

Desolation

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: 11 October 2025

Preacher: Rev. Colin MacLeod (Lochcarron)

[0 : 0 0] Well, I very warm welcome to you all to our service today. It's lovely to see you here and especially it's a huge encouragement to welcome visitors. Thank you very much for coming and we're so grateful for the opportunity to worship again together.

And I'm especially delighted this morning to welcome Reverend Colin McLeod, who's going to be preaching this morning and in our services tomorrow. Some of you may know that there are actually several Colin McLeods in the Free Church. There's one in Bath, there's one in Turkey, this one is currently in Lough Karam.

I can assure you that of all the Colin McLeod in the Free Church, this is the best one. And so we are delighted to have you with us and we look forward very, very much to hearing God's word and to enjoying a time of fellowship together.

Again, to say that after the service this morning, there's the opportunity to meet with the session if anybody would like to do so. And those of anybody here who loves the Lord and who would love to sit at this table, then we would be delighted to speak with you.

The prayer meeting will be at 6pm this evening. That will be led by the elders, but I'll come to close that at about 7pm. And then the service is tomorrow at 11 and 6.30. We'd love to see you there and we look forward to them very much.

[1 : 1 9] So it's with great pleasure that I'll hand over to Colin. Welcome. Thomas. Well, Thomas, thank you for that very warm welcome.

I'm not so sure about the best Colin McLeod. But anyway, so we're going to begin our worship today. Our call to worship is from the psalm that we're going to begin singing in.

And it's Psalm 115. So Psalm 115 begins. Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

And so we're going to take up these words in our first item of worship. Psalm 115. Psalm 115. Psalm 115. We're singing there from the beginning. And we're singing down to the verse that's marked 11.

Psalm 115. From the beginning. Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, even for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake.

[2 : 3 4] And down to verse 11. To God's praise. Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, O wherefore, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, O wherefore, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, Where is thy God not gone, but our God is the man's place.

What please tell me, O wherefore, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, What please tell me, have done. Here I know, never, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, Wherefore, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, Howfore, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, And thy son do not see.

Of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice, that so these very bones, which thou hast given.

broken may rejoice. All my iniquities. All my iniquities.

Glow down to 14 to God's praise. Glow down to 14 to God's praise. Glow down to 14 to God's praise. Thy face. Hide from my sin. All my sin. All my sin.

Take a clean heart, Lord, renew. A clean heart, Lord, renew. Arise, split me within.

[11 : 05] Amen. Have me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

Restore me in thy salvation's joy.

With thy three spirit me stay. Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be.

And those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee.

O God, my salvation, God, me from blood guiltiness.

[12 : 35] Set free and shall my tongue allow. Sing all thy righteousness.

We're going to read now in the prophecy of Ezekiel. So Ezekiel and chapter 36.

Ezekiel chapter 36. And we're going to read from verse 16 and down to the end of that chapter.

So this weekend, today I'm going to read Ezekiel 16 and tomorrow morning, God willing, going to be reading the first 14 verses of Ezekiel 17. And then in the evening, the last verses in Ezekiel 17.

Trying to tie those three passages together. So Ezekiel chapter 36 from verse 16. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings.

[13 : 50] Their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it.

And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries. According to their way and according to their doings, I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen whither they went, they profaned my holy name.

When they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen whither they went.

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen whither you went.

And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them. And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

[15 : 07] For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and I will bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.

From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. And you shall keep my judgments, and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers.

And you shall be my people, and I shall be, I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness. And I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good.

[16 : 16] And shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you.

Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God, in the day that I have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that pass by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.

And the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate.

I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.

[17 : 20] I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men.

And they shall know that I am the Lord. We trust that God will bless that reading of the Bible to us. We are going to join once again in prayer.

So let us pray. Our gracious God, our heavenly Father, it is good for us to be here. There were others who have said that before.

It is good for us to be here. And we, like Peter, James and John, on the Mount of Transfiguration, are in the presence of the glorified Christ. And we give thanks to you for this today.

We are here on earth, and he is in heaven. But we, by the Spirit, and through faith, and with the church on earth, and gathering with the souls of men made perfect, and the angels of God in glory, join together to worship the living God.

[18 : 28] To worship the risen Christ. We thank you for this great blessing and privilege, which is ours on this Saturday afternoon. And we pray that as we gather today in the name of the risen Savior, as we gather this weekend to reflect on what he does, what he has done for us, and what he promises to do for us also, that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that the fruit of the Spirit would be evident in our lives. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

That the Holy Spirit that you gift us through faith unto salvation would flourish our lives just as we've read in this passage in Ezekiel.

Thank you for that wonderful promise to us, that you will cause us to grow. We shall be like a tree, the psalmist said, near planted by a river, which in its season yields its fruit, and its leaf fadeth ever, and all he does shall prosper well.

We pray that we might know growth, that we might know flourishing, that we might know joy unbounded in the Holy Spirit of Christ, working in our lives to bring about that wonderful transformation that he has begun in our lives.

[19 : 51] We thank you for today as we reflect, as we prepare to sit at the Lord's table. We thank you for an opportunity just to think about what it is we're doing.

And we pray that as we do so, your Spirit himself, by the Word of God, would work a great work in our lives, that we would see our need, and see the one who meets our need, ever more clearly.

We pray you would bless the congregation here. We thank you for everyone who is here, both those that are visiting, and those that are part of the congregation. May your blessing rest upon us all.

And may we and the congregations that we represent also know your promises been realised in our lives, and your good hand, your faithful hand, been upon us.

You promised to take us by the hand and to lead us and to say, this is the way, walk in it. So may we know your fatherly presence and your powerful promises at work in us and through us.

[20 : 56] We remember our families, friends, our neighbours. We pray for all who are with us in this building, not physically, but in our hearts. Those whom we carry.

Those who are a burden to us. Those who are a great concern for us. Those who perhaps never pray for themselves. But Lord, we can pray for them. And we pray we will never ever underestimate the power that that is.

And we think of the four friends who lowered their friend, the paralysed man, to Jesus, without even a word. And the Lord recognised what they wanted.

And the Lord recognised what the man needed. Your sins are forgiven. Take up your mat and go home. And may we then also bring those that we have concerns for into the presence of God even here today.

And know that what we cannot do, you certainly can. Because you are the God who promises to answer our prayers above and beyond what we can ask or even imagine.

[21 : 59] So Lord, will you broaden the horizons of our prayers? Will you help us see beyond even what we think are big prayers? And to remember you are the God who cannot be measured.

The God who is from everlasting to everlasting God. The God of whom it said the heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. And may we not limit what you can do.

And may we never limit our prayers in this respect also. And we pray for the island. We pray your blessing upon all the congregations of our island.

We are praying once again that you would revive and bring revitalisation. We pray that you would remember our nation as well. And we bring before you our leaders.

Those that you have set up over us in Holyrood and Westminster. Those who are entrusted with a serious and a solemn duty. May you give them the spirit of wisdom.

[22 : 59] And may you help them to fear the Lord. For that is surely the beginning of wisdom. Father, we pray as we think broader still of the world in which we live.

We give thanks for stead towards peace in the Middle East. And we pray that this will result in that in a lasting peace.

A peace that is of God. Because we know that ultimately nothing but the peace that comes from God will ever last forever. We pray therefore that you would bring this to pass.

And that lies would cease to be lost. There have been so many tens of thousands of lies. Particularly when we think of the little ones lost in this battle.

Lost in this war. Our hearts grieve. We pray that you will bring this to an end. Above all we pray that the gospel of our Saviour will go to the ends of the earth.

[23 : 58] And that Israel, your ancient people, will recognize that Jesus is one of them. That Jesus is their King. He is the one sent to save.

That salvation is for the Jew first and then the Gentile. So Lord, bless them we pray in this respect. Please do bless us as we continue to worship you and keep our minds, our hearts, our lives focused for this time we're together.

Guard us, we pray, and lift up Jesus in all that we say and in all that we do. For we ask these things in his name. Amen. We're going to sing once more and then we'll turn to this passage.

We're singing in Psalm 25. Psalm 25. It's the first version of Psalm 25.

From verse 6 down to verse 12. Psalm 25. First version from verse 6 to verse 12. Thy tender mercies, Lord, I pray thee to remember and loving kindnesses, for they have been of old forever.

[25 : 13] Psalm 25. First version. Verses 6 to 12. To God's praise. By tender mercies, Lord, I pray thee to remember and loving kindnesses, for they have been of old forever.

My sins and faults of you, do thou, O Lord, for me.

After thy mercy, take it for me, and for thy goodness, be.

God's good and the brightest, the wicked sinners show.

And he, in judgment, he will guide, and make this path to know.

[27 : 01] The whole house of the Lord, are truth and mercy sure.

To those that do, this covenant keep, a testimony, O Lord, I be and me.

To pardon my iniquity, for it is very great.

What man is he that fears the Lord, and does him say?

Him shall he teach the way that he shall do, and still all say.

[28 : 46] If you have your Bibles, will you please open your Bibles and the passage that we read together in Ezekiel. Ezekiel, Ezekiel on chapter 36.

Ezekiel chapter 36, at verse 16. You can read just a couple of verses. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings.

Their way was removed, their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman, wherefore I poured my fury upon them, for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols, wherewith they had polluted it, and so on.

The prophecy of Ezekiel, or the prophet Ezekiel, ministers at a time that is akin to the scenes that we might see, or that we have seen on our TV screens, when you turn on the telly and you look at the Gaza Strip.

So we all know about the Gaza Strip, and things, thankfully, are turning for the better, we trust, in these days. But for the last two years, when we've turned on our TVs, we've seen this part of this tiny part of the world in the Middle East.

[30 : 09] Five times smaller than the island of Lewis. I don't know if you realise that. It's a very small piece of land, with a population of over 2 million, which is 200 times the size of the island.

This tiny Buddha land, just devastated. And you see, where there was buildings, there's no buildings. Where there was streets, there's no streets. It's rubble, it's devastation, it's destruction.

It's just pitiful, really, when you see it. And that's the kind of scene, that Ezekiel, thinking of his homeland, Jerusalem, Judah and Jerusalem, would have come from, would have had in his mind.

Because Ezekiel, right at a time where Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has come, and he has decimated the southern part of Israel, of Judah. He's destroyed the temple.

The place where God's glory once was, the glory of the Lord and the presence of the Lord, it's desecrated and destroyed. It was like a scene like the Gaza Strip, ironically.

[31 : 13] And to the nations around, it looked as if Israel's God had been defeated. Because the nations were represented by God, and if the nation was defeated, the God was defeated.

It looked to the nations, Aha! Israel's God is defeated. And to Israel, it looked as if they had been abandoned by God.

And yet, even though they were being punished for their sin, yet, God was not finished. God is never finished with his people. God cannot be finished with his church.

God will never abandon those who are his own. And through Ezekiel, he promises renewal. And it's a renewal, not just of land and temple, which is really the immediate context.

But it's a renewal of heart. And we've seen that in the passage. We'll look at it again soon. A renewal of heart. A renewal of life. A renewal of relationship with God.

[32 : 12] That's going to be unique. It's going to be different. Which all comes about through the Spirit coming and a new heart giving. And it all comes about through one whose name is Jesus.

It's always and always through Jesus. We don't see it here. They don't see it there. But we know in terms of the language of New Covenant. This is all speaking about what Jesus is going to bring in to the lives of those who are his own.

And so this weekend, today, we're going to look at this passage where the theme really is desolation. And then tomorrow morning, we'll look at Ezekiel 37, the first 14 verses, where the theme is resurrection.

And then tomorrow evening, God willing, we'll look at the rest of the passage in Ezekiel 37, where the theme is consolation. Where we have the summary of what God is going to do under one community, under one king, with one covenant.

What God is going to do. But today, we're going to look at these verses briefly this morning. And I want to think of three things to unpack what Ezekiel is telling us today as we prepare for tomorrow.

[33 : 20] The first is divine grief. The second is divine glory. And the third thing is divine gift. Three things very easy to understand. Well, I hope it will be easy to understand, but easy to remember.

Divine grief. Their sin caused God such grief. Divine glory. He steps in to do something for his own reputation. And divine gift.

The wonderful gift of complete renewal and restoration that he promises. So first of all, the divine grief. Verses 16 to 20.

Ezekiel. The word of the Lord came to him and he says, Son of man. It's a term that's used for Ezekiel. When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it. And there's a very important word.

They defiled it by their own way and by their doings. What they did and how they did it was defiling. Their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

[34 : 20] So Israel's sin was not a mistake. It was more in terms of pollution, which is where we get that word defiled from. They defiled God's name.

They defiled themselves. They defiled the lands. And he uses a really strong word. And he uses actually a very disturbing image to communicate that.

He says there that their uncleanness, the bottom of verse 17, was that of a removed woman. A strange phrase.

It's the same word that the prophet Isaiah uses when he says righteousness is at us. Filthy rags. We know that word, don't we? Filthy rags. It's the same word.

A removed woman. Filthy rags. It's the image of a menstrual cloth. Now as I stand here with yourselves in a pulpit saying these things.

[35 : 21] Of course there's a bit of us that thinks that is awful. Two things. One, it's the word of God. If you've got a problem with that, well, you have the problem, not me. And secondly, and here's the most important thing.

This is God using imagery to communicate, to depict just how repulsive, just how grievous to him the sin of his people was.

And he employs this language to communicate just that their sin is not just law breaking. It's utterly repulsive to him. Like that of a removed woman.

It grieves him. He cannot stand the sight of it. He cannot stand the smell of it. That's what he's saying. We often think, and we all know this friends today, what is sin? Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.

And it is that. But we need to remember it's not purely sterile law breaking sin. It's actually repulsive to his senses. And that's what that image I think does very, very clearly.

[36 : 26] You think of that yourself. And you know that it makes you think inside. That is awful. And that's the whole point. Many, many years ago. Many years ago.

In a former life for me. I was a social worker and spent lots of time. Lots of time. Children and families and criminal justice. And I was going to say that I spent many times in court.

But I didn't want you to get the wrong idea. I was in court for the right reasons. And I remember one time being in court. And this gentleman came in. And friends today.

The stench was utterly repulsive. It really was. He was a poor soul. We would say in many, many ways. Unkempt. And I think things had gone wrong with him.

Hence the smell. The smell. It was really bad. He was there because he had broken the law. But he was also there in that court. And the smell. The sight and the smell of him.

[37 : 22] Was so bad that the sheriff. I hadn't seen anybody. The sheriff at that time. Dealing with somebody so swiftly. Because he wanted to get him out of court. Because the PF. The lawyers. The sheriff.

We were all. It was awful. And it's just a little glimpse. Of what. Sin is. In the sight and to the sense. Of God.

It turns his stomach. If I can say it like that. It's truly. Repulsive. It's really. Grievous. And if we want to see how really grievous.

Sin is. Where do we look friends. We might look at. A menstrual cloth. And have an idea. We look at the cross. Not a cloth. But the cross. We look there.

At the cross. Of Jesus Christ. The cross. Upon which. He was crucified. And the darkness. And the desolation. Of the cross. The darkness. Was God's judgment.

[38 : 19] The desolation. Was. As if Jesus had come. To that place. Where he couldn't cry. To his father. He had lost all sense. Of his father. But even. His God. My God.

My God. Why have you forsaken me? He felt desolate. It was as if God was saying. The sight. The smell of this. And you get out of here. And so. Christ was there. Bathing our sin.

Bathing our cloth. Bathing it all in himself. And God's repulsiveness is seen. In that ominous. Fears. Of darkness.

And that awful. Desolation. He who knew no sin. He who knew no sin. Became. Sin for us. That we might be made. The righteousness. Of God.

In him. He took our cloth. And put it on himself. And he took off a robe. Of beautiful righteousness. And put it on us. And that was what he did.

[39 : 17] Upon the cross. And so today. As we prepare. As we prepare. For tomorrow. We need that sense. Of the awfulness. Of our sin. And. We should have the same sense.

Of the awfulness. Of sin. In our lives. Which will ever be present. Until the last day. But. May the Lord enable us. To. Be. Feel the same way.

As he does. About our sin. We. To. To marginalize sin. To use different words. For sin. And mistakes. Falling short. Of a standard. That's acceptable.

Call sin. Out in our own lives. For what it is. It's repulsive. Utterly repulsive. But. Don't hide your sin friends. Don't hide.

Just like. If ever you've. Gone into the car. And there's something in there. Been for a few days. I remember once. Going into the car. And there was. A fish that had been left. In the car. And I couldn't see it.

[40 : 12] I smell it. We cannot hide our sin. From God. Cannot. He sees it. And smells it. Long before. We do. Don't. Hide our sin.

Why? We cannot. But secondly. Christ has already carried it. He's taken it away. From us. Out of God's sight. Our sin. Forever.

And. Forever. So. Divine. Grief. Sin is really. Repulsive. Impulsive. Secondly. Divine. Glory.

So. Verse 21. God begins to say. How his people have sinned. But he's going to do something. See. God always does something. He's never passive. He's always active. Either planning. Or immediately.

And he is going to do something. He said in verse 21. And he says in verse 21. I had pity for my holy name. Which the house of Israel. I had profaned among the heathen. Wherever they went. So they had scattered where they went.

[41 : 07] He was scattering them. And they were still doing what they were doing. That cloth like behavior. Therefore say unto the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God. Verse 22. I do not this.

And this means what he's going to do. Okay. I do not this. For your sake. So house of Israel. But for my holy name sake. Which you have profaned among the heathen.

I will sanctify my great name. Which was profaned among the heathen. Which you have profaned in the midst of them. And then the heathen will know that I am the Lord. Saith the Lord God. When I shall be sanctified in you.

Before their very eyes. It's not for your sake. I'm going to do something. He says. It is for my sake. That I'm going to do something. It's not for you.

It is for our good. And our salvation. Of course it is. But the chief mover. The chief motivator. The main driver. In everything that God does. Friends.

[42 : 05] Today. Is his glory. It is always his glory. That word glory. Means. The word behind it. Is weightiness. To make an impression. Literally. It's weightiness.

Reputation. And it's his reputation. That is at stake. He's saying. See these people of mine. They are defiling my reputation. I need to do something about this. So I'm going to do something.

Not because they're good. Or going to get better. But because they cannot. And my reputation. Is what's on the line here. And so divine grief.

Leads on to divine glory. For his name's sake. For his name's sake. And the whole of the Bible. The whole of the story of scripture. What we call the narrative of the Bible. Is all about the glory of God.

Whether it's creation. In Psalm 19. The heavens. God's glory. The same word. That impression word. The heavens declare the glory of God. Or even Adam and Eve.

[43 : 04] And we made in the image of God. We're made in the image and glory of God. Creation reflects the glory of God. Of God. And when we go through the Bible. And we see God rescuing his people.

It's always his name. It's always for the sake of his name. That he does these things. Remember in Exodus chapter 32. After Israel's golden calf. Moses pleaded with God. God said.

I'm going to wipe these people out. Start afresh with you Moses. You only. And you humanity. And he says. Moses says. Please don't do this Lord. Why should the Egyptians say.

It was with evil intent. That he brought them out of Egypt. In other words. If you do that. The people will say. What sort of a God is that? Who wipes out his people. In other words.

His reputation. In Joshua chapter 7. After Israel were defeated at Ai. Joshua prays. What will you do Lord. For your great name. So again and again. Creation and rescue.

[44 : 01] God rescuing his people. It's his glory. It's his reputation. That is the prime move. And ultimately. Redemption. Salvation.

Is for his glory. He does it. So he will be glorified. And he's glorified of course. In the person of. Jesus Christ.

We see the glory of God. In the face of Jesus. We see the reputation of God. In the face of Jesus. We see what God is like. In the face of Jesus. We see what God wants us to think of him.

When we see Jesus. Which is wonderful. Redemption. Salvation. Is all about. The glory. Of God.

Paul says in Romans 3. 25 to 26. God put Christ forward. As a sacrifice. To demonstrate his righteousness. In other words. To demonstrate what he is like. To demonstrate his reputation.

[45 : 01] He put Christ forward. So that he might. God might be just. And the justifier. Of the one who has faith. In Jesus. So ultimately. The glory of God.

The reputation of God. Is vindicated. On the cross. For the son of God. Gave himself. For all. Who will believe.

In him. Somebody has said. Nothing magnifies God's glory. God's glory. Like the sight of his son. Bearing our shame. Our cloth.

On the cross. And so when God. Passes over sins. If God was to pass over sins. His righteousness. Could be questioned.

Does he take his reputation lightly. If he's not going to deal with sin. But on the cross. God vindicated his glory. He vindicated who he is.

[45 : 58] Sin is punished. Mercy is shown. Justice is satisfied. Love. Is magnified. In the person. Of. Jesus.

All that God does. Is for. His. Glory. And for his honor. We are recipients of that.

We are second. If you like. In that plan. It's all. In order to give us. Great name. Our great reputation. That he does what he does. And we then.

Are gifted. What we're going to look at. In a wee minute. With the blessings of. His plan. For glory. For glory. So how do we honor. The name and reputation. Of God. How do we uphold that.

Wonderful principle. We put our faith. Solidly in Jesus. We take hold of. Jesus. We honor the name. Of God. By believing.

[46 : 53] In the one he sent. Jesus said. He came into the world. To glorify God. And we glorify God. By accepting. God's glory. In Jesus.

By accepting. Of Jesus Christ. By so doing. By accepting. Jesus Christ. As our Lord. And as our Savior. And as the glory of God. Revealed. In his face.

We are saying. To God. You are trustworthy Lord. You are enough. You are. Glorious. That's what faith says. Faith says. Unbelief.

Or no faith. By contrast. Is an insult. To God. It says. Are unworthy. Of my trust. You are. Unreliable. In my sight. That does not.

Do the reputation. Of God. Any good. Whatsoever. So we. Honor. The name. And reputation. Of God. By being satisfied.

[47 : 48] Of what is. The name. And reputation. Of God. Being satisfied. With what he's done. For us. In Jesus. And that is what we. Celebrate. At the Lord's table.

The Lord's table. In so many ways. Has become about. Me. But in fact. The Lord's table. The. It's about. What God.

Has done. For us. In Jesus. And. Yes. We have to examine ourselves. And let a man examine himself. To make sure. That we. Understand. What we're doing.

The whole passage. Is getting at. But. We. Don't go to the extent. That we're examining ourselves. So much. That we take our eyes off. Jesus. Was it. My chain.

For every look to self. We have. Ten looks. To Jesus. That is so true. Salvation. The honor of God. Is rooted in him.

[48 : 43] In Christ. Not in me. And you. Although we're called. To reflect that. In. In our lives. And you. And you.

good or we can be good but because he is glorious and your salvation and my salvation is secure because it rests on the name of Jesus and not on our performance. Divine grief and divine glory and then finally divine gift and verse 24, really down to the end of the chapter but I just want to think of verses 24 to verse 27 that really unpacks the gift of God to us in Jesus, the gift of God ultimately to Israel in sending their Messiah. And you know it is a gift because the thing that you notice in these verses is the way God is saying I will do, I will do. It's not you will do it's I will, I will sprinkle clean water, verse 25 I will give you a new heart, verse 26. I will put my spirit within you, verse 27. I will cause you to walk in my statutes, verse 27. I will save you from your uncleanness, verse 29. It's all that what he's going to do. God takes the initiative and you know when somebody comes to give you a gift they must come and give you the gift. The initiative is on the part of the giver and that is what God is doing. He's not telling us to do anything but to receive the gift that he is giving us through Christ. What is the gift?

Well there's first of all a sprinkling, verse 25 I will sprinkle clean water It's that image, the cloth image filthiness. He says I'm going to cleanse you I'm going to make you whiter than the snow I'm going to wash you. Symbolised with Jesus in the upper room in John chapter 13 where he's washing the disciples' feet Do you remember he washes their feet?

He says I'm going to wash you Peter says you shall never wash me but Jesus says unless I wash you you've got no part with me So Jesus comes and he says I'm going to wash you I'm going to sprinkle you I'm going to cleanse you That stench, that sight I'm going to wash it all away I'm going to make you white in the sight of my Father He's also going to undergo surgery We are going to undergo surgery He says in verse 26 A new heart will I give you A new spirit will I put within you But he's going to give us a new heart We were speaking earlier about the heart operations happen and they are to repair the heart And we thank the Lord for good medical services and good medical interventions But Jesus is not saying I'm going to repair your heart He says I'm going to replace your heart A new heart And not the most skilled surgeon in the world can ever give us a new spiritual heart Only the great physician himself

Jesus can give us that new spiritual heart That's what he says I am going to give you a new heart which is going to beat differently from your old heart So he's sprinkling and surgery and then spirit I would put a spirit within you It's the Holy Spirit he's talking about there The Holy Spirit of God in verse 26 and verse 27 And then finally he's going to enable us to walk in his statutes again in verse 27 In other words we're going to walk in a different way So you see what's happening here is it's like our whole Our whole DNA is changing When somebody This is the language of of being born again And when you're born you are born with the DNA of your parents whether you like that or not And I don't know about you but often some of my children blame me for the way they are And there's some truth in that but not all truth in that but your DNA profile is what it is

[52 : 54] It determines much of who we are and what we do Now what God is saying here is I'm going to give you a new DNA It's the language of being born again by the Spirit of God And if we're born again that means we are different Our hearts have changed And I know we still sin and I know we think terrible things and all of that but the principle change in our lives is that we're now made like God to be like Jesus And we can't help it This is the miracle As a Christian you cannot help being a Christian We struggle with sin and we give in to sin and all too often and perhaps all too easily but you know this when the Spirit of God is in our hearts we cannot but be different So it's not that you must be but you will be a changed individual gradually slowly gradually surely because of what?

The gift of God The gift of God received through Jesus Christ our great Lord and Saviour And that's what we celebrate at the table We celebrate Jesus and the gift that He is All of these things are gifts in Jesus If you read Ephesians 1 it's all in Him in Him We don't get them apart from Jesus We don't get any of this apart from Jesus We're all given them in Jesus So if you imagine a gift box and the box is Jesus and in it shake the box not too hard shake it a little bit you hear oh there's the Spirit and there's statues and there's this new heart that I've been given this change there's sprinkling it's in Jesus and there's a wonderful encouragement today that being a Christian is celebrating the gift that God has given us that we just say thank you Lord thank you and then live out just slowly but surely and gradually as we unpack that gift in our lives as we recognise more and more what God has done for us in Christ as the reality of it dawns on us and takes effect in our lives we just live it out and all for the glory of Jesus

John Newton remember John Newton that slave trader turned preacher wrote near the end of his life I am not what I ought to be I am not what I wish to be I am not what I hope to be but by the grace of God I am not what I once was and by the grace of God I am what I am and that's what these words in Ezekiel 36 encapsulate for us we are new people in Jesus and he wants us to be glad and to rejoice and to celebrate him and so the grief of God over sin the glory of God we see it displayed in this salvation and the gift of God this new heart and this new spirit and may we come to the table tomorrow God willing amazed and thankful and grateful and full of a new purpose to live out for Jesus and for his honour and so our Father we thank you for your grace to us your patient your kind your merciful we thank you that you did not leave us where we were but you did not pass us by but you saw us and you said live we thank you that this new life that we have in Christ is a gift of God even the faith that we have to receive it is a gift of God so thank you thank you today that we can rejoice and celebrate in what is ours by gift in Jesus name we pray

Amen so we are going to finish by singing Psalm 130 Psalm 130 and we are going to sing the whole of this Psalm together Psalm 130 and 30 Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear and to my supplications voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou O Lord shouldst mark iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be the whole of the Psalm to God's praise Lord from the dead to thee I try my voice

Lord will through through O Lord, just life in equity, but yet with me for witnesses, that fear Thou makest me.

[59 : 15] I wait for God, my soul does wait, my hope is in His Word.

For God is not a holy word, my soul is for the Lord.

I say, O Lord, I am not a good one.

The Lord is light to see. At this time I am, O Lord, in the Lord, for with Him mercy be.

I'll lend He just retention.

[60 : 43] Amen.

Amen. Amen.