

A God who is Holy - of Purer Eyes than to behold Evil

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[0 : 01] I can resume a public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 89. Psalm 89, and we're singing from the beginning.

God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all. For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure. Thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure.

I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously, and to my servant, to my love, to David's war have I. That I thy seed establish shall forever to remain, and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.

The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express, and in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness. For who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare, who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are.

And so on. We can sing these verses, Psalm 89, verses 1 to 6. God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall.

[1 : 24] God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall.

God's mercy is I will absoluteness. I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall never sing, and with my mouth I shall read. God's mercy is I will be in my mouth I shall Never sing, and with my mouth I shall be built.

ever to endure thy dead on else even in the heavens the world established you I with my chosen one of it I can undecliciously and to my dead and to my love to give its warm love I that I thy city shall forever to remain and will to generations of thy throne will and maintain the praises of thy world to thwart the heaven shall express express and and in the congregation of sins thy faithfulness for you in heaven with the

Lord may one himself come to who is thy God among the sons of those that mighty are all those that mighty are let us join together in prayer let's pray gracious endeavored blessed God enable us to come before you and those with the spirit grant to us that you would receive from us even the words of our lips may they be the words of our heart that we may not be content with the form of worship but that we would worship in spirit and in truth that we would not be content with the practices and procedures and habits and even these things that we have seen our forebearers engage in and that we would want to follow in their footsteps but grant to us more than that but that we would desire the face of the God of heaven to be lifted up before us in favour we confess that we do not deserve the least of your measures we are not worthy recipients of any of the blessings that you confer upon us that are without number each day we draw breath we encounter your grace we anticipate even your your measures and as your servant of old we can say that your measures are new each morning and great is your faithfulness help us to recognise the many ways in which you you are willing to receive us to yourself not because of who we are or what we have done not because we are in any way different to any of our peers but rather you are willing to receive us because we come before you in the name and for the sake of for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord for what he has done on our behalf and what he has initiated in our lives that those who would worship you do so because you have instilled within us that desire to acknowledge you as our God that you have created within us that insatiable appetite for your for your fellowship for your blessing to be conferred upon us within this act of worship we give thanks for your people who share in that desire and we pray that you would bless each one of them this evening in this place and in every other gathering of your people throughout our island community and our nation and beyond we give thanks for former blessings that ensure that the gospel of free grace

is still proclaimed in our hearing and that sinners such as we are invited, entreated, encouraged to come and seek mercy at the hand of Christ we do not know how long that way be out a lofted portion because we cannot presume upon your grace all we have to do is contemplate this nation state of which we are a part and the many villages and towns and cities even that bear testimony to the grace of God raising up those who would fear God fear God and serve God and who were instrumental in proclaiming the gospel and also in a like manner the worthy recipients of God's blessing upon their lives because they yielded these lives to God and yet in many of these very same places all we have are empty empty empty places of worship sometimes they are derelict sometimes they are given over to celebrate the world's ways and to our shame the soul is neglected we do not think of ourselves being on the same trajectory we think that as our parents and grandparents came to places such as this one that in years to come that will remain the case and yet even within our island it is seen that places that once had the Lord's people gathered in your name these places are with locked doors and empty pews and empty pulpits that is a testimony to our waywardness and to your displeasure and to you holding back your blessing and we do not deserve to think anything other than that may happen within these communities and even within these walls we pray for that spirit of prayer that it would prevail even beating upon the doors of heaven that you may come down and that you may bless our communities that you may bless our island that you may still be pleased to to rend us under the heavens and come down that you may quicken those who are asleep and that have no knowledge of Christ accept the knowledge that that even those who are being raised up in our communities have let slip and they are constantly showing their ignorance of what special days mean what services of your house mean what what the purpose for the gospel is and all other matters matters pertaining to that grant to us that understanding that we may cry out to God out of our need and that we may know that you are willing to bear your aram and to come down that the enemy of our soul may be pleased on his heels and that all the machinations of his evil kingdom may be set back there is no doubt but that

[12 : 05] Christ will have the victory and that he will delight in the souls of those that have received redemption at his hands but there is no telling who they are but that they will be numbered amongst the elect of God who have heard the gospel and received the gospel and believed on Christ to the saving of their souls the saving of their souls so remember our communities remember the preaching of the world even this day we pray for congregations where some have gathered to remember the death of Christ until he come we give thanks for the privilege of so doing and may the remembrances be genuine and may a fragrance permeate the atmosphere of your saints as they reflect and remember what the Lord has done for them we remember before you Lord your people confined to their homes in the weakness and infirmity of old age deprived of the opportunity to meet in public but we give thanks that you are not limited to the buildings that we occupy that you can reach them where they are and we give thanks for every medium that is put at their disposal for so doing may you sanctify these and may you remind us even though they are beneficial to the needy and those who have a use for them that that use is consecrated to that end but do not allow us to be numbered amongst those who absent themselves from God's house unnecessarily for in so doing they show that they have little understanding of the true nature of the Church of Christ and that the fellowship of the saints is all important because you have decreed it so so remember Lord this congregation in all its work and its activities may it be God honouring at all times do not allow us to follow the example of the world simply by generating activity for the sake of it but rather to focus our energies on the glory of God in Christ Jesus bless those who are confined to hospital being cared for by others in care homes those who are dealing with terminal illness we remember them all to you remember the grieving and the sorrowful pour out your balm into the grief of their heart as they approach death knowingly we all do and we do not know when that time will come maybe there are some here even as we pray that have put that even hour so far distance from themselves but sometimes you remind us by way of accident or infirmity that arises without warning that that moment can come and find us in a state of unpreparedness so pour out your spirit upon all who are grieving and bind their wounds and heal their hurts we pray for a nation in which we are found those who govern us may they do so with the fear of God restraining them from all evil deeds we pray for the parts of the world that are suffering from war and all that surround such circumstances

we pray Lord for the grieving and the sorrowful in these places the numbers that have shed their blood for love of their country are without equal in many respects and we pray that you would encourage us to bear each other's burdens even crying out to you the God who is the God of peace so watch over us the short time that we are together this evening blessing your word to us as we sing it and as we reflect upon it in our reading and our consideration of it may it lodge in our hearts for the good of our soul and pardon sin in Jesus name Amen we are singing now to God's praise from Psalm 42 from the beginning of the psalm down to verse 5 Psalm 42 from the beginning like as the hart for water brooks in thirst that pant and breathe so pants my longing soul O God that come to thee I may my soul for God the living God doth thirst when shall I near unto thy countenance approach and in God's sight appear my tears shall unto me be meet both in the night and day while unto me continually where is thy God they say my soul is poured out in me when this I think upon because that with the multitude

I heretofore had gone with them into God's house I went with voice of joy and praise yea with the multitude that kept the solemn holy days O why art thou cast down my soul why in me so dismayed trust God for I shall praise Him yet His countenance is mine aid we can sing these verses Psalm 42 from the beginning like as the heart for water brooks in thirst that pant and pray like as the heart for water brooks in thirst that pant and break so pant my longing soul O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord that come to thee I may my soul for God my soul for God the living God that thirst when shall I near my soul for God my soul for God the living God my soul for God the living God that thirst when shall I near my soul for God my soul for God and to thy countenance approach and in God's sight die here my tears shall endure my tears shall endure within me for then the night and day while unto me while unto me continually where is thy God my soul for God my soul for God my soul for God my soul for God my soul for God and to me for God and to me when this I think upon when this I think upon because that with the country

With the multitude I am here to put a dawn.

With the mentor of the stars I went.

[21 : 22] With voice of joy and grace. Here with the multitude I am here.

Thus all I am hope is. O why art thou cast down my soul?

Why in me so disliked? Trust God for I shall praise him yet.

Trust God for I shall praise him yet.

I am going to hear God's word as we find it in the Old Testament scriptures in the book of the prophet Habakkuk.

[22 : 43] The book of the prophet Habakkuk. And we are going to read the first chapter. Habakkuk chapter 1.

The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. O Lord, how long shall I cry?

And thou wilt not hear. Even cry out unto thee of violence. And thou wilt not save. Why dost thou show me iniquity?

And cause me to behold grievance. For spoiling and violence are before me. And there are that raise up strife and contention.

Therefore the law is slack. And judgment doth never go forth. For the wicked doth compass about the righteous. Therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

[23 : 51] Behold ye among the heathen and regard. And wonder marvelously. For I will work a work in your days.

Which ye will not believe. Though it be told you. For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans. That bitter and hasty nation.

Which shall march through the breadth of the land. To possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful.

Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards. And are more fierce than the evening wolves.

And their horsemen shall spread themselves. And their horsemen shall come from far. They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.

[24 : 51] They shall come all for violence. Their faces shall sup up as the east wind. And they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

And they shall scoff at the kings. And the princes shall be a scorn to them. They shall deride every stronghold. For they shall heap dust and take it.

Then shall his mind change. And he shall pass over and offend. Imputing this his power unto his God. Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God?

Mine Holy One. We shall not die, O Lord. Thou hast ordained them for judgment. And O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil. And canst not look on iniquity. Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously.

[25 : 57] And holdest thy tongue. When the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. And makest men as the fishes of the sea. As the creeping things that have no ruler over them.

They take up all of them with the angle. They catch them in their net. And gather them in their drag. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

Therefore they sacrifice unto their net. And burn incense into their drag. Because by them their portion is fat. And their meat plenteous.

Shall they therefore empty their net. And not spare continually to slay the nations. Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing.

To a reading of his word. To his name be the praise. Let us sing now verses from Psalm 73. Psalm 73.

[27 : 03] We're singing from the beginning of the psalm. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Yet God is good to Israel.

To each pure-hearted one. But as for me, my steps near slipped. My feet were almost gone. For I envious was.

And grudged the foolish folk to see. When I perceived the wicked sought. Enjoy prosperity. For still their strength continueth further.

Their death of bands is free. They are no toiled like other men. Nor plagued as others be. Therefore their pride, like to a chain, Them compasseth about.

And as a garment, violence doth cover them throughout. Their eyes stand out with fat. They have more than their hearts could wish. They are corrupt.

[28 : 03] Their talk of Rome. Both lewd and lofty ears. They set their mouth against the heavens. In their blasphemous talk.

And their reproaching tongue throughout. The earth at large doth walk. And so on. You can sing these verses 1 to 9 of Psalm 73.

Yet God is good to Israel. To each pure-hearted one. Yet God is good to Israel.

To each good-hearted one. But as far may my steps near slip.

My feet were almost gone. Would I love the truth.

[29 : 24] If he died too, by one day and place. seek the way give short and joy most that it be for still their strength content pleasant their death of ancestry they are not joy like the men nor plague does other redeem therefore let pride like you are gin then covers the blood and does a garment like your stuff cover them through earth they died they died they died they have more than blood that hearts could wish they had corrupt their job gone wrong and and they have been they said they are they are they are they are they are they are the stock and very prodigy throughout the earth that large devils walk and we turn to the passage that we read together the old testament scriptures the book of the prophet and we can read again verse 12 chapter chapter 1 verse 12 part thou not from everlasting o lord my god mine holy one we shall not die o lord thou hast obtained them for judgment and almighty god thou hast established them for correction thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he and so on

I think we can safely say that it is true that it has never been easy to be a follower of god I think it goes without saying whatever the generation may be if you follow god you follow someone that is despised and hated by many and the hatred that is directed towards god that is directed towards god is directed in equal measure towards those who claim to be his followers and that is the case throughout every generation I would suspect there may be times when it appears to be popular to be a follower to be popular to be a follower of god and that is something that only eternity will disclose and why it is the case that there are certain times it is the case that there are certain times when large numbers would want to follow after the people of god as they engaged with their god

I think if we just focus for a moment on the passion of the lord jesus christ we know that there were times when or there was a time when it was the done thing as it were to follow christ and that it was acceptable to follow christ and to be with those who were his followers was quite acceptable did that mean that everybody who was with large crowds were genuine in their desire for christ or to to be right with him well i don't think that is the case because we know that after a certain time many of his followers disappeared in the same way that snow disappears from a dike as the saying goes but the truth of the matter is what i want to say is that in every generation that there is clear indications that it is not easy if you are a follower of christ and i think we need to be aware of that because there are those who would encourage people to follow the lord with the pretense that it is something that is that it is something that is easy to do i don't think they mean to deceive them what they what they mean by that is they want to encourage people to become believers they want to encourage people to be where the lord's people are that they may derive benefit from being in their company to be engaged in the same wholesome activities wholesome activities as they are and they will say to them with with the right to do so come thou with us and we will do you good and there are many things that are to be said that are very positive about being with the lord's people whenever we are able to be in their company but we should never make a pretense of the fact that if we identify with the lord's people that not everyone will deal with us as if we are doing the right thing they will not deal with us as if we are anything other than the focus of their displeasure or suspicion or whatever it is that is stimulated within their heart heart now I begin like that because in this passage what we have is one of God's servants the prophet and he is engaged in a conversation with God and his conversation with God is really the conversation of somebody who is in many respects confused about what God is doing or more correctly what God is not doing because in his day he sees the people who bear God's name living their lives as if God did not matter they live a life where many of the teachings that they were under as God's people are neglected and many of the things that they ought to be doing are not done and

in amongst all that there is all kinds of wickedness evident within society and the difficulty for the prophet is why is God permitting such perverse behaviour without acting on it if you go back to the very start of this chapter and verse 2 O Lord how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear even cry out unto thee of violence and thou wilt not save why do you show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance for spoiling and violence are before me and there are that raise up strife and contention and so on where in a nutshell is his problem he sees the name of God be smirched he sees the cause of God and the mind he sees those who are championing a very clear alien culture and an opposition to the God of Heaven and yet they are not corrected and that is his problem why is God not dealing with the situation that confronts him now we can't suppose

I've overlooked to say this I should have said that while it is true that it is not easy to follow God that while it is not something that will be a garden of roses the life without God and without Christ is a life that is barely worth living in the sense that whatever it contains because it does not contain God and because it does not contain Christ it is really a shell of what it ought to be and while the believer is somebody who in living out their life may have to deal with all kinds of opposition and all kinds of trial and temptation arising out of the fact that they are the target of the enemy of their soul because of their interest in Christ and because of their love for God nevertheless all of these things which are not easy to deal with all of these things they can live with with God's help all of these things they are able to to approach and overcome with God's help but even having said that it does not negate the fact that because of what they are because of their humanity because of their confusion at times about God and what God ought to be doing they have this other dimension to their life where they are looking for the activity of God and not finding it in the way that they would want you know it is one thing for those who are not believers in God to say that God is not there to do what you would expect God to do that's the reason they would say that's the reason God is not doing anything he is not there to do it their answer is atheistic their answer is completely opposed to the reality of who God is and what God does but you have to remember that when that thought intrudes into the thinking of a believer then there is a problem you would expect people who do not know God to entertain such thinking but the person who believes in God and who trusts in God they should not have such thoughts but they do however fleeting these thoughts may be however limited these thoughts might be the being of God they should not be like for example well I think as a generation as an island community

[44 : 04] I believe that comparatively speaking in my reasonably short life what we are seeing at the present is a withdrawal of God's favour upon our communities and the reason I am saying that is there is so little evidence of new conversions and new expressions of faith I am not saying that it is not there at all that is not right but I am saying that compared to what it was like say even as short a while ago as 10 years ago 20 years ago 30 years ago where you heard of and you experienced the work of God's Spirit in your own life and in the life of others there was a vibrancy there was an energy within the preaching of the gospel and within the community of God's people which isn't there today and if you don't see it like that then there is something wrong with the way you see things as a minister one of the common complaints I have heard from other ministers so I don't need to point to this congregation although I can that the evidence of that is seen in the failure of the Lord's people to come to the prayer meeting for example the professing body of God's people that you would expect to attend the prayer meeting and yet there is clearly a dereliction of duty on the part of many the dereliction of duty whether they feel like it or not whether they want to or not that's not the point the prayer meeting is a central meeting of the people of God where God hears the prayers of God's people and the prayers of God's people in concert it's not just one or two people who stand publicly to pray that's what you see but you remember that when you hear God's people praying what they're doing is they're leading in prayer the words of their mouth are coming from the heart and the mind of those who are there with them who are numbered amongst God's people thoughts that the person who stands to pray might not even possess at the beginning of their prayer the prayer it is fed into by the believing body of Christ so that it is a union of believers crying out to God for his blessing now where that dereliction of duty occurs it is symbolic it is evidence of something intrinsically wrong with the spiritual life of the congregation and it's not just this congregation but every congregation throughout our island it's endemic it is something that is speaking to us loudly and clearly about something wrong now why do I mention that?

because inevitably what are you going to do? you're going to say to God why are you not doing anything about it? this is your cause these are your people why are you not stirring them up?

why are you not answering the prayers of your people if they do pray? and the fact of the matter is that it's not all that uncommon God's people pray but God does not answer God's people are right to pray but God is wrong not to answer is that right?

would we recognise God answering our prayers when we pray? are we attuned to the way God answers prayer?

are we possessive of the spiritual discernment necessary to appreciate how God would answer our prayers if indeed he chose to do so now that's the kind of situation that the prophet is dealing with here there is a definite need for God to speak into that situation and he cannot understand why God is not doing it that is his concern God is not answering just like our generation we might say the spiritual condition of the nation is grim and God is not doing anything about it and as a Christian entity we confess that and we wait for God to do something and it does not seem to be happening but here what we do find out is this although this was the way the mind of the prophet worked

[49 : 54] God did speak to him and God did remind him that he had got it wrong and he said to him I am working I am at work and then he said I am racing up now I don't think for one minute that the answer that the prophet God satisfied him certainly it flew in the face of what he expected God to be doing because how was God going to work?

well God was going to work in this way he was already preparing what he was going to do and that preparation involved this nation of Chaldeans that bitter and hasty nation which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs and so on that is not what the prophet wanted that is not what he expected that is not what he thought God was going to do to use a hostile nation who were themselves idolatrous and who were themselves ignorant of who the only living and true God was and it seems to us at times when the remedy that God proposes is worse than the deceives behold ye among the heathen and regard and wonder and wonder marvelling for I will work a work in your days which you will not believe though it be told you so what kind of response what response do we find on the part of the prophet and that's really the four things I want to bring to your attention for your consideration which we find in this verse here we can't really understand what the prophet is saying it's as if as God has imposed his thoughts into his heart and made him understand that even though he wasn't seeing God work

God was at work he was preparing the way for judgment upon that nation but what we find is this he finds himself as he fears reflecting on what is true about himself and about his relationship with God and there are four things that are highlighted by him which are simple truths that are always true about God whatever time we live in whatever occasion we find ourselves confronted with with God in his ways these truths are always are always there they're consistent because they apply to God the first thing is that he speaks of the eternity of God he speaks of the holiness of God he speaks of the sovereignty of God and the final thing he speaks of the ownership of God and he needs to explain that four things that are found in the words that we have in verse 12 to 13 art thou not from everlasting and it's as if you know having to confront something and you're thinking that that something is greater than than you greater than what you believe greater than the God that you have put your trust in you need to remind yourself of who that God is and this God is who is the God who is eternal the God who is ever the same regardless of what we confront in the world whether it is a world that is apostate a world that is atheistic a world that is idolatrous a world that is following things that have yet to be discovered that will attract the attention of the heart and mind of those who are in it you can understand that the world in which you and I live in it's a world that is a world of trends and fads and fashions and what is true is that all of them come and go they last for a while they attract attention the people come be sorted with them and then after a short while maybe a lifetime they disappear their import is no longer there you know for a while

I remember in my teens I suppose the Beatles were the number one pop group and they went from from what they were to begin with they moved into transcendental meditation and they followed that path of mysticism Eastern mysticism and so many followed their example became all important this was a discovery that this young group of people had made and they believed in their own in their own present that what they believed was worth believing and they shared it with others and while the Beatles were no more the band was a band what they once believed if they believe anything now those of them who are alive who knows but that's just one trivial example you find it throughout time that whatever it was that achieved popularity by reason of the confidence that people placed in it because it was popular because it was something that others shared in and were made it exciting and made it of importance with the passage of time it evaporated but God is ever the same

God lived through these fashions and facts and all that it involved the spirit involved in fact he was before these things a version the prophecy of Isaiah that encompasses all that the prophet Habakkuk has to say in Isaiah 57 verse 15 for thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity whose name is holy I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones God who inhabits eternity whose name is holy such a quotation covers all of the attributes identified but it reminds us that God is before time in the sense in which we measure it whatever point in time this world came to discover the wisdom of measuring it who knows when that took place formally we know that from the creation that the sun was created by God the moon was created by God light and day night and dark were created by God so these things that are bearing upon the measurement of time but God was before all that he inhabited eternity and he will inhabit eternity even after this world has ceased to function as it is functioning now we cannot I suppose fully understand what the eternity of God means

[58 : 34] God means but that he was from before the beginning the second thing we have is the holiness of God we mentioned this I think in the morning that God is holy and when we speak about the holiness of God it's not something that we can really begin to explain because for the the simple reason is this we cannot speak of it experientially we cannot speak of it from a personal perspective we don't know what holiness is we know it as it is presented to us in the scripture we are told that God is holy and that that God who is holy is without sin that that God is holy in the sense that in him is light and there is no darkness at all in him you know there is a passage which I often think of when I think of the holiness of God and we have it in the book of the prophet Isaiah in the year that King Isaiah died

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and his train filled the temple above it stood the seraphims each one had six wings and with twain he covered his face with twain he covered his feet and with twain he did fly and one cried to another and said holy holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory and the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke and then said I woest me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts and so on do we understand what holiness is clearly the seraphim who are holy angelic beings veil their faces in his presence the smoke and fire all of that speaks of a holy otherness he is by nature opposed to evil

I remember reading one of I think it was William Garnall he's got a very detailed commentary on the book of Galatians I think and he was talking about the holiness of the saints of God and he was saying about the effect a holy saint has upon people and he says this the light of a holy life he says puts as it were a padlock on the lips of the profane the light of a holy life puts as it were a padlock on the lips of a profane life and that's true the witness the testimony of a person who is holy will do that a person who is liable to curse and to swear will mind their language if they are in the company of someone they know to be a believer a genuine believer but that is but a reflected holiness it is a holiness that is there rightly so spoken of as holiness as holiness but it is but a pale reflection of the holiness of God as we said God is light and in him is no darkness at all and the prophet remembers that in the midst of all that he accuses God of not doing he cannot accuse God of not being what he says he is that he is a God who is holy

O Lord my God mine holy one and so on thou art of pure eyes and to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity but not a picture of who God is then the third thing we have is the sovereignty of this God the sovereignty of God what God is doing and what he is overlooking and forgetting is you know accusing him of inaction when he cannot see that God is actually very active this world is very much like that perhaps you Christian are very much like that you are saying God isn't doing anything God isn't doing anything therefore God is not able to do anything if he was able to do something he would do it surely as if it is really something that God wants to do to wave a magic wand as it were and take steps to change the lives of those who are before him he doesn't need to do that nor would he he is not a magician he is God a sovereign God who overrules not just in the life of individuals but the lives of every individual he inhabits this world from the beginning of time to the end of time there is a power at work in this world that is hidden from sight and when you look

I always encourage you to look at the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ from the moment he entered the scene of time as the infant babe in Aaron's to the point at which he yielded his ghost yielded his soul into death every moment of his earthly journey was according to God's sovereign plan and everything came to fruition for the salvation of sinners nothing but nothing occurred in his lifetime that was not for the good of those who believe in him because God is sovereign God is saying to the prophet is saying you're seeing these people and yet you're seeing nothing in other words it seems that you would naturally do something to correct them to rebuke them to condemn them even but it seems that you're not able to do that or not willing to do that but all the time

[66 : 10] God is saying the Chaldeans have been ordained as my rod and he needs to understand that but he remembers this we shall not die O Lord thou hast ordained them for judgment O mighty God thou hast established them for correction look at the way he has turned his thinking to understand what God was able to do that he would do it in his own time with his hand encircling his own people preserving them keeping them keeping them safe in the midst of all that was going down we shall not die why?

because you are my God when I read these words it reminds me of Psalm 118 I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover we sing these words as Christians sitting at the Lord's table reminding ourselves of ourselves of a focus that is rightly upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who has come to secure the redemption of sinners and that redemption is a redemption from death and a security in eternal life I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover we cannot get away from the fact that the kingly rule of God is omnipotent the kings of this world are they rise and they fall in their thousands and tens of thousands but his reign is secure it will continue and everything that is under his sovereign control will be to his glory whether we see it as that or not no matter how unlikely the circumstances the final thing we said here was the ownership of God what I mean by that is simple the prophet says about this God that he is his God

O Lord my God my Holy One mighty God thou hast established them for correction he is excluding himself from the condemnation and correction and justicement that God brings to bear upon them this is a confession on the part of someone who reminds himself of this privileged position that he has within the covenant relationship that exists between God and his people a God who is always faithful even when his people are not how often do God's people have to remind themselves of this promise that belongs to them that belongs to them I will be their God and they shall be my people how easy it is to forget that the God who said that doesn't change his mind the world in which we live changes but the God who created this world doesn't change his promises to his own people is

I will be their God even in the midst of all of these things that are so so despicable so unproductive spiritually so much an evidence of a world that lies in the iniquity and the sinfulness condition into which man fell God is still God we don't know what will happen in our society where it is going to go what is going to where it is going to end up maybe to the delight of some we will we will fulfill secularization the extension of Christianity in particular will be secured within our nation the witness and the testimony of God's people will be silenced does that mean that God is not God?

no, it does not mean that whatever it means the God who is sovereign the God who is from everlasting to everlasting God the God who is holy is the God who will secure the everlasting blessing of his people wherever he finds them wherever he has placed them and not one of these people will be lost whether they will be found in our nation or not is another matter well may God convince us that we need need to listen to God that we need to have a discernment to recognize what God is doing and why and an interest in what he is doing for the glory of his name may he bless to us these thoughts let us pray be merciful to us O God blot out all that is not in keeping with what you have revealed to us in your word cleanse from every sin in Jesus name

[72 : 14] Amen we are going to conclude singing the last verses of Psalm 73 Psalm 73 from verse 25 whom have I in the heavens I but thee O Lord alone and in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none my flesh and heart have faint and failed but God have failed me never for of my heart God is the strength and portion forever notice how the words of the psalmist have changed from the beginning of the psalm where he was and he was envious of the wicked who enjoyed prosperity we will sing these verses in conclusion whom have I in the heavens I but thee O Lord alone am I in the heavens I but thee O Lord alone am I in the heavens I but thee O Lord alone and in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none my flesh and heart have faint and ill but God have failed me never for of my heart God is the strength and portion forever for of my heart God is the strength and portion forever for of my heart God is the strength and portion forever for of my heart God is the strength and portion for of my heart God Jahre destroyed it all.

But surely it is good for me that I draw near to God.

In God I trust that all thy works I may declare abroad.

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