

Cornelius – a Respected Man

Acts 10:1-8

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on 11-26-2006

Intro: Was Cornelius a Saved Man? See Acts 11:13-14

If I asked for a show of hands, I suspect that at least some of you would say that Cornelius was already saved at this point. How else could he be called a **devout man** in verse 2? How else could he be said to fear God and to have constant prayer to God? Some Christians have a tough time praying twice a day, and here is a guy who constantly prays. But before you jump to any conclusions, let me show you four reasons why many Reformed people have tended to see him as unsaved at this point. Look at chapter 11:14. This verse is repeating the conversation that the angel had with Cornelius in chapter 10, and the angel says this about Peter: **who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.** The first thing that I want you to notice is that hearing the message from Peter was the *immediate cause* of salvation: “...words *by which* you and all your household will be saved.” These words didn’t just describe a salvation they already had. Instead, the Word of God spoken by Peter *was the means* of that salvation.

Second, notice that it doesn’t say, “words by which you *were* saved” (past tense), but rather, “words by which you *will* be saved” (in the future tense). Some people find it so hard to believe that the person being described in these verses is unsaved, that they insist that chapter 11:14 must be loosely describing a salvation he already had. But it doesn’t say that. And if we do not understand the state of this man’s soul, we miss some very important lessons.

Third, elsewhere in the book you have people who are described with exactly the same language of being devout and fearing God and yet those passages make clear that the people were indeed in an unsaved state. For example, in Acts 2 it describes devout men from every nation gathered together at Pentecost, and Peter tells these devout people, “**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.... “Be saved from this perverse generation.”**” If he is calling them to have their sins remitted, their sins are not yet remitted. If he is calling them to be saved, then they are not yet saved. And yet Acts 2:5 describes these people in these words: “**devout men, from every nation under heaven.**” You can be devout and still not be saved. Acts 13:50 is even more clear. It speaks of

devout and prominent Jews who hated the Gospel so much that they raised up persecution against Paul. So it appears that the word “devout” means very religious, but not necessarily saved. Likewise, the Old and the New Testaments speak of the fear of God coming upon people who were not saved. They respected God. They feared Him. So the terms here do not necessarily refer to saved people.

Fourth, in chapter 11:18, when the believers heard about the conversion of Cornelius and his household it says, **“they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life.”** It was after Peter’s preaching that they are interpreting these Gentiles as having been granted repentance unto life. That implies that they did not have eternal life before that.

So in Cornelius we have a remarkable example of how closely a person might resemble a Christian without being a Christian. It highlights characteristics that people often assume make you a true believer but do not get at the heart of the Gospel. And so we are going to use this passage as a teaching tool to highlight the importance of understanding justification by faith alone.

I. Men thought of Cornelius as being a very good man

A. He was a moral man (v. 22)

For example, many people assume that you must be saved if you believe in God and are a good person. This was obviously what his two household servants and his devout soldier thought in verse 22. When Peter asked them why they came, they said: **“Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel”** I mean think about it. If you knew Cornelius, wouldn’t you be tempted to think that he was saved? Wouldn’t you be tempted to think that he was quality elder material? And yet this man did not yet know the basics of the Gospel.

B. He had a “good reputation” even among the Jews (v. 22)

This verse indicates that he had a good reputation even among the Jews. Here was a man who was hard to fault.

C. He attended synagogue regularly (vv. 2,22 – technical meaning for the phrase “God fearer”)

He certainly was a regular synagogue attendee. That’s the meaning of the technical phrase “God fearer” in verses 2 and 22. It referred to a Gentile

who was not yet converted, but who regularly attended the synagogue. They weren't called Jews because they hadn't converted yet, but they were called God-fearers.

D. He was a respected military man (v. 1)

Verse 1 indicates that he was a respected military man. **There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment.** There were various levels of centurion, and we know that the term for regiment indicates that he had been climbing the ranks for about a dozen years. The military thought of him as a good military man. I mean, this was a well-rounded guy. It's not anybody you would want to see burning in hell.

E. He had a respectable family (v. 2)

In verse 2 you find out that he is a family man. It says that he was **one who feared God with all his household...** He wasn't so caught up in the pursuit of the American dream that he lost his family. No, as the chapter progresses it becomes very apparent that he loved his family and they loved him. They were devoted to each other. He brought his family to synagogue regularly. And he took his responsibilities to raise his family very seriously. He was a swell guy, but he was not saved.

F. He passed on his morality to his employees and fellow-soldiers (v. 7)

Verse 7 indicates that he passed on his morality to his employees and fellow-soldiers. It says, **And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.** Well, when you read their conversation later in the chapter you realize that these people believed the same thing that Cornelius did. He was trying to lead those who were nearest and dearest to salvation, even though he did not yet know salvation. D. James Kennedy said that he was in that boat. He tried to lead people to salvation for years, and was not saved himself. He did not understand the Gospel himself. It was not until a friend trained him in how to share his faith that God opened his blind eyes and gave Kennedy a saving faith that transformed his life and his ministry.

G. He was a generous philanthropist (v. 2)

And then finally, we can't forget that verse 2 describes him as a generous philanthropist. It says, **who gave alms generously to the people...** What a model man.

And yet, it is not our conformity to an outward standard of *church* goodness or *society* goodness that saves us. It is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone for our salvation. And at this point he did not do that.

But many evangelicals cringe at the idea that Cornelius was not saved. And the reason is that many evangelical pastors do not understand the Gospel of the Reformation. Their idea of salvation is primarily an experience (such as, inviting Jesus into my heart; falling in love with Jesus, and other expressions that they have). For the Reformers, salvation was primarily a legal declaration of God in the heavenly courtroom outside of our experience, known as justification. And the modern misconception of what saves us leads these evangelicals to make many blunders when it comes to the ecumenical movement. I know at least 50 evangelical pastors in town who think that anyone who loves Jesus is saved, whether he is evangelical, Roman Catholic or cult. Now don't get me wrong, I know Roman Catholics who are saved because they don't believe Romanist doctrine, but instead have trusted Christ alone for their salvation and believe in the imputation of their sins to Jesus and the immediate imputation of Jesus righteousness to them. But that's not what these guys are talking about. They claim that if you can say the Apostles' Creed, then you are saved. Well, the Apostles' Creed doesn't deal with salvation issues. It's a creed for those who are already saved. Anyway, unless you really understand justification by faith, you will have a hard time figuring out why Cornelius was not yet saved.

And you will probably cringe (as these 50 pastors do), if anyone suggests that Mother Theresa was not saved. Now obviously, only God knows what goes on in the last moments of a person's life, but if Mother Theresa believed her own theology, she is not saved. And yet she was an incredibly devout person. She appeared to love God. She certainly won the respect of Romanists, Protestants and Hindus for her work. And if you don't know who she is, it is important to emphasize that she had done some remarkable work over her lifetime. She appeared very selfless, sacrificing, gentle, caring. In a word, she was what the world would call a good woman; she was a model woman. And even I had a great deal of respect for her – as an unsaved woman.

Just as an example, one time a man saw Mother Theresa picking maggots off the body of a dying man on the streets of Calcutta and tenderly caring for him. And the odor of the dying man was so overwhelming and foul that the man who was watching her said, "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars!" Her response was, "Neither would I." Yet something motivated her to feed the poor, carry smelly bodies that were dripping with dysentery into hospitals, wash the pussy and maggot filled wounds of a man, care for people who were dying of AIDS. Something motivated her to boldly confront pro-abortion people like President Clinton. One time the president reached out his hand to shake her hand, and she refused, pointing her finger at his chest and saying, "Stop killing babies." I mean, you've got to admire a spunkiness like that. She stood before the United Nations Assembly on Women in Beijing and confronted their policies of abortion and feminism. There are many similar noble events that have made her a hero to both Romanists and Protestants.

And yet, we are not saved by our good works, are we? If you are uncomfortable with the thought that Mother Theresa is burning in hell, or that Cornelius was not yet saved, it may be because you have a faulty view of what constitutes salvation. Many evangelicals do. Their idea of conversion is inviting Jesus into your heart. I didn't see any invitation by Saul when Jesus came upon him. It seemed more like busting down the gates and declaring Himself to be the Lord of Saul's life and world. But it is so important to realize that the heart of the Gospel is not experience; it is a belief. Yes, the Christian life is full of experiences. But the heart of the Gospel is not an experience. It is a belief in something that has happened outside of us. And people who make salvation an experience have given up the heart of the Reformation. The heart of Peter's message is in verse 43: **To Him [that is, Jesus – "To Him] all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.** That is scandalous to the flesh. It was scandalous to the Jews. You mean we don't have anything to contribute to our salvation? That's right. We believe. And according to the book of Acts, we can't even believe unless faith is given to us as a gift of grace. You do not understand justification unless you believe that God could not justify us if we had even one sin to answer for. You see, justification is a legal declaration of innocence, and God would not be a just judge if he declared anyone to be innocent if the person was indeed guilty. He can't just sweep our sins aside and ignore them. You do not understand justification if you do not believe that our sins must be imputed to Christ (which means that legally He was treated as having sinned all of our sins) and Christ's righteousness must be imputed to us (which means that legally

we are treated as if we did the righteous deeds that Christ did). Salvation is an exchange of lives. We lay our life down at the cross of Christ, not trusting any of our good works to make us acceptable to God. The Scriptures say that we die to our life. We repent of all our works and trust Christ's works alone. And we receive Christ's life as an exchange. Christ died because He was our substitute. We live, because God treats us as being in Christ.

I have had people tell me that Mother Theresa was too good to be lost. And it only illustrates how far from the Reformation the Protestant church has fallen. I've even heard a *Reformed* minister speak of her as a fellow Christian. One defender of Mother Theresa said that the thought that she was in hell "is obviously a monstrous and unimaginable thing to contemplate." Well, then that person must believe that the doctrine of justification is a monstrous and unimaginable thing because it leaves no credit to us.

And by the way, I don't deny that she was a devout person who feared God. I don't deny that she led a model life, or that she was an outstanding citizen. But I do say that in print, on radio and on TV she denied the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and unless she repented of her lack of faith in the finished work of Jesus prior to her death, she is in hell. You may be a person who is trusting in your good works. If so, I urge you to lay them down at the feet of Christ and to trust them no more. It is an insult to the sacrifice of Christ to make our good works have any bearing on our justification.

II. Men thought of Cornelius as being a very religious man who was close to God

A. He was very "*devout*" (v. 2)

But what is confusing to many people is that Cornelius is thought to be a person who was very close to God. Some of these descriptions seem so inconsistent with the doctrine of total depravity that commentators are divided, and some say that he must have been saved even though chapter 11 says that he wasn't. Let's look at these terms. Verse 2 says that he was a **devout man**. Other translations have pious or religious. The term means being devoted to religious observances and being faithful in observing religious obligations. It's a good term. It describes Ananias who was a believer. But chapter 13:50 indicates that very devout, loyal, upright church members can be unsaved and hostile to the Gospel. The Scripture calls them devout. And the fact that you are devout is not proof that you are saved. If you *aren't* devout it might indicate that something is wrong, but the reverse is not necessarily true.

B. He had great reverence for God (v. 2)

Verse 2 says he was **one who feared God with all his household...** Though every believer should have the fear of God, there are those who are unbelievers who have the fear of God upon *them* as well. 2 Chronicles 20:29 describes the incredible effect that Jehoshaphat's miraculous victory had upon the nations around them. It says, **And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.** This is repeated over and over again in the Bible. 2 Chronicles 17:10 says, **the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah...** 1 Samuel 11:7 says, **And the fear of the LORD fell on the people.** It is clear that unbelievers can have the fear of the Lord for a time. It can govern their behavior. It can make them shape up.

C. He "prayed to God always" (v. 2)

Another astonishing thing about Cornelius is that he **prayed to God always** (verse 2). As I mentioned earlier, many Christians struggle with that. But even that is not an infallible sign. I know Buddhists who pray for hours every day and are as far from the Gospel as you could possibly get.

D. He received a vision from God (v. 3)

He received a vision from God in verse 3. But we are not justified by visions. Justification is not an experience. It is a legal declaration of God that only happens when we by faith receive the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Think of king Abimilech. He had a vision in Genesis 20, and God said that he gave the vision to spare Abimilech from death. Yet there is no evidence that he ever became a believer. We are not justified by visions, even when God gave the visions. God gave visions to Nebuchadnezzar years before he was truly saved. I know Mormons who have had visions, and are as far from the Gospel as you can get. I know Roman Catholics who are hostile to the Gospel, and yet claim to have had visions from God. Are those visions from God? How am I to tell, unless they contradict the Scripture? But such visions are irrelevant if they do not trust in Jesus Christ to be their legal substitute. Now this vision clearly was from God. Yet 11:14 makes it clear that Cornelius was not yet saved. That's the point.

E. God answered his prayers (v. 4)

Now verse 4 is probably the strongest argument for Cornelius' salvation. It says, **And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have**

come up for a memorial before God. In other words, God was answering his prayers and was respecting his alms. Does God ever answer the prayers of an unbeliever? Are not the righteous deeds of an unjustified person as filthy rags? Well, yes, as far as earning salvation goes that is true. But he wasn't saved yet. None of these good works had saved him. It doesn't mean that we should tell unbelievers that they might as well sin because good works have no value. No. God never says that. Even though the good works of unbelievers are tainted by sin, it is better to do good works than to do bad works. In fact, Jonathan Edwards said that a sinner ought to place himself in the way of God's means of grace if he is to have any hope of salvation given to him. So even though all our righteousnesses are compared to filthy rags, they are still called righteousnesses, not sins. And God on occasion praises pagan kings for doing the right thing even though they are not saved. He on occasion answers their prayers.

Secondly, it is clear that God has already been drawing Cornelius' heart to Himself. This is a work of preparation before salvation where God makes the heart hunger and thirst for righteousness so that such people cannot stand to continue in their state and they are driven to Christ. So God was preparing Cornelius.

Thirdly, every time a person prays for salvation from sin, it is an unjustified man's prayer that God is answering. So there is at least one prayer that is heard in an unjustified state.

Fourth, it appears that God has already given Cornelius faith to be seeking him. So he is close to the kingdom like the rich young ruler that Christ talked to. He is close, but not there yet. Christ said the same thing to the scribe in Mark 12:34 - **"You are not far from the kingdom of God."** But close is not enough.

And then fifth, God does hear the prayers of unsaved people when they repent. He sometimes relents of His judgment and sometimes prolongs life. For example, it would be hard to think of a more wicked king than Ahab. In 1 Kings 21 God speaks judgment against him, his nation and his wife. In verses 27-29 it says this:

1Kings 21:27 ¶ So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.

1Kings 21:28 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1Kings 21:29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the

calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.”

We must not take the doctrine of depravity so far that we level all pagans out to the same level. There are degrees of depravity. God still respects righteous acts in the same way that He respects pagans’ use of the laws of gravity. This is why God would not allow Israel to take over some nations, but the Amorites he did because their cup of iniquity was full.

And then lastly, it appears that the prayers of Cornelius were precisely dealing with his desire for salvation. And these desires that God had placed in his heart were designed to lead him to hate sin, to love righteousness and to sense his need of Christ. So they are perfectly consistent with what God is doing.

But the reason I bring this up is that some people trust in the fact that God has answered their prayers, as an indicator that they are saved. If that is true of you, read Matthew 7:21-23 and you will see that on judgment day many people will be claiming that God had answered their prayers in their day by day work, and God will still disown them.

F. He obeyed God (vv. 5,8)

Verses 5 and 8 indicate that as soon as God commands Cornelius to do something, Cornelius obeys. That’s more than can be said of some Christians, but he was not saved yet. Are you getting the point?

G. He passed on the religion to family and work associates (vv. 2,7)

Verse 7 indicates that Cornelius was passing on his religion to his family and work associates. **And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually...** This is an unusual thing to have not only the Roman centurion follow God’s laws, but also his servants, his household that is mentioned in verse 2 and at least one of his soldiers, if not more.

I knew of a situation where the father passed on Christianity to his family, but he fell away and they persevered in the faith. It’s amazing to me how closely the counterfeit can resemble the true.

H. He was seen as being holy (v. 22)

Finally, verse 22 indicates a degree of holiness, or at least a degree of outward conformity to God’s law. He is called “just.” It is mysterious to some how all of these things could be true when chapter 11:13-14 says that

he got saved after Peter preaches to him. But that is just to be ignorant of the depth of deception that our hearts can engage in. Martin Luther was seen as being incredibly holy. His superiors were getting tired of the hidden sins that Luther would confess to them, that seemed as nothing. Martin Luther was exactly like Cornelius, yet devoid of salvation. It was not until God opened Luther's eyes to the message of Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone and to God's glory alone that he was set free from His prison house and he was given new life, new eyes, new joy, new courage and new confident boldness. In one moment of time he was regenerated, justified and finally had hope.

I was at a man's house last Saturday who testified that he attended church faithfully, and ministered and served for years but did not have God's life until he heard a message one day that caused him to see his sins in a new light and God's holiness in a new light, and he knelt down next to his bed weeping and cried out to God, calling out for salvation. For the first time in his life, he saw the Scriptures with new eyes. Previously they had been a dead letter to him. He had read them many times before – in fact, every day. But now they jumped out at him now and gave meaning and joy to him. His blind eyes were opened as God regenerated his heart. He was a seeker for years, but he was a possessor in an instant. And the Puritans spoke of this over and over again. They knew of many people who had been seekers like Cornelius, but who did not have new life until one moment of time when God took off the veil and they finally understood. The Puritans didn't give up on people like Cornelius. Just as the angel instructed Cornelius to get under the good preaching of the word in chapter 11:13-14, the Puritans told such seekers to use the means of grace.

The same was true of John Miller, the pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He grew up in a Christian home, went to seminary, passed a rigorous Orthodox Presbyterian Church ordination examination, and pastored for many years without truly being saved. In fact, many people came to salvation under his ministry before he was really saved. And he wrote the book, *Repentance and 20th Century Man*, to warn people of the dangers of counterfeit graces. You see, our flesh is capable of producing many counterfeits of the spirit in order to save its own skin. But it will always be self-centered in its orientation. The servants in verse 22 are almost saying, "Hey, Cornelius really deserves you to come to his place. He is a good man." And perhaps you have felt that God owes you something because you have slaved yourself to the bones; you have gone through all the requirements of church membership; you have tithed and prayed and

sung. And deep down you feel that God is not being fair with you, and you deserve better.

This is the way that Job felt in the middle of the book. He was already saved, but his flesh had gotten the better of him. And he insisted that he deserved better from God. But when God met Job and began asking questions, Job realized his utter unworthiness of the least of God's blessings. When Isaiah sees God in the temple, he falls on his knees and recognizes that in himself he is unworthy and vile and still needs Christ's cleansing.

III. Yet He was still lost in his sins (11:13-14). This means that:

A. Religious form is not enough

What about you? Have you been going through the forms of religion, or do you have a living and vital trust in Jesus? In this chapter Cornelius is brought to the place where he recognizes that religion is not enough. He had been through all the forms and still needed to be saved.

B. Sincerity is not enough

Sincerity is not enough. You couldn't get more sincere than Cornelius. But as the Christians used to say, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

C. Charity is not enough

Charity is not enough. You could give away everything and still lack salvation.

D. Prayerfulness is not enough

Prayerfulness was not enough to get Cornelius into heaven.

E. Humility in the face of bigotry is not enough

And his huge humility in the face of the bigotry of the Jews was not enough to get him into heaven. Now certainly those things are admirable. But they do not save.

Now don't make the mistake of throwing such things out. God honors such things. And as Jonathan Edwards would say, these things were not useless. They made him willing to sit under the means of grace that eventually brought grace to his heart. It is much better to go through the motions and not have salvation than to ignore the means of grace and ensure that you have nothing. Do you see what I mean there?

IV. He was saved by

A. Hearing God's Word – the Gospel

There are three things that resulted in the salvation of Cornelius. First, he put himself in the place where he could hear God's Word. Chapter 11:14 says about Peter, **who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.** If he had not gone to hear those words from Peter, he would not have been saved. He put himself in the place where he could hear God's Word. Why do we read the Bible to our children every day, and have them memorize the Scriptures and bring them to church? It is because the Word of God is powerful and sharp. It is God's tool for bringing salvation. And anywhere God intends salvation to come will be a place where God puts a hunger for the Word. The Word brings the Gospel, and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

B. Repentance and faith in the Gospel

The second thing that was present was repentance and faith. Those two things are flip sides of the same coin. Where you have one, you will have the other. If you see a person who doesn't show ongoing repentance, it is evident that he doesn't have ongoing faith. Calvin said that just as the Christian life is a life of faith, it is also a life of repentance. The two go hand in hand. In chapter 11:18 it was obvious to the church that God had granted repentance and faith to the family of Cornelius because they were looking to Jesus and to Jesus alone.

One of the mistakes that many people make is to put their confidence in their faith rather than in the Lord Jesus Christ. They look back to a time when they had a conversion experience and are trusting that event for their salvation rather than continuing to look to Jesus. For many years this was my problem, and it plagued me with lack of assurance. I would repent and believe numerous times, hoping to be saved. And people would tell me to write down the date of my repentance and faith and sign a card that I believed on this day. They assured me that when I doubted my salvation I could look at that card and be reminded that I was indeed a believer. But it didn't work. I would look at that card and wonder if my faith was genuine back then, or if I had repented of all of my sins. Finally, a brother showed me that my problem was that I was trying to have faith in my faith rather than faith in Jesus. He asked me, "Do you believe in Jesus right now?" And I would say, "Yes." And he said, "Then it doesn't matter what happened last month, does it? Faith that is saving, is faith that continues to cling to Jesus. Repentance that is saving is *not* repentance that trusts in repentance, but

repentance that confesses the sin of trusting in anything within ourselves, including our repentance. And I finally got it. I looked to the *Lord* and laid not only my sins, but all of my righteousnesses (what one hymn calls my deadly doings) down at the feet of Jesus. And I began to realize that my righteousness needed to be repented of and laid at his feet as well.

C. Confessing Christ as Savior (10:24-48)

Finally, Romans says, **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.** Confession with the mouth is the outward expression of faith. It is not adding to faith; it is an outward expression of faith. It is an act that shows that we are not ashamed of Jesus. And Cornelius brought his friends, associates and family to witness his confession that Christ alone was his hope of salvation. He did not hide his faith.

We started with the story of Mother Theresa to see if our hearts were focused on *her* goodness or *Christ's* goodness. Initially I was tempted to read quotes from her about her denials of the doctrine of justification, her affirmation of universalism, her love for all religions, her trust in the merits of Mary, etc. But I decided not to. What if she had good doctrine and was still trusting in her good works? There are evangelical pastors in this city who would say that there is no need for Cornelius to profess faith since he was already saved. The reason I know is because they have told me that it's enough that people are sincere and love God.

Brothers and sisters – do not neglect the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, through grace alone. Keep focusing your eyes on Jesus who alone is good enough to save you. And then, secure in His acceptance and in His salvation, you will have what it takes to love Him, serve Him, obey Him and do all the things that Cornelius was doing. And to be able to do them with joy. Make it so Lord. Amen.

The Hymn that we will sing in response to the sermon is an expression of trust in Christ. No matter what charges may be laid against us, this hymn says that Christ has absolved us. That word “absolved” means a public declaration has been made by Christ that we are not guilty. What beautiful words. Verse 3 says that my only plea on judgment day is “Jesus hath lived and died for me.” Let's make that our testimony as we sing this song.

Children of God, I charge you to fix your eyes on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.