

W296_Thoroughly_Furnished_8.mp3

[00:00:01] This is the recording binding the chapter of the Open book and is number eight of the series thoroughly furnished. We read as our lesson the first 18 verses of Romans Chapter one. The first 18 verses of Romans Chapter one. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Concerning his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, by whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name, among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God called to be saints. Grace be to you and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His son, that without ceasing, I make mention of you always in my prayers. Making request. If by any means now at length, I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you that are important to you.

[00:01:41] Some spiritual gift to the end You may be established. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith. Both of you and me. Now, I would not have you ignorant brethren, that often times I purpose to come unto you, but was let hitherto that I might have some fruit among you also. So even as among other Gentiles, I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe it, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. We should have to turn to that reading again presently. But just let me introduce the subject that is before us in this recording. We are particularly in mind, as you know. Any of you who may be led of God to stand up before your fellows and speak for him. And you realize, of course, that you are messengers. You are not the originators of the message.

[00:03:17] You carry it. Therefore, it's required that you should give it faithfully without alteration. You are not responsible for the words you are responsible for delivering. But then of course, we have to come nearer to it than that. We've got the Word of God in this complete Bible. We may say that's the Word of God. And I heard some people stand up at a meeting, and what it amounts to is they give you a page out of a concordance. Well, that's the word of God. But that may not be giving a message. There may be no point in it. You see, truth is not merely a statement. It's a relation of statements. Oh, you say, What's all this mean? Well, supposing I said the chapel. I made a statement, haven't I? But nobody is going to get up and walk out because they don't know what I'm going to say about the chapel. But the moment I say something about it, the chapel is a nice building. It's a shocking place. It's hopeless. The moment I relate something, then I've made a statement and now you can argue about it. So you see, it's not enough merely to quote scripture. You must quote scripture with a purpose. Otherwise you can get things so mixed that you can contradict one another. So the point that I want to make this afternoon is. Supposedly like it. If the scripture is like the joint that you have been delivered if delivered by the butcher.

[00:04:45] Oh, well, you've got to do something with it. So far as our ordinary organized society is concerned. Now it has to be cooked and it has to be served well, don't you see? It's possible that a very good joint can sometimes be spoiled in the cooking and the serving? Yes, you say. I know it can. Right. So that we may have the inspired Word of God as our basis. And by the time we give it up. It's unappetizing or it might be spoiled. So I'm attempting now in this present little opportunity just to say. You must, at least in the back of your mind, when you go before a congregation, you must at least have some point that you want to make. Because if you haven't got one there, it will be a miracle. If I know what you're driving at, if you don't know yourself. And will you come to realize that the word faith itself originates in the Greek language from a word that means persuaded? I am persuaded, is the word that gives us the next wave, which it comes down to scale of things. I believe. You are persuaded that what he said is true or valuable. And so you put out your hand and you receive and you believe. So we have to present the truth. Well, now, there are many ways in which it may be done, and this is where the individual comes in.

[00:06:15] What might be a right method for me might be hopeless for you. And nobody can sort this out except themselves. But if you keep well in mind that you've got men

and women in front of you who may be dying for the need of truth, then you will be on your, as it were, qui vive all the time and that there'll be no wasting words. There'll be no introducing some anecdote merely because it's funny. It may be used if it illustrates and if it doesn't throw it out. And so that we at the finish, we could commend our witness to the Lord. I have mentioned before. I know in speaking to others. About one Negro preacher who was asked what his method was. Well, if you'd have said to him, Have you studied Homiletics? He might have said, I never heard of it. Well, never mind about homiletics. He'd got the gist of it, even though he'd never heard the word, because this is what he is supposed to have said. His method was this. He divided this subject up into three parts. He said First I tell them what I'm going to tell them. That's part number one. And then I tell them that part number two. And then I tell them what I told them. That's part number three. But anyhow, it may sound not ready, but I reckon everybody in that congregation knew what he was about to tell them.

[00:07:39] Well, that's something, isn't it? You could hope something would arise out of him. Well, now this. Subdivision into three parts. Is very, very orthodox. And it doesn't follow that he's necessarily wrong. It has been used by so many different types of minds that it's a good one to start with anyhow. And then if you find that you can improve upon it or that you can alter it to suit your own style, so much the better. So this afternoon I'm going to take as an example the apostle Paul, who took a text. He divided it into three parts and not only preached a sermon, but he wrote three solid epistles firstly, secondly, and thirdly. Well, that will show you that there's tremendous scope in using a text in that way, if only you have the background to deal with. Now, this text was taken by the apostle Paul from a very obscure minor prophet, and you need not be ashamed if you cannot turn to the Prophet Habakkuk straight away. But you must be ashamed if after you've had one turn, you forget where you find it the next time. The Prophet Malachi is the last book in our Old Testament. And if you go backwards through Malachi, through Zechariah and Haggai, Zephaniah, you'll come to Habakkuk. It's among the minor prophets. Now I'm going to read a few verses from the Prophet Habakkuk in which we shall discover Paul's text.

[00:09:17] The first three verses of Chapter one. Over the first four verses I'm sorry. The burden which Habakkuk, the Prophet, did see. Oh, Lord, How long shall I cry? And thou wilt not hear. Even cry out unto thee of violence And thou wilt not save? Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are

before me. And there are thatrillionaise up strife and contention. Isn't that very much what you read in the newspapers about the state of affairs all over the world? Therefore, the law is left and judgment doth never go forth, For the wicked doth compass about the righteous. Therefore, wrong judgment proceeded. So he is a prophet. And he's baffled. He's prayed. He gets no answer. Now, the second chapter. I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me. So at last the silence is broken. The Lord answered me and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables that He may run that reading it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time. First lesson However much you worry God in prayer, you cannot hasten him. He's never behind time, but he cannot be hurried. So if you get no answer in the sense of yes, don't think you haven't been heard, you say, I must do whatever, God forbid.

[00:10:53] I'll stand up on my watch. I'll set me upon the tower and I'll wait. The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak. And not lie. And though it carry weight for it because it will surely come. It will not carry. Behold, his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith. That's the text that the apostle lifted out. The Just Shall Live by Faith. Chapter three of Habakkuk before we leave the book. Verse 17. Although the fig tree shall not blossom. Neither shall fruit be in the vines. The labor of the olive shall fail and the field should yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls. That's pretty well famine, isn't it? With a vengeance. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. So the just. Is living by faith. It was a real thing, wasn't it? It wasn't really a doctor in the lead read somewhere. He actually was able to put it into practice in the midst of a famine. He could rejoice in the Lord. God is my strength and he will make my feet like hinds feet and he will make me to walk upon my high places.

[00:12:22] And he commended this to the singer of stringed instruments that it may form a part of temple worship. Now, the first thing to do, I've tried to do it myself, is when you take a text out of the Bible, don't lift it straight out and go straight on with it. But first of all, be sure that your hearers are acquainted with the book or the passage or the chapter or the argument that has provided it. You see, if I'd have gone straight away to the Just shall live by faith, then you'd never read the Prophet Habakkuk. You wouldn't see with what a what a searching word it is. The man baffled. God after he gave and then he triumphantly enduring, in spite of all apparent difficulty. Living by sight. Was not

just a mere doctrinal statement. It was a very intense, practical reality. What else? The apostle in the epistle to the Romans is laying down the great basis of his gospel for all time, whether it belongs to that period or whether it comes over into our own. The gospel upon which we rest is the gospel that He gives here summed up in the words justification by faith. We are not merely pardoned with the pardon of a king. You know, in the gospel. According to Matthew, there is a parable of a man who owed a tremendous sum. And then because he couldn't pay it, he was cast into prison.

[00:13:59] And then he pleaded that he was going to be cast into prison. But then he pleaded with the king and he was forgiven all that debt. And then because he didn't treat his fellow servant with the same spirit of grace, that pardon was rescinded, the forgiveness was canceled. And that man who had been forgiven was cast back into prison. Now, you see, you could never take that as a text and say that's what God will do with you. Because you see, that was the pardon of a king. And the pardon of a king today has no basis of righteousness about it. For the matter of policy about which we know nothing. The Queen may extend the royal palm, the somebody be let out of prison. But I haven't been treated like that. I have been in the Law Court of God. I know that I myself had been condemned in my person, but there was someone there who had taken my place and in his righteousness, made mine by gift of grace. I stand accepted and that can never be rescinded. So I've not been pardoned with the pardon of a king. I have been acquitted in the law. Court of God. After the apostle. That is the basis of what you do remember is beneath your feet all the time. Whatever other doctrine you build, or however far it may go until you reach the position of being seated together with Christ at the right hand of God in Ephesians, it still is true, everlastingly true.

[00:15:29] The just shall live by faith. So in this Romans of first chapter. Now he has taken it firstly, secondly, and thirdly, my beloved brethren. But if you know the epistle to the Romans, you know, the key word is righteousness. And of course, you know also that the word just. Is the same as the word righteous. I was going to say just the same as the word righteous. Uh, the reason why we have the two words is because our English language can sometimes borrow from the Latin, sometimes borrow from the Saxon, sometimes from borrow from Chinese and Hindustani or whatnot. And instead of saying righteous and righteous ify, we say righteous and justify. That's all. So the just is the word righteous. The just by faith shall live. So we'll look at verse 16 and 17 of this chapter again just to see how he introduces it. You remember he told the Romans that

he'd been planning many times to visit them. But he'd been hindered. And he wanted them to understand that he hadn't kept back from going there because he thought, Oh, this is Rome. That's the capital city of the Empire. They don't need this simple gospel. He said, You do. I am a debtor, both to the Greek. Now, that was the wise of the world and the Barbarian. That was the rest. The Greeks divided the world up into two parts themselves and the rest.

[00:17:02] They were the wise. The rest were the barbarians. Well, he said, I'm dead to the both. To the wise and to the wise. And so much as in me is ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and not merely apologetic. It's the positive. Implied isn't ashamed. I should think not. I glory in it. And why? What is it? It works. We sometimes say that there are no miracles today. That's true. If we speak of evidential miracles like cleansing the lepers and raising the dead and giving sight to the blind. But he is a miracle that goes on all the time. This word power is the word miracle used by the Gospels. So you could, if you wish to translate it for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the miracle of God, the one miracle that goes on being worked every time a sinner repents and receive salvation unto salvation to everyone that believe it. And of course, when he wrote it during the Acts of the Apostles period, the Jew was first and then came the Greek. There is a reason why it's the power of God. Unto salvation is that it provides the one thing that the sinner can never do. We can never provide a righteousness of God. It doesn't mean to say that every one of us have got to stand up before men and call ourselves the vilest names we can think of.

[00:18:34] That wouldn't be true because it is very epistle where it says there is none righteous. No, not one. It says for a a good man. One would die. Scarcely for a righteous man, would you? But for a good man you might. So you see, on another basis, he said, there are some who are righteous people and some who are good. And yet, from the point of view of God's throne and His Excellency, there is none righteous. No, not one. There is none that do it good. So it's not good enough then, for you who are a righteous person as far as you go who pay 20 shillings in the pound, who never do what they call fiddling with anything, you're honest and open. All. That's fine. Splendid, lovely friends. But that's no clean in the presence of God. There's something that you can never reach that he demands. But what he demand, what he demanded he has provided. He hasn't asked you to do the impossible. He says he will do the apparently

impossible. So there is a righteousness of God revealed. Now, our version says from faith to faith and the difficult thing to explain as it stands. But if you see that throughout Paul's writings, he says he speaks of a righteousness X faith, a righteousness originating in faith, a righteousness out of faith, not out of works.

[00:20:09] You have to supply that word again to give it its full value. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed a righteousness originating in faith and addressed to faith. It originates in faith. It doesn't originate in works and it's addressed to faith and nothing else that you could do to attain it or merit it. And then he does what is what is characteristic as it is written. Now, earlier in this chapter, he stops himself in the first two verses to put a bit in brackets. He was really saying he was separated unto the Gospel of God concerning his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And he calls it the Gospel of Christ in verse 16. But he stops himself in verse two. He says, This Gospel of God is something he promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. He said that generally. Now in verse 18, he particularizes it. Now, verse 17, he particularizes. It is one of the prophets. You may not know the prophet Habakkuk, but he says it's written in the Prophet Habakkuk. The just shall live by faith. So the first point, my beloved brethren now when you're speaking is righteousness is provided. Righteousness is required and righteousness is by faith alone without works and many other aspects that you'll find developed in the Epistle to the Romans. But we've got this text before us. It's divided into three parts, and we must now look at the second.

[00:21:47] Shall we turn the page till we come to the epistle to the Galatians? Here, the apostle is traversing much the same ground that he covers in Galatians, only much more tersely. It's as far as we can compute. It's his first epistle that he wrote, and there's a good deal of contending for the faith in its few pages. But when he comes to Chapter three of Galatians, he comes to the point where he begins to rebuke these believers because they had departed from the simple basis of faith and were beginning beginning to be persuaded to go through various ceremonials and features of the law to make their salvation more secure. So shall we approach the second division of this text? The just shall live by faith as it occurs in Galatians. All foolish Galatians Who hath bewitched you? He seems to speakers that have been fascinated by something and are not quite using their wits that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you. The word evidently set forth is a strange word and means to placard. It actually means to stick a placard on a wall. And the

apostle says, I've so preached the crucified Christ as though I placarded the very wall with it that if you shouldn't miss it, what has happened to you? This only would I learn of you received ye the spirit by the works of the law.

[00:23:28] Or by the hearing the fight, he puts it to them. Well, of course, if they know the truth, I would say, well, the law had no place in giving me the gift of the spirit. It was simply through faith. All right, he says. Are you then so foolish you've begun in the spirit that you're now going to be perfected in the flesh. Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it yet be in vain? He therefore that ministries to you the spirit of worketh miracles among you. Does he do it by the works of the law? Body here hearing your sight. Oh, you say? Well, he must be by sight. Well, right. He says, know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham and the scripture foreseeing Now he's back on this point that this was promised before in the Holy Scriptures. But he personifies the Scripture now. He makes the Scripture through the foreseeing. The the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles or the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying In thee, shall all nations be blessed? So then they, which be a faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. Now he says, just look at what it means to put yourself under the law and seek to justify yourself by its works. Look what it involved.

[00:24:51] For as many as of are of the law are works of the law are under the curse, for it is written cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Notice the way in which he develops this thought. Somebody might raise an objection. Aren't you making too sweeping a statement, Paul? You say cursed is everyone. You haven't given us a chance yet to see whether we can do it. What is it? Is. Let's see what you're supposed to be about to do then. Cursed is everyone that does what that continue is not. You see, it is a matter of obeying the law sometimes. And then 40. It's continuing. This is day by day, week by week. This is the whole life. He said, that's finish. That finishes you, doesn't it? Cursed is he? That continue is not. And then in all things. You haven't got any option to choose which part of the law you will keep. Like you were instructed when you sat for your examination, unless there were some rule that you shouldn't do this. Pick out the question. You could answer best first and get on with that. Or there's no picking out the law like that. It's all or none. And so he goes through this gamut, which are written in the book of the law,

and it ends up with not to approve them, not to say what a wonderful code of laws they are, but to do them.

[00:26:11] Do them. So no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, for it is evident the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but the men that do with them shall live in them. And then he comes to the cross of Christ. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us, for it is written. Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. You will notice that Peter never once uses the word cross. Peter always speaks of Christ dying on a tree because he was speaking to Israel and they knew that cursed is everyone that hang it on a tree. And Paul never uses the word tree anywhere else except in this first epistle where he links it with the cross. He says in chapter two. Am I at verse 20, I am crucified with Christ. He says later on in his time Epistle. God forbid that I should boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But here the cross is the Roman equivalent of the Hebrew tree. And so the Jew conceived the crucified Messiah under the curse of a broken law. And the Gentile can see that the cross was the Gentile equivalent. So there we have now the word faith emphasized. He's picked out first of all, in Romans the righteous.

[00:27:38] He now says by faith. That is, my Lord said as he written on the epistle, which stresses shall live. Yes, the Epistle to the Hebrews. And for that we turn to Chapter ten. Chapter date. You will see he is speaking about those who are believers and have suffered a great deal. Let's look at the verse 32 and read downwards. But call to remembrance the former days in which after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions and partly washed. He became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of thee in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away, therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God. Ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while. And he that shall come, will come and will not carry. Is he abacuc now the just shall live by faith. He preached the word shall live, and is not making it the gift of eternal life, which is included, but is making it living now in the midst of stress and strain of persecution and want. He says the just shall live by faith. And he goes on. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

[00:29:20] So the opposite from Living by Faith is drawing back and drawing back to what? Or our version says we are not of them that draw back unto perdition. And that is an evil sounding word, isn't it? Because if we think that it means that a Christian who is a believer in Christ and has acknowledged him as Savior can be ultimately lost, we are denying the whole text of scripture. So it's wise for us to look at this word perdition before we build a doctrine. And I turn you to a passage in the Gospels where this self-same word perdition is given its ordinary, natural, everyday meaning. And this is in Matthew the 26th chapter. Verse eight. Now, when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation saying to what purpose is this perdition? Now, you couldn't tolerate that translation, could you? And our version says to what purpose is this waste? That's the ordinary non-doctrinal use of the word. So he says to these Hebrews, You may go on. Chapter six unto Perfection, or you may draw back Chapter ten Unto Perdition. They are the two focal points of this epistle.

[00:30:49] But you see, one is going on to perfection and the other is drawing back just to waste. Just to waste. So you see, there may be a wasted life. You may not be living by faith. And the apostle says, writing to the Hebrews, I'm speaking about those things that accompany salvation. I'm assuming that salvation is yours. I've called you Holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, and I've drawn your attention to the fact that some of those who were redeemed out of Egypt fell in the wilderness. They didn't mix faith and they suffered consequently. But it doesn't mean to say they were lost, although they may suffer loss. So you see what I've tried to do in these this limited time. I know that I've taken an extraordinary example, but of course, it's good to have a very fine example in front of us and then see how far we may match it in our own private witness. What I've tried to show you is that there is a value, first of all, in taking a text from the Scriptures. Never take it out of its context before acquainting your reader with the surroundings, because that will be taking a mean advantage and it will not be ministering truth. So we lifted out from the Prophet Habakkuk the words the just shall live by his faith. But I drew your attention by reading sections in three chapters that the Prophet Habakkuk did just that.

[00:32:18] He was praying and he got no answer. He saw violence. There was no interposition. He waited and God said, the vision is for an appointed time, although it

appears to tarry to you, Habakkuk, it will not carry. Meanwhile, the just shall live by faith. So it needs a testing. When you cannot see, when there is nothing to rest upon except the bare word of God, you still believe it and you found that Habakkuk did well. Now, said the Apostle, that's my text. And the epistle to the Romans says Righteousness is demanded for your salvation. And if you're wise, you say, But God, Lord, I've no righteousness to put it on the scale, He says, I know you haven't. But I've sent my son. And the righteousness which which will be your standing before me will be the righteousness which is by faith. Which have been wrought out by the work of my beloved on your account. Don't alter it. Don't try to add to it. Don't take away from it. He is your righteous standing. Then don't allow any admixture of legal works and ceremonials to spoil the quality of faith. The just by faith. Justice, people believing that God is dead like the examples has given you of Abraham, who though he was past the age of being a parent as far as he knew. And Sarah also he staggered not at the promise of God, but was full of faith, believing what God had said.

[00:33:48] And it's written. He believed in the Lord and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. So the righteous by faith is the way in which the apostle preaches his gospel. And then it not only produces life. But it also urges living. The two must go together. If you have life in Christ, it is surely expected that you should have a life that will be, in some measure, comparable, some measure in parallel, in some way worthy of such a gospel. You may never be satisfied, but it should be at least the desire and the attempt. Well, there you have then. One way in which in preaching or in teaching, you may break up the word of God. And so exhibit it to your hero. Now, you may never. You may not find that it is always possible to take three divisions. You must be on your guard. That you don't make it merely mechanical. Sometimes the only way to do it is to take some particular word that focuses attention upon a theme and leave all the subdivisions to look after themselves. But take a series of passages of Scripture which will exhibit this particular word from one angle or another. So I'm not trying to bind you. Listen to me to any one particular method. I'm only saying do have some method that will make your message have a point that those who listen will have some idea of what you're driving at and will go away.

[00:35:24] Having felt that it's been not a waste of time to sit and listen. But if you think that by reading a chapter out of a concordance and stringing a whole lot of passages together is a message that may not accomplish much. It's the relating of one passage to

another, not merely saying the same word over and over again, but relating one to another, which is presenting truth and its consequences. Now we shall try to help you in other ways as time goes on. And we trust that when this series is complete that you will have some help. May be small, but some help in the very, very important ministry of opening up the Word of God or preaching the gospel of salvation to those either saints or sinners who come under your influence. We pray Thee pray that all those who listen to these recordings will realize that we are fallible ourselves. Very much so. We're not pretending We know all the answers. We're only giving as far as God has given us grace. A little example here and there of the way in which God has been pleased to use our ministry in days past. So we bring this recording again to a conclusion and hope to meet together next time with other phases of the teaching of the Word of God that will help those who are in a measure standing up and ministering His wonderful word to others.