

How Shall we Escape?

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- [0 : 00] Good morning, welcome to our service this morning as we come together to worship God. We pray that he would bless his word to us and that we would learn from him. We are going to begin by singing to God's praise Psalm 110.
- Psalm 110, I'm going to sing the whole psalm. Psalm 110, the Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stone whereon thy feet may stand.
- The Lord shall out of Zion send the rod of thy great power. In midst of all thine enemies be thou the governor. A willing people in thy day of power shall come to thee.
- In holy beauties from morn's womb thy youth like Jew shall be. The Lord himself hath made an oath that will repent him never. The order of Melchizedek thou art a priest forever.
- [1 : 17] The glorious and mighty Lord that sits at thy right hand. Shall in his day of wrath strike through kings that do him withstand.
- He shall among the heathen judge. He shall with bodies dead the places full. O'er many lands he won't shall every head.
- The brook that runneth in the way with drink shall him supply. And for this cause in triumph he shall lift his head on high.
- Psalm 110, the whole psalm to God's praise. The Lord did say unto my Lord. The Lord did say unto my Lord.
- Say thou at my right hand. Until I make thy voice.
- [2 : 22] Until I make thy voice. A store where thy thy way laím. method Ally did make ye die." The Lord shall last■ està.
- O Zion said, the Lord of thy peace, in which all thine enemies be thou the governor.
- How will you give the letter thy day of heart shall come to thee?
- In holy beauty strung or swarm thy spirit you shall sing.
- The Lord himself had made your youth and will repent in the never of the order of the kingdom of the kingdom of Israel.
- [4 : 15] The glorious and mighty Lord that sits not like I've done shall in this sea your bronze strike through King's love to him was done.
- He shall among the hills and judge He shall with bodies yet the places still nor many lands he wants shall ever end.

The brook that runeth in the way when dreams shall ever supply and for his thoughts and triumph is your life his head on night O Lord God in heaven we come before you we would seek your help to enable us to worship as we are required to worship and that our worship should be wholehearted and that our affection should be undivided and that our attention should be focused narrowly upon the God who is in receipt of our praise and our worship and yet who of us can enter into this experience without acknowledging that we find ourselves with our attention drawn this way and that even our love which is supposed to be wholly devoted to God and spoken of by the way in which we the way in which we give perfect obedience to your revealed will and yet we do not perfectly come in obedience we sin we sin against our God in thought in word and indeed even in our most holy things so our confession as we can is a confession of failing failing and shortcoming and the desperate need for you our God to assist us in our coming we pray that you would engage with us as we would see to engage with you so that our minds are drawn to be dwelling upon the things that matter that we would not be distracted we have an enemy a declared enemy that there is spoken of by your own son as one that comes comes and sow seed of discord he sow weeds amongst the wheat he sow impure thoughts in the midst of the purest thought we acknowledge that we have dealing with him and he with us but with your strength we can resist the system grant to us the wherewithal

by which so to do that we may acknowledge that you are a God who is mighty in power even the God who is described as the lion of the tribe of Judah who is by fire than the enemy of our soul who is a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour mortal combat has already been engaged in and there is but one victor and you are he in the passion of your son Jesus Christ he vanquished the foe his foot is upon his head and he has been disenfranchised he has been disinherited of that which he claimed for himself but we give thanks that there is but one who possesses all things and that you are such a God whose kingdom knows no end at all and upon which there is one king who is

Lord of all who is king eternal immortal we bless you and thank you that we can turn to you at the beginning of our service and leave all in your hands bless our gathering bless all who are part of the gathering those who have your people encourage them in their faith a faith that is sovereign under threat it is one thing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving those who do are assured that they will persevere to the end but that does not mean for them that they will not be threatened that they will not be tested and tried that they will not know ups and downs in the path of faith throughout their Christian life and we give thanks that they can speak of these things and speak of their ability through Christ to triumph against adversity of all forms and of every description so those who are on the heights today may they bless you and magnify your name thanking you from the bottom of their heart that they are on the heights and that they have an awareness of being in the presence of God in a meaningful way just as Peter and James and John were on the

[12 : 01] Mount of Transfiguration and they were so filled with what they saw that they desire to dwell there and so it is in the experience of your people from time to time they would desire to remain where they are and they are so full of the blessing that God confers upon them but these occasions are few and they are they are occasions that do not last much as they would like to linger there they cannot their face is set upon a wilderness journey and in that wilderness they must depart from the oasis that you allow them to drink at and go out where the wild beasts will confront them and try them so those who are in the wilderness today those who think that the dry parched land is forever to be their experience those who are assailed those who are tested may they be reminded through your word that there is a God to whom they can go even in the depths when they cry to you from these depths may they remember that you are able to lift them up and to still the storm and to bring calm even when it seems so far from them remember those who cannot understand these experiences those who have yet to taste of what it means to have taken the cup of salvation to their lips who have not yet feasted with Christ who have not yet sat at his feet and drank deeply of the cup that he has poured out for them that speaks of life without end who have not yet feasted of his flesh because his flesh his food is food indeed we pray Lord that you would encourage them to look unto Jesus that he may be the author and finisher of their faith that they may rest upon him to the saving of their soul be they young or old there is never a moment that can pass that is not a moment too far if it is spent without Christ as their portion however long lived they are they may look back upon the desolation of a life lived

Christless and regret these years and yet you are able to make up for them even now that which the locust has eaten in the mystery of your own goodness but do not allow any such to dwell any further in the strange land that is barren and wasteful bless our young as they are being raised in a world that is so full of horror all guard them keep them protect them surround them with the everlasting arms we do not know what the future holds for any one of us and we do not know what it holds for them and we despair of it being anything other than a place of sore trial in your mercy forbid that and bring us to yourself that we may know that the God of heaven is God over all bless the gospel of your grace in this proclamation and in the extension of your kingdom wherever your people are to be found may they be blessed today be they in this island in our nation in the lands beyond we pray for your people pray for those who are persecuted for the name of Christ guard them Lord and keep them heal their hearts and bind their wounds and pour out the spirit of peace into their troubled hearts remember the war torn nations of the earth we pray for the Ukraine where there is desperate wickedness may the despots be trodden under foot we pray for those nations that are tried and tested by reason of want and poverty and hunger we live in a relative place of prosperity our food is on the table without us having to do anything more than go to our cupboards and our tables are full and yet there are so many places and mothers and fathers open their eyes in the morning morning and they do not know where where the next marshal is going to come for themselves or their children we do not know experientially what that means the Lord is not far from us historically when our parents and parents great grandparents were living in days of want want and their reliance upon God is so much inevitable far more so than in our experience so remember us Lord as our people remember those who govern us be merciful to them turn them to yourself that they may learn to rely upon God rather than rely on the meagre resources of man bless our king and his family and we pray for the power of God to be an exercise towards those who have power that they may know what true power means hear our petitions bless your word to us and grant mercy for our sins in Jesus name, Amen we are going to hear God's word as we have it in the epistle to the Hebrews we are going to read at the beginning of the epistle chapter 1 and reading some 1 to 4 of chapter 2 2

God who hath sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the worlds who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged their sins sat down in the right hand of the majesty on high being made so much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they for unto which of the angels said he at any time thou art my son this day have I begotten thee and again I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son and again when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith and let all the angels of God worship him and of the angels he saith saith who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire but unto the son he saith thy throne O God is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity therefore God even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows and thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of thine hands they shall perish but thou remainest and they all shall walk so old as a garment and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail but to which of the angels said he at any time sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy foodstoke are they not all ministering spirits set forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him

God also bearing him witness both with signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will Amen Lord at his blessing to the reading of his word Boys and girls before you go I have to send this to just a very quick word word before when we think of when we think of of the earliest of Jesus' miracles what miracle was that if you read in certain books that do not depend on the Bible there are stories told about about Jesus when he was a boy growing up with his family and these stories very often talk about the power that Jesus had even as an infant the young boy that he could do things that other boys and girls couldn't do and the reason he was able to do that was because he was God's son but of course the Bible doesn't mention anything about Jesus other than his birth and then it moves on to when he was slightly older and his parents took him to worship in the temple and then there's silence until he was older still and the point at which the Bible tells us that he performed his first miracle was at the very beginning of his Christian ministry and there are very interesting things about that first miracle he didn't do it for himself he didn't perform a miracle just to prove that he could he didn't do it like we would expect people to perform magic tricks that's some the way some people think of Jesus as if he was some kind of of magician that he he could do anything if he wanted to and we could say that but we would be wrong if we said it because Jesus couldn't do anything if he wanted to because for the simple reason that he couldn't do anything that was bad couldn't do anything that was wrong he couldn't do anything that was sinful he couldn't do anything that his father didn't want him to do because he was obedient to his father's will and when he comes to perform this first miracle it seems as if he did not want to do it because maybe you don't know what the first miracle was it was when he changed water into wine and himself and the disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee and it seems according to the story as it's told in the gospel that during this feast and it's quite different to the kind of wedding feast that we have here they ran out of wine and that itself was something that was probably a shame on the family who were responsible for the marriage but his mother

Mary came to him and told him how things were and it seems when he speaks to her that he's a bit annoyed but he still tells her to go and give instruction to those there now there are many things about this that people you know it's quite strange the way people want to make Jesus behave in ways that they think is right you know there are some people who don't think any passion should drink strong drink any description they forbid any kind of strong drink and they say well Jesus changed the water into wine and then they'll start making arguments about how strong the wine was and they'll say well it wasn't really strong drink well if it was wine it was alcohol and if it was alcohol it had the capability of making a person feel the effect of it they were not making an argument for Jesus being permissive as far as the drinking of alcohol as concerned but people use such a passage in the scripture to make all kinds of strange arguments that have nothing whatsoever to do what Jesus did he performed a miracle in response to a need the need was probably to preserve the family from shame and he provided them with better wine than they had before and he did so powerfully he did so miraculously in other words when Jesus performed this miracle it was even more than what was asked for he didn't just say well I'll give you exactly what you had before because the master of ceremonies whoever that was he said usually the worst wine is left the worst wine is left to last but what you provided is better than what was there first now

[28 : 02] I suppose there are many lessons to be learned from what Jesus did but I think this lesson is there anyway when we come to Jesus with a need if that need is a genuine need if it is a need that arises out of our circumstances whatever these circumstances are Jesus has the ability to recognise what that need is and he is able to make provision for it far more than we anticipated when we asked him to meet that need now sometimes he can meet our need by saying yes sometimes he can meet our need by saying no and there again just like those who look at this miracle and they think they want to make Jesus say something that he didn't say or do something that he didn't do we think that we know the best way that Jesus is going to answer our request

I have a need I go to Jesus with my need and I tell him not only this is what I need but this is how I want you to meet that need I'll tell him I know best and this is the best way for you to do it but Jesus knows best what our need is and how to address it so sometimes even when we think that the answer yes is what we need to hear if I'm telling him to say no and keep us waiting or give us something different because he knows best so we learn from coming to Jesus trusting and believing that what we ask for he will supply it far in a far better way in a far more important way than we ever thought maybe that's one thing that we can learn from that first miracle well we're going to sing as you go out to Sunday schools on verses from

Psalm 90 Psalm 90 and at verse 8 Our sins thou and iniquities dost in thy presence place and set out secret faults before the brightness of thy face for in thine anger all our days do pass on to an end and as a tale that hath been told so we our years do spend threescore and ten years do sum up our days and years we see or if by reason of more strength in some four score they be yet doth the strength of such old men but grief and labor prove for it is soon cut off and we fly hence and soon remove who knows the power of thy wrath according to thy fear so is thy wrath Lord teach thou us our end in mind to bear and so to count our days that we our hearts may still apply to learn thy wisdom and thy truth that we may live thereby turn yet again to us

O Lord how long thus shall it be let it repent thee now for those that servants are to thee with thy tender mercies Lord do us certainly satisfy so we rejoice shall all our days and still be glad indeed and so on I'm going to sing from verse 10 to verse 14 of Psalm 90 three score and ten years to sum up our days and years we sing three score and ten years do sum up our days and years we sing our days and years we sing Is the near facing Or if I reason No more strength

And some poor story dream Yet on the strength Of such old men But grave and liver crew For it isn't a job And we climb in a sun To the sun we move To use the power Of the night of the night And more gain to the day

- [33 : 33] So is the night of the night I love, Lord, is the use In our trust unsaid my family.
And it was our sins and we all heart miss ■ in the■.
To learn thy wisdom and thy truth, that we will live thereby.
Turn yet again to us, O Lord, along the chalice day.
Let it repent thee for those that sinless are to thee.
- [35 : 11] O with thy tender mercies, Lord, as early judges high.
So we rejoice, O Lord, our guests, and still be glad in thee.
Amen. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?
I remember being greatly impressed by a sermon preached on this text by a minister of the gospel no longer with us.
And at the time that I was there, I was unconverted. I was not a believer. But I was left in no doubt as to the fact that if we did not, if I did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I would be lost.
- [37 : 25] And that is something that every one of us has to be persuaded of. Whatever we believe or not believe, if we don't believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, if we don't believe that Jesus is the only saviour for sinners, if we don't believe so that he becomes our saviour, there is no other remedy for our sin, for our need.
I want us to look at this passage by placing it first of all in the context in which it is found.
And that context we read here at the beginning of this epistle. And it establishes a truth that we need to be persuaded of before we can actually be persuaded of the truth that we are confronted by.
So that's where I want to begin and then look at what the question actually challenges us with regard to.
I don't want it to be complicated. I don't want it to be difficult. I want every one of us to understand where the apostle is coming from with regard to these truths.
- [39 : 03] I'm a firm believer and I believe that all ministers of the gospel who themselves genuinely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the alone saviour of sinners that the word of God, the Bible is what it says.
It is God's word to us. It's the word of truth. It is the word of life. From Genesis to Revelation. This is the place that God has chosen to speak to us pre-eminently.
I know he speaks to us in providence. I know he speaks to us in ways that could be beyond his word. But his word is the main locus for the truth that he has to say concerning himself and concerning ourselves.
There are great many people in the world who do not know this and they do not believe this. They don't have the Bible and they've not read the Bible and even if they have the Bible it doesn't mean that they read the Bible and even if they read the Bible it doesn't mean that they believe what the Bible is saying.
There are all kinds of different people and even within what we would call the Reformed Church or that has the testimony of being Reformed there are those who treat God's word in a way differently to the way it should be treated.
- [40 : 52] Not just in my opinion but in the light of what this scripture itself teaches us. It is not a word about God simply or from God simply it is all that there is concerning God's truth is found within this book.
There are some people who would say well it contains in part the truth of God. The Bible contains the truth. No, you'd think that's the same thing is it not?

Well it's not the same as saying it is the truth of God. The truth of God is the scriptures of the Old and New Testament and that's daily being tested and daily being denied and daily being usurped because when the Bible says something that we don't like or when we take time to work it through to its natural conclusion we don't like what the conclusions are we're not comfortable with them we're not happy with what is expected of us or from us or what God is looking at from our lives and then we say well God's word cannot mean that so we deal with it in the light of that understanding but I believe that it is God's word to us about himself and about ourselves and it reminds us of what we are and this passage here tells us you know it begins

God who had sent three times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in this last day spoken unto us by his son whom he hath appointed in of all things by whom he made the worlds so it draws attention to the fact that God when he spoke sometimes he spoke directly but often he spoke through his servants the prophets in the New Testament he spoke through Jesus Christ mainly and then through his servants the apostles who taught what Jesus gave them to teach and that's where the apostle is coming from and he is saying this Jesus that is before you is greater than the prophets he is greater than the angels through whom God spoke when his law his word came to the world and he's speaking to us

I suppose there's one thing that stands out I believe and that is that God is telling us that his word was given to teach us about a relationship to himself being a broken relationship a relationship that was broken because of sin we go back to the book of Genesis we find the original sin of mankind disclosed to us there where Adam disobeyed God Adam decided to follow a path that God had forbidden he broke God's law and he departed from a life that was in a full relationship with himself there's much more that can be said about that but there we have the first sin described as it appeared on the face of this planet in the experience of the first parents

[44 : 50] Adam and Eve the consequences of that followed sin came into the world and affected all in the world in different ways different shapes and forms and God in his measure addressed that situation by giving his law which was previously imprinted in the heart of his own creation Adam created an image of God Adam made like God in this sense that he had the law of God in his heart he knew what was right he knew what was wrong he knew what the consequences there if he did not do what was right because God had explained it to him and placed that thought firmly within his heart I think when you begin to delve into this situation that

Adam entered into it's a very mysterious thing but at some point in the experience of Adam he must have decided against the light of reason he did something that worked entirely against the light that God had given to him because he was persuaded that what God had said to him was not true to permeate the very environment that he lived in from then on perhaps he did not fully conceive of that thought in its fullness but sin came into the world and

God taught man about sin he gave his law to show what sin was how sin worked against who he was his commands showed the moral law the ten commandments and that is what is being referred to here when the angels are mentioned they're spoken of at the beginning of chapter two there he's talking about angels in different ways but the angels at this point are mentioned as those by whom God gave his law through the administration the law was given it was not their law to give it was God's law but they were his vehicles they were his vessels for communicating that truth and we'll quote that again but God was communicating a truth concerning sin that's what we need to understand the presence of sin the nature of sin the way that sin touches every area of our life and

God in his mercy gave his law so that we would understand that but perversely people looked at the law of God and they said this is God giving to us a means of escape this is God giving us his commandments and if we fulfill them if we obey them then we will be blessed God will ensure that we will be blessed because we'll do what he says we won't kill we won't murder we won't steal we won't commit adultery we won't do any of these things and by not doing these things we will be safe we will be assured of salvation how blind can we be God sees the blindness and caters for it and the gospel is God's way of dealing with man's false understanding of the of the degree to which sin has polluted our lives and we know that when we think of sin when you think of sin what do you think of what is a sin what is sin we are told in the shorted catechism is any want of conformity unto our transgression of the law of

God but when we think of sin we think often humanly speaking of bad things that bad people do and we have sin we'll say but they're not really bad sins they're trivial they're not really sins that we will find ourselves in hot water with God over comparatively speaking but we're wrong because the Bible teaches God's work teaches not only does it teach us where sin came from where sin developed what God thinks of it how God highlights it how God tells us that we are not capable of resolving our issue with him he tells us that every sin is deserving of his anger his wrath and his curse without exception we can't have a league table saying well this one will not deprive me of heaven this one will not deprive me of heaven if

[51 : 30] I go beyond this line maybe it will expose me to God's anger but this one as long as stay under this line and this line you see if you ask people where they draw the line they'll have different different appreciation of what sin is and how bad sin is and how we can tolerate sin but very often if we are left to our own reasoning we get it wrong the Bible says every sin without exception not the ones that you draw the line under or over whichever line you're drawing every sin whatever the sin the sins that are committed in your heart that no man sees but the eye of a God who is holy where you steal where you are thinking evil thoughts where you are doing things without actually physically doing them you're working it out in your mind you're going through the processes you've expressed hatred but suppressed it in a way that no one knows that that hatred is there but

God condemns it and God says for that you will be cursed for that I will express my wrath that is holy against you and if we were left like that there would be no remedy for our sin there would be no answer to our predicament god so and and Paul writes his epistle to the Galatians he tells us about those who thought that foolishly thought that they could in some way you know fulfil god's law and by fulfilling god's law that they would be saved that they would have salvation that sin would not be a martyr to worry about.

But Paul says, For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. For it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things, he says, which are written in the book of the law to do them.

In all things. That word all, whatever it means, it can only mean one thing. Everything contained within it is marked by it.

And no man is justified by the law. In the sight of God it is evident. For the just shall live by faith, he says.

[54 : 29] Speaking about the psalmist, when God deals with a sinner, he has to convince that sinner that he is a sinner. And he has to convince that sinner of the reality of his sin.

That it's not just about doing. That it's not just about saying. It's much more deep than that.

It's the thought processes of the heart that unveils the genuine reality of what sin is. Writing about Psalm 32, one of the psalms of David where he acknowledges his sin.

Tim Keller was speaking about the expression of guilt that David was using.

He begins, he says, every sin, he says, is a kind of atheism. Many insist that guilt is an imposition of society or religion.

[55 : 50] That people can define right and wrong for themselves. Nonetheless, we have a sense of condemnation of not being as we ought, that we cannot shake.

Now that's his opinion. And I wonder if you share it. That whether we like it or not. Society, you see, is at odds with the word of God.

Society is not happy with anybody having to experience guilt. Guilt is something that is unwanted. Guilt is something that is uninvited.

Guilt is something that is negative. And at all costs should not be allowed to permeate the atmosphere that we breathe. It's simply a means by which our lives are kept in check.

By those who would want their lives to be controlled. But it's not society, not Christian society, or religious society, or any society for that matter, that introduces guilt into the heart of man when it comes to the sin that God condemns.

[57 : 10] That is something created in our heart by God himself. He makes us feel this unease.

When we least expect it. Whether you're a Christian or not. Whether you're a believer in God's word or not. This is what Keller was arguing. That men and women will have this experience of conviction.

of the guilt that they feel for what? What was behind it? The sense that there is a God in heaven who sees all and who condemns all that is at odds with who he is.

And into that situation, God supplies his gospel. And this gospel that he speaks of, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says, is the remedy for our sin.

The gospel is not only provided by Christ, he is its subject, he is the one who is at the heart of it. John Owen, the Puritan, wrote the following.

[58 : 30] The gospel is not only a word of life and great salvation, but was spoken, declared and delivered by the Lord himself. The gospel was delivered unto those that heard it infallibly by the ministry of the apostles that this was from their divine inspiration.

The gospel is what is provided by God to deal with the circumstances that we are left in by reason of our sin, from which we cannot extricate ourselves, which we cannot heal, we cannot recover from, we cannot in any way provide an answer to and if it was possible then God would not have supplied his son to go through the awful realities of the cross because that is what he did.

God has supplied his son to be the one who would minister to our need. provide welfare that is wholesome and without any lack for the needs of our eternal soul.

When you think about it, well, this is the way that I was reflecting on these words, everybody here has heard about sin today.

Whether you agree with it or not, whether you agree with what you've heard or not, you've heard it. No, you can't unhear it. You can't behave as if what has been said has not been said.

[60 : 47] And in many ways in our lives, we may see things and we would much rather that we had never seen them. And we may hear things and we would say, and we've said it, I would much rather have not seen that.

But simply having such wishful thinking will not undo what we've had to hear or see. It's part of our experience. Just as part of your experience has been told that you're a sinner in need of a saviour and that that saviour is Christ and that it requires of you to embrace that salvation as it is offered in the gospel.

And you can't not say, you can't say that you didn't hear that. Whatever you think of it, whatever you believe concerning it, however poorly put across it is, you're not left with an excuse concerning what you have heard.

you know, we may think wrongly, I believe, that because of our involvement in the gospel that we're in a better position than those who are ignorant of the gospel.

And the Bible, when it comes to sin, it tells us that there are sins that are more heinous than others. You know, if you read about the Second World War, you read that Adolf Hitler was responsible, not directly, but at least he was responsible for the death of six million Jews.

[62 : 38] That number is estimated. Later, Paul Port, a Marxist dictator, was responsible for the death of 1.5 million people at an estimate.

There's no problem in saying about these people that they were evil, that they did wrong, and there's no problem with you thinking, well, these people deserve God's wrath, deserve to be sent to the hottest part of hell.

Well, but then you may come down to the individual level where you're thinking, well, maybe this week, or last week, rather, you read and heard about this woman who took the life of a friend and decapitated her and took her body and left it somewhere.

What kind of action? Was she guilty of? She was evil. the judge said in judging her that there was no evidence of remorse or sorrow for her action.

And you'll say that person is evil. That person deserves the wrath and curse of God. And you may be right, and the Bible tells us that there are degrees of sin and degrees of sinfulness.

[64 : 12] But, when it comes to what is called a great sin, the greatest sin, according to some anyway, is the sin that you're guilty of, that I know you're guilty of, because if your position today, outwardly, conforms to your position before God, you are rejecting Christ and denying his right over your life.

Do you remember when Stephen was put to death? he preached. He preached the gospel.

He taught people about God's truth. And he told them how God worked in the world from the early days. And then he came down to the present, to the moment at which they were moved in anger against him.

and this is what he told the people who were standing there ready to take his life.

He said to them, you stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost.

[65 : 48] As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted, and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just one, of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

He was pointing directly at them and saying, look, you killed Christ, we don't in this epistle, and it speaks of the sin of apostasy, and it speaks of those who crucify a flesh, the Son of God.

And essentially, what are you saying? When you deny Christ, when you refuse Christ, when you live on as if Christ has nothing whatsoever to do with you, what you're doing is sinful, but not just sinful, it's the grossest of sins.

Not to believe the gospel is to reject Christ. The person who gives away to his natural disposition, which is not to want salvation, because pride forbids it.

You don't want to be saved. Why? Because you can save yourself. If you're on the Titanic, and there's one life raft, and you're told this is where you're going to have salvation, you're going to drown if you're not on this raft, and you say, not at all, I'll manage, I'll find some other way, you would say of that person that he was foolish.

[67 : 53] But when it comes to the salvation that God has supplied in the person of Jesus Christ, that is exactly what you're to. Do you believe falsely that there is some other way by which your sin is going to be dealt with?

Or, if not that, you're saying, oh, well, minister, you've got it all wrong, you've talked about Paul Port, you've talked about Adolf Hitler, I'm nothing like them, and when it comes to the great day of judgment, if there is such a day, I'll be able to face my maker with the certainty that he'll take me on face value, and that means I'm not as bad as some others were.

Well, if I believe that to be your hope, I can only say to you it's a forlorn hope. It's a hope that will leave you wanting on the great day of judgment.

There is no other saviour, there is no other salvation, is what this verse in part is saying to us. An American preacher by the name of Gardner Spring left us a book where he was looking at the attractions of the cross.

The attractions of the cross. What is it that makes the cross all important to the believer? As he comes to the conclusion of that book, he says, the consequence of rejection of the cross, this future and eternal death, because the Bible says clearly, he that believeth not shall be damned.

[69 : 46] Men who live under the gospel, he says this, it's a solemn thing, men, and by that he means men and women, young or old, whoever you are, men who live under the gospel deserve to perish for not believing it.

Desert to perish for not believing it. It's not too extreme. Have I got it all wrong? Well, you know, in all honesty, if you can find for me an alternative way of salvation, an alternative strategy to deal with your predicament, as someone who has sin in their heart and not one of you can hold up your hand and say, I'm one, I have no sin.

if you have one, that sin will condemn you. And that sin, if it is not contained within the sins that Christ died for on the cross, you will be accountable to them at the last.

May God convince you of that and bring you to your knees before him that you may receive the salvation. He is freely willing to confer upon each one of us to stretch out decrepit hands to claim it for ourselves with his help.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, oh God, your word is a word that we live under. You have brought it into our lives and when we think of so many that do not have this privilege of knowing the word of God, reading the word of God, having the word of God explained to them however imperfectly.

[71 : 51] We pray that you would make it our business to ensure that we know the one of whom this word speaks, even Jesus Christ the righteous.

Grant mercy in his name and all we ask with forgiveness of sin in him. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Concluding Psalm 76 verse 7.

Psalm 76 and sing to the end of the psalm. Verse 7. Thou Lord, even thou art he that should be feared.

And who is he that may stand up before thy sight, if thou once thou angry be? For heaven, thou judgment caused, be heard, the earth was still with fear, when God the judgment rose, to save all meek on earth that were.

Surely the very wrath of man unto thy praise redoules, thou to the remnant of his wrath would set restraining boughs. We sing to the end of the psalm. Thou Lord, even thou art he that should be feared.

[73 : 00] Thou Lord, even thou art of faith now that is god cared before thy side His one surrounding.

From heaven the tragic all the earth.

The earth was filled with fear. When God the judgment rose to see.

On the young earth the plain. To be a laddie rod.

Undone like hissing. God bless you.

[75 : 06] God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

[76 : 24] God bless you. Amen.