

Psalm 1

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[0 : 0 0] this evening in Psalm 1, the very first psalm of the book of Psalms. And then what I want to do this evening as we look into this psalm is actually to give an introduction to the whole of the psalms and to the new series that we're about to start and hopefully to set things up well for all those who'll be preaching in the weeks that lie ahead. But first of all, let's read in God's Word, let's read in the book of the Psalms, and let's begin there in Psalm 1.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Amen. And we pray that God would speak to us as we look into his Word this evening.

Well, as we were reflecting on entering into 2020, I was aware of the fact that in the evenings, a series in Elijah had come to an end, and we were in Christmas and looking at many different aspects of the Christmas story of the account of God incarnate. And at the beginning of the year, in our evening services, we were going to require a new series. And I've been reflecting for a little while, and one of the things that was a great encouragement to many of the folks in our own church just a couple of years back, was when we took time just to not preach all the way through 150 psalms. But in actual fact, to pick different psalms from different parts of the book itself, and unpack them for the encouragement, for the upbuilding of the people of God. And many people were so blessed by it, and so encouraged by it. And it was interesting that as soon as I'd set the series, I sent off a little email to those who would be preaching in January in the Sunday evening services, and just to let them know what psalms they were going to be preaching on. And I got an email back almost by return. And it came from a certain Bill Mudduch. And Bill got back to me right away, but it was a great encouragement. It was an inspiring email. Because in actual fact, I'd been in touch with Bill, because next week, when you gather on Sunday evening, God willing, it'll be Bill who'll be preaching, and he'll be on Psalm 2. And we're not going to go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, but he is on Psalm 2.

There's a good reason for that. And he's excited about that. I know that. But he's in Psalm 2. But this is what he wrote in his email. He said that he's so encouraged that we're doing a series on the Psalms.

And he said that I'm longing to get into the messianic, meditational, musical, and majestic substance of the Psalms. And I thought, that's a good response to a series, right? If ever you're going to send something out to a preacher and say, I want you to preach on the Psalms, and they come back right away, and they say, I'm really looking forward to the messianic, meditational, musical, and majestic substance of the Psalms. That's exactly what he said. And I thought, well, there you are.

[4 : 3 8] There's a great introduction to the Psalms for you. And that was just in a little email of encouragement. There was also a little footnote to that from the Gurnall's great book. And he said this.

He says, practice meditation. Not as if you're having some chat. But practice meditation in the same way as Abraham did. Invite them into the tent. Meditate on the Psalms. Not just in a brief, fleeting, passing way. But invite the Psalms into the tent. You know, many, many years ago, there was an old Scots divine who told the story of another Scottish divine. And they were trying to describe, you know, a man of God that he was. And they lived up in the Western Isles. And they were accustomed to the button bend, you know, the two-room dwelling. And they said, there's only one thing you can say about. And that is that he's far bend with God. And it's that beautiful idea of just taking the Psalms and meditating upon them. And just delving into all that God has for you in them. And being, as it were, far bend with God. You know, the Psalms, I think, are a favorite of all believers.

You know, this afternoon, I was on duty at the Kilbride Hospice. Part of the thing that we do in the life of our church is we serve the chaplains in the hospice there at East Kilbride by going in as local ministers from time to time some Sundays, just to be available, to be available to those that are wanting to receive a visit. And there I was with the chaplain. And I was able to go and see two gentlemen.

And they were very different visits. But in the second of those visits, an elderly man just took me with a hand. And he said, John, he said, I know I have cancer.

I know I am dying. I know that I don't have long. And I said to him, I said, would you mind if we read the Word of God together? And I pray.

[7 : 16] And he said, I would really appreciate that. We turn to the Psalms. And we find ourselves doing that, don't we? We find ourselves drawn to the Psalms for all different types of encouragement or of confidence or of comfort or of reassurance.

Or even when we're seeking boldness. The Psalms serve in so many ways. When we ourselves want to renew faith, we can find ourselves drawn to the Psalms.

And of course, the reality is, it's the great hymn book of Holy Scripture. 150 Psalms. A great hymn book of praise.

It's calling out to God. Encountering God in all manner of different situations and different circumstances.

It's interesting. Spurgeon, of course, loved to preach the treasury of David. He loved to preach through the Psalms. And it's interesting, we talk about the Psalms of David. And of course, many of them, but not all, are written by David.

[8 : 34] In fact, 73 or 74 are written by David. Of the total 150. We often talk about the Psalms of David.

But in actual fact, Moses gets a Psalm in here. In actual fact, Moses, because of the chronology, gets the earliest Psalm. But it's number 90 in the list.

You know, so it doesn't appear as number one, even although it's the oldest. But Moses is there. And he's number 90. Solomon, of course, gets two Psalms. The sons of Korah.

We don't know much about the sons of Korah. But they get ten Psalms that were written by the sons of Korah. Heman. Ethan. Haggai.

Zechariah. They all get a Psalm. Asaph gets 12 Psalms. And some of you are mathematicians and quickly numbers. And you're counting all up and you're thinking, John, that's no 150.

[9 : 34] And that's because 47 of the Psalms are anonymous. We don't know the author. But they're there in the Psalter.

They're there in the book. In fact, Psalm 1, the very Psalm that we're looking at tonight. We don't know the author of Psalm 1. But one of the things we do know about Psalm 1 is that it's placed right at the start.

Right at the door. It's the gateway in to all of the 150 Psalms. And without doubt, the Psalm is placed there. Positioned there. Can't almost help feel, but written almost as it were.

To kind of start things off on the right foot. To show us what all of this is about. But it's an anonymous Psalm.

We don't know the author of Psalm 1. Because the remarkable thing is, it's one of those books in Scripture. That in actual fact come together over a span of about 900 to about 1,000 years.

[10 : 40] Humanly speaking. You know, it's got more authors than any other book in the Scriptures. The Psalms. Humanly speaking. We know, of course, the Spirit of God is the inspiration.

But 900 to 1,000 years pass when you look into the Psalms. Now that shouldn't surprise us. Because if we come back and we say, here is the hymn book.

The early hymn book. You know, of the people of God. Then in actual fact, this is the worship of the God of all the ages. And so therefore, it shouldn't surprise us that in actual fact we find Psalms coming up.

In all manner. Of different ways. And in different places. In fact, the sort of youngest Psalm.

In the whole of the Psalter is probably Psalm 126. It's probably the last one to be written. In terms of the book of Psalms.

[11 : 39] But of course, when we talk about the book of Psalms. In actual fact, even there. When we come to it. We're kind of doing it an injustice. Because it's five books. It's not one.

But you know, we've just got it in there. It's the book of Psalms. 150 of them. But in actual fact, it's five books. Unlike Kings and Chronicles. We don't say 1 Kings.

We don't say 1st book of Psalms. 2nd book of Psalms. In actual fact, they're just there. But when you break it down. 1 to 41. That's the 1st book of Psalms.

42 to 72. That's the 2nd book of Psalms. 73 to 89. That's the 3rd book of Psalms. 90 to 106.

That's the 4th book of Psalms. And 107 to 150. Is the 5th book of Psalms.

[12 : 39] And of course, one of the great things. About the Psalms. Are that they're rich. And varied in their type. You know, Psalm 2.

Is where we're going to be next week. You can read ahead. But not just now. We're looking at Psalm 1 this evening. But you can look ahead at Psalm 2 this week. But there you've got a Messianic Psalm.

And a Royal Psalm to boot. Which is probably one of the reasons why Bill would get excited. Give me a Messianic and Royal Psalm. He's going to be a happy man. But at the end of the day. It's one of the types of Psalms that there are.

But of course, there are penitential Psalms. Psalm 51. That great penitent prayer of David. Create me a clean heart, O Lord.

And you know, the important thing about the book of Psalms is that. You know, you and I. We can actually take the Psalms. And turn the Psalms into prayers. And we can pray the Psalms.

[13 : 42] And very often when I'm in the midst of a hospital visitation. It's one of the things that I'll do. That I'll actually spend time in praying the Psalms.

There are imprecatory Psalms. There are teaching Psalms. They're all there. And it's beautiful and majestic.

In all of its type. Just for the record. We will have a look at Psalm 119. But don't worry. We won't ask whoever's preaching that day to preach the whole of it in one night.

In actual fact, we'll just take one of the opening stanzas of Psalm 119. But that's a beautiful Psalm. And you'll know it takes the Hebrew alphabet.

And it takes each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And that's its launch pad. For teaching. And for directing. Turn with me for a moment.

[14 : 50] To Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Is the shortest Psalm. In the whole book.

You ever want to memorize. You know, a big section of scripture. And impress your friends. Memorize Psalm 117. It's the shortest Psalm.

And here it is. Praise the Lord all nations. Extol him all peoples. For great is his steadfast love towards us.

And the faithfulness of the Lord. Endures forever. Praise the Lord. That's the Psalm.

A Psalm calling all the nations. To extol the Lord God. Because of his steadfast love.

[15 : 47] And his enduring faithfulness. One little Psalm. So few words. And yet you could spend your lifetime. Actually seeking to achieve it.

Read on a little bit. Psalm 118. Verse 8. It is better to take refuge in the Lord.

Than to trust in man. Psalm 118. Verse 8. Significant. Significant. Significant. Because it's the very central verse.

In the whole of scripture. From Genesis to Revelation. In all the books. In all the chapters. In all the verses.

The central verse. In the whole of scripture. Is Psalm 118. In verse 8. It is better to take refuge in the Lord.

[16 : 48] Than to trust in man. Is that not a master stroke. Of the Holy Spirit. Because there. You know. What is the whole revelation. Of Genesis through Revelation.

But it is better to put your trust in the Lord. Than to put your trust in man. And there it is. Right at the very heart. Right at the very center. Of the whole. Of the Psalter.

Psalm 118. Verse 8. It will not surprise you. That the Psalms. Have the most authors. It will not surprise you.

That they are the most quoted. Scriptural reference. Elsewhere. In the Bible. It will not surprise you. That in actual fact. They get the most. Prophetic. Fulfillment.

And in actual fact. If you look at the Psalm. Psalm 1. That we read. Let's hear Jeremiah. Jeremiah 17.

[17 : 48] And they. Look what it says there. At verse 7. Blessed is the man. Who trusts in the Lord. Whose trust. Is in the Lord.

He is like a tree. He is like a tree. Planted by water. That sends out. Its roots. By the stream. And does not fear. When heat comes. For its leaves remain green.

And it is not anxious. In the year of drought. For it does not cease. To bear fruit. And in actual fact. You could have read. 17.

5. And 6. As well. In relation to Psalm 1. Thus says the Lord. Cursed is the man. Who trusts in man. And makes flesh his strength.

Whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a shrub. In the desert. And shall not see. Any good come. He shall dwell.

[18 : 43] In the parched places. Of the wilderness. In an uninhabited. Salt land. And again. It will come as no surprise. That the Psalms.

Increasingly. Contain. And speak to us. Of all the prophetic. Fulfillment. Of scripture. And they're quoted.

Throughout the Bible. In so many different ways. And in so many different places. And that's why we're looking at the Psalms. That's why we're beginning a series.

That will bless us. And teach us. And instruct us. In so many ways. And why is Psalm 1.

The gateway. Incidentally. Psalm 1. As a type. Of Psalm. Is what we call. A Torah. Psalm. Or a teaching. Psalm. That's what Psalm 1 is.

[19 : 44] You know. Where some are messianic. And royal. And some. Some. Are calling down. The curse of God. And others. Are singing. The praise of God. And others. Are people.

In penitence. And repentance. Psalm 1. Is a teaching. Psalm. It's a Torah. Psalm. And what it wants to do.

Is it wants to open up. The gateway. To the Psalms. By actually. Saying. Right at the very outset. There's one. Thing. In life.

That you need to get right. That's what Psalm 1. Effectively says. You know. Psalm 1 tells us. There's only two ways to live. And only one of them is right.

And so. Right at the very beginning. Of Psalm 1. He's really just saying to us. What. What I want you to do. Is get off on the right foot. Stay on.

[20 : 39] The right way. Learn what it is. To live. As God. Intends. Learn what it is. To live. According. To Holy Scripture.

That's what Psalm 1. Is all about. And I sit there. And I look at the simplicity. Of that Psalm. And I look at it. As the opener. To the whole book.

Of Psalms. And I think. Again. We're a masterpiece. Of God. The Holy Spirit. We're a masterpiece.

Of all those. Who in obedience. We're collating together. The Holy Scriptures. You're going to enter into the hymn book. But before you can sing.

The praises of the God. That is exalted in the Psalms. You need to make sure. That you yourself. Are living. The right way.

[21 : 36] You need to make sure. That you yourself. Are someone. Who is walking. In obedience. To God's word. In accordance.

With God's way. And so we look at that opening. A little stanza. Blessed. Is the man. Who walks. Not. In the counsel.

Of the wicked. Nor stands. In the way. Of sinners. Nor sits. In the seat. Of scoffers. But his delight.

Is in the law. Of the Lord. And on. His law. He meditates. Day and night. And what you find.

Time and time again. In the Psalms. Is that the Psalmist. Will give us. Contrasting ways. The technical term. For it. Is comparative. Similes.

[22 : 32] What it does. Is that. Will show us. That you know. There's a wrong way. And a right way. And he'll define for us. And describe for us. And outline for us. You know.

Something that's negative. And something that's positive. Comparative. Similes. Ways of teaching us. What matters. Ways of teaching us. What counts. Ways of showing us.

The way. In which you and I. Ought to be going. And what I love. About the way. In which the whole of the Psalms. Open up. Is they open up. With the promise of blessing.

That's a wonderful thing. They open up. With the promise of blessing. Who doesn't want to be blessed. You know. Who doesn't want to know.

The blessing of God. In their life. You know. There are many. Because in actual fact. You know. The wicked. The sinner. The scoffer. Doesn't want to know. The blessing of God.

[23 : 28] In their life. But in actual fact. Here's the Psalms. Opening up with. Blessed is the man. Who does not walk. In those ways. But it begins. With this promise of blessing.

And you and I. The minute we see that. Blessed. There's a sense in which. Our born again. By the Spirit of God. Christ filled hearts. They run to the teaching of Jesus.

In the Sermon of the Mount. In chapter 5. Blessed. Blessed. Blessed. And we know that word. That word blessed. Is a word that sometimes. Gets redefined as happiness.

But really. It's so much more than that. It's that deep seated. Satisfaction. It's that contentment. That only God can give to a person. And so what he's saying.

Right at the beginning of the Psalms. Is. Deeply satisfied. Immovably content. Are those. Who learn.

[24 : 25] It's a teaching Psalm. Who learn what it is. To walk. In all the ways of Scripture. Now that builds on where we were this morning.

In Romans chapter 12. It's the promise of God. In the Psalms saying. Deeply content. Deeply. You know. We live in a world. Where people are longing for happiness. They're longing for satisfaction.

They're longing for contentment. But they're not finding it. You know. You can go into Waterstones. Or any of the big major bookstores. And you will find shelves upon shelves.

Of books. About how you will find happiness. How you will find satisfaction. How you will find contentment. And they're written by people. Who for the most part. Because they don't know Jesus Christ.

Are unsatisfied. Discontent. And unhappy. Right. But they've written a book. About how you can be happy. Content. And satisfied. Right. Now the reality is. Here is.

[25 : 21] The book of God. And when the book of God. Gives you a promise of blessing. It will deliver. On what it promises. The difficulty is.

That you and I. Can sometimes chase after that. Which does not satisfy. Which does not bring us happiness. And it will not bring us contentment. But the book of God. Begins with a promise of blessing.

He says. Blessed is the man. And then we get this comparative. Similarly. The negative. And then the positive. Blessed is the man. Who does not. Walk in the counsel of the wicked.

Who does not stand. In the way of sinners. Who does not sit. In the seat of God. Sometimes you'll hear people. Do something quite clever. With the idea of kind of walking. And standing. And sitting. Almost as if.

There's a sense in which. We're flitting with it. And then we're getting. More engrossed in it. And then we're very settled in it. You know. Sometimes you'll hear people. Doing things with the. You know. With those words. You know.

[26 : 17] Walking. You know. Standing. Sitting. But in actual fact. The emphasis. On the scriptural text. Is on the business. Of counsel.

Way. And seek. That's where the emphasis lies. In the Holy Scripture. And really. What it's saying. Is that.

We need. As it were. To get our thinking. Right. We need to get. Our behavior. Right. We need to keep.

Good. Company. That's really. What the emphasis. Of Psalm 1. Verse 1. Is all about. When it gives us. That negative. It's just saying. That if your thinking. Is wrong.

And your behavior. Is wrong. And the company. You keep. Is wrong. Then in actual fact. That's never. Going to glorify God.

[27 : 11] And it's never. Going to ring. Blessing. But right. Thinking. Right behavior. And good company. That is the company. Of those. Who know. And love.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Who are seeking. To build up. And to encourage. And inspire. That. Will lead. To the blessing. That God.

Promises. For those. Who love him. And who walk. According. To his ways. And so really. The psalm. And the psalmist. Is saying.

The promise of God. Is that satisfaction. That contentment. That blessing. In your life. But you're not going to find it. If your thinking is wrong. You're not going to find it. If your behavior is wrong.

You're not going to find it. If your company. Is wrong. Now. You and I know. That we can never find these things. By our own strength. We know. That we need the messianic savior to come.

[28 : 05] That's why Bill's on a platform next week. We know. That we need the messianic coming of Christ. We know. That we need. Jesus. But when we are.

In the company of Jesus. Jesus. And when we are submitting ourselves. To the word. That he has spoken. And he himself. Is the word. Then.

That will be good company. It will lead. To right thinking. And it will produce. The right. Behavior. Behavior. That honors. And glorifies.

And magnifies. God. And the comparative simile. Is this. That rather. Than be there. What we do instead. Is we delight. In the law.

Of the Lord. And on that law. We meditate. Day. And night. Now. The. The word. That's used there.

[29 : 01] To contrast. Contrast. The godlessness. With the godly. Contrast. What it is. To delight. Now. The word. Law. Doesn't always help us.

Because we get very legal. We get very technical. With that word. But in actual fact. What it's really saying to us. Is. Meditate upon. Think upon. Dwell upon. Holy scripture. That's really what it's saying.

Meditate. Think upon. Dwell upon. What god. Has spoken. What god. Has revealed. In holy scripture.

And I love that little encouragement. From garner. To meditate. Upon it. Not just to have a brief chat. Not just to have a kind of fleeting acquaintance. But in actual fact.

Just to sit down. And to. To muse. Over it. To chew. Over it. To think about. What god. Has said. To think about.

[29 : 57] What he's saying to us. To think about. What that might do. In us. To think about. What that might mean. For us. To think about. How that might affect. Everything in us. To think about. The company.

We might become. For others. As a result. Of what god. Has spoken. To think about. The thoughts. That we might have. For the glory of his name. And the difference we can make. To think about. The behavior. That can flow out.

Of all of that. Because we've been with god. And his word. That's really the heart. Of what he's saying. He says. I want to give you.

A promise of blessing. That if you would spend time. With me. Was that old hymn. Take time to be holy. Speak off with my lord.

Spend much time in secret. And this meditation. Is something that we. We need to set aside. The time for it. We all live.

[30 : 51] Busy lives. Busyness is an easy excuse. To make. But busyness is not. A sufficient excuse. Busy lives.

For sacrificing. The time. That we should spend. Meditating. On the word. Listening.

For God. Hearing. What he has. To say. And it's just such a wonderful. Entry point.

For the whole of the Psalter. And I love. The pictorial way. In which the blessing. Is then. Presented. The person.

That. That does. These right things. He. Is like. A tree. Planted. By streams. Of water. That yields.

[31 : 52] Its fruit. In its season. And its leaf. Does not. Wither. In all. That he does. As he. Prospers. The wicked.

Are not so. But are like. Chaff. That the wind. Thrives. Away. You know.

Throughout my life. I've. I've. A love of trees. It's one of those things.

It's always. Captured. My attention. In fact. In different places. When I used to drive. All over Scotland. When I would. Preach.

As an. Eternal. Evangelist. I used to know. A number of trees. And specific roads. I used to say. You know. Just up around this corner.

[32 : 55] There's a beautiful tree. See. And. You know. One or two people. Would say to me. You should be know. About trees. Everywhere. And I've never. Spent lots of time.

Studying the different types. And everything else. I've just. Always appreciated. A good tree. When I see one. And there's something.

Here. About that. Imagery. That says. How do you know. A good life. When you see one. Well.

It's a lot. Like a well. Planted. Strong. Deep. Rooted. Evergreen. Fruitful. Tree.

That's what it looks like. It's a beautiful picture. You know. We know. That fruitfulness. It is always. Connected.

[33 : 48] To rootedness. It's. Well rooted. Trees. That are abundantly. Fruitful. And.

There's just something. Very precious. About the imagery. And I love. The way. It's a tree. Planted. By streams. Of water.

And there again. There's that. Refreshing. For the soul. And of course. We remember. Again. The teaching. Of Christ. The living water. That he is.

There's something. About the blessing. Of God. About being. In the presence. Of the word. There's something. About the living. Vital relationship. There's something. About that imagery.

Of the well. Planted tree. That is fruitful. Ever. Green. You know. We're an eternal people. You know. It's just this old body. That's wasting away.

[34 : 45] We're an eternal. We're an evergreen people. Right. We're an eternal people. In Christ. And there's something. Wonderful. There's something. So very beautiful. About this.

And again. You know. The psalmist. Is contrasting. The two ways. To live. You're either. For God. Or against God. There's no third way. You're either.

A believer. Or an unbeliever. You know. An agnostic is. An unbeliever. We talk about atheists.

And agnostics. And believers. We create three ways. There only are two. It's great.

When somebody is. Looking into. The claims of Christ. But we move. From being an unbeliever. To believer. And. And.

[35 : 47] And there's something. It's fascinating. The way in which. The psalmist. Writes this. You'll find. The psalmist. Are very earthy. You know. You know. When you get. Some of those. Implicatory psalms. You know. You know.

God. He's done this. And I'll tell you. What I'd like you. To do to him. Right. I mean. Some of it's direct. It's blunt. There's something.

Painfully honest. In this psalm. About the destination. Of the wicked. It's the chaff.

Those that are godless. Those that are rootless. Those that. The life is no substance. The wind drives away. The god is never dismisses.

Of people. Because you only have to look. At the whole message. Of the gospel. To realize. The full extent. Of his love for us. But he's very frank. With us.

[36 : 46] About the state. Of those. Who do not repent. And who do not put their trust. In Christ. Christ. He says. The chaff.

The wind. Drives. Away. And he goes on. To build that metaphor. For he says. Therefore the wicked. Will not stand.

In the judgment. Nor sinners. In the congregation. Of the righteous. For the lord knows. The way of the righteous. But the way. Of the wicked. Will perish.

Right at the start. Of this series. In the Psalms. God is very honest. With us. That there's only two ways. To live. You're either for him.

Or against him. God says. That those that are for me. I long to bless. And I long to bless them. Out of my. Holy word.

[37 : 53] I long for them. To be the people. That spend time. With me. That stop. And listen.

And meditate. Upon my word. And God. Is very honest with us. About the reality. Of eternity. Either with him. Or without him.

And I want just to exhort us. As we. Open up this series. And we look at different Psalms. To spend time ourselves.

In the Psalms. Reading them. Meditating upon them. Thinking about what God is saying. To you.

To us. Even do that ahead. Of those that are preaching. In order that God might. Speak again. Speak afresh. Speak anew. When in the corporate gathering.

[38 : 52] Of his people. We look at them. You know. I've. I've often struggled. In the business. Of my life. To. To be still.

To meditate. Over the years. I've been. What I call. A sporadic journaler. That means.

That from time to time. I write things down. But I don't write things down. Often enough. And I'm a bit of a sporadic. Journaler. I've got many journals.

That I've got many musings. And writings. And the reason I've got many of them. Is I've never carried one. All the way to completion. I end up opening another one. Another one. Another one. And so I've got many of them.

In different times. But one of my. One of my favorite places. For. For meditating. On the word of God. And learning.

[39 : 53] In Torah. Psalm. Or in the Torah. Of the whole of scripture. Is. At the. The garden. In the garden. Of friends of ours. Dear friends of ours.

Retired friends. I've actually. Moved house fairly recently. But I've still got a beautiful garden. Because they're keen gardeners. In Chicago. Or just outside Chicago. In the states.

And whenever I go there. There's something about being in that culture. Which means I get up early. Or very early. When I'm over there. And I love just to go out. Into their garden. And I love to just sit in their garden.

In the stillness. And the beautiful trees as well. But to read God's word. And to listen. I'm not by nature.

The kind of person. Who sees God. In every. You know. Bud. In every. Piece of grass. In every tree. I'm not by nature. That kind of person. But there.

[40 : 55] In the stillness. I'll just sit. With the scriptures. With God. And with my open journal. And surrounded.

By all that he's made. And I recall. One occasion. When I was just sitting in the garden. And it's.

It's a blaze. With flowers. And trees. And with bird life. And I'm sitting there.

Reflecting. And I'm seeing red cardinals. Yellow cardinals. I'm seeing birds. That I don't know the names of. And I'm seeing.

My favorite little bird of all. The hummingbird. And I'm watching. The hummingbird. And as I'm watching.

[41 : 52] The hummingbird. I'm writing. About the hummingbird. I'm sensing. Before God. That there's something. Here. For me to get.

And I'm looking. At the hummingbird. In a garden. With the scriptures open. Just admiring. The wonder. Of God's creation. What is it.

About the hummingbird. It's small. It's frantic. And yet. It's perfectly still.

I noticed that. It's wings. Are flapping. At a phenomenal rate. And yet.

It's still. I need to hear that. John. You need stillness. In the midst. Of all. The frantic activity.

[42 : 52] And as I'm. Writing this. Reflecting. On all. That I'm seeing. A hummingbird. Turns. Flies. Right up.

To my face. And goes. Beak. To beak. With me. And I'm looking. At this little bird. Right in front.

Of my face. Nose. To nose. And I'm staggered. And then. All of a sudden.

He just flies off. And I'm writing it. In my journal. And it. I walked back. Into the house. Breakfast.

Was getting ready. To be served. The smell of coffee. Brought me in. And I sat down. At the table. And. And. And. And. My good friend. Said to me. What have you been reading?

[43 : 47] What's God been saying? And I've recounted the story. Of the hummingbird. Now. I'm not an ornithologist. I don't know a great deal. About the ways.

Of birds. But he looked at me. And he said. A hummingbird. He said. The hummingbirds here. Wouldn't. Come anywhere near a human. I said.

Well. One just went. Beak to beak. With me. And. And. Just smiled. And said. Well. Lessons for the learning. Being still.

In the midst of all. The frantic activity. Blessed. Is the man. Whose delight. Is in the law of the Lord.

And on his law. In the stillness. He meditates. I don't know. If you're a New Year's.

[44 : 50] Resolution person. But why not. Simply resolve. Before God. Our father. That you'll spend.

More time with him. He'll not. Shortchange you. And you will be blessed. Let's pray.

Our gracious father. We thank you. That you are. Extremely honest. With us.

About the reality. Of the eternal. Destination. Of men. And women. We thank you. Lord God. That you.

Never miss. When you tell us. The truth. That those. Who stay in their sin. And die. In their sin. Will pay the penalty. And price. Of their sin. And father.

[45 : 45] We realize. That it is only. By grace. That we have been forgiven. Father.

Father. Would you help us. To enter into the promises. Of the blessings. Which are ours. In Christ. By being those. Who delight. In your word.

Who meditate. Who meditate. Upon your word. And who. Because we spend time. In your company. Learn what it is. To think. Right.

And because we think. Right. Learn what it is. To live. Right. And to honor you. In all things. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.