

Psalm 34 Series Part 5

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Preacher: David MacPherson

[0 : 00] A warm welcome to you all to our service this morning.

Any who are visiting with us, perhaps from the neighbourhood or you've come from further afield, we're very pleased to have you amongst us and pray that God would bless you as you worship together with us.

At the close of this morning's service, tea and coffee are served downstairs in the hall and you're very welcome to come down and join with us for that time of fellowship together.

Well, let us worship God and we'll sing to his praise in Psalm 150. In the same Psalms, it's on page 196. The blue psalm book that you received as you came in on page 196, Psalm 150b.

And we'll sing the whole of the psalm to the tune, Praise God in his holy temple. Praise the Lord in heaven's high. Praise him for his acts of power.

[1 : 18] Praise him for his majesty. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him for his majesty. We'll sing the whole of the psalm. We'll stand to sing and we'll remain standing for prayer.

Praise God in his holy temple. Praise God in his holy temple. Praise the Lord in heaven's high.

Praise him for his acts of power. Praise him for his majesty.

Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him for his majesty.

Praise him with the sounding trumpet. Praise him with the heart of the good.

[2 : 27] Praise him for his faith. Praise him for his atmosphere. Praise him for his glory.

Praise him and the speech. Praise him for his majesty.

sings and blues. Praise Him with the heart of cymbals, with the cymbals praise the Lord.

Praise Him every sing and greeting. Hallelujah, praise the Lord.

Praise Him, praise Him. Praise Him, praise Him. Hallelujah, praise the Lord.

[3 : 37] Let us pray. We would indeed, our great God, come and praise you for you are a God who is worthy to be praised.

And we have ample reason to praise you. You are a God who has created the world and everything in it. You are the one who sustains it.

You are the one who provides generously for us. You are the one who, in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ has saved us from our sin and has given us entry once again through Him into your presence and into your friendship.

And we would, this morning, as your people, gather in the name of Jesus to praise you for who you are and for all that you have done and continue to do for us, your people.

Help us, even as we gather, to spend time pondering on and considering who you are, considering your acts of power, contemplating your majesty and employing in your praise all that we are.

[4 : 52] Heavenly Father, we pray then that our hearts would be hearts that are prepared to praise and instructed to praise, motivated to praise by the work of your Spirit in us.

Heavenly Father, we ask then that the praise that we bring before you, even this morning, would be pleasing to you. We thank you that you are a God who looks down upon us, whose eyes are attentive to the righteous, whose ears are ever ready to hear the cry of your people.

and we gather in that assurance and in that confidence. We pray that you would grant to us also a sense of concern and burden for those who do not gather to praise, for those who know nothing of Jesus and who live their lives without hope and without God.

and that as we recognize our privilege, as we recognize the grace that has brought us to form part of that worshipping community, that our concern would be for those who are yet outside, that we would invite them in, that they, together with us, would worship you, the living and true God.

We pray that you would bless us this morning in all that we are about, as we would read the Bible, the very living Word of God, that we would hear and that we would understand and that we would respond in a manner that is fitting.

[6 : 32] Help us then, we pray. We pray for all. As we gather, we gather perhaps with different burdens that we carry, we come, with different circumstances that are surrounding us and perhaps causing us concern and fear and worry.

Lord, we pray that we might be able to bring these things to you. You do not promise to remove all the problems that are before us, but you do promise to accompany us and to help us face all that we have to face.

So, Lord, we pray that you would bless us. We thank you that as we gather, we gather with all of your people, all across the world, who gather with this same purpose, on this special day, on this day, when we remember and celebrate that Jesus Christ, your Son, who died on the cross in our place, rose again, triumphant from the grave.

And this is surely a matter that we do good to remember and to celebrate, and we do so. And we pray in his name. Amen.

Now, we'll invite the children to come to the first couple of views, and we've got a couple of words that we want to share with you. Amen. Amen. Now, I've got an envelope here, quite a big one.

[8 : 16] It's like a padded envelope, which is always interesting when you get one of these, because you wonder what's inside. I wonder if anybody wants to guess. It's a very difficult question, and somebody who's already seen what's inside isn't allowed to answer.

But anybody who hasn't seen what's inside is allowed to guess what might be inside. Ewan, what do you think? I think the person who has seen has perhaps told you what's inside, but that's okay.

So, yes, indeed, there are some packets of sweets. There's three packets of sweets. Teeth and lips.

So, there you go. And, well, evidently I've got to give you some, or else it would be just cruel to show you. So, we shall begin by giving you...

And as I'm... You can take a couple, okay? And as I'm giving the sweets, I'll explain who they're from. And... There we go.

[9 : 12] Actually, if you just grab them and then pass them along, that's probably the best bet. And then I can open another one and do the other few that way. That will be a quicker way of operating.

And I'll trust you just to take a couple each. Okay? Right. And that allows me to actually read a letter that came with these sweets. Because that's the best. Because it's for you. It's addressed to me, but it's for you, really.

So, I'm going to read this letter and see if anybody remembers what this is about. It says, Dear David, please find enclosed a few packets of sweets for your Sunday school children.

When I was preaching in Bonacord, I told the children present that the kids in Aleppo get a sweet when they come for our weekly children's address.

I promised to send them some sweets since I had forgot to take any with me. And this is from Alistair MacLeod. And he's the minister in Aleppo.

[10:09] Did any of you remember the minister who came? I wasn't here. That's why he was here. Do you remember the minister who came and said that he gives sweets to the children and that he was going to send you some? You do? Okay. So, he remembered.

And he sent this letter with the sweets for you. Some of you are wondering what this bag for. This is for the minister. There's a footnote at the bottom that doesn't say that.

So, anyway. He has sent these sweets and so you're getting a chance to have some. Now, I wonder why you're getting a sweet this morning.

Is it because Mr. MacLeod is a very nice man? Well, I'm sure he is a very nice man. He's evidently a nicer man than the Bonacord minister because he gives sweets to the children in Aleppo every week.

So, we can agree with you that he's a very nice man. But I don't think that's the main reason why you're getting a sweet this morning. I think the main reason is because he's keeping his promise.

[11:09] I don't know if you noticed in the letter that he wrote that I read he said I promised to send some sweets for the Bonacord Sunday School. So, he was here in front of you or in front of some of you some of you probably were on holiday and he said I promised to send you some sweets.

And a few weeks have passed and what he's done is he's kept his promise. He's done what he said he would do. And that's what I want us to think about a little bit this morning because that is very, very important.

Getting or not getting a sweet isn't very, very important. You might disagree with me but trust me that it's not very, very important. But keeping a promise is very important.

And that's what Mr. MacLeod has done. Our God the God that we have gathered here today to worship is a promise keeping God.

He keeps his promises. The psalmist in Psalm 145 tells us something that we know to be true. The Lord is faithful to all his promises.

[12:15] Which is really just a way of saying the Lord keeps all his promises. Whatever promises God makes he keeps. He promises to forgive us if we ask him to forgive us.

And he always keeps that promise. And we could give lots and lots of other examples. So our God is a promise keeping God and he wants us who are part of his family if we're trusting in Jesus to be like him.

We are to be like our God. And so we have to be very careful about making promises. We have to be careful not to make promises we're not going to be able to keep.

But we also have to be careful about making promises that we should make. And when we make them to keep them. And I'll just tell you another thing that the psalmist says in one of the psalms in Psalm 119 and in verse 57.

The psalmist says I have promised to obey your words. He promised to God that he would obey him. That he would do what God told him to do.

[13 : 20] And then a little further on in the psalm he says I will haste or I will hurry up I will be quick to obey your commands. Really what he's saying is I promise to keep your commands so I will be very careful to make sure that I keep my promise.

Because it's an important promise and one that I must keep. So the last thing I would say to you is this. It is good to promise to obey God but it's even better to keep that promise.

So I hope that all of us here have made that promise. That we've said to God we promise to obey you. That's good. But it's even better to keep the promise.

And as you're enjoying your sleep remember that. Why do we have them? Because somebody made a promise and he kept his promise. And I hope we too are those who make sensible and wise promises and that we also keep them.

And that is pleasing to God. Well we're going to sing again. We're going to sing again and we're going to sing in Psalm 61.

[14 : 30] Before we do just or as you're looking up the psalm it's on page 78 just to say a big thank you to all who contributed in one way or another even if just with your presence at the outing yesterday.

We had a very big crowd and there was a lot of work that went into it. And I'm not going to mention people by name because they'd just be probably embarrassed if I did but you know who you are and we're grateful for all the work that you put in to make yesterday such a good time for all.

Well let's sing. We're going to sing in Psalm 61 on page 78 page 78 and we will sing verses 1 to 5 to the tune Weatherby O hear my urgent cry my God and listen to my plea from earth's remotest bounds I call when my heart faints in me.

Psalm 61 verses 1 to 5 and we'll stand to sing. O hear my urgent cry my God and listen to my plea from earth's remotest Harrison .

o God whom God shall guide me to the road .

[16 : 24] not Lord For you, my refuge from the tomb, my power of pain, O my.

O let me dwell within you, saying forever, thank you.

O God, the shelter of your wings, the refuge with me is.

For you, my God, O God, and you have given me.

The heritage of the Lord to be in your name, God is your name.

[18 : 10] Now we're going to read the Bible in the book of the prophet Jeremiah, in chapter 23.

Jeremiah chapter 23, it's on page 782 in our Bibles. We'll read from the beginning of the chapter through to verse 8, and then we'll have a second reading in the New Testament in Romans chapter 3.

But we'll begin by reading the passage in Jeremiah chapter 23, reading from the beginning. Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture, declares the Lord.

Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who send my people. Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment in you for the evil you have done, declares the Lord.

I myself will gather the remnants of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.

[19 : 31] I will place shepherds over them who will send them. And they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing, declares the Lord.

The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called, the Lord, our righteousness.

So then the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer say, as surely as the Lord lives who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt, but they will say, as surely as the Lord lives who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them, then they will live in their own land.

And we'll read also in the New Testament in Paul's letter to the Romans and chapter 3.

[20 : 46] Romans chapter 3. And we'll read from verse 21 through to the end of the chapter. It's on page 1131.

Romans chapter 3, reading from verse 21. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the law and the prophets testify.

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just, and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting?

[22 : 05] It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from observing the law.

Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

Do we then nullify the law by this faith? Not at all. Rather, we uphold the law. The word of God. Let's bow our heads again together in prayer.

We thank you, our God, that indeed a righteousness from yourself has been made known. We thank you for your Son, Jesus.

We thank you for his perfect righteousness. And we thank you for the manner in which we can be made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

[23 : 20] And we pray that it would be true of all of us that we, by that faith, find ourselves, as we approach you this morning, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

For we can come in no other way. And we do pray for any who are not clothed in that righteousness, for any who as yet have not exercised that faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, that by your Spirit and by our considering your word before us this morning, they would be enabled so to exercise that faith in Jesus.

Indeed, we pray that whatever the good news of the gospel is announced and proclaimed across our city and across our land, there would be those who are able to respond to it and who, in that way, are able to return home justified.

And that there would be rejoicing in heaven and on earth over many sinners who repent. We pray then that you would be the one who would do this work.

We recognize that we are entirely dependent on you. We are dependent on your grace and on the work of your Spirit amongst us.

[24 : 44] We pray also that those of us who, by grace and grace alone, are indeed in that happy position of having been made righteous, that we would have a better understanding of the love that finds expression in that reality and that our gratitude would be expressed in lies of obedience and commitment and service to you.

We come before you at this time and we take upon ourselves the duty that we have to pray for the world.

And we ask that you would grant us that wide and broad vision of this world that is your world, a world that knows much of suffering and pain and violence and injustice in so many ways.

And we would commend to you those who particularly suffer. We once again bring before you the nation of Pakistan as it continues to battle with the disaster that has overcome it.

And we pray for all those who are involved in one way or another in bringing relief to those who have lost everything, to those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, to those who have lost all their physical possessions and indeed have lost their physical health as a result of all that is continuing to afflict that nation.

[26 : 13] And we do pray that relief would be provided. Lord, we pray for others who suffer, others whose circumstances are not known to us, perhaps hidden away in far corners of the globe.

And we pray for them, that you would be the one who would extend your hand of help and succour and comfort. Lord, help us to recognise that your response is so often through us and that we would be willing to take on that duty and indeed that privilege to represent Jesus and to reflect the love of Jesus to others.

Forgive us for often being slow in so doing. As we pray for the world, we pray also for our own fellowship and we thank you for it.

We thank you for the privilege of being part of this congregation and we do pray your blessing upon it. We would thank you for the time of fun and friendship that we were able to enjoy yesterday afternoon at the congregational outing.

And we thank you for all who were able to participate and thank you again for those who made it possible. Lord, we thank you for friends who joined with us, those who perhaps do not gather with us at a service such as this, but who were there with us yesterday.

[27 : 40] And we thank you for them and pray that you would draw them in to the fellowship of this community as they would see Jesus and put their trust in Jesus.

As we remember and are grateful for those who were present, we think of those who are no longer with us. And we would remember very particularly the Mackenzie children who this weekend will be in Canada for the first time following travel just there on Friday.

And we pray for them as they would settle in to a new and a very different situation. Lord, that you would be with them and provide for them and help them to settle in well with the family where they will be and in due course when they go to school and face all kinds of new circumstances.

Be with them. And Lord, we do pray that they would go trusting in you and that you would be very close to them.

We pray for the family who are receiving them and pray that your blessing would be upon them also. Lord, we do pray then for our congregation that you would bless us and prosper us and that you would add to our number.

[28 : 57] Lord, that it would be true for us that we might with the church of old be able to rejoice and to recognize that you add to your church daily such as are to be saved.

Lord, we pray also at this time for the forthcoming start of the new academic year certainly in higher education in the universities and colleges particularly here in Aberdeen.

And we do commend to you that new start. We pray for returning students and for those who will be beginning their studies for the first time. For those who are Christians that you would uphold them in their faith that they would be bright in their witness for Jesus Christ.

And that there would also be opportunity to present the gospel to those who as yet do not know Jesus. Lord, we pray for our own congregation that you would bless us as we would seek to reach to new students those who are from our own country and the many who come to Aberdeen from the four corners of the world.

Lord, be with us and bless us as we think of the work of Christian Union. And we pray for UCCF staff workers and relay workers who are in a very specific and committed way involved in reaching the student community and in helping to nurture those who are Christians in their faith.

[30 : 26] We do commend to you then these things. We pray for the Christian Union and Aberdeen University and Robert Gordon's and Aberdeen College and that you would prosper the work that will begin soon with them.

So Lord, we commend to you all these things. Continue with us now as we would sing your praises once again and as we would turn to consider what you have to say to us in your word. And we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to sing in Psalm 14 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 14. It's on page 214.

The tune is St. Thomas. We'll sing the whole of the psalm. But there is not a God, the fool, doth in his heart conclude they are corrupt, their works are vile, not one of them doth good.

Upon them, sons, the Lord from heaven did cast his eyes abroad to see if any understood and did seek after God. And the conclusion of God as he cast his eye over this world was that there was not one who doeth good.

[31 : 34] well, let's sing there in this psalm and we'll stand to sing Psalm 14, the whole of the psalm. But there is not a God that holds good.

beginning of the peace good. with their Godres Elisa ■ Understand, understand, see after God.

They are together, but they'll see us.

They are all our signs, our God. And there is no matter who has good.

You should be the one. These workers are iniquity.

[33 : 39] Neither do they not know at all. But save my people, Jesus, may.

And I'm not still who you've called. Their fears in mind are guarded with the Holy Soul.

But I'm not still who you've called. They are all our signs.

They are all our signs. They are all our signs. They are all our signs.

And there is no matter who has good.

[35 : 21] Are you a righteous man?

Are you a righteous woman? Are you an evildoer? In the brief moments that you've had to listen and ponder on those questions, I wonder what answer you would give.

Are some of us wondering whether there may be somewhere in between where we could locate ourselves. Well, as we consider this matter, we're going to do so with the help of Psalm 34.

We've been going through this Psalm now for a few weeks. And this morning, we're going to be considering verses 15 to 18. Psalm 34, verses 15 to 18.

And we'll read these verses now and then continue. Considering how they might shed some light on how we could answer the questions that were posed.

[36 : 36] Psalm 34 and verse 15 we read, The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their crying.

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them.

He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

For the psalmist, not only here, but throughout the Psalter, only two categories of people are contemplated.

The righteous and the wicked. The righteous and the evil doers. Now, these words, especially wicked and evil doers, are not commonly used today.

[37 : 45] And that in itself perhaps speaks volumes of our society that has airbrushed out unpleasant truth. But as we turn to the word of God, and as we turn to this psalm, we repeat that for the psalmist, there is no middle ground.

There are the righteous, those who do what is right, and the wicked, those who do what is evil. Now, the psalmist does not claim to be the one who determines who is in which camp.

Indeed, he doesn't know definitively who are in each camp, nor does he claim so to know. He does, however, make it very clear that God views us all.

And he views us all as being located in one or other of these camps or constituencies, if you wish.

Where are you? Does it matter? Well, it matters a great deal. And this morning I want to carefully, I hope, consider this matter.

[39 : 04] And to consider it in the following way. What we are going to do to begin with, and perhaps we'll spend most time doing, is defining our terms. These terms we've already introduced, the righteous and the wicked, the righteous and evildoers.

We need to define these terms. And we are going to do so in the light, not only of the psalm, but also drawing on the floor a revelation provided by God, especially in the New Testament.

So first we're also to define our terms, but then secondly, to answer the question, why it matters. We've already stated that it matters a great deal, but why is that so?

Why does it matter that much? And we'll notice that this relates to God's attitude towards those who are righteous, and his attitude to those who are wicked.

And of course, from his attitude to them, derives the manner in which he deals with them. And then finally, what must you do?

[40 : 11] In the light of what I trust we will discover, what must you do? First of all then, let's define our terms, or the endeavour to do so.

First of all, the righteous. Who are the righteous? Well, the word is used in the Old Testament in the sense of conforming to an ethical or moral standard.

So the righteous are those who conform to a moral and ethical standard. They are the righteous. But of course, it is also clear that that standard is determined and revealed by God.

So it's not for us to determine the standard and then to say, well, we are abiding by it. That would be a very interesting way of doing things.

I decide the standard and so I can determine if I am or am not righteous. But clearly, that is not as it is. God is the one who determines the standard and in His grace, He makes known that standard to us so that we are without excuse.

[41 : 22] He says, this is the standard. These are my laws. This is how you must live. And the righteous are those who conform to that standard that God has given.

The righteous man is the man who keeps God's law. The righteous woman is the woman who obeys the Ten Commandments and indeed all of God's commandments.

Well, so far, so good, in as much as definition is concerned. But we don't need to be very bright or incisive in our thinking to recognize that even in the little that we have said so far, a problem presents itself on the horizon.

And the problem is this, that so defined, the manner in which we have defined who the righteous are, can such a person be found? Can such a person be identified?

Well, here is one who is righteous. Here is one who conforms perfectly to God's standards. Here is a man who obeys all the commandments of God. Here is a woman who can rightly be described as righteous.

[42 : 39] Can such a person be found? Well, perhaps David himself, who employs the concept here in this psalm, can help us in answering that question.

Let's turn to the psalm that we sung just a moment ago. Psalm 14 and verses 2 and 3. And what do we read there? The psalmist is imagining a scene.

He is imagining God looking down from heaven. And there he describes the scene. The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of man, on all of us, to see if there are any who understand.

Any who seek God. What does he discover? What is the panorama that presents itself before him? All have turned aside.

They have together become corrupt. There is no one who does good. Not even one. The Lord looks down from heaven, and from heaven the view is pretty good.

[43 : 47] You don't miss out anybody when you are looking down from heaven. Google Earth has nothing on the view that God has as he looks down from heaven. He sees every nook and cranny, every corner of this planet that is his.

He sees it all, and he looks down, and he considers all who live on this overcrowded planet earth. And he doesn't find one who can be described in these terms.

He does not find one who conforms to the standard that he has set. That is, no one righteous, no one who does good. We know that the Apostle Paul makes use of this very passage to very explicitly make the point that all, without exception, are guilty.

If you turn with me very briefly to the epistle of Paul to the Romans, in chapter 3, verses 10 and following. And there we find Paul using this psalm to make the point that he is making.

As it is written in that psalm, and indeed in other psalms, There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

[45 : 06] All have turned away. They have become together worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one. The one. Well, again, that would seem very clear.

But we have a problem. We have a problem because the psalmist in Psalm 34 speaks of the righteous, and he speaks of them seemingly as people who do actually exist. And yet, he himself recognizes that when God looks down from heaven, And he does not find any who can be so described.

So what is the psalmist on about here in Psalm 34, When he speaks of the eyes of the Lord being on the righteous, Of the righteous crying out, and the Lord hears them?

Is this fantasy, a theology, or those spoken of, the hypothetical righteous? They don't actually exist. But if they did, well, the Lord would hear them. If they did exist, he would look favorably upon them.

It seems very clear that David is speaking about real people. And indeed, throughout the Old Testament, real people are designated as righteous.

[46 : 22] How are we to understand this? Well, the answer to this seeming contradiction or difficulty is to understand that men and women can be made righteous.

We need to develop this a little. How this happens is hinted at in the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 36. We don't have time to go and consider it in any detail.

But there the prophet speaks of God giving men and women a new heart. That will, and this is important, allow them or enable them to do what is right. The prophet is clear that we are not able to do what is right, but he envisages this gift of God of a new heart that will enable sinners such as we are to do what is right.

The prophet Jeremiah, when we read the passage earlier in the service, speaks of one coming who would be described as the Lord, our righteousness.

And in the New Testament, these hints, these suggestions in the Old are developed and the lights, as it were, are fully turned on and all is revealed.

[47 : 42] The picture that comes to my mind, I don't know if you've ever seen, maybe you've been in a sports arena or you've seen on the TV a darkened arena, and then suddenly all the lights, the floodlights come on all at once.

There's nothing new there really, it was all there before, but it's all visible, it's all clear in a way that it hadn't been before. So with this matter, as we turn to God's fuller revelation in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the One described in the first letter of John as the Righteous One. The Righteous One.

He lived a life of perfect conformity to the law and will of God. As the Father looked down from heaven when His Son was here, He did find one who did what is right.

He did find one who perfectly conformed to His moral standard and He was well pleased with His Son, who so lived and who so lived in perfect conformity to the law and will of His Father.

[48 : 51] And this Righteous One, Jesus Christ, He secures and provides His righteousness to others. Again, if we listen to how Paul explains this matter in his letter to the Romans, in Romans chapter 3 and in verses 21 and 22, we read as follows.

There we read, But now, but now, there is a new situation, but now, a righteousness from God apart from law has been made known, to which the law and the prophets testify, of which Ezekiel and Jeremiah spoke and others.

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

And here Paul, in his letter to the Romans, is speaking of the righteousness of Christ how that righteousness is appropriated by faith in Him.

In other words, Jesus is able to make righteous those who are wicked. And indeed, that same language is used by Paul just in the following chapter, in chapter 5 and verse 19.

[50 : 16] For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man, Jesus Christ, the many will be made righteous.

We are all wicked. We are all evildoers. We are all sinners. But some are made righteous. The righteousness of Christ is credited to our account by the instrumentality of faith.

As we exercise faith in Jesus Christ, we are made righteous. Another helpful picture that the Bible uses is of the whole in Christ's righteousness.

We don't have a righteousness of our own, but we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, and so clothed, become righteous. We are made righteous.

We can rightly be described as righteous. The righteous. None by nature.

[51 : 25] None by our own efforts. None by our own immoral, upright living. But some made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ.

We are defining our terms, and we have to, much more briefly also, define the second. Who are the evildoers? Who are the wicked? Well, the point has already been made that evildoers are those who do evil, and as such we all come into that category.

But, simply repeating what we have said, in the life of that, some who are evildoers have been made righteous. They have moved, or been made from one camp to another.

And so the wicked are all those who have not been made righteous. They simply remain where they always were. They simply remain what they have always been by nature, evil doers.

And so, before we continue to consider why it matters, I am duty bound to pose the question to you this morning.

[52 : 38] Where are you? In what camp are you? Are you, by faith in Jesus Christ, among the righteous? And praise be to God.

For are you, as yet, among those rightly and justly described as the wicked, the evildoers? Why does it matter that we limit ourselves to what the psalmist says in the psalm that we are considering?

What is God's attitude to, what are God's dealings with those in each camp? If we can speak in those terms. First of all, the righteous. How does God deal with the righteous?

What attitude does God have towards the righteous? Those who are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Well, the language used is thrilling and wonderful. So, we read there in verse 15, The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, not to condemn us, and not to identify our many faults, although there are many, but when it speaks of the eyes of the Lord on the righteous, it speaks, first of all, of His protective concern.

[53 : 49] His eyes are upon us. Yesterday we were at the outing, and many mums and dads were wee ones. And of course they were concerned because the wee ones would be running one place or another.

And it was interesting to see how the mother or the father would be ever keeping their eye on their wee ones. Because of that protective concern for them. They didn't want them to suffer any harm.

They didn't want them to get hurt in any way. They certainly didn't want them to get lost. So their eyes were always on them. But we know as parents, even though that may be our intention, sometimes we're not able to do that.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. It speaks of His protective concern. But I think it also speaks of His fatherly pleasure. His eyes are upon those He loves.

I don't know if you've seen, it was on the news yesterday, a very beautiful photograph of David Cameron and his wee daughter. There's one where they're touching nose to nose.

[54 : 49] You can see this picture of this father, besotted with his daughter. The pleasure that he derives from looking at his daughter. There's great pleasure just to look at this beautiful creature.

His eyes are upon his daughter. We don't need to think of David Cameron. Even within our own congregation, we've been witnesses of new parents who are looking constantly and it gives them great pleasure for their eyes to be upon their newborn, a child.

And so with our God, He looks on the righteous. He looks on them, desires it upon them, that fatherly care and concern for them, but also that fatherly pleasure and delight in them.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His ears are attentive to their cry. However timorous that cry, however incoherent that cry may be, however mixed up or doubting the cry even of the righteous may be, His ears hear.

He hears clearly that cry. We don't understand sometimes what we're crying. We don't know where we're coming from, but He hears clearly the cry of the righteous.

[56 : 09] The Lord hears. He delivers them from all their troubles. He is willing to deliver. He is able to deliver. We recognize that in that deliverance we must be aware of His prerogative in the matter of the manner of the deliverance and indeed the timing of the deliverance.

We may have our own view as to how we would wish to be delivered from a given trial. The Lord knows better. He may choose to deliver us in another way. And also as to the timing.

We want to be delivered now. Perhaps the Lord chooses to deliver us from a particular trial at some other point that He chooses and knows best. And indeed, there were the trials from which we are delivered only at death itself.

But the Lord delivers the righteous from all their troubles. This is the manner in which the Lord deals with those that are His.

Why does He treat the righteous in such a way? Why is it that we are so well-built with, so well-considered by God? Why does God the Father consider us with such tender and special love?

[57 : 30] Because when He looks down on you, you who are righteous by your faith in Jesus Christ, He sees Jesus. He sees you in Christ.

He sees you as part of the body of His beloved Son. And so He looks down on you in this way. And when you cry, Christian friend, He hears Jesus.

And when His eyes rest on you, they see the loveliness of Jesus. And so He deals with you in this wonderful way.

Is this your experience? Is this the manner in which the Lord looks upon you? That His eyes are attentive to you? That His ears hear you?

The righteous. But the psalmist also considers God's attitude to the wicked, to those who do evil.

[58 : 30] And in verse 16, He presents to us two solemn truths that portray God's current attitude and also His future action. First of all, if we consider God's current attitude to the wicked.

We read there in verse 16, The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. He is against them.

This is personal. We sometimes say, oh, there's nothing personal. Well, this is personal. There is a personal enmity on the part of God towards the wicked.

It is put in very personal terms of the unwelcoming face of God. He sees the wicked. He knows the wicked. And He hates the wicked.

That is not the full story, but it is true. This is not simply a case of not being a friend of God.

[59 : 31] It's not simply a case of being unknown to God. God does know you. And He considers you His enemy. This is God's current attitude to the wicked, to those who have not been made righteous, to those who have not availed themselves of this wonderful opportunity and invitation to put their trust in Jesus and receive as a gift His perfect righteousness.

He is against such. But the psalmist also speaks of his future actions. He will cut them off. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

The language speaks of a deliberate act on the part of God. It speaks of complete destruction or indeed perhaps better described as absolute banishment.

So that not even a memory remains. That's the idea of not even a memory remains. It does not imply, certainly in the light of the full revelation of Scripture, it does not imply that the wicked cease to exist.

But it does speak of actions that God will take against the wicked. They will be cut off. And again, as we said, that we would be considering these verses in the light of God's full revelation, we must state solemnly and yet clearly that the ultimate fulfillment of this statement of divine intent is the reality of hell.

[61 : 05] The destiny of the wicked is hell. Those who have not been made righteous through faith in the righteous one, those who have not been made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, will be thrown into the lake of fire to endure never-ending torment.

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil to cut off the memory of them from the earth. And so, my friend, it matters a great deal.

It matters a great deal where you stand this morning. It matters a great deal in which camp you are located. It matters a great deal. There is nothing that matters more than this matter.

Have you been made righteous? Or to put it in other terms or in other language, are you a forgiven sinner or an unforgiven sinner?

For we are all sinners. But are you a forgiven sinner? Or are you as yet one who is unforgiven? If that is where you are, there is nothing stopping you from moving from one camp to the other, even this morning as you would cry out to God and seek His forgiveness that He promises to give.

[62 : 32] He is, as we were thinking with the children, a promise-keeping God. And He promises to forgive those who seek forgiveness. He promises to forgive those who confess their sins.

This is what you must do. And that takes us on to the final thing we want to consider briefly. What must you do? What must you do? Well, the first thing is that you must be clear where you stand.

You must be clear of where you are this morning. And if by grace you are among the righteous, as I know many of you are, then thank God and do what is right.

The righteous are so characterized in this way, they do what is right. Doing what is right does not make them righteous, but they demonstrate who they are by doing what is right.

And so if you are by grace among the righteous, then make that known. Show evidence of that by doing what is right. By pleasing God in your life.

[63 : 38] By obeying Him. By being faithful to Him. And that means that you are not faithful to Him. But if you are an evildoer. If you are an unforgiven sinner. If you are one who has yet have not been made righteous, then what must you do?

Well, you must repent of your sin. You must recognize your condition. And you must confess your sin before God. And there are words for you in this section of the psalm.

In verse 18, David assures us, The Lord is close to the broken hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Here is a word brimming with hope and opportunity.

David speaks here of those who are in spiritual anguish. It would seem that these words have this as their principal import. The broken hearted, the crushed in spirit.

Those whose hearts are broken by sin. Those whose spirits are crushed by guilt. And what David says is that this is a good place to be. You say, how could this be a good place to be?

[64 : 45] To be broken hearted, to be crushed in spirit. How could this be a good place to be? Well, it is a good place to be because, David assures us, the Lord is near to such. The Lord is close to the broken hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

He is near and ready to save. He is close and awaiting only your cry for help. He is ready to hear and to answer the cry of the broken hearted and of the crushed in spirit.

Indeed, by his grace, he is the one who crushes us. That he might drive us to his son, Jesus. And so I ask you, will you cry out to the righteous one?

There is only one. Will you cry out to Jesus? Will you lay hold of Jesus as your savior? Will you sing with the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord is my righteousness?

Why did you cry out to you? I am not sure. Robert Murray McChain, a well-known preacher of the 19th century in Dundee, cried out. And he described his experience of Jehovah, Sidkenyu.

[65 : 57] Jehovah, our righteousness. The Lord, our righteousness. He described. He testified to that cry and to the answer he received in the hymn that he wrote.

I once was a stranger. To grace and to God I knew not my danger and felt not my load. Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ in the tree.

Jehovah's tenure was nothing to me. I oft read with pleasure to save or engage. Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page.

They fit in when they pictured the blood sprinkled tree. Jehovah said, can you see nothing to me? Like tears from the daughter of Zion that roll, I wept when the waters went over his soul.

Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree. Jehovah said, can you, it was nothing to me. When free grace awoke me. By light from on high, then legal fears shook me.

[66 : 58] I trembled to die. I was crushed in spirit. I was broken hearted as the weight of my sin bore upon me. No refuge, no safety in self could I see.

Jehovah said, can you, my saviour must be. May these be the words that reflect your own heart.

Jehovah said, can you, the Lord, my righteousness. He and he alone can be that saviour that I desperately need. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come before you and we thank you for your goodness and grace in providing us with such a saviour.

One who is altogether sufficient for our needs. We thank you that in Jesus we have one who is indeed the righteous one. We thank you that we have in him one who offers to us his righteousness.

To close up with his righteousness. As we would put our faith in him. And so we pray that you would help us so to do. And we pray in his name.

[68 : 04] Amen. Amen. We'll sing the verses that we've been considering. Psalm 34.

Singing from verse 15. On page 41 of our psalm books. Psalm 34. We'll sing from verse 15.

And we'll sing through to the end of the psalm and the tune of Abelma. The Lord's eyes are upon the just. He listens to their plea. The wicked he rejects and blots from earth their memory.

Psalm 34, verses 15 to the end. And we'll stand to sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[69 : 02] Amen. Amen. Amen.

And bring them red and Evans, The Lord was near a broken heart, And bless you from this care, From all that trouble falls apart, The Lord will stand Him free, The Lord will stand Him free, And the Lord will stand Him free,

The wind and the wind of heaven to bear, All to make the joy, The faith is true, There are no condemn, All to make the joy, The Lord will stand Him free, The Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, Now and always.

Amen. There are no ■■■■ thou, Tontal además winner a contest, Do you know when the heat is coming up I won free, There are no Egyptians, The planet cannot buy heavy, flew away and para those out of muito regulators.

arettes firm and weren't gonna block up now and go. The Himparald down was with a ■hab agree. To make the deeds of the trust in the heart of the unbelief, In the name of the Lord, In the name of all theoths, Theborn with the drink is first elected, In the name of all theavored Your rhythms in the covenant