

# The Mystery of the Deep Things of God

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 August 2022

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us from elsewhere.
- As we come together to worship God, we pray His blessing and His word to us this morning. We're going to sing to God's praise from the Metrical Psalm 78.
- And we're singing from the beginning down to verse 6. Psalm 78 from verses 1 to 6.
- Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear. The words that from my mouth proceed attentively do hear.
- My mouth shall speak a parable and sayings dark of old. The same which we have heard and known and as our fathers told.
- [ 1 : 05 ] We also will them not conceal from their posterity. Them to the generations to come declare will we. The praises of the Lord our God and His almighty strength.
- The wondrous works that He hath done. We will show forth at length. Whose testimony and His law in Israel He did place. And charged our fathership to show to their succeeding race.
- That so the race which was to come might well then learn and know. And sons unborn who should arise might to their sons them show.
- And so on. We can sing these verses. Psalm 78 from the beginning. Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear. Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear.
- The words that from my mouth proceed. Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear.
- [ 2 : 30 ] My mouth shall speak a parable and sayings dark of old.
- The same of which we have heard and known. And blessed Father's word.
- We also will not conceal from their hostility.
- And through the tender divisions. To come we play with we.
- The places of the Lord our God.
- [ 3 : 45 ] At His almighty stand. The wondrous works that be undone.
- We will show for the land. Whose test of the Lord our God. Whose test of the Lord.
- And His holy and holy and holy. In His holy and holy place. And judge the mothership to show.
- The lips of speaking grace. The tone of the Lord. The voice of speaking grace.
- The voice of speaking grace. The voice of speaking grace. The voice of speaking grace.
- [ 5 : 15 ] Just join together in prayer. Ever-blessed God, we have been singing the words of your servant, the psalmist, who was led by your Spirit to compose words that were expressive of the relationship enjoyed by your people with yourself, their God.

A relationship that encouraged them to share their experiences with others and to speak of the blessings that they enjoyed under your hand.

And we know that there is a place for sharing and witnessing to the experiences that we enjoy as God's people.

That there is a place for it in the lives that we lead as your people. That we are not only encouraged to make known these things to others.

Those who share the same faith. Those who can identify with the things that we discovered of God and the God of heaven in the triune relationship that you have as God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[ 7 : 05 ] But also as God who has presented himself to our souls as our Heavenly Father, as our brother and as our Spirit who is one with our own Spirit.

As we possess that never-dying faith. We pray that we would be encouraged so to do and be fearless even in speaking of the truth as it is served, lived in our lives.

Lived out in our lives rather. But we also are encouraged to formally give testimony to God's grace in our hearts and in our lives as believing people.

To do so because it is incumbent upon us as those who know the Lord to testify to that fact. Not just sharing it with those who have that experience themselves, but sharing it with others who have yet to enjoy that privilege.

And your servant, the psalmist, speaks of that duty that devolves upon the families of God to rehearse and to discourse with regard to God's truth in their family lives and in the lives within the community.

[ 8 : 47 ] We pray that we pray that we too might learn from their example and be willing to speak of the things of God to those who may not know God as we know Him.

We pray your blessing upon such a testimony that the eyes of our understanding might be opened as those who speak of that truth and who hear that truth spoken.

So help us to that end to remind us and help us to remember what you wish us to do as your people here in the world.

Bless us as we worship today. Bless your word as we have it upon our lips to sing it, to magnify your name with our praises.

Bless your word as we have it upon our lips as we petition the throne of grace, the God who sits sovereign upon that throne and who is able to wield the mighty rod of grace, the mighty rod of grace, the mighty rod of grace over this world that you survey as no other can.

[ 10 : 05 ] No matter how gifted we are as a society, no matter how privileged we are, no matter how many faculties and facilities we have at our disposal as this world hurdles in all kinds of directions, not knowing what the future will hold.

Yet God who is sovereign knows all things, the beginning from the end, the end from the beginning. And we bless you and thank you that you are such a God. And as you survey this sin sick world today and you see all the sadness that is in it, all the trials and the tragedies that are before your eye, we are thankful that we can confess our need of your own grace and to cry out to you who is powerful, all powerful and pray for mercy.

Mercy to us as a people, as a nation, even as nations, when we see so many sorrows displayed, when war is so rampant and when we see the destruction that is so evident, when we think again of places that are before us, perhaps not so readily as the passage of time inevitably dictates.

We think of the situation in Ukraine and we pray that peace would be something that would come from on high and that through your intervention, through your decree, that a resolution would be found where hostilities would cease.

We think of the Middle East and we see there again an increase of tension when we see Israel and our neighbours engage in hostilities.

[ 12 : 18 ] And we think of the Yemen where there is constant warfare and the aftermath offered. Great need is before us when there is so much destruction leaving the elderly and the weak and the young who are often the victims of such tragedies.

We pray, Lord, for these places. We pray, Lord, for these places.

We pray for grace to look heavenwards before we act hastily, opening our mouth without due regard to the consequences, taking actions that we may sometimes regret.

This is often the case. Grant to us wisdom to know to turn to the Lord and to wait upon you. Remember us as a community. We pray for those afflicted by the griefs and the sorrows of this day, when sadness assails us, when death comes and touches the lives of some we know, some that we know little about.

And yet we know the experience of the sorrows of death and we bring them before you and ask that you would assuage their grief. We pray for the sick, remembering those who are unwell, those who are confined to their homes, to hospital, to care homes for the elderly, even those in the hospice.

[ 14 : 17 ] We pray for those who are caring for them and those who have a care and a concern for them. Those who are heavy-hearted as they look upon loved ones, unable to care for themselves, and they themselves feeling very much unable to administer the care that they would wish.

We give thanks for the caring professions, playing for doctors and nurses and all members of that fraternity who are industrious in alleviating the sufferings of others.

Lord, help us to bear one another's burdens, unite us in prayer, bring us as one, conquered before a throne of grace, seeking above all else that a day of power, would be experienced, where the heavens would be rent, and the Spirit of God poured out, and the Word of Truth, that is preached and proclaimed by whatever means, that it would be blessed to each of us, encourage us to look to the Lord, the one who is without change, the same yesterday, today and forever, the same God who blessed in times past, who blesses still today, that his blessing would be upon us, forgive our sins in him, all we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to read the scriptures of the New Testament, and reading from the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and chapter 2.

1 Corinthians chapter 2. You can read the whole chapter. 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 1.

[ 16 : 11 ] And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and I am crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and much trembling. And my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words, of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that your faith should not stand, in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect. Yet not the wisdom of this world, or of the princes of this world, that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew.

For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things, which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, same the Spirit of a man which is in him.

[ 17 : 47 ] Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him, but we have the mind of Christ.

So on, may the Lord add his blessing to our reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. Let us sing now some verses from Psalm 49.

Psalm 49, and from the beginning, and we sing in six stanzas to verse 9. Verses 1 through to 9. Hear, please all people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell, both low and high, both rich and poor, my mouth shall wisdom tell, my heart shall knowledge meditate, I will incline mine ear to parables, and on the heart my sayings dark declare.

[ 19 : 30 ] Amidst those days that evil be, why should I, fearing doubt, when off my heels the iniquity shall compass me about, whoe'er they be that in their wealth their confidence do pitch, and boast themselves because they are become exceeding rich.

Yet none of these his brother can redeem by any way, nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay. Their soul's redemption precious, and it can never be that still he should forever live, if not corruption see.

And so on. These verses to God's praise. Hear this, O people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell. Hear this, O people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell.

O Lord, I will rich and good, my heart shall wisdom tell.

My heart shall knowledge mediate, I will incline my ear, to my above the sun beyond the hour, my spirit shall declare.

[ 21 : 31 ] A colour of God's love upon the launch of, O people, and give ear by children. A place Naboo's will cement the potential of solstice.

■■■■■■■■ así, o highest Episode 18■. A Red encuentran at Mr. 1922, And in your Head, And all my hills Iniquity Shall Compared Each Other Where They We loveíos.

We love Milton. to face and close themselves because they have become magazine in race yet none of this is rather come redeem the enemy way nor can he love to God for him sufficient and some pain their soul's regeneration precious is and can never be that shall be sure forever live and do not find love humanity be like us to turn for a short while to this chapter that we read together in the

New Testament scriptures Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians chapter 2 and we can read verse 9 first Corinthians chapter 2 reading verse 9 but as it is written eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit for the spirit searches all things yea the deep things of God and so on as it is written eye hath not seen nor ear heard and so on when we think of the gospel of Jesus Christ what do we think of it is often explained explained in this way that it is the good news of salvation through

Christ Jesus good news to people who are all too often suffering because of all manner of bad news the message of the gospel is in many respects simple the simplicity of it is in what it tells us for example in the gospels we find and in the new testament epistles we find various expressions of the same truth and that truth is this all have sinned and come short of the glory of god and the gospel tells us what god's way of salvation is how the person who is always coming short of god's glory is going to have that situation or predicament addressed i don't want to say too much about this but simply this that all men all women all be the young or old of every generation of every creed and culture are according to the word of god guilty before the judgment seat of god none is accepted and the gospel is the good news for such a person now if without the gospel that statement would not change all have sinned and come short of the glory of god sinned the result of that god predicted and god promised but he also provided an answer to it and that's what the gospel declares to us that without that our predicament our

[ 29 : 35 ] future would be assured we would appear before God to answer for our shortcomings to answer for our our guilt in not giving to him the glory that is his as our God and our creator and as those who will answer to him for that then there would be no hope for us but that's what the gospel does it provides hope for this world it provides God's remedy for our predicament it provides a way by which our inability to give God the glory is met through the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ of which the gospel speaks now why am I beginning to look at these words in this way because simply the words of our text reminds us of how God himself was to answer our predicament and that his provision is something that the gospel speaks to us of without him providing an answer to the predicament that the fall of man created then we would remain as we were we would not possibly experience any change in our human condition now Paul is saying for all its simplicity all men if left to themselves would not and could not change from what they are by nature to what they need to be in order to appear in God's presence at the throne of judgment without fear now what we find in this verse is first of all the warrant that Paul has for saying that because what he applies to is God's word and

I'm not embarrassed about emphasizing the place that God's word has to have in the life of the believer the person who believes in Jesus Christ the person who believes the gospel the person who believes that he's a God must believe his word and if we don't believe his word if we challenge the truth of his word if we question it if we divide it up into what we are pleased to accept and what we are not then we jeopardize our relationship with God we always have to present the integrity of God's word as a word that he has given to us and upon which we can depend as a truth or the truth of God now what Paul is doing here is he's speaking of a situation that we've outlined where man's predicament is highlighted and Paul emphasizes that predicament and

God's answer for it by drawing attention to what God's word is saying so verse 9 in the first instance is a reference to the word of God I'm not going to say it as a quotation as we'll see it isn't an exact quotation as it is written he says I have not seen nor ear heard and so on so I want us to begin with that emphasis the emphasis that we can believe that God places upon his own word because when it comes to his servants the apostle or any preacher of the gospel telling us what God has said or his doing that his word is the place where we gain light upon that this is the warrant of what Paul's saying the second thing is that what

God is telling us through the words of the apostle is that our predicament is such that even the simplest of truths presented to our human intellect will not be understood by us simply using our human resources intellect the ability to reason even the understanding that is elevated is not sufficient in and of itself to grasp the significance of what the gospel is presenting to us the third thing is that what we are reminded of and we've already alluded to is that the gospel is God's provision for our predicament that is its source it's not the minister it's not the apostle it's not the prophet it's not any other person who conveys the truth of the gospel but the

God who is the source of the gospel who is the source of that salvation and the final thing just a brief word I suppose about that those who receive the gospel those who believe the gospel those who are enabled to embrace the truth that the gospel presents to them will witness to that fact by the love that they possess to the Lord Jesus Christ the believer is not a believer because they love Jesus but because they love Jesus it is a proof positive that the gospel has been believed by them because the gospel speaks preeminently about Christ now what we said at the outset is that when Paul says as it is written usually or at least sometimes we can look to the scriptures because what he is referring to is written within the scriptures scriptures sometimes he is quoting directly from a passage of the scripture and it is clear from that passage which reference what he is referring to now most people most theologians most commentators on the scripture will take you to a passage in

[ 37 : 27 ] Isaiah that is most like this word that Paul is referring to chapter 64 and verse 4 for since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear neither hath the eye seen O God besides thee what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him now you can see that there is similarity between these words of the prophet Isaiah and the words that the apostle is speaking here but it is not an exact marriage it is not an exact quotation and that leaves theologians in a middle because they ask the question does Paul has he forgotten the scripture or is he abusing the scripture by just providing words that he applies in a context and saying this is what the word of

God is saying but I think while you look if you look at the context of the words in Isaiah clearly the words mean something in that context that they cannot mean in the context in which the apostle Paul is using them in this place it is possibly closer to a paraphrase of these words but more than likely and I think quite a number of commentators would argue that Paul is simply referring to the scripture as a whole and the scripture as a whole can repeatedly be pointed to as underlining or emphasizing the truth that Paul is conveying in this passage as a whole it's not just that he can refer to one passage specifically and refer to that passage and insist this is what this passage is saying and I'm applying it in this context which we can see sometimes happen

Jesus often refers to the scripture and specifically takes the old testament passage and applies it to the situation he finds himself in and says this scripture is fulfilled in me at this time in this at this moment in time this is the fulfillment of God's word but at other times you find Jesus referring to an old testament passage and while it is not an exact quotation it is clearly referenced to what he is saying so that there is flexibility I suppose in that but there's no doubt when we read the whole chapter and I would like you to read it again for yourself that the whole emphasis of what the apostle Paul is saying is that by nature every one of us is in the same predicament while we are in possession of the most elevated of human faculties of the powers of reason the powers of understanding the powers of wisdom in and of themselves they are incapable of allowing us to penetrate the deep mysteries of God's ways of salvation in Christ

Jesus we cannot by ourselves understand what God is doing even though the gospel presents it to us I've said it often to our own congregation here and if you're a visitor you won't mind hearing me say it to you for the first time but very often when Christians speak about their own experience one thing that you hear from them is this that the hardest thing that they could do was believe the gospel they had been born and raised within a community that could be considered Christian they were raised in Christian homes at some point they were exposed to doctrines theologies teachings of the Bible within these homes and yet they did not believe the truth that they were presented with they could say that they acquiesced in the truth that they were quite prepared to say well that's the truth that the

Christian believes in but it was not their truth it was not what they believed in it was impossible for them to believe that the salvation of their soul could be accomplished by Christ and yet when they experienced the spirit of God working in their hearts in their minds it was as if the blindness that affected them was taken away what they were incapable of seeing with the eyes of the natural mind was taken away in that twinkling and they couldn't explain it in any other way whereas I was blind now I see when Jesus performed the miracle in the experience of a man born blind his eyes were able to see what he could not see before then and spiritual blindness is no different in the experience of every individual unless God takes that blindness away then they will remain ignorant of the truth they will remain lacking in the wisdom that is

[ 44 : 12 ] God's wisdom and that's what the whole burden of what Paul has to say here what the Old Testament teaches us and Paul refers to it obliquely if you like with a reference that is not pointed enough for some it is not once that it makes reference to this that there is a mystery that is God's he is a person who is mysterious deeply mysterious and the person who who gets up on his high horse and says I'm not going to believe this God unless I see into this mystery as if the puny creature that man is can actually fathom the depths of God's being without God revealing his truth to him the thing about the gospel is it is a revealed system it is something that God reveals to us

I remember reading about a Christian minister who who was constantly trying to help this young woman in his congregation and she often came to see him and she was burdened because she felt her need of salvation but no matter how much of the gospel she heard preached she could not understand she could not believe the truths that were presented to her and one of the days he was speaking to her he to the summer's day to go out into the garden and he stood with her before an apple tree in the garden and he asked her this tree that they stood under was a tall tree and the fruit was very far off the ground and he says reach out your hand and bring to me an apple from that tree and she said

I can't it's too high it's too high up I can't reach it and he said that's quite right he said Paul could say I know in whom I have believed and I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day Paul he said can reach for such an apple but you you poor thing cannot now he says walk a little bit with me and they came to a tree again a tree that was covered in fruit but this one was a smaller tree a shorter tree now he said reach out and bring me a fruit from that tree and she reached out and took the fruit and he says even a child can bring that fruit down and he said so it is with

Christ no matter who or what you are Christ says to you him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out even the youngest child and through that her eyes were open she could see that by coming to Christ that was what she needed to do I can't explain that I can't simplify it any other than to tell you this is what happened this is what this man did and this was how her distress was taken away this was how she made sense of the senseless to her this was how the gospel became a gospel to the good news because Christ was saying to her him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out now if we read on what

Paul has to say here he says very simply the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned Paul is making a distinction between somebody who tries to understand spiritual truth with the natural abilities they possess with the natural intellect they possess and it's not going to work and in many respects Paul's world and our world is no different you know what he is dealing with here in Corinth he's dealing with a society that have given great emphasis to the powers of reason the powers of oratory the powers of the wise man the person who projects himself and his intellect so that all are in awe of what they see and what we project as a society may differ but we're looking at something that is entirely natural and very often devoid of spiritual true wisdom

[ 50 : 20 ] Paul says is divine is divine wisdom what the world considers foolish and yet God who is wise limits salvation to it a salvation the foolish of the world rejects the foolish of the world despises and yet at the same time they see themselves the wise of the world they see themselves as despising the wise of the Lord those who have wisdom from God the wisdom that God decrees wise is so different the burden of what Paul is saying is this truth of God is always a revealed truth you cannot work it out you can't take your slate and work it out you can't take your your spreadsheets and work it out you can't take your computer and google it and find it it doesn't work like that we cannot discover it except perhaps on our knees it is further proved by the fact that humanly speaking when you think of the apostle himself how does he describe himself at the beginning of the chapter

I brotherly said when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God he came as a preacher of the gospel yet he could not and did not depend on his ability to preach or his ability to proclaim the word that he had purely as his own you know we know and you know there are many gifted ministers of the gospel so gifted that they are able to to preach the gospel acceptably to their congregation and the congregation hang upon their every word and God in his goodness blesses that word through the agency of these gifted men gifted preachers of the gospel but the amazing thing is that those who are less so those who do not possess these powers of oratory those who are not so gifted theologically or academically or whatever that

God can also bless their word their preaching and has done and will do in the future the gospel is God's gospel the wisdom is God's wisdom the blessing is God's blessing the power is God's power now Derrick Prime favourite preacher of what I like to hear and read says the following Paul refers to his weakness and fear when he arrives in Corinth he felt unequal to the task set before him but Paul's weakness presented no problem to God rather it provided a platform or stage upon which God could demonstrate his power. That's the beauty of the gospel. You know I preach as faithfully as I can and I am never of the opinion that my congregation will be blessed by reason of my ability to present that gospel or my ability to do anything other than present that gospel in the hope that God will bless it. That

God's spirit will take his word and apply it to your heart and your mind and open your eyes so that you can see Christ with the eyes that need to see him as I would love you to see him as the altogether lovely one.

The gospel is God's provision and the blessing is by God's power. You know the hymn, John Newton's hymn, Amazing Grace.

[ 55 : 13 ] And in that hymn he was able to write and to speak of his own experience as somebody who was lost and who was found.

Not somebody who was lost and found for himself, but somebody who was lost and was found.

Somebody who was blind and was able to see. And I'm fairly confident that there is no person alive that appreciates the predicament that sin has introduced into their experience.

If you understand that predicament, you also understand the need that you have of God intervening in that predicament so as to take away the weakness that is used by nature.

It is written, I hath not seen, nor I have heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

[ 56 : 23 ] You could be excused for thinking that it is because of love that Paul is saying that the blessing of the gospel becomes yours.

And many people think, and this is the way it is inevitably reasonable for us to think like this, that surely there is something I must do in order for the blessing of the gospel to become mine.



And I present Christ to you and you love that Christ and you are blessed because you love him. That's the conclusion. Present Christ, you love that Christ, and you are blessed because of your love for that Christ.

But that's not the gospel. It's not because of your love that the gospel is a blessing to you. The blessing of the gospel brings the love of Christ into your heart and it overflows.

We spoke of it on Thursday evening in the prayer meeting. What we need to understand is this, what we need to emphasize is this, what we need to believe is this, that every person who receives the truth that the gospel presents to them.

[ 57 : 52 ] That revelation of God, that truth that God presents to us in the gospel, He reminds us that the blessings that the gospel brings, they're a gift.

You can't buy them, you can't earn them, you can't win them. It is God's gift of salvation through Christ Jesus.

The scripture reminds us that God says come, that God says take, that God says drink, that God says eat.

And it is all an invitation for you to do that. And it's not an invitation to love in order to be blessed.

But the blessing creates in your heart a love for Christ that overflows, that cannot but be expressed towards them.

[ 58 : 59 ] And the Christian, speaking to you Christian today, if I ask you the question, do you love Christ? And you say, oh yes, I love Christ. But your great fear, what is it?

Your great fear is, I don't love him enough. I love him, but I don't love him enough. And that's what meets you every day.

My love for Christ is supposed to be represented, to be reflected in my obedience to his word.

And where do I see that obedience? I don't see it often enough. I don't feel it often enough. But Paul says, What do you think that means?

Well, I've said it before, and I've quoted these words before, and I've often heard it explained in this way. that these words are words that speak of what awaits the believer when they get to heaven.

[ 60 : 21 ] They're thinking of the blessings of God when they are fully realized, when the saint emerges in glory, when they enter into heaven.

The glories of heaven, we can't describe them sufficiently well in this world. And the apostle is saying, I have not seen, nor hear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them.

So you can see why they think like that. Why they believe that that is what these words mean. But really, that's not what Paul is getting at.

What Paul is saying here is that the gospel, in its very essence, is a mysterious thing.

God's blessing of a sinner who is hell-deserving is a mystery. Why would God wish to confer a blessing on someone who is living a life, often in denial of that God?

[ 61 : 38 ] The gospel is such that it comes to undecided men and women. It comes to people who have no time for God.

It comes to people and they have no understanding of who God is or what God is about. And yet, he means to bless such a people.

The theologian, Roger Ellsworth, explains it like this, and I believe that what he is saying is quite true.

Would you ever in a million years figure out a plan of salvation such as this? God's only son left the glories of heaven to render perfect obedience to God and to bear the wrath of God against sinners by dying on the cross.

If I gave you homework and I asked you to write down in as short a compass as you can what you think would need to happen for you, a sinner, who has no knowledge of God or of Christ, what would need to happen in your experience in order for you and God to be reconciled?

[ 63 : 16 ] What would your answer be? How elaborate would it be? Well, God's answer to your predicament is beyond our ability to understand.

That's what the apostle is getting at. That's what the apostle is wanting us to understand. This is the beauty of the gospel. Anything and everything that your soul craves is found in Christ.

Everything and anything that you need in the face of eternity and an encounter with a holy God is found in Christ. Anything and everything that your sin deserves has been met in the cross of Christ.

And that's the mystery. That's the beauty. And you wouldn't think of it. But God has. Do not let the wonder of the gospel keep you from Christ.

That's the principle. The principle, Donald MacLeod in his book on the preaching of the gospel. And I understand what he's saying.

[ 64 : 35 ] I wonder if you understand it. There is a perverse argument that the sinner makes. which is simply this I am a sinner therefore Christ cannot be mine I am a sinner therefore Christ cannot be mine Dolph McLeod calls it perverse for a reason because it is sinners that Christ came into the world to save and how can the very person the very kind of person that God came to save in the person of Jesus Christ not be saved by the person that he sent to save him because of what God knows him to be Dolph McLeod quotes the words of Rabbi Dunfga sin he says is the handle by which I get Christ sin is the handle by which I get Christ there is no Bible verse that I can go to he said that mentions John Duncan by name

I can't go to the Bible and say Jesus Christ came into the world to save Carl MacDonald I can't go to my Bible to find that verse it's not there but there is a verse that assures me that the son of man has come to save that which was lost because he said I put my finger on that word lost that one word and I say I am in that one world I am the lost I am one that was lost and because Christ came to seek and to save me as lost I can believe that gospel I can trust that that gospel is for me it's a mystery have I explained the mystery to you it's not a mystery if I have that's not an excuse if you don't understand it all don't be embarrassed because it's a mystery how a holy God can love a wretched sinner that's what John Newton said that God saved a wretch like him a lost wretch a blind wretch and yet the gospel came to him and the blind saw and the wretched sinner saw Christ as one who could make him whole can you see that?

I hope that many of you have seen it and understand for yourself what it means to experience the salvation that is in Christ you're not too old to come to that knowledge you're not too young to come to that knowledge well may God enable every one of us to remember that however difficult it may appear to us I mean that's one thing that that I remember as clearly as the day dawned today I remember when my own eyes were opened and I went to speak to a blind man about what I saw who was blind just a few hours before that and it was just earth shattering difficult for me to understand how that blind man could not see what I now saw how quickly

I forgot how blind my own eyes were until they were opened and if you can't see well you know where to go not to the optician but to the one who takes away the blindness that is spiritual and able to heal everyone who come to him let us pray Lord hear our prayers and bless your word to us we give thanks that you are a great God and a God who is mighty to save to the others cleanse us from every sin in Christ Amen we are closing Psalm 111 and we are singing the first four stanzas Psalm 111 1 to 4 Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart I will God's praise declare where the assemblies of the just and congregations are the whole works of the Lord our God are great above all measure sought out they are of everyone that does their intake pleasure his work most honourable is most glorious and pure and his intended righteousness forever doth endure his works most wonderful he had made to be thought upon the Lord is gracious and he is full of compassion and so on

Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart I will God's grace be there where the assembly lest So does the eye of everyone that does let him take pleasure.

[ 71 : 27 ] His word was gone and was joyous and pure.

And his attempted righteousness forever does let him hear.

His words was wonderful enough, it should be judged upon.

The Lord is raised in hand, is born all on my own.

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