

What do you think of when you think of God?

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[0 : 00] This is a sermon from King's Church, West North. We'll be back if you invite us, but no offence taken if you don't.

I just pray quickly. Is that alright? Just as we open your word together in a moment, Lord God, I just pray. Would you just speak to us? Thank you that your word is alive and it's active, that it changes us, Lord Jesus.

It transforms us, Lord God. And I just pray we would all, myself included, just be open to that right now. Lord Jesus, right now as we think about who you are and what you've done, we really have changed as a result, Lord God.

Amen. I've got a really simple one for you. If you've been around church for any length of time, you've definitely heard this sort of message before. But I think it's one that bears repeating. I think it's something that's really, really important because we forget it constantly and frequently.

And I just want to start with a question. What do you think of when you think of God? And can you do me a favour? I'm not going to ask for like hands up, but can you please actually think of an answer? Don't treat that as rhetorical.

[1 : 22] Like actually think of an answer. When someone says to you, God, Jesus, some of these words we've talked about already, what comes to your mind this morning? That's a force of habit. This afternoon. Sorry.

This afternoon. You know, whoever you are in the room, I've got the pleasure of only recognising a few of you. I don't know your stories. I don't know your background. Some of you might call yourselves Christians.

You might say that you're in a relationship with Jesus and you have been for like longer than I've been alive. Or some of you might say, oh, I've only known him for a couple of weeks and I think he's amazing and I'm just starting to learn about him.

Or some of you might be sat in the room today. I don't know. Maybe you're not quite sure about who this Jesus is. You're not convinced about some of the claims that he makes. But you're interested. You're interested to know what does this mean for my life, if it's true.

I'd argue it means some really incredible things for your life, if it's true. But whatever the case, wherever you're up to, what's your answer? What do you think of when you think of God's?

Because really simply today, I just want to suggest something that God's been reminding me of this week, just as I've been praying about coming here and sharing with you guys.

[2 : 25] I think a way that we can think of him that I think is biblical and is incredibly important. It's a way that we can think of him. Actually, it equips us to live out our lives in the way that he is calling us to do so.

It equips us to live our lives in a way that is fruitful and it's satisfying. And it means that we'll go the distance. You might have read that verse that says, run your race well, that we won't give up halfway through.

We'll actually keep going and make it to the end. I'm going to give away my answer now, if that's okay. This is what I think God would want to remind us of today. That he is the God who fought for us.

And I hadn't made the Remembrance Day link, by the way, until I was sat here in the middle of worship thinking, oh, that wasn't an intentional on-the-nose link. I apologize for that one. But the God who fought for us. The God who waged war and battle on our behalf.

The God who came and sought after us. I think that's really important. And if you're not quite sure what I'm talking about this afternoon, I think this is something we see all over the Bible.

[3 : 27] I think it's something that we hear in people's stories when people share how they've come to faith. A lot of people's stories involve a bit of a back and forth. A bit of God almost chasing them down a little bit.

If you're familiar with the Old Testament, you'll know that there's a book called the Book of Exodus. And in this book, we read about a people called the Israelites. They're God's chosen people. But they've got a bit of a problem, to say the least.

They're enslaved. They're held in captivity by an evil, tyrant king, the Pharaoh of Egypt. The most powerful man in the world at that time. He hates them.

He just despises them. And he says, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to treat them absolutely awfully. I'm going to get them to do work that is life-threatening. I'm even going to ask the midwives at the time, if one of these people has a baby boy, I want you to kill it so that they will not multiply. He is super anti-God's people. They are in the worst situation that we can possibly imagine. And then the Book of Exodus contains this incredible account of how God raises up a man called Moses.

[4 : 29] I'm sure many of you have heard this before. And his brother-in-law, Aaron. And through these two men, God starts to challenge Pharaoh. And at first he sends them. And they speak up and they say, Pharaoh, what you are doing is wrong.

Let God's people go. And that doesn't work. So God steps in and he sends plagues. Like things that would bring us to our knees. Incredible natural disasters. All kinds of crazy stuff.

And it doesn't work. So God steps it up. And he parts the sea. He parts the ocean so that the Israelite people could walk through to freedom. And then when they're on their way to freedom, he closes the water.

And it drowns the people who were chasing them. The enemies. The army of Pharaoh. God fights for his people. It's a story of Exodus. It is not a passive story.

It's a really, really active one. And I think, I wonder if you agree with me on this. It's quite easy to understand people needing a saviour when they're like obviously enslaved.

[5 : 27] Like the Israelite people were. I think we get our heads around that quite easily. Let my people go. Yes. That's really powerful. I love that phrase. I understand that. And I can get my head around it. But actually, I think the Bible would argue that that is not the greatest need for salvation that mankind was ever going to face.

I think the Bible would say there was a greater freedom that needed to be won that God was intending to fight for. And we see, if you're familiar with the rest of the Old Testament, loads of stories of God fighting for his people.

And fighting for his people. And fighting for his people. But all of them point forwards. They're all signposts to something that was going to come. The ultimate victory that God wanted to win on behalf of his people.

I'm sure many of you have heard this before. If you're sat in this room this afternoon. But we as mankind, we long to choose for ourselves what we think is right. And what we think is wrong. And if we're being honest, we're bad at it. Is that fair? Is that a fair statement to say in our own strength? We're awful at choosing things that are good. Actually, we subtly and sometimes not subtly choose things that are really destructive.

[6 : 37] We make decisions that are really harmful to myself. I make decisions that are really harmful to the people around me. And the book of Romans talks about how by default, we, all of us human beings, mankind, we're enslaved to a wicked master.

We're enslaved to someone who hates us. An enemy whose desire for us is sin and death and destruction. That's the enslavement that we are under as mankind.

But just like with the Israelites in Egypt, God's heart for us is freedom. His heart for us is life. His heart for us is not, I'm going to sit back and watch them be enslaved.

His heart is, I am going to fight for their freedom. That they, us here today, would be those who get to live our lives to the full. Who get to experience the very purpose for which we were created.

Which is a close, intimate, loving relationship with our heavenly, perfect father. I'm going to go off script. It's always dangerous. Seen Toy Story? Anyone seen Toy Story in the room?

[7 : 41] Toy Story 1 and 2. The whole premise of Toy Story, the whole problem is they belong to Andy. Yeah? They are designed to be played with by Andy. They literally have Andy written on their shoe.

And we see that that comes under threat. Andy, I think, does he like go to uni or something? Or he gets bored of them? I can't remember what happens in the first one. Huh? He goes to school. And all of a sudden, the purpose for which these toys were made is not being fulfilled.

And they panic. They do all kinds of stuff. They're like crossing the road with traffic cones on their heads. Have you seen the film? You know what I mean. If not, this is just chaos. And I'm sorry. It's not a helpful example. But I think we're a little bit like that.

I think we have a blueprint on us. A purpose for which we were created. And it's relationship with God. And when we're not living in that purpose, we do crazy stuff. We panic.

We do the metaphorical equivalence of running across the road with a traffic cone on our head. Or maybe you literally do that. I mean, do your own thing. I don't know. But we go a little bit mad. We do things that are really, really unhealthy.

[8 : 41] And actually, God's desire is, no, I don't want that for them. I want them to know the reason that they were created. The purpose that I had for them before the beginning of time. And so he fought for us.

He said, I'm not going to watch as mankind is held under slavery to sin and death. And it's come out in the verses from Ephesians and the stuff we've sang already this morning. But we see these verses in Romans 5, verses 8 to 10.

It says this, But if, while we were God's enemies, while we were enslaved to a different master, while we were serving ourselves and the world and everything in between, if, while that was the case, we were reconciled to him through the death of Christ Jesus, how much more now will we be saved through his life?

That was the case for all of us. We were his enemies. We were serving a different master. And he said, no, I'm not up for that. I'm going to fight for them. I'm going to fight for them. And Jesus Christ, and I'm sorry if you've heard this a million times, but we just must reiterate that Jesus Christ was the one who was freely given as a costly sacrifice, as a costly gift, who in dying on the cross, paid the full and the total price for all of our sin, everything we had ever done, anything we were going to think about doing, anything that I will do, the price for it has been paid.

I do not need to serve that master anymore. I am not a slave to sin anymore because the price for it has been paid. But then it doesn't even end there because having paid the price, God then exerts this incredible power.

[10 : 31] He raises Christ Jesus back to glorious life. And he shows, no, I need you to understand death itself has been defeated. The enemy has lost.

The battle is won. It is done. It is finished. And your invitation now is not to follow some guy who died 2,000 years ago. Your invitation now is to follow the one who is alive, the one who says, I am the way and the truth and the life.

Come and know me. Come and know me closely. Come and know what it is to not run around with traffic. I'm sorry, I'm leaning into this example now. To know what it is not to run around with traffic cones on your head, to try and do things in your own strength.

You know what that feels like. And it's rubbish. Don't do that anymore. Instead, come and be filled by my Holy Spirit. Come and know what it is to walk out the rest of your days on this earth saying, I belong to him and he dwells in me.

And the choices that I get to make now are the plans that he has. And he says, even as though that was not enough, that one day we will then be in eternity with him. When this life is over, there will come a day where we stand before him in the fullness of his glory and his beauty.

[11 : 45] And we worship him for who he is, where we will be completely vulnerable as we were meant to be in our relationship with him, where there will be no more pain, no more sickness, no more suffering, no more sin.

And he himself will wipe away the tear from all of those who love him. It's a good promise. Would you agree this afternoon? It's a good promise. It's good news that we have today.

And actually, all of this good news, it's really active. Like it's not like sit back passive God's good news. He has played a huge part in this.

I hope you're seeing the point that I'm trying to make here. He didn't just sit back and watch. He is the God who fought for us. He paid the greatest price. Are you with me so far? Is that a comfortable thing that we can say this afternoon?

So I guess I just really simply want to ask the question, why do I think that matters? Why do I think it matters that actually when I say, what do you think of when you think of God?

[12 : 43] That, thanks, we've got there. Don't worry, it's totally fine. That the idea that he fought for us is something that comes to our mind quickly. Why does it matter? I think this is the first one. Because I've only got two.

It's not like an eight-point preacher, I promise. I've literally only got two things I want to talk about today. The first reason this really matters is it totally changes how we approach him. It totally changes the potential dynamic in my relationship with God when I remember, oh yeah, he's the one who fought for me.

He's the one who paid the ultimate price voluntarily because of his great love for me. Joe, I wonder if you can relate to this. There's so many ways that God is described in the Bible.

He's got like infinite names. There's loads of things that are said about him. And it's all true. It's all beautiful. It's all incredible in ways that we can't possibly imagine. But actually, as human beings, we're still full of insecurity.

We're still people who walk around with a lot of baggage. Actually, we're people who are not perfect. That's a reality that we're waiting for in eternity. But as we walk out our days on this earth, we carry stuff.

[13:48] And some of those insecurities, they're just part of who we are. They're part of the things that we've maybe experienced in our past. Some of us will have been through really traumatic stuff. That means we just deal with things in a different way.

And I just wonder whether you can relate to this, that sometimes when we read words that describe God in the Bible, it can make him seem a little bit far off, depending on the experience that you've had.

I mean, we've used the word father this afternoon. I won't do this, but we could go around the room and say, what is your experience of a father in your life? There'll be joy for some people. There'll be pain and suffering for others in the room.

That word father, I believe it's true. I believe it's biblical. I believe it's beautiful. But sometimes our insecurities get in the way of that. It's something that we need to deal with a little bit sometimes, I would argue.

Some of the words that we find, we've described as ruler and king and judge and holy and perfect. And they're all incredible things. They're all true about God.

[14:48] They're perfectly true about who he is. But actually, I think sometimes if we don't know him very well, the effect that these words have on us is, can I really approach him?

Like, can I really draw close to this one who, I mean, holy means different. This one who is different, who is set apart, who is perfect. Can I really approach him?

I don't feel like I know him very well in that way. And I'd say this is definitely my own experience. My story is one of getting saved in my early 20s from, like, extended drug addiction and mental health problems and all kinds of baggage that I brought into my relationship with Jesus.

And some of that he just healed instantaneously. And it was incredible. And he did amazing stuff in my life. And it kind of forced me to agree that he was real. Have you ever had an experience where God sort of forced you to go, ah, yes, you are real.

But I didn't know him yet. Does that make sense? I didn't actually know him closely or deeply or intimately. I wonder if anyone in the room would say you're at that stage where, oh, yeah, I think he's real, but I don't really know him yet.

[16:00] And actually, I started to read God's word. I started to spend time with other Christians. And everything I heard about this Jesus was incredible. It was amazing. But what happened at the same time as this is I just became aware of the brokenness in my own heart.

And I became aware of the stuff in my life that was just wrong. I became aware of the sin and the damage and the consequences of how I'd lived my life up until this point.

And actually, what ended up happening is as I learned more about this Jesus, and I could have never phrased it this way at the time, but as I learned more about him, I became a little bit reluctant to go to him with this stuff.

I thought, well, you're like this. You're perfect and you're holy and you're beautiful. So I've got to keep this stuff over here. And I've got to deal with this by myself or not deal with it, as the case might be. I just wonder if anyone can relate to that sort of insecurity in the room today.

Like I say, it was never something that I said out loud. But as I read about him, instead of approaching him, I just felt guilt and I just felt shame. Have you ever had that experience with something in your life you might not want to nod?

[17:10] That's totally fine. If you don't want to nod, if you're really full of guilt and shame, it's okay. If you don't want to nod to that this afternoon. But I think that's why it's really important that we remember he's the God who fought for us.

Like actually, that is a truth that undoes all of that insecurity that I'm bringing into my relationship with him. If I remember that he is the God who fought for me.

If I remember he is the one who knew what he was getting himself into. He was the one that, as it says in Romans, while I was still a sinner, not when I became perfect. Not when I had it all sorted out.

But while I was a sinner, Jesus Christ died for me. He knew exactly what he was getting into. In fact, it's the reason he came. It was because I needed him.

Not because I didn't. It's because I was broken. It's because of this stuff that I'd never even realized was wrong before. And he was saying, Phil, come close with it, mate. Don't run away.

[18:05] Come close. Come and know me intimately. I just think that's really, really important to remember. That actually, in being raised to life, Jesus' invitation to all of us is salvation.

Yes. It's eternity with the Father. Absolutely it is. But it's also an invitation to know what it is. To see the pit of despair that we are in. To see the reality of our own hearts and the darkness.

But at the same time, see that he is the one reaching his hand down and saying, let me pull you out of that guilt. Let me pull you out of that shame. I've dealt with the consequences of your sin.

This does not get to be a barrier between me and you anymore. Because I fought for you. You don't get a say in this. You're not allowed to let your guilt and shame be a barrier between you and me.

I'm not having it. I am alive. I am risen. I am glorious. This isn't going to happen, mate. Give it to me. Give it to me. I think it's important to remember. He is the one who fought for us.

[19:07] The one who Romans 8 tells us never condemns us. Ever. He sees our mess and our sin. And he never allows it to stand in the way of us and him.

He went to the cross so that the price for it would be paid once and for all. And his heart now is, are you broken in the room today? Are you full of messy stuff in your heart and in your mind and in your life?

Good. Good. That's why I came. Bring it to me. I'm not surprised by it. It's the reason I'm here.

Come. Come, my children. Come, my sons. Come, my daughters.

Approach me freely. It's the freedom that I've won for you. We heard about it before that neither height nor depth nor anything in all of this world outside of it is able to separate us from the love of God.

Because his love is greater. And he says, I've won. So come and approach me and know me close. I'd love to just encourage us this afternoon. If you can relate to like 5% of what I've said there.

[20:08] If you can relate to anything. If you just know you may never want to share it with someone. But deep down, there's some stuff and it stops you from coming to him. When you do that thing.

When you think that way. Whatever it is. It stops you from coming to God. You think, no, I can't approach him because of that. I just want to speak some truth. He disagrees. He loudly disagrees. In the most dramatic love letter of all time. When he hung on a cross. Arms wide open. Come to me. Come to me. Don't put barriers up that I've destroyed.

Come to me. If you're in the room and you're feeling that way today. I'd love to pray for you. In a few moments time. I'm sure Mike and others in the room. It is Mike. Please tell me. It's Mike. I said that confidently then.

I was like, is that his name? I'm sure Mike and others would love to pray for you. If you can relate to that in the room. Let's deal with it now. Let's deal with it today. We're not leaving here. With that still a barrier. He says, no. You're giving it to me today.

[21:06] I really, really believe that today. He's the one who says, come all who are tired and weary. And I will give you rest. Come all who are thirsty. And I will let you drink deep.

Are you broken? Are you sick? Are you sinful? And I came for you. Come and know my peace. That's the truth of the gospel for us this afternoon. It's the first reason I think it really matters that we remember.

He's the God who fought for me. Our insecurity gets in the way. He says, no, no, no. None of that. Don't let it happen. We've got better for you. Are you up for one more? One more reason I think this really matters. One more reason. It helps us to grab hold of the life that he's calling us to with both hands.

It helps us just to take it really seriously. We've heard it already today. It's all by his grace. And it's all by his goodness. But when we've accepted that, he says, and now I've got some stuff for you to

do.

I've got a life for you to live. And it's way better than what you would have chosen by yourself. Grab hold of it with both hands. I'm sorry to use personal examples again, but my experience of secondary school was not a positive one, shall we say.

[22 : 15] I did not get along with high school, and high school didn't really get along with me. I struggled. I was arrogant. I was a young, arrogant man to start with. I was disengaged. I really struggled with these teachers who didn't actually care about me as a person.

They were just doing their job. And it just triggered something in me. I was like, oh, no, I don't want to listen to anything that you say. And I was very arrogant. I'll make that clear. I was just a bit of a so-and-so. But when someone told me to do something, did you agree with that then?

I feel like you might have nodded, but that's okay. Don't worry. It's true. But when people told me to do stuff, I just found it. Like, no, I don't want to listen to you. Why would I listen to what you say? But there was this one maths teacher that I had, and his name was Mr. Cochran.

And it's really funny. He didn't punish me less than anyone else. If anything, he probably gave me more detentions, and he probably called out my behavior more than anyone else did. But the only thing I enjoyed about school, I'm a keys player.

I like playing piano. And they'd get me to do, like, little performances every now and again. And he'd come. He'd come along, and he'd listen. And then when I was in a detention with him, he wouldn't shout, and he wouldn't scream.

[23 : 22] He'd be like, Phil, I heard you last week. I loved what you played. You played it with this real heart and this real soul. And we'd just talk for a few minutes, and then he'd tell me how much of an idiot I was being afterwards. You know what I mean? But it was really interesting.

I could tell. And as a teenage lad, I could not have phrased it with these words. But looking back, I realized the difference was he was fighting for me. He was saying, I'm not willing to let this young lad just throw away his future.

I'm not going to settle for that. I'm going to go the extra mile. I'm going to go to his concerts, talk about it with him, just as any other might be a chance that he'll listen to me if I do that. And it worked.

It was the only subject that I did vaguely all right in as a result was maths. Because actually, if he asked me to do something, I just found it easier to obey. Because I knew he cared, and I knew that he loved me.

I wonder if you've got anyone in your life where you can think about that. If they're the one who asked you to do it, couldn't someone else have said it? And I'd say no. But it's that person. That was Mr. Cochran for me, the maths teacher.

[24 : 20] And do you know, I think when we read God's words, when we hear about the ways that Jesus wants us to live, sometimes actually, it's really straightforward. Like sometimes our heart just sings, and we love it.

And we see, oh, that's beautiful. I'd love to do that, Jesus. I've never read it in that way before.

That's changed my life. I'm going to do this, and I'm going to live for you in this way. Yes! Praise God, I'm an amazing Christian. You know, we have those moments.

I'm like, wow, this is really, I'm grappling with this. And I understand it. But I think we just need to be honest that also, we are fundamentally disobedient human beings. It is in our nature to be disobedient humans.

That's who we are. It's why we needed saving. We long to do things in our own way and in our own strength. And as a result, we just need to admit and be really honest, there are situations, in fact, there's even periods of time where we just find it hard to do what the Bible tells us to do.

There are situations and periods of time where we know what God said. It's not that we're not sure what he thinks on this situation, but we just find it really hard to line up with that.

[25 : 28] Because if we're really honest, I want to do it my way. I want to do it differently. I don't want to do it the way that you're calling me to do. And I believe that actually we must be those who intentionally remind ourselves, hang on a minute, who is it who's asking me to do this?

Who is it who's telling me to do this thing? Never mind the fact that he is the author of the universe, the name above every other name, the one who is glorious in a way that no one else would be glorified, that if we did not praise, the rocks will cry out.

That it's all true, but sometimes that's not enough for our fickle hearts. And I think it's helpful to remember, he's the one who fought for me. He's the one who loves me, who cares for me, who is on my side, whose entire agenda is that I would flourish.

His entire agenda, it might not look the way that I want it to, let's be very clear about that. But his agenda is that I would know life to the full. Who is it who's asking me to do this?

It's the one who went to such great lengths to save me in the first place, to save me from my own sin and my own darkness. And as a result, it's a silly comparison, but he's worth listening to so much more than any teacher in school, than any kind family member that you might have had who was always really good to you, than that neighbour who was really helpful that time that you moved in or whatever it might be.

[26 : 53] He is ultimately worth listening to, A, because of who he is, but B, because of what he's done. We heard about it from Mike already. He hasn't held back his heart.

He's not played his cards close to the chest. He doesn't make us guess, what is your agenda for me? He's laid it out in advance. I adore you. I love you. You are my children.

I have given everything for you so that you would be safe to know when I ask you to do something, it's goods. It might be hard. It almost definitely won't be easy, but it is goods because I am the one who is asking you to do it.

He's the one who says, actually, do you know what? Now that you've met me, I've got stuff that I want you to put down. I've got things that you need to stop doing, actually.

It's not a condition of your salvation. You met me first, but now that we're in this relationship, I want you to know there's things you need to leave behind. They're not good for you. For me, as someone who came out of drug addiction, it was people, actually.

[27 : 55] There was people I couldn't see because I knew if I went there, we're going to get high together. And that's just the reality. There was no criticism. It was no judgment. But God just said for a period of time, don't see those people.

Just don't spend your time in that way. For other people, it might be that he's asking you just to lay down, actually, hopes and dreams, things that you thought, oh, I always want to do this.

And God's saying, I know you think that will be good, but I promise you this will be better. I guarantee this will be better. He's the one who has habits in our lives that he just knows are unhealthy, relationships that he thinks, guys, this isn't serving you.

It's not good for you. And I want you to put it down. And he's the one who also has stuff that he wants us to pick up. I'm sure we know this, but things that he wants us to begin doing that we would never have thought of in our own strength.

Things he wants us to do that actually they might be outside of our comfort zone. It might be a case that we have finances or other areas of blessing in our life. And he says, I know you really want to use that in the way you think could be good.

[28 : 57] But I want you to bless this person who has lets. That might be something that he calls us to do. It might be the fact, maybe you're someone with free time. You've got a Saturday available and your heart's desire would just be to just sit off and do whatever it is that you enjoy doing and relax.

And he says, you can, but I've got something better I want you to do. I want you to pick these things up as a result of who I am. He's the one who actually longs that we would come to him and say, I know this sounds like the simplest thing in the world.

It is, but it's not easy. That's why I feel the need to remind us today that we come to him and say, Lord, what would you have me do? What would you have me do? And he's the one, we talked about this a little bit last night, who wants us to know that at times it's going to be really hard.

It's going to be really hard to pick up the things he wants us to pick up. It's going to be really hard to put down the things that he wants us to put down. It's going to be hard to even admit that we've heard him say it. We might pretend that we haven't.

We might pretend, oh no, I don't remember reading that verse actually that I read the other night. Or when someone says something, we might say, sorry, can you just repeat that? I wasn't quite listening. We might try and pretend that we haven't heard him, but he knows and he has mercy and he has grace for the fact that it is hard.

[30 : 11] There are things he calls us to that are difficult because it feels like it's going to cost us a lot. But I believe just this afternoon, really simply, he wants to remind us, actually, I'm the one who fought for you.

I'm the one who gave you everything that I am and everything that I have. I'm the one whose love for you has no earthly comparison that is worth making this afternoon. that anything I am asking you to put down is because it's just bad for you. You might not see how. You might not understand the way in which it's bad for you, but I promise you, I love you and I know better.

So put it down. And anything that I'm asking you to pick up, yeah, do you know what? There might be costs. There might be financial costs. There might be time costs. There might be all kinds of different costs.

But I want you to know this is going to lead to a life that is fulfilling and satisfying in me in a way that you cannot imagine if you were in charge of your own calendar and your own bank account.

[31 : 09] Give it to me. Give it to me. I've got better plans and better things for you to do today. He knows that when we act in our own strength, actually it doesn't lead to fruit.

And he longs that we would be fruitful here this afternoon. So I guess really simply, I'd just love to ask you that question again. What do you think of in the room today when you think of God? I hope maybe you'll agree with me that it might be worth considering that one of the things I would like to come to my mind, and I'm preaching to myself as much as anyone else today, is that actually he's the one who fought for me.

I think that changes how we live. I think that changes our hearts. I think that has an incredible effect. I know there's people in this room who've only met him recently. I know there's people in this room who've been walking with him faithfully for a very, very long time.

It doesn't matter. We all need this. He fought for me. And that is going to change who I am today. It's going to change how I conduct my week. It's going to change the way that my future looks. But it's going to be better than if I was in charge of it.

[32 : 09] So I come to you, Lord. And I guess I'd love to just invite you this afternoon. I think this is the smooth transition. We're probably going to worship again soon. Nice one. Thanks. I don't know if that's okay.

And I'd love to invite you, first of all, just this afternoon. Can we just come to him together first? Because this isn't something we can do in our own strength. His love breaks in.

His mercy and his grace breaks in. He shows us who he really is. And I'd love us, first of all, just to come together to worship him, to praise him, and say, Lord, would you just remind me now how great your love is for me?

How incredible the battle was that you fought for me? How much you gave for me? Would you remind me of that now? And then I wonder whether we could just spend a bit of time praying together. If anyone would like that, we won't impose that on anyone in the room today.

But if you've heard anything this afternoon that you think, I'd love a bit of prayer for that. Maybe it's just the reality of the gospel and the good news. That he's on your side.

[33 : 06] That he fought for you. And that he loves you. And you want to know that this week. I'd love to pray that for you. Maybe there's something that you know God is asking you to pick up. And it's just hard. I'd love to pray about that with you as well.

Maybe, I think, possibly more likely, the stuff that he's asking you to put down. The stuff that he's asking you to stop doing. And to leave behind. And it just feels difficult. It feels like he's asking you to abandon a part of yourself.

And he says, no, no, no. I'm the one who knows what you were made for. I'm the one who knows your identity in a way that you cannot possibly comprehend. So put it down and come to me. I'd love to pray with you. I'm sure Mike would love to pray with you as well.

I'm sure lots of people in the room would. But can I just pray for us as we go into a time of worship? Is that okay? I just thank you for who you are, Lord Jesus.

First of all, I thank you that you just are. Worthy of all honour and glory and praise. Lord, we just acknowledge that here this afternoon. That you are the King of Kings. That you are the Lord of Lords.

[34 : 04] That you are the only saviour, Lord Jesus. You are the way and the truth and the life. You're just incredible, Lord. You are love himself. And we just adore you for that, Lord God. And I pray that as we come and as we worship you together, would you just tangibly remind us or teach us for the first time, whatever the case might be in the room this afternoon, that you fought for me.

That there's no pride in that, Lord God. There's no arrogance in that because it's not my will. It's yours, Lord Jesus. You fought for me. And that defines who I am.
Lord God, that defines how I live my life today. It defines how I live my life this week. Would you just come, Lord God, and have your way in our hearts this afternoon. Amen.