

Naomi Returns Home

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Date: 25 August 2024

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[0 : 00] We can resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 36. Psalm 36. And we're going to sing from verse 5 to the end.

Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great. Thy judgment deep does flood.

Lord, thou preservest man and beast, how precious is thy grace. Therefore in shadow of thy wings men's sons their trust shall please. They with the fatness of thy house shall be well satisfied.

From rivers of thy pleasures thou wilt drink to them provide. Because of life the fountain pure remains alone with thee. And in that purest light of thine we clearly light shall see.

Thy loving kindness unto them continue that they know. And still on men upright in heart thy righteousness bestow. Let not the fruit of cruel pride come and against me stand.

[1 : 15] And let me not remove it be, Lord, by the wicked's hand. There fallen are they and ruined. At work iniquities cast down they are and never shall be able to arise.

We can sing these verses. Psalm 36 from verse 5. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens.

Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great.

Thy judgment's deep as floods. Lord, thou praise the heavens.

Lord, thou praise the heavens. Thy grace, man and peace. How precious is thy grace.

[2 : 33] Therefore, in shadow of thy wings, men and sons their trust shall place.

They with the fondness of thy house shall be well satisfied.

From rivers of thy pleasures, Thy will drink to them provide.

Because of life, thou chanted pure remains alone with thee.

And in the beautest light of thine, We clearly life shall see.

[4 : 04] Thy lovingkindness unto them call.

Continue, let thee know. And still, O men of brightened heart, Thy righteousness bestow.

Let not the fruit of cruel and bright come and against me stand.

And let me not remove, let me, Lord, by the wicked's hand.

There fall now they unruined, When they thine work in equities.

[5 : 34] Cast down the heart, And never shall be able to arise.

Let us join together in prayer. Most gracious God, Most gracious God, as we come together to worship, We give thanks that we can call upon your name, And that you give us a way of access to a throne of grace.

A God who is a God who is the heavenly king and potentate of all the universe.

And yet we have that way of access. There are kings and queens and royal personages throughout the world.

And we could not envisage being given permission to move in the same circles as them. We couldn't be expected to be allowed to approach them.

[7 : 02] Indeed, in some cultures it is forbidden. And yet such a king as the king of kings invites us to come.

And permits us so to do in and through the passion of your son, Jesus Christ. We bless you and thank you for the way of access that ensures that it is always freely open to us.

That he has consecrated that way by way of his own shed blood. We bless you and thank you for the obedience that was his to your will.

And that he took delight in doing what it was that you commanded him to do. We ask that you would bless us in his name this evening.

Bless our gathering together here in this place. And though our numbers are few, we give thanks that collectively we can envisage a number that is beyond our ability to enumerate.

[8 : 24] Because you have people the world over. Not only do they gather publicly, but they also are required by reason of their own circumstances to meet in secret.

There are cathedrals. There are large buildings that bear the name church. There are house churches. Places that are consecrated to the service of your house.

Where twos and threes are met together for fear. And we know that even as it was in the day of our Lord, following on from his crucifixion, as the disciples met in his name, they met covertly for fear of the Jews.

And yet you are pleased to present yourself in their midst. And we would seek that from you this evening. That we would recognize that you are in our midst.

And that every one of us here would be able to recognize you, even in the breaking of bread. Because we are met to handle the bread of life.

[9 : 48] The word that you have given to us that speaks of the personage that is royal. Even the Christ of God. And as we handle that word.

As we sing that word. As we contemplate the truth that it contains. May we as one appreciate the privilege of meeting in this manner.

Bless the gatherings of your people throughout our island communities and beyond. Remember those who sat together at the Lord's table today to commemorate his death until he comes.

May those who did it for the first time be encouraged in establishing publicly their faith in him.

And bearing testimony to saving work in their life. We bless you that you are still at work. Even though we fear that there is so little evidence offered in our own congregation here in recent days.

[10 : 56] Yet we cannot but believe that you are at work. And we pray that that work would come to light. And that those who have crossed in with you by faith would be encouraged to bring that to notice.

And to walk without fear in the name of the Lord. And do so wishing to share with others the wonder of having put their trust in him for time and for eternity.

The days of opportunity are few. And yet we are required to avail ourselves of them. So remember those who cannot be with us this evening.

We pray for those who are confined to their homes by reason of illness. Some in hospital. Some in care homes. Some in the hospice.

We also remember those that have been recently bereaved. And for whom it may be difficult to publicly meet with your people. We ask that you would sanctify the visitation of sorrow to us.

[12 : 11] As a congregation and a community. We pray for those who are not only in the old city. We have no city that we are but sojourners.

Those who are pilgrims. Those who are walking roads that will ultimately lead to a terminus that you have appointed whenever that may be.

We pray for all who fear that they are nearing the journey's end and who may think themselves to be unready.

Lord, if they are of your people, we ask that you would open their eyes to gaze upon Christ once again, that they may be persuaded that what they have is of worth and that they have indeed come to know him whom to know is life eternal.

For those who have still to make that acquaintanceship, we pray that you would guide them to bow the knee at his footstool and yield their lives to his tender care.

[13 : 23] He is the good shepherd. He is the one who looks after his flock with care and with concern. We pray for your blessing to be upon that flock the world over, remembering the parts of the world that are war-torn, amongst whom your people are found.

We know that even in hostilities that are ongoing, in different quarters, that you have a people there and they suffer greatly because of their faith and because of the trials that are brought to bear upon their faith.

Keep them safe, we pray. Enable them to fix themselves upon the rock that will not budge and that they would be persuaded that this is a rock against which the gates of hell will not prevail.

So hear our prayers and bless our community and congregation. Watch over us, each one. Cleanse from sin.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We can sing again through the praise of God, this time from Psalm 17.

[14 : 40] Psalm 17. And we're singing from the beginning of the psalm. Lord, hear the rite. Attend my cry.

And to my prayer give heed. That doth not in hypocrisy from faint lips proceed. And from before thy presence forth my sentence do thou send.

Towards these things that equal are, do thou thine eyes intend. Thou provest mine heart. Thou visitedst me.

By night thou didst me try. Yet nothing founts for that my mouth shall not sin. Purpose die. As for men's works, I by the word that from thy lips doth flow.

Did me preserve out of the paths wherein destroyers go. Hold up my goings, Lord. May guide in those thy paths divine. So that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine.

[15 : 46] I called have on thee, O God. Because thou wilt me hear. That thou mayst hearken to my speech. To me incline thine ear.

Psalm 17, verses 1 to 6. Lord, hear the right. Attend my cry. And to my prayer give heed.

Lord, hear the right. Attend my cry. And to my prayer give heed.

Thou-te-of him.

presence for my sentence to love's end toward these things that equal love to love thy nice intent love thou prudes mine heart thou missest me by night thou didst me try yet nothing founts for not my mouth shall not sin heart host die as for men's works

[17 : 57] I buy the word that from thy rest doth blow dead dead me preserve out of the path where them distraught the earth show hold up my goings Lord me guide in those thy paths divine so that my first steps may not slide out of those waves of thine

I call it out on thee O God because thou wilt me hear that thou mayst hearken to my speech to me incline thine ear let us hear God's word as we have it in the Old Testament scriptures and we are reading from the book of Ruth the Old Testament the book of Ruth and we reading chapter one now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land and a certain man of

Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab he and his wife and his two sons and the name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi and the name of his two sons Malon and Jilean Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah and they came into the country of Moab and continued there and Elimelech Naomi's husband died and she was left and her two sons and they took them wives of the women of Moab the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth and they dwelt there about ten years and Malon and Jilean died also both of them and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband then she arose with her daughters in law that she might return from the country of

Moab for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters in law with her and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah and Naomi said unto her two daughters in law go return each to her mother's house the Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me the Lord grant you that you may find rest each of you in the house of her husband then she kissed them and they lifted up their voice and wept and they said unto her surely we will return with thee unto thy people and Naomi said turn again my daughters why will ye go with me are there yet any more sons in my womb that they may be your husbands turn again my daughters go your way for

I am too old to have a husband if I should say I have hope if I should have a husband also tonight and should also bear sons would you tarry for them until they were grown would ye stay for them from having husbands nay my daughters for it grieve me much for you sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me things of the of the

[25 : 31] Lord prepared hath his throne in heaven's foot to stand and everything that be hath his kingdom doth command O ye his angels that excel in strength bless ye the Lord ye who obey what he commands and hearken to his word O bless and magnify the Lord ye glorious hosts of his ye ministers that do fulfill what their pleasure is O bless the Lord all ye his works wherewith the world is stored in his dominions everywhere my soul bless thee the Lord these verses to God's praise Psalm 103 verse 17 to the end but unto them that do him fear God's mercy never ends but unto them that do him fear

God's mercy never ends unto their children's children dream still dream still his righteousness extends to such as keep his covenant and mindful and all way of his most just commandment that they i lu love to in heaven heaven's earth to stand.

And everything that being has his kingdom does command.

O give his angels that excel in strength bless ye the Lord.

He who obey what he commands and hearken to his word.

[28 : 49] O bless and magnify the Lord ye glorious hosts of this ye ministers that do fulfill what in his pleasure is.

O bless the Lord all ye his word. Wherewith the world is stored in his dominions everywhere my soul bless thou thou thou the Lord.

We'll turn to the passage that we read in the Old Testament scriptures the book of Ruth chapter 1 and we will read verse 22.

Verse 22. So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite as her daughter-in-law with her which returned out of the country of Moab and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

So Naomi returned on Ruth the Moabite as her daughter-in-law with her. I'm sure there's nobody here who has not got some familiarity with the story of Ruth.

[31 : 03] It is a short book and it's a book that gives an account of an occasion an event a history from the Old Testament scriptures.

Some describe it as an important lesson in theology some describe it as the gospel in the Old Testament and it is all of these things I would imagine we could comfortably use these descriptions.

There are three principal characters found in the book Naomi and Ruth her daughter-in-law and following on from the first chapter the Passion of Boaz.

But it is a book about redemption and it is a book about the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does it feature as a part of the Lord's genealogy it also displays to us elements of God's grace in the life of believing people.

And that important aspect I think is brought to our attention in the verse that we are wanting to look at in particular this evening.

[32 : 52] Three thoughts that I would like to frame our time around. First of all the returning exile.

Secondly the divine provision. And thirdly the migrant convert.

Wrote the migrant convert. Three headings which will frame our thoughts around. first of all in Naomi the returning exile.

The story line is not a comfortable one in many respects. And I suppose it depends on how you interpret scripture.

how you handle the meaning that is meant to be taken out of this book as a whole. Questions are frequently asked about the departure from Judah by Naomi and her husband Elimelech.

[34 : 22] Is it something that was justifiable? And the conclusion that some people arrive at is very often based on the outcome of the story rather than asking that question in light of how they acted at the very outset.

We are told that there was a famine in the land and that Elimelech and Naomi and the two sons left Bethlehem Judah and they went to Moab.

That's a statement of fact. We are not told exactly what stimulated that movement away from their homeland.

the obvious answer is that there was famine and that they went to meet the need caused by the famine elsewhere.

And if you want to be pedantic, if you want to be somebody who's clear in your own mind about the rights and wrongs of how the people of God behave, the question of their departure is one that can easily be answered because as God's people living in God's chosen land, they lived in Judah, in Bethlehem, land of bread, in the house of bread, it should have been sufficient for them to know that God would provide for them whatever the need was.

[36 : 41] As God's people who would have been under God's instruction, it should have been sufficient for them to have that information and remain as they were.

But that is not what they did. And the alternative to pointing a finger of blame at them is to work your way through to the end of the story and to say, well, it all worked out in the end.

They did what they did, rightly or wrongly, and blessing followed on from that, which is the way some people may well think it should be considered.

But we cannot ignore the fact that they were obligated to remain as they were, even though you might make allowances for them at the level of self-preservation, that the choices made were not the right choices, simply because they put themselves in harm's way by refusing the promise of God's preservation, which was theirs by reason of their covenant relationship with God as a people.

And they went from the place where God had previously blessed them and promised to continue to bless them, to a land that was hostile to God, a land that had idols aplenty and exposed themselves to that kind of environment.

[38 : 50] Now, strangely enough, in the way God describes to us the behavior of his people, that's not unusual. It's not something that we don't come across often, that God's people make wrong choices, that God chose a place where he would be exposed to temptation and where he lived amongst an idolatrous and an immoral people.

That was his choice and it had consequences and the consequences followed him into the future in many different ways.

and this is no different because God in his wisdom has seen fit to reveal to us that there are ways in which he provides for his people and even though that provision may come at a cost to them, it may be that they will have to at times undergo severe temptation or testing before God will intervene and make his own superintendence of their providence known.

Nevertheless, wisdom decrees that that is better for them by far than action that they overrule without the ability to overrule for good.

This book was a book arising out of a generation and the end of the chapter before this, the end of the book of Judges, describes to us the situation that prevailed at the time, that the people did what was right in their own eyes.

[41 : 04] And this was where the problem was. The living, lively relationship with God had diminished and their sensitivity to God's law, God's rule, God's direction was gravely affected.

and because it was, they were not in the best position to make the right decision. And it may well be that at the heart of the decision that was made, it was not an evil decision, but a wrong one.

It was not something that was defiant against God, but one that was considered as something that they themselves should do and that it would be better for themselves.

we read at the point at which Naomi is about to return, that she describes her return in Terence, that also describes the way that they left Bethlehem, that they went out full and they returned, she returned empty.

Now you could argue what that means is that the family was whole, she had a husband and her two sons were living, but I think there's more to it than that and it is the opinion of some at least that the decision that was taken by Elimelech was one that was not based on desperate need, but one that was rather based upon the preservation of what they had and perhaps the improvement of it.

[43 : 18] It was considered a soldier, that was what he was going to do. It wasn't going to be a long-term arrangement, he was just going to mow up while things settled down and returned to his home again.

But it turned into a longer stay, both sons settled down, they marry more by death's who are idolaters. And while we may be persuaded that that is an extreme position to take, read the words of Don Fortner, he says this, and I suppose this is one of the more extreme views, rather than lose his riches, rather than be reduced to depending on God to supply his daily bread, eliminate what's willing to disobey and dishonour his God, lead his family away from God, and turn his back on the kingdom of God.

That is, I think, an extreme position, but it is one that's possible to take. And while much of what lies at the heart of that opinion may be speculative, there is clearly an imprudence in abandoning God's provision for their own attempts to provide in a hostile environment to their faith, which is what they were about to do.

Naomi, we are told, returned. And while her return is inglorious in many respects, the price that was paid is clearly evident.

Her life has shattered. Her home is broken. Her husband is dead. Her sons are dead. And the decision taken was at the heart of that.

[45 : 40] I'm not saying that her husband would have lived. I'm not saying that her sons would have lived. But there are elements to her situation that are clearly affected by that decision.

She died away from friends, from family, and she was bereft of all the comfort that you would expect or require when that happened.

And her return was therefore a bitter one. Her return is something that is based upon the hearing of the information that the Lord had reversed the fortunes of Bethlehem and the famine is at an end and there is bread to be provided.

But that is in no way going to alleviate the bitterness, the grief, and the emptiness that she has. And yet her grief is not a true position.

She does not return alone and she does not return as empty as she makes out.

[47 : 06] because what we need to remember is this, that whatever the experiences that we have in life, even the ones that we consider to be most negative, most demoralizing, most depriving, these experiences under God's hand are able to be used for our good, God's love.

They are not reasons for embracing sin. They are not reasons for departing from the path of righteousness. They are not reasons for doing what God clearly forbids.

But just because that is true doesn't mean that we cannot glean from the experience something that is wholesome and something that is strengthening spiritually.

Somebody did say that if it doesn't kill you it makes you stronger. And I suppose some people have had to go through much before they could ever say that.

God is not going to do it. But the conclusion that Naomi arrives at is that her return is a return of emptiness.

[48 : 38] A return where everything is against her. Her utterance could be the same as Jacob's. As he reads his providence and he concludes that God is against her.

Everything is against her. There is nothing good to be found in what they have encountered. And you can understand why that is so.

I went out home and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why call you Naomi seeing the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?

Very pessimistic and a very dark interpretation of events. But it's not the best position to be in to interpret God's providence.

Because when she returns, a broken woman, a woman bereft of creature comforts, the love of a husband, the support of her sons, and all that goes with that.

[49 : 51] The shame that she, you know, when she comes back, the people look at her and they say, is this not Naomi?

The whole village is gathered there expectantly, sure, longingly, wanting to see this person who has gone away from them, returning.

And yet, her return as far as she is concerned, is one that is very much against what they would expect to find.

And while we are maybe in danger of reading too much into what is written here, she returned because of her emptiness, and she returned because it had been reported to her that his people, God had given his people bread.

her and the question is asked, if both these things were not true, would she have come back to the place that she had previously lived?

[51 : 19] It may well have been the case that when they left together as a family, that their intention was only to sojourn.

And that's how their departure is described, they went to sojourn, they went to live in Moab for a short time, but their sojourn, they put down their roots there.

Now would she have gone away from that if the providence that she had to encounter had not made that the only obvious return that she could choose.

And sometimes that is the way it is. When the people of God go out of God's way, the choices they make in their life take them away from God.

and it is only a bitter providence that may well persuade them to come back to that way, to that God that they turned their back on.

[52 : 31] And there are many who would testify to that very truth. And people might say, well, what kind of God is it that is their God who introduces them to such pain and such bitterness in order to bring them back.

And then at that moment the choices made are overlooked. And God who is the God of providence is apportioned to the heavy part of the blame for what takes place without any consideration of the person's own involvement in it.

But the God that they have as God is the God of providence. And just because he is able to take bitterness and turn it into something that is sweet or at least something that is able to strengthen their conviction in who he is as their God that does not make him responsible or blameworthy because of their own actions.

What we see here is on her return it is simply stated they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

And that simple statement is not just a reminder to us that the famine is over.

[54 : 13] There wouldn't be a harvest if there was no grain to grow. And if the famine still existed that would not have been possible. But the harvest was marked by a feast a festival which was a festival which spoke of God giving new life.

Another name for this is the feast of the first fruits. And what it speaks of is the new beginnings or the new life that God ordains for his people.

And you could say it's just coincidental that this is the moment that Naomi chose to return. To return at the very time when the harvest was being marked.

And the key element in marking that harvest is the fact that it marks the new beginning of the year and the provision that God promises for future harvest.

Furthermore, you can read on in chapter 2 and you find there the provision because it was at the time of the harvest there was you could call a chance encounter with Boaz.

[55 : 50] And this came about because we read Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth of the family of Eliminate, his name was Boaz.

And Rose the Moabite said unto Naomi, let us go into the field and so on. It is a provision of God's that allowed her to encounter this person who would be the kinsman redeemer, who would be the means by which support would be given to this widow and to her daughter-in-law.

A chance event. But there are no chance events in God's providence. All that is true of him is that God provides and it's a wonder of his grace that that provision comes to this woman who would not consider herself deserving of God's provision.

Her estimation of her own situation is that God has afflicted her and that that is something that she doesn't question.

She doesn't react to it in the sense that disputing with it. And is that not the wonder of grace?

[57 : 20] Is that not the wonder of what God does in the face even of our sin and our negligence of the things that should be at the heart of our relationship with himself?

It's interesting, many of the commentators quote different passages from a poem by William Cowper and Cowper was someone who was afflicted with a very severe form of depression or mental illness at times in his life.

life. And one of his most famous poems was God moves in a mysterious way. And it's interesting when the various commentators quote a poem, they don't necessarily quote the same part of what he writes.

Some of them focus on one part, some focus on the other. Dr. Singler Ferguson quoted these words, Dich bin unfathomable minds of never failing skill.

He treasures up his bright designs and works his sovereign will. Dich bin unfathomable minds of never failing skill.

[59 : 04] It is Coper's own experience of difficult times in his life where he encounters the mystery of God's dealings with people.

And in many respects this is what we have here. How someone who forsook God's grace, God's promised provision is met by it on her return.

A return that could not have possibly taken place if her providence had not dictated that her return was in the way that it was, that she had been deprived of husband and children and impoverished because of that.

But he meets her return with grace. He meets her return with provision. Far in excess of her ability to understand it because as this book unfolds it's not just the story of three individuals, it's not just a love story, it's not just even a story of remarkable grace.

It is a story of God's superintendence of his own purposes for mankind seen in this way.

[60 : 41] The final thing we have here is Ruth, the migrant convert. There is a lot of talk today about the influence or the effect of migrants on different societies.

But God's people were often that very thing. They were forced by reason of circumstance to move around. Sometimes they were driven from their homes.

Sometimes it was the effect such as famine. Sometimes it was because of the malice of neighbors that they had to flee their homes.

Sometimes they were forcibly taken into bondage such as in Egypt and Babylon. and the people there were treated very much like migrants are treated today with great suspicion.

The story of Joseph is a mysterious story. The providence of God the son of Jacob sold into slavery and yet is the means by which that people are spared.

[62 : 00] and yet after some time the Egyptians treat them with suspicion which turns into hatred and a desire to destroy them.

And that's human instinct. That's human nature. And it's no different today. But Rozier is accompanying Naomi as she returns.

but she is on a different path. Naomi is returning but Ruth is not because she's never been to Bethlehem before.

This is a strange land for her. But I think it's Ferguson who calls the account that we have here the narrative of a surprising conversion.

And in the strange providence of God Naomi came to know Ruth because of the marriage that she had with her son.

[63 : 14] And through that marriage Ruth came to know Naomi's God. We're not told how, we're not told to what degree that the actual physical or spiritual nature of conversion, how it took place.

But what we do know is this very famous declaration of interest of interest in Naomi's God.

Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee. Whither thou goest I will go, whither thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God.

Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also if all but death are thee and me.

Very famous declaration of love. Love for Naomi, love for Naomi's God. An intention to remain with her and to continue following steadfastly after that God.

[64 : 32] Now who could doubt the reality of her commitment? Who could doubt that even through the test that was placed against her commitment?

By Naomi driving her away along with her sister-in-law. And you should not have blamed her if she had succumbed to that test.

But God God had a plan for Ruth. And that plan for Ruth is important for you and for me.

An insignificant event is just a single solitary woman who allies herself with a single solitary woman of a different faith, different background, with different knowledge of gods and so on.

And yet it comes at the very end of this book. There's a genealogy that is given to us. These are the generations of phares, phares begat hezron, hezron begat ram, ram, begat minitab, minitab, begat nashon, and nashon begat samon, samon begat boas, and boas begat obid, and obid begat jesse, and jesse begat david.

[66 : 10] Go to the new testament and Matthew's gospel in chapter one, you'll see a genealogy there. And the same genealogy which stops here continues until it reaches the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a displaced woman, a woman who had no historical background with Israel or Judah of old, had no knowledge of that God until her life was mysteriously bound up with someone who had gone out of the way and who despite that God used to introduce his son to the world.

God's providence is a mysterious thing. It doesn't excuse our activities, it doesn't excuse our inactivities.

We are all responsible to do what we ought to do when we are required to do it. If we fail to do so, our actions, our inactions, if they are wrong, will lead us into who knows what.

As God's people, he may allow us to return, as he allowed Naomi to return to her people. but it wasn't the same Naomi that returned, that left.

[67 : 47] A different woman, a different life, a different experience, her heart was rent and God alone could bind it up and make her life worthwhile after that.

And she was able to rejoice at the marriage that took place and so on. While God teaches us through his word of the mystery of how he does things, the mystery of how he works in individuals' lives, how he works in the experience of our world in producing and providing a saviour, even Christ.

May he bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Oh Lord, oh God, we give thanks that your word is never wrong, it teaches us when we are wrong, it reminds us of the consequences of our wrongdoing, it reminds us that we are seldom able to go in ways that are inconsistent with your ways without yielding the griefs that are marked.

We pray for your wisdom to prevail in our hearts so that we would know to hear your word and to act upon it. Cleanse from sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. Of closing Psalm is Psalm 115. Psalm 115 and we're singing from verse 12.

[69 : 26] Psalm 158.

has given. The dead nor who to silence go. God's praise do not record, but henceforth we forever will. Bless God, praise ye the Lord.

The Lord of us has mindful been, and he will bless us still. The Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will bless us still.

He will the hearts of Israel bless. Blessed on hearts he will.

Both small and big, but fear the Lord. He will then surely bless.

[71 : 06] The Lord will you and you see I more and more and more increase.

O blessed are the of the Lord, who made the earth theirös and skull, God's days do not record, but henceforth we forever will.

Bless God, praise ye the Lord. Amen.

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