

The Gospel Comes In Power

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Date: 23 July 2023

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 0 0] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 119.
Psalm 119. And we're going to sing from verse 57 to verse 64.
This section of the psalm. Psalm 119, verse 57. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.
I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word. With my whole heart I did entreat, thy face and favour free, according to thy gracious word.
Be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways and did my life well try. And to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turn and die.
- [1 : 0 4] I did not stay nor linger long as those that slothful are. But hastily thy laws to keep, myself I did prepare.
Bands of ill men me robbed, yet I thy precepts did not slide. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise, even for thy judgments right.
I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy laws, I pray.
O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.
O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth.
- [2 : 0 1] O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth.
The risotto said that I would keep thy holy word.
With my whole heart I did in thee, thy face and face were free.
According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me.
I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well dry.
- [3 : 2 5] Until thy testimony's cure, my faith then burned high.
I did not stay, not linger long as those that slothful are.
But history in thy cross to keep myself I did repair.
Bands of ill men may rob yet I, my priest is dead not like.
I rise at midnight, be to praise him for thy judgment's right.
- [5 : 0 1] I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey.
O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth.
Teach me thy laws, I pray. Let us join together in prayer.
Let us pray. O Lord, O God. As we come before you this evening, our worship, we give thanks for the words that we have been singing.

That remind us of an undertaking taken by your servant, the psalmist. That indicates to us the perfect willingness with which he came to God.

[6 : 19] And embrace the knowledge of that God. As if it all depended upon his own inclination.

As if there was no other thought process involved or any action on your part.

But we also understand that your word reminds us that the willingness of men to come to God also involves the willingness of God to receive such.

And your activity in bringing about this happy reconciliation is entirely what lies behind the salvation of sinners.

For where we are. For where we left to our own devices. For where we left to our own devices. We would remain under your just condemnation. Experiencing for time your displeasure.

[7 : 38] And in eternity the perfections of it without hope of relief. And yet in your mercy you have presented to us the opportunity to embrace salvation as it is in Christ.

By presenting to us through the gospel. That privilege that can be ours by closing in with him by faith.

And we often wonder and marvel at what needed to take place in our own experience before that ever came to fruition.

Nevertheless we are left without excuse. If we fail to avail ourselves of that privilege.

Because you have said it before us in your word. And you have encouraged each and every person. To seek the Lord while you are to be found.

[8 : 47] To call upon you while you are near. And we give thanks that your close proximity to us is most especially found.

When we gather unto the sound of your word. And when we meet together as we are met this evening. In the place appointed to that end that bears your name.

We give thanks for the many occasions where we have met in this place and elsewhere. Where your word has been read. The psalms have been sung.

Praises have been upon the lips of the many and the few. Prayer has been offered. You have heard and you have answered far.

More than we have asked. And we give thanks. That even this evening afresh we have that opportunity to experience all these things.

[9 : 49] While this world is in a state of flux. Change and decay are all around in what we said it would be. But the Lord our God ever remains the same.

The same yesterday, today and forever. And we give thanks that the day will come. When the world as we know it will come to an end. And we have to be thankful that that is how it is.

For who would want this world to remain as it is. When it will melt physically with the fervent heat of your own wrath.

Out of it you will create new heavens and a new earth. Even by divine fear. While we may not be given all the information concerning the activity of God on that day.

We do know that you created the world by your own word in a space of six days and all very good. And that that was by the word of your power.

[11 : 23] You brought this world into being. The same power has remained inexhaustible to this day. And the day will come when the same power will bring to nothing what is.

And create something entirely different. A new heaven. A new earth. Wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Christ will be highlighted as king. All will observe him as such. And will worship him accordingly.

Without any hindrance. Without any hindrance. And without any embarrassment to do so. In the company of those who share the same affection for him.

Others will be debarred from this experience. And they will know what it is. That Christ indeed is king. And king of glory.

[12 : 23] We pray your blessing upon all who proclaim his name this evening. Upon the word that he declare wherever it is declared. The world over. We give thanks for the missionary activity of the church.

In all quarters. Places that we don't usually associate with the word of God being proclaimed. Places that are openly hostile to the word.

And yet there are people there who have been sent by you. To speak of Christ. To needy souls. We give thanks for every place.

Where Christ is on the lips of many and even few this evening. We pray for our own congregation here. And bless all who are part of it.

The villages surrounding us and beyond. We commit them to your care and keeping and blessing. And especially with regard to the gospel of your free grace.

[13 : 27] May the blessings of the gospel touch many. We pray for those who need this evening. Remembering those who are part of the congregation.

Enabled to be present. May their sicknesses be healed. Those who are in the realms of old age. Beyond the hope that they will be restored.

To the public fellowship of your people. May they be encouraged by the previous life spent. In that company.

Where they will spend their eternity. In company with those who are of a like mind. Something that many of that number long for.

We pray for your blessing upon those who care for them. Within their homes. In hospital. In care homes for the elderly.

[14 : 24] Even those who are of a like mind. Even those who are taking short final step. From this world. Being cared for in the hospice. Who doubted our son.

Who are of that number. Who have knowledge of Christ. To the saving of their souls. Who remember the grieving. And the sorrowful. Even amongst ourselves.

As a community. The voice of death has spoken. Once again. We pray for those affected. And we pray that you would. Accompany that.

Voice with power from on high. To open blind eyes. And to. Encourage those. Who have yet to look to Christ. To do so. While the opportunity is afforded them.

It is a reminder to each of us. To make. Ready. To make our calling. And election sure. Knowing that.

[15 : 22] Our time is short. We pray for our nation. Our king. His family. The parliaments. That serve him. And the company.

That they represent. We pray for mercy. And for grace. That those who are. Blindly indifferent. To the God of heaven.

That they would have their eyes opened. And that they would know. That there is a sovereign king. Who reigns above. To whom they will answer. Before. All men.

Remember. The nations of the earth. In all their bearing needs. Those engaged in war. These places. This word. War has been something.

- That has been going on. For a long long time. Some we know. Some we have made. Oblivious of. Because of. The editorial. Rights.
- [16 : 21] Of those who bring news. To our attention. We pray Lord. For those who are displaced. By reason of war. Those who are. Driven from their homes.
- Those who are. Deprived of family. And friendship. And who are. Cast adrift. On the stormy.
- The seas of life. May you in mercy. Minister to them. And show to them. That there is one. Who is. Who is.
- The husband of the widow. And who is the father. Of the orphan. Remember Lord. All who are. In need. The hungry.
- May you feed them. Those who are. Naked. May you clothe them. Those who are. Destitute. Of spiritual. Provision. May in your grace.
- [17 : 18] Provide. Through the gospel. Sight of Christ. And that he may. Delight the heart. Of all. Who fix the eye upon. Grant mercy.
- For our sins. Heal our hearts. And all we ask. With Jesus names. For Jesus names sake. Amen. We can sing now.
- To God's praise. From Psalm 19. Psalm 19. And we're singing. From verse 7. Down to verse 12. Down to verse 13.
- God's law is perfect. And converts the soul. In sin that lies. God's testimony.
- Is most sure. And makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord. Are right. And do rejoice the heart. The Lord's command. Is pure. And that light to the eyes.
- [18 : 19] Impart. And spotted. Is the fear of God. And that endure forever. The judgments of the Lord. Are true. And righteous. All together.
- They more than gold. Yea much fine gold. To be desired are. Than honey. Honey from the coal. That droppeth sweeter fire. Moreover they thy servant warn.
- How he his life should frame. A great reward provided is. For them that keep the same. Who can his errors understand. Or cleanse thou me within.
- From secret faults. Thy servant keep. From all. Presumptuous sin. We'll sing these verses. 7. Through to 13.
- Of Psalm 19. God's law is perfect. And converts the soul. In sin that lies. God's law is perfect.
- [19 : 22] And converts the soul. In sin that lies.
- God's testimony is worship. And makes the sin that lies.
- The statutes of the Lord are right.
- And to rejoice the heart. The Lord's command is good and tough.
- Like to the eyes and heart. And spotting is the year of God.
- [20 : 34] And to vengeance forever. The judgments of the Lord are great.
- And righteous altogether. He is a film.
- In this time toward the church. In this time we feuenga. For all.
- The shall of God. That drop a sweeter flower.
- More though worthy thy servant wore. He is my good friend.
- [21 : 53] A great reward provide judges. For them that keep the same.
- Who can they send us? Wonders done. Oh, cleanse me with end.

From secret forms thy servant keep. From all christens sin.

I'm going to hear God's word as we have it in the New Testament scriptures. And the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians.

And the first chapter. First Thessalonians chapter 1. And we'll read the whole chapter.

[23 : 14] Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus and to the Church of the Thessalonians. Which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all.

Making mention of you in our prayers. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith. And labour of love. And patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the sight of God and our Father. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only.

But also in power. And in the Holy Ghost. And in much assurance. As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

[24 : 20] And ye became followers of us. And of the Lord. Having received the word. In much affliction. With joy of the Holy Ghost.

So that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord.

Not only in Macedonia and Achaia. But also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad. So that we need not to speak anything.

For they themselves show of us. What manner of entering in we had unto you. And how ye turned to God from idols.

To serve the living and through God. And to wait for his son from heaven. Whom he raised from the dead. Even Jesus.

[25 : 17] Which delivered us from the wrath to come. Amen. And may the Lord at his blessing. To a reading of his word.

And to his name be the praise. We shall sing now from Psalm 25. Psalm 25.

The first version of the psalm. Singing from verse 4. Show me thy ways O Lord. Thy paths O teach thou me.

And do thou lead me in thy truth. Therein my teacher be. For thou art God that does. To me salvation send. And I upon thee all the day expecting.

Do attend. Thy tender mercies Lord. I pray thee to remember. And loving kindnesses. For they have been of old forever. My sins and faults of youth.

[26 : 14] Do thou O Lord forget. After thy mercy think on me. And for thy goodness great. God good and upright is. The way he'll sinners show.

The meek in judgment he will guide. And make his path to know. The whole paths of the Lord. Are truth and mercy sure.

To those that do his covenant keep. And testimonies pure. I can sing these verses of Psalm 25.

The first version of the psalm. Show me thy ways O Lord. Thy paths O teach thou me. Show me thy ways O Lord.

Thy paths O teach thou me. And do thou lead me.

[27 : 24] And thy path O Lord. Therein might he cure me.

For thou who art called the just. Jesus. For shall you.

And I shall not experience. And give some faith. Jesus. gentlemen. And I abide in that,
And I abide aus llo okay.

Expecting to attend. the tent. Thy tender mercy's Lord.

I pray thee to remember the loving kindness for thee have been of old forever.

[28 : 52] My sins and faults of you could thou on earth forgive it.

After thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great.

God good and the right is the way he'll serve not show the made in judgment he will guide
and guide and make his path to go the hope has all the Lord our truth that mein matters
with residue and keep and testimony is pure.

I'd like us now to turn to the passage read, 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, and we can read at
verse 5.

Reading at verse 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and
in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.

[31 : 25] For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost
and in much assurance.

Amen. And what I mean by that is that wherever the gospel is preached, there is a need
for the gospel to be preached and for the gospel to be heard and believed.

That being said, while the gospel that is preached does not change and should not
change, the context into which the church's preach may demand a presentation of the
gospel that reflects that.

For example, if we think of our own congregation here, this congregation is a congregation
where you have a combination of mature Christians for the most part.

one or two less experienced Christians. And accompanying that, there are many.

[33 : 29] And the only picture that corresponds with those who are that, they are gospel-hardened.

That is, they've been under the sound of the gospel for a lifetime. And they've heard the
gospel repeatedly. They've been presented with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and
encouraged to believe in him.

And up until now, that has not happened. And then you have a congregation like the
congregation that is represented in Thessalonica.

It is a congregation of immature Christians. And most of the people who are not Christian
are unbelievers.

In verse 9, for example, we read, They themselves show of us what manner of entering in
we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and through
God.

[34 : 55] That represents to us the type of people out of which these immature Christians came.
And they were idolaters.

They were unbelievers. They were unfamiliar with the Christian gospel. So the
congregation, you could argue, is made up of those who have newly come to faith, and
those who accompany them, who are essentially idolaters, and who are oblivious to their
need of salvation.

Now we know that the gospel had newly come to Thessalonica. We know that because if
you read, go back to read Acts chapter 17, it describes to you the missionary journey of
the apostle Paul.

And it tells us in that, I'll read it with you, how the apostle came to Thessalonica and the
situation that confronted him there.

Now when they had passed through Amphibolus and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

[36 : 23] That doesn't mean that there were many Jews there. A synagogue only required as little as ten believers, I think. The number was very small for there to be a viable place of worship for Jews.

But there was a synagogue there, and whenever Paul went with the gospel, he usually focused his ministry on the synagogue or places of worship that the Jews frequented.

And there he was allowed to present the gospel. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ.

Some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews, which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company and set all the city on an uproar, and assorted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

[37 : 50] And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom Jason hath received.

And these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

And when they had taken security of Jason and of the others, they let them go. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night, and to Berea, who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

And this is a brief description of what Paul encountered when he came with the Gospel to Thessalonica. Now theologians, or those who are responsible for interpreting the Scriptures, debate the length of time that Paul was in Thessalonica.

We read there that he was there on three consecutive Sabbaths preaching. Now the son maintained that, although that is said, that the time that he spent there was longer, and that it was a matter of months before he was forced to leave.

[39 : 21] He was forced to leave. But it is not really of relevance how long he was there, but that during the time he was there he preached Christ to them.

And by virtue of the preaching of Christ to them, some of them came to faith. And others became actively engaged in persecuting those who came to faith.

They sought to lay hands upon Paul, and he had to leave that vicinity. Now, the thing that's important for us is that what he is describing for us in the opening verses of Thessalonians is this, that he was commending and encouraging those who had come to faith.

The letter is written to these believers. And he is encouraged by the report that he receives of their faith, and the activity of their faith, and the evidences that they present that the gospel that he preached has produced in them the sure sign that the gospel was believed by them.

And this is what these words are all about. It is telling us that Paul was wanting proof positive that the proclamation of the gospel was itself bearing fruit, and that he wasn't wasting his words, that he wasn't laboring without bearing fruit for the Lord.

[41 : 26] And he was persuaded that that was the case because he speaks of the things that are evidences to him of that.

Remembering, he says, remembering, he says, without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father, knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.

All of these things that he hears of and that he witnesses for himself prove to him that the gospel has indeed been successfully preached, and that they have believed.

But it's not all happily ever after. Because as soon as they believe, they experience persecution because of what they believe.

They experience, like many other Christians, the enmity of the world in which they live against the gospel of Jesus Christ and those who believe it.

[42 : 41] So because of that persecution and because of that trial of their faith, Paul wants them to understand that he appreciates who they are and what they are, and he wants them to be encouraged.

He wants them to continue in the faith that they have entered into. So I want us to think of the things that Paul is persuaded by.

The things that encourage him to believe that the gospel that he preached has truly been believed. The first thing that I want us to notice with you is this, that he speaks of the gospel as our gospel.

Our gospel, he says, came not unto you in word only. The first thing that Paul is saying is that the gospel is the gospel. The gospel is the gospel that he believes is our gospel. And by that we need to understand what Paul means by it.

That there is one gospel seems obvious, but Paul wants them to understand that the gospel that they believe is our gospel.

[44 : 07] Secondly, the gospel that is preached by them and that has been received by them has come to them, not in word only.

Now, what does that mean? What does it mean for the gospel to come in word only? And Paul wants us to understand, wants them to understand that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just simply a bare word.

We often speak of the scriptures as a bare word, and it's never that. And Paul means us to understand that. It was more than just words.

And the third thing that I want us to see are the three things that he identifies there that were true of those who believe the gospel.

And the reason for their believing the gospel was that it came to them with, it came to them in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

[45 : 26] And I'd like us just to briefly consider what is meant by him through that description of the gospel working in them.

Now, when the gospel is preached, and preached by Paul and preached by others, it is a gospel that is good news.

And Paul means them to understand by the use of the word, our gospel, that the gospel that he preached is the same gospel that others like him have preached to others.

The same gospel that is the good news of salvation by a redeemer, even Jesus Christ.

Paul knows that he is commissioned by God to proclaim such a gospel. And there is no other gospel that he can possibly proclaim except this gospel.

[46 : 47] There is no other gospel. There is no other gospel. There is no other gospel. There is no other news that is good. Except the news that is good because it is God's saving interest in a fallen world, which is made known through the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul has no other gospel. Paul has no other gospel. Paul has no other gospel. He knows no other gospel. And, in fact, if you read the writings of the apostle, you know that he condemns those that he has encountered who come with a gospel that is no gospel.

They purport to be preaching a gospel that is the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is no such thing. It is a fabrication.

It is something that is inconsistent with the word of God that needs to be at the heart of the proclamation of the gospel. But his gospel is the gospel of Christ, the gospel of God, the gospel of the Son of God.

One of the divines puts it in this way. Paul takes no credit for the gospel other than he had been entrusted with it by God and he has endeavoured to be a good steward of the divine trust.

[48 : 24] A good steward of the divine trust. If you go on into the second chapter. We are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak.

Not as pleasing men, but God which tries our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words as we know, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness.

God is witness. God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ.

His purpose for preaching Christ is for the glory of God. Not his own, not the glory of others, but the glory of the God who gave him such a commission and his interest in the salvation of sinners by way of it.

Paul's gospel is the same gospel that John preached, that Peter preached, that James preached. The same gospel, the same Christ, the same Saviour.

[49 : 39] Our gospel, Paul could say, is the gospel of God's free grace, God's purpose in showing pardon to sinners, showing mercy to those who are held deserving and who are destined to encounter the judgment seat of Christ, to give account to that Christ for their sins.

And the only remedy for that encounter is to be clothed in righteousness that he alone possesses.

Sinners who are lawbreakers, sinners who are transgressors of the law of God, condemned by their own activities.

The gospel is the gospel is for them, and the gospel is the remedy for their sinfulness. And so Paul proclaims that gospel. And Paul makes this point.

This gospel came to you, he says, not in word only. Now don't make the error of thinking that what Paul means by that is that the word that he preaches is in any way belittled.

[51 : 03] Because Paul has in some way added to that word or made that word different to what that word is. But his mind is fixed upon this, that when the word came from him, that it was never a word that was anything other than a word from God.

He was God's ambassador. He was God's voice in this world. He was God's voice in this world. Destined to be heard and for God to be seen through the word that he proclaimed.

The scripture, the word of God, the Old Testament, the New Testament, nothing less, nothing more. Christ's words, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which Paul would have access to.

And God's word to himself. The word and nothing but the word.

God's word to come with it. But not the word without. God's power to come with it. And that's what he goes on to. One of the divines makes a very, very acute distinction.

[52 : 37] I suppose succinct distinction is the best way that we can understand it. The gospel can come to people only in words.

Oh, but not in words alone or not in words only. And I think that's what Paul is saying.

This is the evidence. The Bible that I've taught. The scripture that I've opened out to you. The texts of the Old Testament.

The passages that came from the mouth of Christ that I've expounded to you. That I've spoken of. I've done that in the expectation that God in his infinite capacity to show mercy will accompany these words with power.

In order to create the desired results that must be accompanied with something else.

[53 : 44] And I think that there is. I don't believe that they put it like that. I don't believe that there is a preacher who goes out to preach the gospel.

Whoever they are. Whether they are ministers in full time ministry. Elders engaged to speak to their congregations or to other congregations.

They know. They know. And they are persuaded. That if the word that they preach or proclaim. The word that they open out to others. If it is not accompanied with the power of God as it is.

And spoken of here by the apostle. Then their labors will not produce the effect that they would wish.

You'll notice these eyes three there. The power in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. I'm sure I've heard countless preachers of God's word saying that this is what they long for most of all.

[55 : 01] For people to be engaged in preaching the word of God. With the conscious assurance that the spirit of God is accompanying the word.

And it doesn't often happen. Knowingly anyway. I think every preacher goes out with the expectation that the word that is proclaimed.

Can be taken by God. And used by God. And applied by God to the hearts and the minds of the congregation and those in it.

They know that to be the case. They believe that to be the case. But it is quite another matter for them to be persuaded that it is actually happening.

If anyone believed in his own weakness. If anyone believed in his own weakness. I think the apostle Paul believed in his own weakness.

[56 : 12] If anyone believed in his own strength. Is that an inconsistency?

Is that a contradiction? What do I mean by it? Well I mean by it that Paul knew that his own best endeavors were ineffectual.

His most powerful exposition of God's word.

Would fall on deaf ears. Were it not for the fact that he believed that God could bless his word.

Remember Paul. He was on many occasions. Speaking of this very fact. Writing to the Romans. He was saying to the Roman congregation there.

[57 : 18] For I am not ashamed. He said of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believes.

To the Jew first. And to the Greek. Also to the Greek. He had not ashamed of the gospel. Now we focus on this fact.

That Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. And that is quite in order. But what gave him that conviction was that.

It was this gospel that was the power of God unto salvation. And that power was not in him. It was something that he understood that God was willing to use mightily.

In the salvation of sinners. Whoever these sinners were. The late principle.

[58 : 21] Don't make my code. In one of his books. Where he describes the priorities of the church. I think the priorities of the church is the name of his book. And he describes there.

The various things that ought to be on the mind of the church. More than anything else. Because there were many things that he felt that the church were engaged in doing.

Which were being given a priority. That should not be prioritized. His emphasis. You could say. His argument for the whole book was. The proclamation of Jesus Christ.

And him crucified. And he refers to the apostle Paul. And he says. The apostle Paul makes it abundantly plain. That he regards preaching.

As his supreme task. Why? Because he was so good a preacher. Because his ability as a preacher was unparalleled.

[59 : 26] Because his prowess. In the use of language. Was such that people would. Come to hear him from all over. Not so.

But he believed. That it was by the foolishness of preaching. That God was prepared. To bless the gospel. The gospel. That was by the way of the foolishness of the gospel.

Being preached. That God saves. And Paul would say to you. And to me. Always remind yourself of this.

It is God that saves. Not Paul. Not Peter. Not James. Not Calum MacDonald. Not. Not.

It doesn't matter who the preacher is. It is the word of God. That is used by him. To bring sinners. To a sense of their sin. And to an appreciation of the savior.

[60 : 29] Who is Christ Jesus. And all who believe in Christ here tonight. Have come to an understanding of that. For themselves. And I was reflecting on this.

As I was preparing. There are times in the experience of the church. When the word of God is going out with power. And it is a unique time.

A unique time in the experience of a church. Or a congregation. We were recently speaking about this. At a fellowship. And the late Norman MacLeod.

Who was minister of this congregation. I was told. That at that time. In the congregation's history. Quite a number of.

Of. Men and women were coming to faith. And he was persuaded. That this time. Was a special time.

[61 : 31] It wasn't going to go on forever. It wasn't going to last. It wouldn't last any longer. Than God would determine. His own purposes.

By it. And that's the way it is. Sometimes there are occasions. When the gospel is blessed.

And many. Come to know Christ. And salvation is the experience. Of a number. Of a number. Collectively. But at other times. You see.

God works. And individuals come to faith. And the individual. Is no more or less. Than the number.

That came to faith together. So don't think. That it has to be. A revival of religion. To prove that God is working. That's not the way it is.

[62 : 28] That's not the way it is. There is. Perhaps. Confirmation. There is. Perhaps. More evidence. To satisfy. Our human instincts.

To say. Only God could do this. The fact of the matter is. Only God can bring a sinner. To a sense of his sin. Only by the gospel. Which comes in power.

Not in word only. But in power. Will the person. Who is a sinner. And breast salvation. Through Christ. The Holy Spirit.

We are told here. Is the present. In the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost. He says. And the Holy Ghost.

In his work. Does many things. Which we can't see him do. But he does it nevertheless. You know. This morning.

[63 : 31] We were speaking about Jonah. And our focus. Our attention. Would be on Jonah. What was God doing. In the life of Jonah. Jonah. But the Holy Spirit.

Was working elsewhere. And he always does. Work elsewhere. And sometimes. Before a person. Comes to know Christ.

For themselves. Unbeknownst to themselves. He is at work. In their life. He is. He is. Preparing the ground. For the world.

To be. Implanted. With power. It is. His work. He is doing. On more than one occasion.

I have heard. Of people. Who are quite oblivious. To the role. Of the spirit. In their. In their experience. At the time. The word of God.

[64 : 30] Is plaguing them. Literally. The word of God. Is disturbing. Their nest. Their nest. The word of God. Is challenging. And the word of God. Is creating.

In their heart. A sense. Of want. Which they cannot meet. In anything. That they have sought. In their life. Up until now. And they are. Directed. Where?

Directed. To Christ. But ask them. Were you aware. Of the spirit. At that moment. Some said.

I didn't even know. There was a spirit. I didn't even know. That the spirit. Was anywhere. In the proximity. Of my life. At the time.

I remember. Somebody. Telling. His own experience. Of how. He unburdened himself. To a friend. And that same. Friend. Was.

[65 : 27] Challenged. By him. Because. He believed. That that friend. Had trust. And. And told. The minister. All that his friend. Had unburdened.

His heart with. No thought. Of the spirit. No thought. Of the Holy Spirit. Who. Is. The discernor. Of hearts.

The one. Who penetrates. Into the deepest. Recesses. Of our being. So. When Paul. Preaches. He preaches. Not into a vacuum.

He preaches. The word. God's word. Knowing. That the spirit. Of God. Has been. At work. Preparing. The ground. Is that.

Your experience. Is that. What happened. Before. You came. To faith. It's. Certainly. What happened.

[66 : 24] In the lives. Of many. The secrets. Of our heart. Are not. Are not. Secret. To God. In.

Much. Assurance. He says. Conviction. In. Preaching. Forthrightly. And. I suppose. You know. That is.

Important. For the preacher. The preacher. Can't. Preach. To. Please. An audience. The preacher.

Can't. Preach. In order. To. To. Say. What. People. Like. Hearing. Sometimes.

What. They need. To hear. Is not. What. They like. To hear. Sometimes. The preacher. Has. To prepare.

[67 : 21] A sermon. Which. He is preaching. Like. What. He is preaching. Anymore. Than. Those. Who will hear. It.

- Because. It is. Exposing. Deficiency. In. Faith. Or. Aberrations. In. Our. Relationships.
 Be. They. Spiritual. Or. Human. Things. That should. Not. The. Of. God.
 Brings. That. Before. But. In. Order. That. They. The. Old. Testament.
 They. Are. Don't. Shy. Away. From. It. Don't. Water. Make. It.
- [68 : 16] More. It. It. Is. Not. Easy. To. Declare. A. Thought. That.
 Springs. To. Mind. Just. As. You. Want. You. Want. You. Want.
 To. At. The. Time. Who. Knows. What. God. Is. Willing.
 To. To. To. Be. Said. Is. That. The. Word. Is. That.
 The. Word. Is. Proclaimed. With. Conviction. Persuasion. With. The. Understanding. That.
- [69 : 11] This. Is. The. The. The. These. Things. Paul. New. These. Things.
 Paul. Understood. And. When. He. Viewed. His. Congregation. Thessalonica. He. Saw.
 Lives. He saw people who were idolaters and were idolaters no more. He saw people who
 were fearless for the Lord, who were willing to stand up and be counted.
 Remember without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope in our Lord
 Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. A life changed by the gospel.
 A life changed in order that the gospel would be presented by them as living epistles who
 are read of all men. Is that what we are?
- [70 : 18] Is that what men and women see in us? Lives translated by the power of God from the
 kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his marvelous light.
 And those who see us see the fruit of the gospel. See the fruit of the gospel. So much so
 that they say to themselves, Oh, would it not be good for me to be a hearer of the word of
 God?
 A believer in the word of God? Someone who trusts in the Christ of God? That I may have
 the salvation that the gospel holds out to me.
 Well, Paul looked for evidences. Even the persecution that they endured was evidence.
 Just as he himself suffered persecution because of the gospel that he preached. Those
 that he preached the gospel to, who believed it, were just like himself.
- [71 : 30] And while he took no delight in their suffering, he took delight in what brought it about. And
 may God encourage you to think about the gospel and the effects that it has on your life
 up until now.
 And the desire that you have to see that in your life as you live it in the world. Let us pray.
 O Lord our God, we give thanks.
 That we live in a place where the gospel has been preached. And that we live in a place
 where the gospel has been blessed. And that we have experienced the power of God unto
 salvation.
 That we have experienced the word of God made alive to us. That we have experienced
 what it is. For the spirit of God to bring home to us with great power the conviction that as
 sinners we need a saviour.
 We pray for a day of power amongst us as a congregation. As communities that we might
 yet see. The ones and the twos and the threes come to faith.
- [72 : 52] And that they may believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. To the saving of their soul. Pardon us
 in his name. Amen. Amen. Our closing psalm is Psalm 57.
 Psalm 57. Psalm 57. From the beginning. Be merciful to me, O God. Thy mercy unto me
 do thou extend. Because my soul doth put our trust in thee.

Yea, in the shadow of thy wings my refuge I will place. Until these sad calamities do wholly overpass. My cry I will cause to ascend unto the Lord most high.

To God who doth all things for me perform most perfectly. From heaven he shall send down. And me from whose reproach defend.

That would devour me God his truth and mercy forth shall send. These verses. Be merciful to me, O God. Thy mercy unto me.

[73 : 55] Be merciful to me, O God.

Thy mercy unto me. God who doth put our trust in thee.

In the shadow of thy wings my refuge I will place.

And to these sad calamities do wholly overpass.

By cry I will cause to the same.

[75 : 25] And to the Lord most high. beeping of the one-genyo-flage The one-genyo-flage And to these sadanciers that try and suffer I can't live properly.

me. From this reproach he fainned, that for given he gold his trade, and mercy forth shall sing.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.