

## W131\_Paul\_2.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording being made in the chapel of the opened book. Under the covering title of Casting Shadows before, it means to say that we're looking at outstanding scriptural characters and endeavoring to learn some God appointed lessons from them. The subject before us this evening is the apostle Paul and some of the men that gathered around him as recorded in the New Testament and the lessons we may learn from that. It is our custom in this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. And if those who are listening to this recording care to join us, will you switch off for a little while and read together with us Philippians Chapter four. Those of you who were with us last Thursday will remember that we were looking at the apostle Paul and his life and character as given in the New Testament under three headings. Not so much his spiritual equipment, but those things which were under the control of God, quite unconscious, quite unknown by the Apostle at the time. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a Pharisee and the Pharisees. What a man to be able to speak to those groaning under the bondage of the law. He could say, I've been there, but it was also a citizen of no mean city, Tarsus, which was a university city and of great repute with regard to its philosophy. But in the square of that city stood a statue and it said, eat and drink or something to that effect.

[00:01:52] The end is nothing. You can see how that affected his mind. And then you also we discover presently that it was a Roman citizen and he hadn't purchased that he was born free. Now, all these things were outside of his own volition. But God, who chose him before his birth knew the sort of man he chose. And it's encouraging to us to know that not only spiritual equipment, but all the other phases, the temperament that we possessed, the leanings we have to this altar that we're all known by him and he can just give us. In answer to that prayer which the apostle himself put up, Lord, what would they have me to do? He just gave him the work and he realized that all sufficiency of grace went with the disposing of that office. Well, now. He tells us in one Timothy that his his conversion. And the way in which he was called was a pattern. He says in two Timothy the same word translated form hold a pattern of sound words. He says in Philippians four, the chapter we read just now, those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me. That's pretty wide, isn't it? Not those things that you've heard at a distance, but all this focusing upon Him do. And the God of peace shall be with you. What an extraordinary claim for anyone to make.

[00:03:26] And yet there it is, embedded in scripture. Well, what sort of man is this? What is an extraordinary mixture. It's so good to realize when sometimes you sit down and think about yourself, you say, Well, I'm apostolic in one thing. The Apostle Paul seemed to be all sorts of types rolled into one because of his temperament and his calling and his office. He said, For instance, I am made all things to all men. But if you thought he was Mr. Pliable, that you could twist around your fingers and bribe or bully or bamboozle into any disloyalty to the truth, you realize how insistence he was insistently was that while he was all things to all men, that by all means he might save some. He said, Am I now pleasing God? And of course, you know the answer to the expected. What if he said. When I'm feeding babes in the truth, I give them milk and not meat. But then he repudiated in the same the epistles to the same churches that he huckster ized or watered down the word of God as the word might mean, which comes in the close of two Corinthians Chapter two. We are not, as those who huckster eyes or watered down, but we use great plainness of speech so we get these characteristics. We find an extraordinary sensitiveness to handling money. The apostle Paul was very, very scrupulous with regard to the way in which money entrusted to him should be watched over by others and so on.

[00:05:08] And yet, at the same time, he could quote. The scripture says, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. He was a champion of liberty, if ever there was one. And yet he was glad to find himself the bondslave of Jesus Christ. He said, Shall I come to you with an apostolic rod? And yet writing? He says, I beseech you instead of commanding you. He said, I am less than the least of all saints. I am not worthy to be called an apostle. And then suddenly he says, I magnify mine office and I am not one whit behind the Chiefest apostles. What are you going to do with a man like that? Well, you better learn something because, you see, you can't judge him by an ordinary foot rule. There's something vaster, something deeper, something greater. And I feel that in this very chapter we've been looking at Philippians chapter four. We can make a good start off on this investigation. Notice in verse 11 his extreme independence. Not that I speak in respect of want, because you see, in verse ten, he had been reminding them how they had helped him financially because he refers to it again in verse 15. Now, you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving. For even in Thessalonica, you sent once and again unto my necessity.

[00:06:41] And in Chapter ten, the moment he speaks about this, he comes in verse 11. Not that I speak in respect of want. Or after he spoken to them in 15 and 16, he says, not because I desire a gift always so sensitive, lest having jog your memory that there is a long time come since you had any fellowship with us. You think I'm just asking for something? You see, isn't it fine to know the man had that character? It sometimes helps a few of us who feel a little bit so disposed many a time. Now, this is in verse 11. Not that I speak in respect of want. Our version says for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. First of all, the word learned this is a verbal form of the word disciple Mathetes. You can learn, you know, by reading a book, but you can learn by going through it. Disciplined is the word. A disciple has been disciplined. He says, I've learned as a disciple. And what have you learned? Our version says What You have a state. I am therewith to be content. Whereas instead of the word therewith being in the original, it's not there at all. This man didn't say, Oh, I'm content with whatever I have. He says. I'm content in spite of whatever I have. That's a distant, different aspect, isn't it? Leave the word without and then come and look at this word content.

[00:08:15] Turn back to two Chronicles two Corinthians Chapter nine. Verse eight. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things. That word gives us the word content. All sufficiency and the makeup of the word in the original means independence. Non-independence of Christ, but independence of circumstances. If he wasn't miserable because he was in prison and he wasn't too elated because he was free, he didn't his joy or his sorrow didn't depend upon circumstances. Let him tell you in verse 12, I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound, abased and abound. He knew both everywhere and in all things. I've instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. So he knew the extremes. But he says I'm independent of them all, for one thing, remains unmoved. And that is Christ. And while that is true, I can still say I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. Mostly Most of you, at some time or another have seen or made your own list of the mysteries that are mentioned by the Apostle Paul. And there are a great number, but I don't think I've ever seen in the list. I've never put it there myself. I don't think I've ever seen anybody else put this verse in verse 12.

[00:09:56] But you may say to me, I don't see any mystery in verse 12. Well, the word instructed in this particular verse means to be initiated into a mystery. It contains the very root word of the word mystery. He is a mystery. A secret. He said, I have been initiated. Into this mystery that I can be full and not be toppled over by wealth. I can be hungry and not be down in the abyss because I'm lacking something. He said, No, I just go on independent of it all. I'm not saying that. Be friends or you ready to be a hard thing for us. If we could get this more clearly in our minds, wouldn't it? I mean, we're up today and we're down tomorrow simply because of the rise of the political or financial or domestic thermometer. But he says that may go up or down, but Christ remains. And that's good enough for me. Well, here's the man. And yet with all this independent spirit that we've suggested, how that land longed for and recognized the need for fellowship. Now, that's the other side of the story, because if we stop one side, we make an austere, unapproachable sort of individual that you either like to speak to him and yet he can be as gentle as he said his own words. I was with you like a nursing mother. Our version says a nurse, but he goes on to say nursing her own children.

[00:11:35] Well, that's a nursing mother. What a figure for this austere, unmovable, inflexible type of person. Now look at Philippians once more. He counsels them in verse five. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Supposing that stood alone, would you may prove that the Apostle Paul was one of those persons that were always cringing a little bit and not liking to say all he believed in case he upset you. But I want you to remember this. This word moderation. In another form. The verbal form occurs in that challenging passage in Galatians chapter two, when he said To whom? We yielded subjection. Not for an hour. What about that man? Is he saying trouble with regard to the truth? Never. He says if it's a matter of yielding your own rights. If it's a matter of remembering the tender conscience of somebody else, let your yielding ness be manifest. But if it's a matter of standing for the good deposit of truth that God has entrusted to you, call them all somebodies and somewhat if needs be, but don't yield an inch. Here's a man for you. And so that man has been given us by Christ to give us some little idea of the type of person that he picked out and gave, not only as an apostle, but as an example. Or did you notice the alternation? As we've already suggested, he's not speaking about a gift or he doesn't want you to think he's after a gift.

[00:13:17] Is it? I desire fruit. I desire that you may have something down as a matter of interest on your account. And then he suddenly breaks again. He ceases to be the independent, austere one who won't even listen to receiving a gift from you. He says, Oh, but I have all and abound. I am full. I am full. Who is this talking? Who's this man who's saying I am full? Is he coming for a legacy? What's happened to him? He's in prison. Friends. In prison. It is full. But how was that? Well, it's not the prison that gives him his fulness. He said, Didn't I tell you I was independent of whether I was outside or inside? Christ is there with me. I am full. Having received of epaphroditus the things which were sent from you. Now he's making all this wonderful to do out of a full overflowing heart for a little parcel that was sent because it was carried by hand. He'd had to get through enemies, so it couldn't have been a very big one. Couldn't have been a very big one. A little parcel that someone carried that was made up for him by these Philippians. And when he opened it, however simple it might have been, I believe that man's heart nearly broke for a moment in joy because he gives it this title writing to the Ephesians. He spoke about the love of Christ, which was a sacrifice.

[00:14:45] Acceptable, well pleasing to God. That's Christ's sacrifice. And here he describes the parcel and odor of a sweet smell. A sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. Have you ever sent a parcel to somebody? I wonder whether you could ever dare to believe that somebody out of an honest heart could say those words. But that's possible to see. It's possible with a man like this, anyhow. And then, of course, he can't help himself. Becky comes in verse 19, but. Hey, he says, You said to me, and I'm rejoicing in it that. My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. So he gives them a bit back, after all. Now, I love this man, don't you? Not because of any one particular apostolic quality that is so human and yet so devoted. Whenever you turn with me to a chapter which, if read at first, may seem terribly uninteresting. Romans The 16th chapter. Now, you'd expect, of course, in Romans to have a very wonderful doctrinal flourish as a wind up. And yet what do we find? Romans 16. I commend unto you, Phebe. Our system. Which is a servant of the church, which is a kingrea. That you receive her in the Lord has become His saints and that she assist her in what you have a business she had need of you, for she hath been a sufferer of many and of myself also.

[00:16:33] The a man like Paul registering that Phoebe. This woman had not only helped others, but helped him. He says, Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ

Jesus, who have for my life laid down their necks unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. He is a man overflowing with gratitude for all sorts of service rendered in the name of Christ to Him, and he doesn't hesitate to put it down in black and white and wherever this is read as our Savior said of the act of the woman when she anointed him. Wherever this gospel is read, this shall be recorded of her. And wherever Romans is read, these acts are written and recognized. So let's go on. He says, Salute my well beloved Epaenetus. Who is the first fruits of Achaia. He gives them all a little title, doesn't he? Christ greet Mary. What did she do? Oh, she bestowed much labor on us. Salute Andronicus. And Junia. My kinsmen. My kinsmen. Oh, that's good. Because you almost felt this man stood absolutely alone with regard to kith and kin as believers. But here they are. And my fellow prisoners who are of note among the apostles who also were in Christ before me. Go on, Paul. Put it all down unsparingly, isn't he? Isn't this a generous man? Greet and bless my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbain, our helper in Christ and Stachys, my beloved.

[00:18:15] Salute. Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus household. Salute. Dorothea. My kinsman is another one. Greet them that be of the house of Narcissus which are in the Lord. Salute. Christina and Tryphosa who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis. Notice that he doesn't say Salute. My beloved Persis. This was a woman in all the exuberance of his overflowing gratitude. He still is wise, he says, thee beloved persis, which labored much in the Lord when he come to write his last epistle. And he was about to lay down his life, for Christ's sake. He lets down the veil and you'll find him to the same. The precise name Priscilla. He calls her by a little pet name, Prisca Prisca. I think you did all the time, but he wouldn't say anything about it until the end came. So here's this man. You could be as severe as it is humanly possible to conceive as an apostle. And he could so enter in to the family that he could be allowed to say a little pet name for one of these people who laid down their lives for his sake. And so it goes on. So Duke Roufus chosen in the Lord and his mother and mine as a lovely touch, isn't it? Rufus. His own mother, as far as we know, would have to disown him. However much he broke her heart as many a Jewish mother has done since.

[00:19:46] And here are some other mother had apparently taken a little bit of the place. And you apparently go sometimes to the House of Rufus and find that which everyone must miss. He says, his mother and mine. And so the whole list goes on. Isn't that a

delightful little list after all? Frames. And there's more of it. More of it. Others are put in. He even tells you the name who wrote the epistle to the Romans. Now, some people say, Well, that's idiotic for Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans. But he says no. Verse 22, I tertius who wrote this epistle Salute you in the Lord and Tertius means number three. You've got another servant of the Lord called Secundus number two, and you're going to get another one called Quartus Number four. These were slaves. And number three, a trained writer had taken down, as far as we know, by dictation, the epistle to the Romans and God allowed him to put his name in as well. All these lovely little things. Wouldn't it be fine if we did that? Sometimes in all our rush and all our business to slip in, sometimes these little elements that make the wheels go round so much better. I'd have to remember that when I'm up to my neck in work and take a dose of my own medicine, but it's left it rather late in life, perhaps, you see. So. But I'm not telling you, as the Apostle said, that you do what I do.

[00:21:08] I'm hoping that both of us will be very conscious that we've got a lot to make up as we follow this man. Well, now the next thing I want to do is to think about the way in which this man so independent yet longed for fellowship. The one who could say not for an hour Yet over and over again, he uses the word fellow. Take this one in Philippians four. We just look at it, but look at it again. My yoke, fellow. Today we don't use the word fellow. There was a woman. Except it may mean the fellow of some society, but it is quite reasonable to use it in either way because it means one associated with another. And the word is feminine. My yoke fellow. Here was a woman who had so worked with the apostle Paul that he could say she was his yoke fellow. And then in chapter four, verse three, he again says, and other my fellow laborers whose names are in the book of life. Fellow laborers. And then again in Philippians. Still more in chapter. 127 There's another reference of the same type. Only let your conversation be as it became if the Gospel of Christ that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together, striving together. And then you will remember that, he says in one Corinthians, Chapter three, with regard to himself and Apollos, these words, they would do well to be pondered in connection with Christian service.

[00:22:59] Who then is Paul? One Corinthians three five. But ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man I have planted, Apollos watered, but. God gave the increase. And then he says in verse nine, for we are laborers together with

God. And that can be misread on the surface. It means that you or I are working with God as a companion, laborers together with God. But it's the other way round in the original. We are fellow laborers and both of us belong to God. Whether I'm a planter or whether I'm a water or whatever else I'm doing, I'm a fellow laborer with the other man, and both of us belong to him. You know, I. I don't show up at these things very much, but it is a joy to come into this chapel sometimes and see some folks using their spare time. And I have a little chit with them. I say, Well, you're doing a bit of work at the end of the day, at last. But secretly I'm thanking God secretly to think that men should voluntarily. Oh, that's a lovely part of it. And sometimes our refrain from even thanking them, perhaps I'm wrong because the last day is the independence coming up again. The last thing I would wish anyone to do is to serve me.

[00:24:21] Oh, what a delight to know that they're giving all that time and thought because we together are serving the Lord Christ. And whether it's downstairs or upstairs in the back or in the front in the pulpit or somewhere, you don't know where. What's it matter as long as it's rendered unto him and you're doing that which is well pleasing and making that work, Go. I've never seen so much ingratitude, I think, for anybody's service for about, what, 40 years? So whether I repeat myself, I'm not sure. But there was just I couldn't help it. Here it is right in front of me. He was the prisoner of Jesus Christ pre-eminently. Yet notice how he says fellow prisoners, I think we might get those together, because that is a point that he recognized that others had shared. We know in the acts of the apostles that there was not only Paul with his back bleeding in the innermost prison at Philippi. There were Silas, too. And in Colossians chapter 410, he says, Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner saluted you Aristarchus my fellow prisoner. So he's not taking it to himself, except that he must, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for US Gentiles. And then in Romans 16, seven, I think we've already seen he refers to a fellow prisoner. I believe we mentioned it, but it's good enough to mention again, Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners.

[00:25:52] So there was this sharing together. And then think of the 1 or 2 men that came into contact with the Apostle Paul. Take, for instance, Barnabas. We will have to miss some out. But take, for instance, Barnabas. In chapter 927. We read these words, but Barnabas took him and besought him and brought him rather to the apostles and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to Him and how He had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. You say,

What's all this mean? Well, if you go into the story. Saul. The persecutor now comes back to Jerusalem and is supposed to be a believer. But you can quite understand the little gathering at Jerusalem would be very cheery about accepting that man on his own terms. And then Barnabas steps in and bridges the gap and Barnabas does it again. Later on, he goes to Antioch. He sees the work that's being done there, and instead of taking it to himself. And doing the best he can. It says. He goes right up to Tarsus to seek Saul and bring him back again. So in a measure we owe to the intervention of Barnabas, the fact that Saul didn't go away so disheartened has never come back again. He went and sought him. There's many other things, of course, that may be said, but here it is in Chapter 11.

[00:27:27] Verse 22. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church, which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch, who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, for he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and the faith and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him back at Antioch, became a centre for the preaching of the Gospel. Very wonderfully well as many other things that we may say about Barnabas and some not quite to his credit, but there that man stepped in. Now, Barnabas was a Levite, and while the Ministry of Paul was limited to the Land of Promise and its vicinity, like Antioch, he would have great weight. But if they were going into Europe that because a man was a Jewish priest or Levite wouldn't have any weight with those people there. They didn't bother about that. So you see what comes. A split comes between Paul and Barnabas. That may have been wrong, but it was overruled. And Silas comes into the story. Chapter 15. Cyrus had come. With Judas, two trusted men with the decrees of the been agreed at X15. And when it was all over.

[00:29:02] They were ready. They were Judas finished. And they departed. But. Silas carried verse 34. Judas went back, but verse 34 says, notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there. Still doesn't tell you why. It doesn't tell you whether he had a vision from heaven. It doesn't tell you whether you heard any words dropped. It was just a matter of intuition. Or perhaps he couldn't tell you why did it himself. But God knew. God knew. For immediately after that, the spirit came so bad that Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Verse 39. And Paul chose Silas. Silas. He was ready. He stepped in. That's a

foreign character, friends. Just in the background a little bit. Not poking yourself forward and making yourself a nuisance, but nevertheless conscious that God may have a work for you to do. And all you're going to do is to say, Here are my Lord, I'm ready. So our South Siders went out to the Apostle Paul and didn't know what he did. Well, he just looked at him. And so said, You're the man. Come with me. And you saw what happened. The very next chapter. They got the call to go into Europe. And there they were put in prison. And then it was revealed that both Silas and Paul were Roman citizens. He is a man who would have more influence in Europe than Levi Barnabas. So God knew their Silas. His name is Silvanus. And you find him in the Epistle to the Corinthians.

[00:30:39] So we have another of these that gathered around the Apostle Paul. In a letter from United States. One friend who has become very keenly interested commented like this. He said, We are impressed with the quality of the men that you have gathered around you. But I haven't gathered them. They've been gathering around me. I don't say like bees around a honey pot. But the Lord has been putting it into their hearts to do so. And it is a wonderful thought because you can gauge a man by his companions to a large extent. You can gauge that Apostle Paul by Barnabas and by Silas and by Timothy and by Luke, the beloved physician and all these others, Aquila and Priscilla, all they're all telling you that's the sort of man he is. Otherwise I'd have nothing to do with it. I must be an extraordinary person. Friends, when I think of the character of those who voluntarily have taken up work using their spare time and a good bit more. I hope they don't use their governors time, but you never know what some of these people would do with elastic consciences. But there it is. That's what's happening. Isn't it wonderful that the Lord would never dream of going and asking a person to do certain things? I'd be always trying to put myself in this position to say, Well, why should I impose all that upon him? He comes forward and says, Oh, not only do that, but I do a bit more.

[00:32:07] So it's better to leave it to the Lord, isn't it? Connecticut. That's sad, guy. And that friend put his finger on the spot. You can judge a person. Or should I put it the other way? You can judge the character of the work he's doing that leaves the person out of it by the men and the women that God has raised up to voluntarily give their bit. And so I'm glad that this is all written in the Scriptures. It gives heart and helps us to go on. And I mentioned Luke. Luke's gospel is purer Greek than the writing of any other in the New

Testament. You see, Paul came from Tarsus. And. Cilicia was noted. It's given us a word in our language, a solecism. I don't know how to pronounce that exactly, but it's a sort of provincial way of saying a thing which immediately told everybody where you came from. The Duke's very refined Greek. And you Cowdery may have been a slave. It was a very educated slave. He was a physician. And Tradition says that he was a painter. Oh, that's good. See? Painter. And here's this man standing with the apostle, and he's so modest that you never read his name in the Acts of the Apostles, although he wrote it. But the only time, you know, is there is he suddenly changes from they did this and they did that and says, we did it.

[00:33:36] It's called the resections Typekit. At 16, for instance, Acts 16, verse six. Now, when they had gone throughout Frygia and the region of Galatia and forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to miss her, they assayed to go into Bithynia. But the spirit suffered them not and they passing by Missia came down to Troas. Now we've got to Troy, the ancient Troy, and a vision appeared to Paul. In the night there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over and help us. After he had seen the vision, immediately we. And now for a little period, we Luke's with them. You can find his mentioning that he's there that he goes again doesn't tell you goes There are four times in the acts of the apostles where he suddenly changes. We did this. That's all you know. And yet he could correspond and write to a nobleman. Most excellent. Theophilus was a no turn of a note title of a nobleman. And that man went right through with the apostle until at last he had this tribute. It was a wonderful one. Only Luke is with me. What a testimony. What a testimony. Right the way through that career, writing a gospel that the apostle was glad to read many a time when they opposed him. Think how the apostle could turn to Luke's gospel, The parable of the prodigal son and the other brother when he got the Jew against him.

[00:35:17] Or the parable of the publican and the Pharisee. Why? It's the very basis of the epistle to the Romans. Justified rather than the other. And so we've got all these provisions that God made, the companions and fellow workers that he raised up to stand with this apostle. I missed out one. I didn't know whether I would have time or we'll go back to the first one that ever had contact with the Apostle Paul, and that is given in chapter nine where the Apostle had been stricken down on the road to Damascus, was led, deprived of sight. And there he waited without food, without drink for three days. Then it says in verse ten, there was a certain disciple at Damascus

named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street, which is called straight and inquire in the House of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus. For behold, he prays. And he has seen a vision, a man in a vision, a man in L.A. coming in and putting his head on him that he might receive his sight. Now and is very rightly said, Oh, dear, dear, what a work to give me to do. He says, Lord, I've heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

[00:36:46] And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. And you're telling me to go to him? She was like to be diffident of it, wasn't it? At first he argued it out a bit. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me. To bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. This Apostle Paul could speak reverently, but quite familiarly with King Agrippa. If you notice, although he was a prisoner in the King, Agrippa was sitting on a throne. But I will show him how great things he must suffer. For my name's sake. While having been told all that and went his way and Aeneas went his way. Entered into the house, putting his hands on him. And there's one little bit. I just wonder whether in the mercy of God he was permitted to do, He added a word that God never told him to say. He said. Brother Saul. I just wondered whether that was his one little contribution. He thought to himself, I've been talking about this man. I've been frightened of coming to this man. I've been said to this man. He's a chosen vessel. And he looked at him perhaps with a new eye. And is very, very seldom that any one of us are justified in altering or modifying or adding to a message that God gives us.

[00:38:17] But if ever there was joy in the presence of the angels of God over one, who did? I think it was when Ananias broke his reserve and not only said Saul of Tarsus, but said Brother Saul. I wonder how much we owe to the man who said, Brother Saul, for I'm sure it finished Saul of Tarsus, if he needed any finishing to hear those words for one that he would a few days before have handed over to the persecution or the death for believing in Christ. So we have all these wonderful illustrations, and I hope that by we haven't been emphasizing the person and work of Christ as we should, perhaps in some meetings. But we've done what he's told us to have a look at this pattern. And Paul describes himself as a man of light infirmity to ourselves. And here is this man. He can stand against the somebodies and the somewhat and at the long last, he's permitted in an epistle which is inspired by God to say, I have finished my course. I

have kept the faith henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness. Collected encouragement to ask, isn't it? A man who could be a blasphemer, a persecutor, self-righteous, and all the things that went to make up Saul of Tarsus. And then by that miracle of grace to be turned into Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ.

[00:39:56] But as he would rather subscribe himself. Paul the bond servant of Jesus Christ. For one stroke of mercy, he turned the persecutor into a preacher and into a pattern. And so may we take courage that the same grace as he said that was given to him could be given and would be given to us. Will you accept this then, therefore, as another contribution to the study of the Scriptures focusing our attention, this time upon outstanding characters? We've looked at Adam, the Old Testament and 1 or 2 other worthies with him there. And now we've come to the New Testament to consider someone whose ministry means so much to us. And I trust that you will not go away from this meeting or get up from listening to this recording and feel that time has been wasted. While we've been looking for a moment at a very earthen vessel, but rejoicing in the grace that stooped to pick him up and use him and the grace that fueled him to the full so overflowing that we ourselves here tonight have much to be thankful for. That Saul of Tarsus became Paul the Apostle and so faithfully stood to all the grace, both the testimony and the graciousness of his character and sort, as he tells us, to adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior in all things, not hesitating in mock humility to say those things which you have heard and seen in me do, and the God of peace shall be with you. Amen.