

A Christian's Credentials

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2019

Preacher: Nick Louw

[0 : 00] Thanks, Alan, and thanks, Gene, for reading for us. Good morning, everyone. Good to see you this morning. We're going to continue our journey through the book of 2 Corinthians, so I encourage you to keep your Bibles open at the passage Gene read for us.

So let's pray and ask for God's help. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your provision to us. We thank you that not only do you give us a mission in this world to make the glory of you and your kingdom and the reality of resurrection, known to those around us so that they might be saved and come into your kingdom.

We thank you, Lord, for providing the resources we need to go forward and to do that. We do pray, Lord, for our next few months as we start this new initiative that you would be with us, that you would guide us, and that you would be glorified.

We also thank you for the provision of your word that we might know truth about life and death and eternity and you, and we pray that as we read your word this morning, you would speak to us and help us to know how this applies to our lives.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I want you to imagine for a second that you are an employer and you're interviewing a candidate for a new job.

[1 : 15] And so you're sitting there in the interview room and you're going through the questions that you would ask in an interview. And you get to the question which you ask this candidate. List your job history and some past work achievements.

Now imagine this is their answer. Well, in my first job, I was under disciplinary procedure for disobeying the company policy. But don't worry, I managed to get out of there before they could track me down.

Other achievements in my career include crashing my car three times on the way to work. In one job, I was officially recognized as the least liked employee in the company.

And I've been suspended from my previous jobs on at least eight different occasions. Now, that's not the type of thing you'd expect to hear in a job interview, right?

It's not the type of things people are normally proud of or that you would boast about in trying to get a job. And that's why this passage in 2 Corinthians seems so strange.

[2 : 14] Because that's exactly the type of things that the apostle Paul chooses to boast about in trying to convince the Corinthian church to accept him as an apostle. But in doing so, in boasting in these strange things, he teaches us something very important that we're going to see this morning.

Not just about what qualified a true apostle of Jesus and more generally the important place of weakness and suffering in the Christian's life, which is what the next two Sundays we're going to be looking at.

But we also learn in this passage, what are the kinds of ways God shows us that our devotion to him is genuine. And that's a very important thing to consider, especially given last week's reminder. If you were here last week, we learned from this passage that even Christians are able to fall away from a sincere devotion to Christ. That's what verse 3 of this chapter says.

And so, if that's the case, how do we make sure that we don't do that? How do we check ourselves and make sure that our devotion to Christ is not slipping away?

[3 : 24] It's a very important question. Well, we do it in the same way that Paul proved to the Corinthians that he was a truly devoted apostle of Christ.

That his devotion to Christ was solid and genuine. And do you know what that is? Do you know how he showed them? Do you know how we can know whether our devotion to Christ is real and genuine and solid?

Well, it's not in our religious achievements. It's not in the excellence of our works or our good deeds. What it is, is in how we deal with suffering in our life.

That, more than anything else, will prove our faith and devotion for what it really is. And that's why Paul listed his sufferings rather than his achievements as his crowning qualifications as an apostle and as a Christian.

So, look how he does it. Have a look in your Bibles halfway through verse 21. He says, Whatever anyone else dares to boast about, I'm speaking as a fool, I also dare to boast about.

[4 : 33] Okay, so remember he's up against the false teachers in Corinth. You would have known that if you've been with us for a while. Well, and the problem here is that the Corinthians were getting drawn in by these false teachings because of the impressiveness and the eloquence of these false teachers as well as their wealth.

They looked like the real deal because outwardly they were impressive and they were very good at boasting about their own achievements. And then Paul said in the last passage, Well, that's foolishness to claim God's authority by boasting in yourself.

And yet, the Corinthians are so enamored by these false teachers, so taken in by them, that now Paul himself, just for a moment, resorts to the same tactic as they're using to boast about himself. It's as if he's saying, You know, you're so impressed with these other teachers because of all their qualifications and achievements. Don't you realize I'm actually more qualified even than they are? I just haven't boasted about it.

But now I guess I have to. So, he goes on verse 22. Are they Hebrews? Or so am I. Are they Israelites? Or so am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.

[5 : 46] Are they servants of Christ? I am out of my mind to talk like this. I am more. Okay, so Paul knows that there's no point doing what he's doing, boasting about personal qualifications, but he's trying to make a point to the Corinthians, which he then goes on to do in the next few verses by listing his real achievements that they don't realize are his achievements.

And so now he changes tack. So listen to what he says from verse 23. I've worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

Five times I received from the Jews, 40 lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rocks. Once I was pelted with stones. Three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and day in the open sea.

I've been constantly on the move. I've been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false believers.

I have labored and toiled, and have often gone without sleep. I have known hunger and thirst, and have often gone without food. I've been cold and naked. Those are my achievements, says Paul.

[7 : 01] Now why? Why is it that Paul considers these things, achievements, to boast about? Well because, think about this, unless his faith in Christ, and his devotion to Christ, was real, and a genuine work of God in him, then he would never have gone through all of this.

Unless his devotion was the real thing. And it's worth just stopping for a second to consider, that a person's devotion to Christ, is not something that they conjure up inside themselves.

It's something that God enables them, through giving them real, solid, saving faith, that they, and that we, and that Paul, are able to be devoted to Christ.

And so, that's how he shows, that his devotion is real, because he would have never been willing, to go through all of these things, if it wasn't. In fact, right from the beginning, of his career as an apostle, his life was marked, specifically, by suffering, for Jesus, because that is always the mark of a true apostle.

So, skip down to verse 32, in your Bibles. He says, he ends off this way. In Damascus, the governor under King Aratus, had the city of the Damascans, guarded, in order to arrest me.

[8 : 19] But I was lowered in a basket, from a window in the wall, and slipped through his hands. Now, this is a strange incident, to mention, right at the end of this passage.

Why does he mention, this particular incident, of all the things that he went through? Well, because, this was the first, persecution, that Paul ever faced. This was his first, experience, of persecution, as an apostle, when he had just started, his ministry, after being converted, on the way to Damascus, on the Damascus road.

So remember, if you know, about Paul, he used to be a persecutor, of Christians. He used to hunt them down, arrest them, and punish them, and order, their death sentences.

It was serious. He was a persecutor, of Christians, and, he was heading to Damascus, with an armed guard, of soldiers, on horses, to do just that, to hunt down Christians, in Damascus.

But on the way, we read, in Acts, the risen Jesus, in all his glory, intercepted Paul, and basically told him, no, I've got different plans, for you buddy.

[9 : 26] Instead of marching, into Damascus, in all of your pomp, and strength, to hunt down Christians, you're going to leave. You're going to go there, in humility, and then you're going to leave, as a hunted down Christian, yourself.

God certainly, has a sense of humor, doesn't he? But you see, this wasn't Jesus, just having some fun. He was making, a vital point, to Paul, that the mark, of a true apostle of Christ, and following the footsteps, of Jesus, was going to be, suffering and humility.

And Paul needed, to get ready for that. And that, concept, that the mark, of a true, follower of Christ, is suffering, and humility, is especially true, of apostles.

You can breathe, a bit of a sigh of relief, because this was, mainly, talking to the apostles, those first, men, who Jesus commissioned, to expose, and to reveal, his word, and the truth of the gospel, which we have recorded, in our Bibles.

So, even though it's true, for an ordinary Christian, it was even more true, much more true, for the apostles, given, the important job, they had. So, suffering, was actually essential, for them, to do their job, properly, in God's strength, and not their own.

[10 : 40] You know, it always amuses me, you know, the new apostolic churches, and I'm not in the habit, of bashing other churches, but I'm quite happy, to bash these guys, because they believe, that there are still, apostles today, and therefore, the Bible is not finished.

That God is still, speaking, and there was, there's more than he, that he wants to say, other than what we have, in the Bible. It's not true. The Bible is complete, the God's complete revelation. He has, revealed himself, once and for all, through Jesus Christ, and his commissioned apostles. But it's funny, the new apostolic churches, who believe, that they still have, apostles today. It's funny, how their apostles, conveniently ignore this fact, that the mark, of a genuine apostle, is actually a life, of suffering.

Suffering, is what proves, true apostleship. And history, records for us, that every single, one of the apostles, apart from John, who was, exiled on an island, every other one, was, was killed, for the gospel.

It was killed, for what they proclaimed, incidentally, and that's actually, one of the reasons, we know, the apostles, weren't just making, this stuff up. You're not going to suffer, and die, for something you know, is a lie, right?

[11 : 51] Maybe one madman, might do that, but not 12. And so, their suffering, is not only the way, that God, helped them, to trust in his strength, and not their own, but it's the way, he shows us, that what they said, must be true.

What, what, you know, what they wrote, in the Bible, is, is truth from God. If you are wandering, around this life, wondering what it's all about, the answers are right here.

Okay? Because God has revealed, everything we need to know, for life, and godliness, and salvation, and eternal life. Anyway, so that's why, Paul's CV, is actually, a list of the way, he's, the ways he's suffered, for Jesus.

But let's now, look at that list, a little closer, and see what kind of suffering, it involves, and what it means for us. And I think, as you go through, this list of suffering, you can divide, all the suffering, that Paul mentions here, into two main categories.

And what's common, in all of it, is that it's suffering, related to his role, as an apostle, suffering for the gospel. But there's still, two distinct types, of suffering for the gospel. The first, is direct persecution.

[13 : 03] Direct persecution. Imprisonments, floggings, stoning, all for proclaiming Jesus. Now, first of all, we must ask, why would people do this, to Paul?

Why would people react, like this to him? You know, it's not like, he was running up, behind people, and flicking their ears, looking for a fight. It's, he was simply, proclaiming, the gospel of Jesus.

Jesus. Why did people react, in so much, violence and venom, towards the message, of Jesus?

Well, it's because, of the message itself.

Because of what, the gospel message, declares. What it reveals, which is that, Jesus rose from the dead, bodily. And he proved, he was proven, to be the son of God.

And he is now, claiming authority, over the lives, of all people. That's what they, didn't like to hear. That's what the gospel is. The gospel is not just, you know, you can, Jesus died for your sins, so you can be saved.

[14 : 03] The gospel is, Jesus is the king, of the universe. The gospel, is about him. It's not about us, and how we can, get a heavenly, insurance policy. It's about, the identity of Jesus, and that he rules, all things, and that every knee, will bow before him, one day, and answer, for how they've lived.

And that's what people, don't like to hear, because they don't want, someone else, ruling over their life, and holding them, accountable. They want to be king, over their own lives. But the gospel proves, that Jesus is now, in the place of power, we're going to remember that, this Thursday, at ascension day.

That he rose, and ascended to the throne, and he is coming back, to judge every human being, and we owe our allegiance, to him. And if people don't accept that, and submit to him, they will oppose it, and they will want to shut up, because it's a threat, to our human self autonomy.

And nothing's changed. Nothing's changed, since Paul's day. Christians, in some countries, as Alan reminded us earlier, are still being killed, and put in prison, for the simple gospel message, they share.

Here's the latest map, behind me, of persecution, of Christians, from the Open Doors website. And that's just, active, official, persecution.

[15 : 20] And I fear, it's going to spread, as liberalism, and, grows in our world, and as freedom of speech, is quashed, and more and more people, don't want to hear the gospel, and they will more and more, react violently to it.

We've almost been living, for the last, few centuries, in a bubble, of Christendom, where we've been protected, from that. But that is, slowly, being eroded. And so this map, is only going to get, bigger and bigger, in terms of the persecution, that we see in the world.

And that is exactly, what Jesus warned us of. People will not like, this message, will not like this truth. They will oppose you for it. They will want to, shut you up. And now, even in more open society, so the grey, countries you see there, who aren't, going through, official persecution, even there, people are still trying, to shut Christians up.

And we can lose our jobs, today, for simply, saying things, that the Bible says. Like the Israel, flower saga, in Australian rugby, has recently shown. He just, tweeted a Bible verse, and he was fired, and he can no longer, play rugby.

Or, if it's not that, if it's not losing our jobs, at least it's losing our friends. Because people, don't want to hear the gospel. And so we must expect, hostility, if we're going to represent Jesus, to the people around us.

[16 : 41] But what's important, is how we handle, that hostility, against us. Because, it can threaten our faith, as well as our witness.

I want to say that again, hostility towards you, if you're a Christian, and you open your mouth, about the truth of Jesus. If you're not ashamed, to, testify to Jesus.

Which he warned us against, being ashamed. He says, if you're ashamed of me, I'm going to be ashamed of you, when I come back, with my holy angels, in my power. So be warned. Mark chapter 8, look at it.

But, if we do that, if we're not ashamed, of the truth of Jesus, but we get persecuted, therefore, that persecution, can threaten our faith, as well as our witness.

So, remember the parable of the sower, in Matthew, and Luke, and Mark. Jesus talks about, the seed that fell on rocky ground. You know what I'm talking about? Different seeds were scattered, and they all grew, in different ways.

[17 : 41] And Jesus uses that, as an illustration, of people who receive the word, and how they react, in different ways. Well, he describes it like this. The seed, the particular seed, that fell on rocky ground, he explains this, in Matthew.

The seed falling on rocky ground, refers to someone, who hears the word, and at once receives it, with joy. But since they have no root, they last, only a short time.

When trouble, or persecution, comes because of the word, they quickly, fall away. So, persecution, can cause people, who once accepted, and believed the word, to fall away.

Which also means, that being able to endure, being willing to endure, persecution, and get through it, is a sign, of genuine faith. Genuine devotion, to Christ.

And that's why, Paul uses his persecutions, as his qualifications, as an apostle. He sees his persecutions, as opportunities, to be assured himself, and to assure others, of his genuine, devotion, and faith, in Christ.

[18 : 49] Now, in this country, at the moment, thanks be to God, we don't get, much explicit persecution. Our chief justice, is still praying, on his knees, in parliament.

And we can be thankful, that Christianity, is still, allowed, and accepted, in this country. And so we're not, persecuted, openly, officially, but that's not always, a good thing.

Because it makes it, much harder to know, whose faith is genuine. As opposed to, just cultural. And it makes it, harder to be encouraged, that our own faith, is genuine. If we don't get, persecuted. Now, I'm not saying, go out and look for, persecution. Because you don't have, to despair, that we're not, openly persecuted, and therefore, don't have any, you know, way of seeing, that our devotion, is genuine.

Because there is, another type, of suffering, Paul mentions, in his list of sufferings, here. That points, and proves, genuine faith. And that's, a type we can all, sign up for.

[19 : 53] Even if we're not, openly persecuted. Because that is, the suffering of, sacrifices made, for the gospel. That's the second type, of suffering, he mentions here. Sacrifices, made for the gospel.

Because Paul also, have a look, mentions things like, labor, exhausting himself, for gospel work. Being shipwrecked, the dangers of travel, in the ancient world, in taking the gospel, across borders. Being hungry, and thirsty, and cold, not having money, to support himself, because of the sacrifices, he makes. You see, and these are not, necessarily, the result of, direct persecution.

Rather, this is the suffering, that resulted from, Paul's work, of taking the gospel, to the world, carrying out his mission, that Jesus gave him, on the Damascus road. Sacrifices, of money, and safety, and comfort, in order to do, God's work.

And that is something, that not only, the apostles were challenged, to do, and called to do, it is something, that all Christians, are called, to do, to make sacrifices, for the gospel, and the spread of the gospel, and the growth, of the kingdom.

[21 : 00] As we saw, a few weeks ago, in chapters 8 and 9, of 2 Corinthians, where Paul talks, about money, and, not only the, the importance, of Christians giving, but the benefit, to Christians who give.

So read chapter 8 and 9 again. Like St. Mark's, has been challenged to do, over the last few weeks, with our social action initiative, to reach more people, with the gospel, to show the reality, of the gospel, to the community, around us.

But also, that might mean, for some, so this, this sacrifice, to make sacrifices, for gospel work, might mean, moving to a less, comfortable situation, if you can better, use your gifts, for the kingdom, in that new place.

It might mean, something as simple, as sacrificing, opportunities for promotion, by leaving work on time, to get to Bible study, when everybody else, is working overtime, to climb the ladder. Or, it might mean, changing jobs, to, get a job, that gives you, a lower salary, but it gives you time, and, and gives you a situation, where you can spend more time, doing kingdom work, through your local church.

And it might mean, being exposed, to dangers, and discomforts, doing things, that you wouldn't have, otherwise done. That is, the kind of gospel sacrifices, that Christians are called to make.

[22 : 21] And that kind of suffering, is also evidence, of a true and living devotion, to Christ, when we are willing, to do that. Whereas, to be unwilling, to make sacrifices, for the gospel, is actually, very spiritually dangerous.

dangerous. It's not just, unhelpful to the kingdom, it's spiritually dangerous, to you, if you're not willing, to make sacrifices, for the gospel. Because Jesus spoke, about another seed, in his parable. The seed that fell, on thorny ground. And he said this about it. The seed that fell, among thorns, stands for those, who hear. But as they go, on their way, they are choked, by life's worries, riches, and pleasures, and they do not, mature.

To be too, caught up, in what the world, can give you, and not willing, to sacrifice, what the world, could give you, can choke out, your faith.

That's what Jesus, is saying here. And so, Paul's suffering, both, direct persecution, and indirect sacrifices, for the gospel, are evidences, of his genuine, faith, and devotion, to Christ.

[23 : 31] And that gives us, this morning, at least two things, to think about, in our own lives. Firstly, we should avoid, self-serving leaders.

That was the direct application, to the Corinthians. They were tempted, to follow those rich teachers, who were just in it, for what they could get out of it, and they were actually, Paul mentions earlier, in this passage, they were, abusing the Corinthians, to benefit themselves.

And they were, lapping it up, the Corinthians. They were still, following these guys. And so the point, that Paul's trying to make here, to them and to us, is no matter, how impressive a teacher is, no matter how, captivating, they are, how profound, their teaching, or how many, views, their YouTube videos have, if their way of life, is self-serving, and they are only in ministry, for what they can, get out of it, steer clear, they will lead you, into, a destruction, of your faith.

Don't just listen, to anyone. We learned that last week. Second thing, we learned from this passage, is to value, your sufferings, more than your strengths.

That's a very, profound lesson, that we learn, in this passage. Value, your sufferings, more than your strengths, because God uses, your sufferings, not your strengths, to show, to you, and to be a witness, to others, the reality, of your faith.

[24 : 58] It's why Peter, the Apostle Peter, in his letter, his first letter, says this, for a little while, you may have had to suffer grief, in all kinds of trials.

These have come, so that, the proven, genuineness, of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes, even though refined by fire, that that, genuineness, of your faith, may result in praise, glory, and honor, when Jesus Christ, is revealed.

And so, enduring, suffering, for Jesus, proves the genuineness, of our faith, which is the most valuable, thing we have. And so, we should value, the difficulties, and the discomforts, and the persecutions, that God allows, in our lives, to show us, the genuineness, of our faith, and to show it, to others as well.

We should value, those things. God would not, put anything, in the life, of his children, that will cause them, to suffer, other than what he knows, is necessary, for their eternal benefit, and the eternal good, of others.

And even more than that, our discomforts, and sufferings, for Christ, are actually a way, of worshiping him. You're worshiping Christ, is not just singing songs, on a Sunday. It's making sacrifices, throughout the week, for him.

[26 : 27] You know, we like to make sacrifices, for those we love, family members. I'm sure you've experienced it, with a spouse, or with children. You're not only willing, to make sacrifices, but you derive, a kind of pleasure, from being able, to sacrifice, and give to those you love.

Well, we should be happy, to make sacrifices, for Christ, as a way, of reflecting, our gratitude, for the immense, sacrifices, that he made for us, as his people.

Not just, dying in our place, but taking all of the punishment, of all of our sins, on the cross. That was immense suffering, that we will never know, thank God. So that we don't have to bear, that punishment.

God's, just wrath, on our sins. We don't have to bear that, if we trust in Christ. That is the sacrifice, he made for us. I'm sure we can make, sacrifices for him, in light of that.

But there's another thing, we learn in this passage, before we finish this morning. Another, third, type of suffering, that Paul mentions, that all Christians, must be willing, to endure, in their life, as a mark, of genuine devotion, to Christ.

[27 : 43] And that is the suffering, that comes, from being spiritually, attached, to others, in their sufferings, and their battles, with sin, to suffer with them.

So look at, verse 28 to 29. That's what Paul, is saying here. He says, besides everything else, I face daily, the pressure, of my concern, for all the churches.

Who is weak, and I do not feel weak. Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn. See, what he's saying here, is that, above all of the other, sufferings that he faces, the shipwrecks, and the floggings, and all of that, he's almost saying, his real suffering, that really gets to him, is his anxiety, for the spiritual state, of the Corinthians, and the other Christians, that he works with.

He has so, bound his heart, to theirs, that when they suffer, he suffers. When they are weak, he feels weak, with them. And when they sin, and are led astray, from the truth, he is emotionally engaged, he burns with passion, for God's people.

As, should, we. We need to be fighting, for each other. We need to be contending, for each other's faith.

[29 : 06] Not just assuming, we're all safe, and so we don't need, to do that. That's, by the way, another danger, of presuming, that anyone, who has faith, can never fall away. That's not what, the Bible teaches. And if we believed it, we'd never need, to hold each other, to account.

We'd never work, to grow each other, in the faith, and fervently pray, for each other. If we didn't believe, that our brothers, and sisters, were in real danger, of falling away. But we must, because the enemy, is prowling around, looking, for who to devour.

And we need, to help each other, to fight him, and to resist him. We need to burn, inwardly, like Paul, when we see our brother, or sister, falling into sin, and not just say, well that's none of my business.

We need to, confess to each other, hold each other, accountable, fight with each other, in prayer, be concerned for each other's, spiritual walks, ask the probing questions, that are uncomfortable.

And yes, it's not easy, but it's part of suffering, for the gospel, Paul says here.

It's why, Paul, puts it here, as part of his suffering, because he has bound himself, to God's people, and he's in the trenches, with them, as they fight sin, and Satan.

[30 : 17] Are you, are you, in the trenches, with your brothers, and sisters, ready to fight, with them, and for them, and to watch their back? Are you willing, to bind yourself, to them, and pray for them, and sacrifice your time, to be with them, and open the word, to them, when they're going through, trial, or battling with sin?

And are you willing, to pray, for, and support, our brothers, and sisters overseas, as they face, real direct persecution, that we still avoid? Are you engaged, in real and active, prayer, for those people overseas?

Do you feel, their pain, with them? You know, it was so encouraging, last week, to have Bob, and Pat Benjamin, with us.

They're visiting, from Iraq, where they serve, where they preach the gospel, secretly, often, baptize people, in secret, baptisms in their bathroom, because they're not allowed, to openly, share the gospel, and they came, they came out to, tell us about their work, and afterwards, Bob came to me, and he thanked me, no, I thanked him, first of all, I said, thank you so much, for coming through, and sharing this with us, it was so encouraging, for us, and he said, no, no, no, thank you guys, I needed that, that's what he said to me, he said, him and Pat, they live, on the support, and the prayers, of brothers and sisters, in other countries, it's what they need, to keep going, he told me, when they're there, in Iraq, to know that, brothers and sisters, are fighting for them, in prayer, all around the world, that's, they say that is, their most important, the most important knowledge, that keeps them going, the greatest encouragement, more than the money, and anything else, that they get, from churches, it's our prayers, and I don't just mean, when Alan, or John, or Michiel, pray up here for them,

I mean you at home, praying for them, that's why we have, prayer items, in our notices, so that you can go home, and pray for those things, and if you have children, what a great way, to bring them up, in the truth, of the Lord, and to bring them up, knowing of the fight, that's going on, in the world around us, than to sit down, at home, when you get home, from church, and to say, we're going to spend, 30 minutes, reading the Bible, and talking about, the sermon, or what you learned, at Sunday school, and praying for our missionaries, great habit, to get into, and of course, in people like Bob, and Pat, you do have, a great example, of the kind of Christianity, that Paul is telling, the Corinthians about here, genuine Christianity, which is willing to suffer, and sacrifice, for Christ, a Christianity, which values, sufferings, more than our achievements, because they show, the genuineness, of our devotion to Christ, and a Christianity, which causes us, to bind ourselves, to one another, and fight for each other, as we contend, for the faith, together, as soldiers, of Christ, let's pray,

[33 : 28] Lord we thank you, for your word, we thank you, for the encouragement, that we get, from examples, like Paul, and we thank you, Lord, that you did, give him, a devotion, to you, which caused him, to go through, all that he went through, so that we today, 2000 years later, can know the truth, and we pray, Lord, that you would work, that same devotion, in us, and help us, to be

willing, to take on persecution, and to sacrifice, for the gospel, so that you would be glorified, and that our faith, would be shown, to be genuine, thank you Lord, for what you give us, a faith, that is more valuable, than any gold, or silver, amen, Emmanuel, I love you, that, it's my name, amen, a faith, and that's it,

I love you, like, you've given me, and I hate him, so that we, and that's it,