

# Sunday Service ~ December 21, 2025

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

Welcome to church this morning. Four days out from Christmas, we will be singing carols together and hearing from the Bible of the work of God that comes to us through his promised, chosen king, Jesus Christ. As God's people, our excitement around Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth and God's salvation. It is a time to rouse each other. It is a time to encourage each other. It is a time to call each other to turn our eyes to Bethlehem and praise God for the birth of his son. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels O come, let us adore Him Christ the Lord

**Let's Pray.** Heavenly Father, we come to you joyful and triumphant in the victory of Christ over the grave. Born as a babe in Bethlehem, crucified upon the cross at Calvary, risen in power and glory, now seated with you in the heavenly realms. We bring you praise, Lord God. We bring praise to your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord. We praise you, God in trinity - holy, righteous, wise, merciful, strong and kind. *Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace. Hail the Son of Righteousness. Light and life to all He brings. Risen with healing in His wings. Hark! the herald angels sing. Glory to the new-born King!* Father, we thank you for your mercy to us. And that your son, born in a manger, took the penalty of our sin, and brought forgiveness. Grant to us this day, hearts that are ready to listen to your word, and praise you for your goodness. In Christ's name we pray. Amen

### Song – O Come all ye Faithful <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9P3zXXCTa0>

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| 1. Oh, come, all ye faithful,<br>Joyful and triumphant!<br>Oh, come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem.<br>Come and behold him,<br>Born the King of angels; | 2. Sing Choirs of angels<br>Sing in exultation;<br>Sing all ye citizens of heaven above<br>Glory to God<br>Glory in the highest          |
| [Chorus]<br>Oh, come, let us adore him;<br>Oh, come, let us adore him;<br>Oh, come, let us adore him,<br>Christ, the Lord.                           | 3. Yea, Lord we greet thee<br>Born that happy morning<br>Jesus to thee be all glory given<br>Son of the Father<br>Now in flesh appearing |

### Bible Reading – Romans 8:18-30 (NIV)

*"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. 28 And we know that in all things God*

*works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."*

## Announcements

**Focus for Month: Christmas.** Christmas is just days away, and now is the time to prepare our hearts as well as our homes. As we finish the busyness of the season, let's pause to remember the Saviour who came near. May we enter Christmas with gratitude, wonder, and a renewed readiness to worship Christ the Lord.

### Christmas Services

Christmas Carols	6pm	TONIGHT. Charlestown Public
Christmas Eve	6pm	Charlestown Public School
Christmas Day	8am	Swansea Presbyterian
	9:30am	Charlestown Public School

**Tearfund.** This Christmas, supporting **TEARFUND** means partnering with local churches around the world to bring **hope, dignity and lasting change** to poor and vulnerable communities. Through TEARFUND's Christ-centred work, your gifts meet **both physical needs and spiritual transformation**—providing food, clean water, shelter and the good news of Jesus. In a season of giving, your generosity reflects the love of Christ to our global family who are in desperate need of compassion and practical help. Please consider giving to the **TEARFUND Christmas Appeal 2025** and be part of God's work of restoration and hope:

<https://www.tearfund.org.au/tearfund-christmas-appeal-2025>.

**NSW School Holidays.** With all NSW schools now on holidays, our regular activities will go into recess until February 2026. That means all Home Groups, Kids and Youth activities, playgroup and most other things (not sure about the walking groups!) will be having a well-earned rest. We especially want to thank the leaders/coordinators of all these groups for all the hard work they have put in this year. It has been especially hard being away from our Church facilities but they have found other ways to teach others about Jesus nevertheless.

**Church Redevelopment.** Final inspection of the work of our building contractor should be complete tomorrow and then it is just working through a list of things that need to be fixed up. This means the emphasis now switches to us as we complete ourselves the work that we didn't have the finances to do when our redevelopment contract was signed. This mainly involves painting, gardening, cleaning, lighting, sound and electrical. There will be work days each Saturday (8am-4pm) over the next month or so. If you can help out just contact Stephen for more details.

**New City Catechism:** Each week this year we have had a question and answer from the New City Catechism. Was it helpful for you? Did you find it provoked you to think about our key beliefs? Should we do something similar in 2026? Or have you got another suggestion we could consider. Let Stephen know in the next week or two.

**Communication.** To receive our church bulletin via email, or to get the church directory/ roster App, Elvanto, please email [Samuel.wilson@cpres.org.au](mailto:Samuel.wilson@cpres.org.au)

**Church Camp | 6th- 8th March 2026** Church Camp is coming up quickly! Make sure you get your registration in by Christmas Day, to take advantage of the Early Bird Pricing Discounts.

<https://charlestownpresbyterian.square.site/>

**Merry Christmas.** We really hope that you have a wonderful Christmas as you celebrate with your family and friends the birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Take time to rest and relax after a busy year. And when you recharge your batteries we look forward to a year where God's kingdom will grow and we serve our Saviour with the energy that he will provide.

## Pastoral Prayer

**Pray for New Zealand.** Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit to awaken the Church in Aotearoa,

empowering believers to boldly share the life-transforming Gospel, leading to widespread salvation and a turning from idolatry and secularism to Christ, fulfilling God's glory. We ask for wisdom and integrity for leaders and for righteous laws, praying for mercy and healing for broken communities, the vulnerable, and immigrants, that all would experience Christ's hope and find true provision. We pray that New Zealand Christians would be deeply rooted in God's Word, living humble, courageous, and obedient lives, united in love, and that the Church would be a beacon of God's light and truth in every sphere of society.

**Pray for those affected by the violence at Bondi.** We ask the Lord of all comfort to draw near to those who are grieving, injured, or traumatised, and to uphold police, medical workers, and first responders as they serve with courage, wisdom, and care. We give thanks for the acts of bravery, compassion, and neighbour-love shown by ordinary people in the midst of fear. As we live in a broken world marked by sin and sorrow, we look in hope to the Lord Jesus Christ, the light who has come into the darkness and whom the darkness cannot overcome. We pray that God would bring justice, healing, and peace, and that many would turn to Christ for mercy, forgiveness, and true comfort, trusting that even in tragedy, our gracious God is at work to redeem and restore.

**Pray for Christmas in our land.** Lord, help us focus on the **gospel truth of Christ's incarnation**, not worldly distractions, as we thank You for fulfilling prophecies by sending your Son to redeem sinners. Pray for hearts to be renewed by the Spirit for genuine worship and for the joy of Immanuel to compel us to share His saving grace with a world in need. May our lives, empowered by Christ's righteousness, bring glory to God as we live out His love this Christmas and beyond.

**Thanks for all who have served us this year.** Let's be thankful for all those who have served us either upfront or behind the scenes as a Church this year. We are so thankful for all that God has done in our midst in 2025 and to partner with him this year has been a great encouragement to us.

## Bible Reading – Romans 8:31-39 (NIV)

*31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## Song – Carol – How still the starry night

[How Still The Starry Night // Emu Music - YouTube](#)

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|---|--|
| <p>1. How still the starry night above<br/>How still the earth below<br/>How small the greatest gift of love<br/>The world has ever known<br/>The fullness of the deity<br/>A borrowed manger fills<br/>The God of all eternity<br/>Beneath the Bethl'hem hills</p> | <p>3. How still the heart today that bows<br/>Before our Prince of Peace<br/>What joy to lay our burdens down<br/>Each one at Jesus' feet!<br/>So let us all adore Him<br/>And gladly do His will<br/>Receive the Christ who came to us<br/>How quietly, how still</p> |
| <p>2. How still He lies in Mary's arms<br/>The long-expected Christ<br/>His voice the raging sea will calm<br/>The dead He'll raise to life!</p>  | <p>A ring of thorns will crown Him<br/>Our suff'ring Servant King<br/>The Saviour of the world is born<br/>To save us from our sin</p>   |

## Sermon – Is it worth it? (Stephen T)

Friends, is the Christian life worth it? Really worth it? **Richard Wurmbrand** spent 14 years in communist prisons for preaching Christ. Tortured, beaten, starved, and locked in silence so deep he could hear his own heartbeat. And yet later he said, “I have never been so close to Christ as in the darkness of that cell.”

Is the Christian life worth it? **Nick Vujcic**, an Australian born without arms or legs, endured relentless bullying, depression, and despair. But Christ met him, gave him hope and purpose, and today he shares the gospel around the world. Ask Nick if following Jesus is worth it, and he’ll say, “Yes, it’s worth more than anything.” Is the Christian life really worth it? There are people in our Church who have served God faithfully for decades and still lost loved ones, still caught terrible diseases, still seen their kids walk away from the faith, lost jobs, marriages or money. Is it worth it? Is being a Christian really worth it? The Apostle Paul would say “Absolutely, its worth it!”

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Remember he was beaten, rejected, shipwrecked, imprisoned, slandered, betrayed and yet he writes in Romans 8 *“that all thing work for the good of those who love God.”* Paul thinks it is worth it, but why? In Romans 8 he gives four reasons why it is worth it, starting with

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### 1. Suffering (verses 18-25)

18 *“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”* Suffering is real & unfortunately it’s a part of life. And when we go through suffering, it can rock us to the core. But God promise to his children, is that this suffering is not meaningless pain. We might groan, in fact we will groan regularly here on earth, but it is preparing us for glory, not just seeing God’s glory but for the glory that will be revealed in us

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There is a glory that is coming our way that will completely outweigh any suffering you and I go through on the way to receiving this glory. If you were to get out a set of scales & put all the tough times on one scale and all the glory we will receive on the other, they would not even come remotely close to each other. For the Weight of Glory will completely outshine the darkness of suffering. What is in store for us will completely overshadow what we have going through, what we have gone through and even what we will go through in this life.

Suffering is real — but it’s not final. Pain is heavy — but glory is heavier. Yes, pain will be our experience in the here and now but one day God’s glory will be ours. But not just ours, for the whole of creation is waiting for same thing. To be relieved of its current frustration so it can receive the fulfilment of God’s eternal plans for all things.

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19 *“For the creation waits in **eager expectation** for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”*

Creation is personified as straining its neck to see what God is going to do with His children. Creation is on tippy toes trying to see as far ahead as it possibly can see concerning what God will do us Christians. Because creation has been subjected to frustration because of us humans. You see when God made creation, he declared it good, very good in fact. And yet once mankind rebelled against their creator, not only did they become imprisoned by their own sin, but they shackled the world. Mankind was meant to look after creation on God’s behalf, but instead it caused it to be subject, chained to decay, disease and death.

Yes, the Psalmist can say, the heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. But our world is now full of cyclones and tsunamis, it is scarred by pollution & profit, it is ravaged by drought and flooding and it too is looking forward to being liberated, renewed, repurposed. One day the glory of the Lord will again shine forth from every aspect of the world around us. As it is brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

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22 *"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."* Creation is groaning but as Calvin once said, it is not going through the death throes before becoming totally annihilated, instead it is having labour pains pointing it to something much better on the way. Glory is on the way. For creation & for God's children.

Over the years I have seen many pictures of women having just delivered their newborn child and when the newborn is placed in their arms and they have that first cuddle the mother is absolutely radiant. But I don't think I have ever seen the picture of that mum half an hour before, straining, struggling, screaming, desperate to get to the end of their labour.

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But when we take a snapshot of much of what we see around us right now, that's what we are taking a photo of. Which means every natural disaster, every world tragedy, every act of violence or terrorism is a picture of what we have done with our world with our sin but here Paul is painting for us another picture of what God will do one day to fix up our mess.

But not only is the earth groaning, but we Christians also groan. We are not immune from the sufferings of this world. We get caught up in all the world's strife as well. What's more we are still part of the problem. We wish we could knock sin on the head but it keeps coming back to bite us. That's another reason we groan; we still aren't what we were made to be!

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23 *"Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."*

We are also caught up in God's cosmic plans, we have the promise but not yet the fulfilment, we have the Spirit as our downpayment on what God will do in our lives, but we are still not like Jesus. We are looking forward to the redemption of our bodies, not just our souls. We have the hope, the certainty of our salvation. But we can't see it fully or participate in its entirety. So, we have to wait patiently and eagerly for what God has promised us but we currently don't have as yet. So, as we wait, as we groan and as we see the groans of creation all around us and the groans of our fellow human beings all around us, we ask, is it worth it?

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Is it worth all the pain? Is it worth going through the loss of loved ones, fighting cancer, struggling with relationships, enduring whatever our world is throwing at us? Is it worth it? Yes, it is. Because our present suffering isn't even comparable to our future glory. Our groaning world is not dying — it is waiting to be renewed. One day our groans will be replaced with God's glory. It is worth it, despite our suffering because secondly, we have the

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## 2. Spirit (verses 26-27)

For we are not the only person groaning. God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit has joined us in our suffering and He too is groaning. 26 *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in*

*accordance with the will of God.”*

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There is a real symphony of sighs going on here – creation sighs, we sigh and the Spirit is also sighing. You see God’s Holy Spirit is active in our suffering. He joins us in our suffering. For he knows how weak we are. And He doesn’t stand aloof and uncaring while we go through such grievous suffering. Instead, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Wow.

Notice he doesn’t take away our weakness. Nor does he take away our suffering. But he sits beside us. He helps us in our weakness. He carries much of the load Himself so that what might completely overwhelm us on our own, is able to be handled with God’s help. I don’t know how many times I have heard Christians say after a bout of suffering, “I don’t know how non-Christian’s cope with their tough times.” Because their experience has been that they wouldn’t have coped with their own tough times without the help of the Spirit.

One way that the Spirit does help us is that He intercedes for us through wordless groans. He takes our hearts desires, our inadequate prayers, our silences even & interprets them and presents them to our heavenly father. He intercedes for us. He makes sure that God truly understands our plight. He translates our feelings into words. He searches our hearts. And he communicates all that he finds to the one who can answer our prayers.

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But how can God’s Spirit do that? Think of a new born baby who begins to cry. The newborn can’t explain what’s going wrong, all it can do is to cry out for help. Yet the mother can work out what the cry is saying, whether it is about hunger, or fear, or pain, or tiredness. In the same way God’s Holy Spirit knows us so well that he can perfectly understand and convey your need to our heavenly father.

Friends, at times do you find prayer difficult? Can you not find the words to express what’s going on inside your heart? Have there been occasions you are too overwhelmed with guilt, with pain, with loss, with heart break that all you can do is come before God in sort of numbed silence? At that moment you are never truly alone. Jesus is at the right side of the father & the Holy Spirit is within you & both are interceding for you. That’s how important you are to the Lord. For all 3 parts of the Trinity is involved in every prayer you ever make.

But can I point out that when the Holy Spirit prays on our behalf, he doesn’t tell God what you and I think we need in this situation, he tells God what **He knows** we need in this situation. And if the Spirit is praying on our behalf he will always pray within God’s will which means not only will the father hear what the Spirit is saying on our behalf but this good, good father will give his children the good things they need in each & every situation.

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So, is it worth it? Is it really worth being a Christian? For there are times you will be spiritually drained, when prayer is hard, when you feel like you are the only one going through this pain. Here Paul is saying it is worth it, because you are never alone. The Spirit is your constant companion. Strengthening you in your weakness. Supporting you in your pain. Praying for you when you can’t pray yourself. Connecting you 24/7 with God the father. Yes, it's worth it despite your suffering, for you have the Spirit and thirdly you can’t forget your

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### 3. Salvation (verses 28-30)

28 *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* God is constantly at work in those he has saved. This is truly one of the best known and loved verses in the whole of the Bible and it has gotten me through many a difficult time but let’s see if we can work through this verse logically.

**“We know.”** It’s not that we hope, or we think or we cross our fingers, but we know. There is something about God’s dealings with his sons & daughters in the past that gives us certainty. A trust. Assurance. That **“we know that in all things”**. Not in some things or most things or even in just the good things, but in all things, including suffering, including weakness, even tears, nothing is beyond God’s power. Nothing is too hard for God to work for the good.

**“And we know that in all things God works for the good.”** God is ceaselessly, energetically, actively working for the good. God himself is good and so he knows what is good for each of his creatures and he is powerful enough to bring about the good in each person. But often you and I get confused as to what is this good that God is working toward. Sometimes I want that good to be safety and security, love, health, protection, friends and family all around me. But God’s good for me is something different – it is making us more like Jesus.

We will see that more clearly in a moment or two but he is using every circumstance, all things to mould, shape, melt, smooth, sculpt, frame and contour us into his design for our lives. He is pouring us into the mould of Christ’s perfect goodness. That’s the thing that will bring God’s glory into our lives. That is why it is worth all the pain and suffering that we experience in this world. That’s the thing that will replace the fear and the apprehension and the resentment that so often fills our lives and instead shape it with faith, hope, love and joy.

**“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** God is not doing this to every human being. He is only doing it to his sons and daughters, those who love him and have been called into his family. God only disciplines his children. God only invests himself in those who put their faith in God’s amazing grace. Friends, God only does this to those of us who are Christians.

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Now let’s take a second to think through the implications of what this means for us and our world. Tim Keller points out that in Romans 1, Paul was telling us that when humans replace the worship of the creator with created things, then God allows these good things like home, family, jobs, sex, sport, friendships to take over their lives. Which means for the unbeliever that some good things can harden hearts, and fool minds and set up people for disaster.

And yet at the same time for the believer, God can use bad circumstances to help humble, educate, develop and shape his sons and daughters into strong, compassionate believers who show others what the character of Christ actually looks like. That’s how powerful God is. Good and bad events are like putty in his hand, he can use them to judge and to reward, to condemn and to cultivate, to destroy and to bring life to the full.

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And to prove it, Paul shows us God’s unbreakable “Golden Chain.” 29 *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”*

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This “Golden Chain” is how God *foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified*. It is a breathtaking summary of salvation from **eternity past to eternity future**. It begins in **eternity past** with God’s foreknowledge and predestination. “Foreknew” does not simply mean God knew about us ahead of time; it means He set His covenant love upon His people before time began. “Predestined” means He sovereignly determined their destiny — to be conformed to the image of His Son. Before a single moment in history, God had already written the story of redemption. For you and me. Even before we were born

The chain then enters **time** through “calling” and “justification.” God’s eternal purpose breaks into human history as He calls His people effectually through the gospel and declares them righteous in Christ. Finally, the chain stretches into **eternity future** — “glorified.” Even though our glorification is still to come, Paul writes it as if it’s already done, because in God’s sovereign plan it is an absolute certain. Thus, salvation is an unbreakable chain — forged by God, beginning before creation and ending in everlasting glory.

With the idea being that if God starts his good work in you, he will finish it. If you start the race of faith, he will make sure you make it to the finish line. So, our confidence can be completely in God because he does everything. For the same number he foreknew, he predestines. And the same number he predestines, he calls. And the same number he calls are justified and then glorified. Not one is lost. That should give you and I confidence not complacency. No matter what we go through, God will never let us go.

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So, is it worth it? When your plans fall apart? When God’s plans seem too hard? When God’s timing seems too slow or confusing? Is it really worth it? Yes, it is. For nothing is wasted with God. Nothing is random to him. Nothing is outside God’s good purposes for your life. We know, we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. And lastly

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#### 4. **There is real security** in that (verses 31-39)

31 *“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”* If God is that powerful, there is no reason to be afraid of any opposition that might seem to be against us. 32 *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* If God has given us Jesus, his one and only son, surely, he will always give us everything we truly need!

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33 *“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who Justifies.”* There is no reason to feel guilty anymore, all charges against us have been dropped. 34 *“Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”* God no longer condemns us, instead he welcomes and intercedes for us.

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Even in the midst of trouble or hardship or persecution or nakedness or danger or the sword we are always safely in the grip of his grace. *“As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”* David knew & wrote in the Psalms that being God’s special choice doesn’t mean that all suffering and pain leaves the building.

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37 *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”* Not just winners. Not just conquerors but more than conquerors. The victory has already been won. By Jesus on the cross. Which means 38 *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, (that means nothing we face in our human experience) neither angels nor demons, (nothing in the spiritual realm), neither the present nor the future (nothing in time), nor any powers, (nothing that opposes God whatsoever) 39 neither height nor depth, (no highs or lows that confront you in life) nor anything else in all creation”* Nothing. Absolutely nothing *“will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Jesus has you so much in his grip, that he will never, ever let you go. Your salvation does not depend upon on your grip on God but God’s grip on you. And he is promising in Romans 8 to never let you go.

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Is it worth it? Even when Christianity is mocked in Australia? Is it worth it? Even when you are raising kids in a difficult and dangerous culture? Is it worth it? You might fail to stand up for the Lord? One day you might find yourself tempted beyond your ability to endure. You might at one time walk away from the



Lord. You might lose all your courage, all your strength, maybe even all your friends? Is it worth it?

**Absolutely it is worth it.**

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**Because Christ is worth it.** Yes, because the glory that is coming is infinitely greater than all your suffering. Yes, because the Spirit is helping you and praying for you. Yes, because God's plan is unbreakable. Yes, because nothing can separate you from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus. So yes, the Christian life is worth it. Ask Richard Wurmbrand. Ask Nick Vujicic. Ask your friends here at Church. Ask the apostle Paul. It is infinitely worth it.

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Let me end with a story. Corrie Ten Boom was at the Nazi death camp Ravensbruck where roll call came at 4:30a.m. every morning. Most mornings were cold and sometimes the women would be forced to stand without moving for hours in the bone-chilling pre-dawn darkness. Nearby, were the punishment barracks, where all day and far into the night would come the sounds of cruelty. Blows landing in regular rhythm and screams keeping pace.

But Corrie and her sister Betsie had a Bible, and at every opportunity they would gather the women together and read Romans 8: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us"* Corrie later said "I would look about us as Betsie read, watching the light leap from face to face. More than conquerors. It was not a wish. It was a fact. We knew it. We experienced it minute by minute in an ever-widening circle of help & hope. Life at Ravensbruck took place on two separate levels. One, the observable, external life, grew every day more horrible. The other, the life we lived with God, grew daily better, truth upon truth, glory upon glory."

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Friends it is worth it. Despite the groans, despite the pain, despite the suffering it is worth it. Because God will use all things for the good of those who love him. All things. And because he is with you right now in all that you go through. And he promises that nothing will ever, ever separate us from the God that we find in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Song – Joy to the World

[Joy To The World \(Christmas Lyric Video\)](#) [Emu Music.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

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| <p>1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come;<br/>Let earth receive her King;<br/>Let every heart prepare him room,<br/>And heaven and nature sing,<br/>And heaven and nature sing,<br/>And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.</p>     | <p>3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,<br/>Nor thorns infest the ground;<br/>He comes to make His blessings flow<br/>Far as the curse is found,<br/>Far as the curse is found,<br/>Far as, far as, the curse is found.</p> |
| <p>2. Joy to the world! the Saviour reigns;<br/>Let men their songs employ;<br/>While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains<br/>Repeat the sounding joy,<br/>Repeat the sounding joy,<br/>Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.</p> | <p>4. He rules the world with truth and grace,<br/>And makes the nations prove<br/>The glories of His righteousness,<br/>And wonders of His love,<br/>And wonders of His love,<br/>And wonders, wonders, of His love.</p>    |

**Benediction.** *"37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:37-39)