived and I died, that's what it did, it set him free from the law, and then there is the question of the cross, it was the cross that did it, we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and then there is the matter of life, we have new life, life according to God, and life brings its proper fruits, and there is the question of an object, and our object, Christ in glory, 2 Corinthians 3.18, we all beholding, with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, [00:52:01] from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord, and when you read on into the first couple of verses, of the next chapter Paul says, not falsifying the word of God, not walking deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God, it would be a happy thing wouldn't it, if the truths that we have considered this week, really do find a root in our inward parts, and result to a better degree, of manifesting the truth of God and his Christ, in the world out of which he was cast, that's the object of the teaching of the body of Christ, and it is the ministry of Christ that recovers us, so that what is normal to Christianity, might become more normal to us,

[00:53:02] can we sing in closing, just part of 1.8.2, 1.8.2 1.8.2 [00:54:09] 1.8.3 1.8.4