

Preach the Gospel - Good News to All !!

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[0 : 00] A warm welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us as we gather together in God's name. We look to him to bring a blessing upon his own word and apply it to our hearts. We are going to begin by singing some verses from Psalm 119. Psalm 119 and verse 129. We are going to sing this section of the Psalm. Psalm 119 verse 129 down to verse 136. Thy statutes, Lord, are wonderful. My soul them keeps with care.

The entrance of thy words gives light, makes wise who simpler. My mouth I have wide opened and panted earnestly, while after thy commandments I long exceedingly. Look on the Lord, and merciful do thou unto me prove, as thou art want to do to those thy name who truly love.

O let my footsteps in thy word a right still ordered be. Let no iniquity obtain dominion over me. From man's oppression save thou me. So keep thy laws I will. Thy face make on thyself and shine. Teach me. Teach me thy statutes still. Rivers of water from thine eyes that run down when I saw how wicked men run on in sin and do not keep thy law. This section of Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 to 136. Thy statutes, Lord, are wonderful. My soul them keeps with care. Thy statutes, Lord, are wonderful. My soul them keeps with care. The entrance of thy words gives light, my soul them keeps with care. The entrance of thy words gives light, makes wise who simpler. My mouth I have wide open, my mouth I have wide open, and compounded earnestly.

My mouth I have wide open, and compounded earnestly.

[2 : 57] My mouth I have wide open, and profounden earnestly, My mouth I have wide open, and proudest earnestly. Now, I have wide open, and a few hopes of God should also ■■■■■ill
Il CAPeal When Hat disposronics is made about the blood of gifts, and where to devour the water for the precious use of water, it is justified in Eddy.

O let my precious and thy word arise, shall order me.

Let no iniquity in dominion over me.

From man's oppression save thou me, so keep thy laws, I will.

Thy face make on thy heaven shine, teach me thy stature still.

[5 : 06] Reversion waters from my night, get running with thy soul.

And wicked men run on in sin, and do not keep thy law.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, we give thanks to you for your word. A word that we have been singing, that is so apt and so appropriate, and reminds us of the way your people are.

It reminds us of the special affection that they have for your word. How they are taught from it.

How they are edified by it. How it gives counsel to them. When they are in darkness, it brings light.

- [6 : 42] We give thanks that it reminds us of the way in which it has spoken to us of that relationship that they enjoy with their God.
- A relationship that you introduced them to. And that you intensified and deepened. And we also are reminded of the way that they think of their own need.
- As sinners in need of salvation. How your word has convinced them. How your word has convinced them. And convicted them. And brought them to understand where mercy is to be found.
- And it also highlights to us the heartfelt grief that is there. Because of the wickedness that is in the world.
- How they cannot but be moved by it. And how they feel in their own very being. The offence that is caused to their God.
- [8 : 01] We give thanks for the expressiveness of the psalmist. How appropriate his words are to your people in many of life's circumstances.
- We give thanks for the way in which we can sing with melody in our hearts. And even when we are not numbered amongst the heavenly choristers.
- Who may be able to join with the angels. Such as the gifting that they enjoy.
- Nevertheless, because our singing is heartfelt. And our joy is intense. However much our voices may not seem to others to be as melodious as others.
- Yet it brings joy to the heart of our God. Because it is heartfelt. And it is springing from the relationship that they have with yourself.
- [9 : 27] Help us then to understand what spiritual praise is. What spiritual worship is. Or to meet in your name.
- Seeking the guiding and leading of your spirit. We once read of the expressiveness of a child of God.
- Who said of the relationship to yourself. That they desire to be the thread to your needle. Which simply meant that wherever the needle went the thread followed.
- And so it is with your people. Their heartfelt desire is to follow the God of heaven as their God. And their Lord and Saviour as the one who is the principal guide of their footsteps here in this world.
- We give thanks for every assurance that is given to us. That notwithstanding our failings. That provision has been made for us.
- [10 : 47] And that Christ Jesus our Lord is able to cleanse us from all sin. Our sins are many. And yet the word of God teaches us.
- That though they be as scarlet. That you will be willing to make them as white as snow. Even as crimson.
- That they would be made as white as wool. We give thanks for the assurance that is received by your people. That there is one to whom they can go.
- And whose name that they can apply to. That has given to them the confidence to believe. That the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.
- So encourage your people to that end. Encourage others to join with them. That they too may have that assurance. That they may know where to take their sin.
- [11 : 50] Rather than to appear before the judgment seat of God's sin laden. How awful that is. How awful the thought of that is.
- That we would carry our burden. To the throne of judgment. And there to find ourselves. Judged.

On the basis of our own merits. And rather than to be declared. Free from guilty stain. Because we stand in the merits of another.

Pour out your spirit upon us this morning. As we worship. That your word read. That it may be meaningful to each of us. Whatever that need may be. May we be Christians of long years professing.

May we be Christians who have newly begun the life of faith. Some even whose faith is hidden. May it be brought to light.

[12 : 56] May it yield in them the confidence. To freely declare their interest in a savior. That Christ who is able to save to the other.

We pray for your blessing to be provided to those who are estranged from you. Those who are backslidden.

Those who have fallen out of the way. We pray for your mercy. For your grace to lay hold of them. And bring them back into the fold.

That their walk would resume. And whatever it is that they have experienced. As a result of falling out of the way.

That they will be encouraged to believe that you are willing to receive them. We know that your servant Jacob carried with him.

[13 : 58] The influence and effects of a disjointed limb. As he suffered the consequences of wrestling with God.

And such is the effect of our involvement with God. That sometimes we must learn lessons that are painful.

And that must constantly be a reminder to us. Of our own weakness. And our own shortcomings.

We pray for your blessing then. Upon all need as it is represented here. We pray for the rest of the community. And all who belong to it.

And who may never darken the door of your house. Remember the body of Christ. Those who cannot be present today. Those of our number who are confined to their homes.

[15 : 02] Some to hospital. Being cared for by others. Some even in the hospice. Who are experiencing terminal care.

We ask Lord that you would visit them in mercy. And bring to their attention in their time of need. The willingness that there is on the part of a saviour.

Who is at the right hand of God. To minister to them by the hand of the spirit. And to intercede on their behalf. In the highest court.

On the basis of his own obedience. And with the generosity of spirit that is his. That so often reached out to the leprous. To the limping.

To those who were caught up in all. The morass of a fallen world. Yet he reached out his hand. To bring healing to them.

[16 : 04] So hear our prayers. Hear our prayers on our own behalf. And on behalf of those whose hearts are heavy. We bring the grieving to you.

The sorrowful to you. We are mindful. That there are those who have. Departed the scene of time. In recent days. That we knew and knew well.

Some attained to old age. Some were taken from the scene of time. In mid years. And the devastation that is wrought. In the lives of those who are loved by them.

Is evident. And we commit and commend them to your care. And seek for them. That you would bring healing. And distract them. From gazing too.

Readily upon their own heart. And look instead to Christ. Who will bring. Their grief. And do the power of his own love.

[17 : 05] Love. We remember before you. The needs of our nation. Our king. His family. The parliaments that represent them.

The decisions that are made. That are often made. Wrongly. We would pray for correction. We would pray for light. And darkness. We would ask for peace.

In the world. Where it is so evident. That. It is. Very much under threat. In the various quarters. Where there is ongoing. Conflict.

We would ask that. You would resolve these issues. In a way that only you can. By overruling for good. In the face. Of those whose.

Intention is evil. Continue to. Stimulate it. Your people. To prayer. Do not allow us. To believe that. Prayer is.

[18 : 05] Impotent. It is. All powerful. Because the prayer. Is offered to a God. Who is all powerful. May we be. As one. Knocking upon the door.

Of heaven. And seeking. An outpouring. Of. Spiritual blessing. That would cover the world. Even as the dew. Covers the ground. Hear our prayers.

And bless us. In all. The affairs of the congregation. Grant cleansing from sin. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing.

On to God's praise. This time. Singing verses from Psalm 80. Psalm 80. And verses 1 through to 6. Hear Israel's shepherd.

Like a flock. Thou that dost. Joseph guide. Shine forth. Shine forth. O thou that dost. Between the jerubooms abide. In Ephraim's. And Benjamin's.

[19 : 04] And in Manasseh's sight. O come. For our salvation. Stir up thy strength. And might. Turn us again. O Lord. Our God. And upon us. Vouch save.

To make thy countenance. To shine. And so we shall be saved. O Lord of hosts. Almighty God. How long shall kindled be. Thy wrath. Thy wrath against the prayer made.

By thine own folk to thee. Thou tears of sorrow. Gives to them. Instead of bread to eat. Eighty years. Instead of drink. Thou gives to them. In measure great.

Thou makest us. Strife unto our neighbours. Round about. Our enemies. Among themselves. And thus. Do laugh and flout. Turn us again.

O God of hosts. And upon us. Vouch save. To make thy countenance. To shine. And so. We shall be saved. And so on.

[20 : 00] We're seeing verses 1 to 6. Of Psalm 86. Stanzas from the beginning. Hear Israel's shepherd. Like a flock. Thou that dost Joseph guide.

Hear Israel's shepherd. Like a flock. Thou that dost Joseph guide.

Shine forth. Or thou that dost lust between. The cherubim.

Nick, chapter 4. Who never I am, son, and germans, And in manas' sight.

O come, Father, salvation, Stand up thy strength and might.

[21 : 28] Turn us again, O Lord our God, And upon us thou save, To make thy curtain eyes to shine, And so we shall be saved.

O Lord our Father, mighty God, I long shall candle thee, Thy rock and supreme made, By thy known folk to thee, Thou tears of sorrow, Gest to them, Instead of breath to me, Get tears instead of drink,

Thou gives, Thou gives, For them in measure great, Thou make us as a stripe unto, Our neighbor's right abides, Our enemies summon themselves, And just give up and play.

Let us hear God's word as we find it in the Old Testament Scriptures, the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 40.

Prophecies of Isaiah, chapter 40. We'll read the whole chapter. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.

[24 : 34] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, And cry unto her, That her warfare is accomplished, That her iniquity is pardoned. For she hath received of the Lord's hand Double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, Make straight in the deserts, A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, And every mountain and hill Shall be made low, And the crooked shall be made straight, And the rough places plain, And the glory of the Lord Shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together, For the mouth of the Lord Hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, And all the goodliness There offers us The flower of the field.

The grass withereth, The flower fadeth, Because the Spirit of the Lord Bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass, The grass withereth, The flower fadeth, But the word of our God Shall stand forever.

O Zion that bringeth good tidings, Get thee up into the high mountain, O Jerusalem that bringeth good tidings, Lift up thy voice with strength, Lift it up, Be not afraid, Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God, Behold the Lord God Will come with strong hand, And his arm shall rule for him, Behold his reward is with him, And his work before him, He shall feed his flock Like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs With his arm, And carry them in his bosom, And shall gently lead those That are with him, Who hath measured the waters In the hollow of his hand, And meted out heaven With the span, And comprehended the dust Of the earth in a measure, And weighed the mountains In scales, And the hills in a balance, Who hath directed The spirit of the Lord, Our being his counsellor,

[26 : 45] Hath taught him, With whom took he counsel, And who instructed him, And taught him in the path Of judgment, And taught him knowledge, And showed to him The way of understanding, Behold the nations are as a drop Of a bucket, And are counted as the small dust Of the balance, Behold he taketh up the isles As a very little thing, And Lebanon is not sufficient To burn, Nor the beasts thereof sufficient For a burnt offering, All nations before him Are asked nothing, And they are counted to him Less than nothing, And vanity, To whom then Will ye liken God, Or what likeness Will ye compare unto him, The workman Melteth a graven image, And the goldsmith Spreadeth it over with gold, And casteth silver chains, He that is so impoverished, That he hath no oblation,

Chooses a tree That will not rot, He seeketh unto him A cunning workman To prepare a graven image That shall not be moved, Have ye not known, Have ye not heard, Hath it not been told you From the beginning, Have you not understood From the foundation of the earth, It is he that sitteth Upon the circle of the earth, And the inhabitants thereof Are as grass of bush, That stretcheth out the heavens As a curtain, And spreadeth them out As a tent to dwell in, That bringeth the princes To nothing, He maketh the judges Of the earth as vanity, Yea, they shall not be planted, Yea, they shall not be sown, Yea, their stalks Shall not take root In the earth, And he shall also Blow upon them, And they shall wither, And the whirlwind Shall take them away As stubble, To whom then Will ye liken me, Or shall I be equal, Sath the Holy One?

Lift up your eyes on high, And behold, Who hath created These things, That bringeth out Their host by number, He calleth them all By names, By the greatness Of his might, For that he is strong In power, Not one faileth.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, And speakest, O Israel, My ways hid from the Lord, And my judgment Is passed over From my God? Hast thou not known, Hast thou not heard, That the everlasting God, The Lord, The creator of the ends Of the earth, Fainteth not, Neither is weary, There is no searching Of his understanding, He giveth power To the faint, And to them That have no mighty Increased strength, Even the youths Shall faint And be weary, And the young men Shall utterly fall, But they that wait Upon the Lord Shall renew Their strength, They shall mount up With wings as eagles, They shall run And not be weary, And they shall walk And not faint, Amen, And may the Lord That his blessing To a reading of his word And to his name

Be the praise, Let us sing now From Psalm 46, Psalm 46, We are going to sing Verses 1 to 7, God is our refuge And our strength In straits of present aid, Therefore, Although the earth remove, We will not be afraid, Though hills amidst the seas Be cast, Though waters roaring make, And troubled be, Yea, though the hills By swelling cease to shake, A river is whose streams Do glad the city of our God, The holy place Wherein the Lord most high Hath his abode, God in the midst of her Doth dwell, Nothing shall her renew, The Lord to her And help her will, And that right To barely prove, The heathen raged Tremeltuously, The kingdom's mood Where, The Lord God Othered his voice,

[31 : 06] The earth did Meant for fear, The Lord of hosts Upon our side, Doth constantly remain, The God of Jacob So refuge, As safely to maintain, And so on, These verses, Psalm 46, Verses 1 to 7, God is a refuge Under strength in streets, At present aid, God is a refuge Under strength, In saints of place And deed, Therefore, O Lord, The earth remains, We will not be happy, Though hills amidst

Im a sheathen, The sea warn, The sea is ■ as Though old yn But door esta ■■ Rotten, Os Pamelaam, The sea is■ in me Gesheftir, Thor, Wie Western It is a refuge■■■ A river dicks its things to plant the city of her God.

The holy place where is the Lord, O shine of His support.

God in the midst of that will dwell, the things shall not remain.

The Lord, give her and hail, good will, and that I dare be free.

[33 : 57] The heathen race humongously, the kingdoms made with the Lord God.

God hath heard His voice, the heathen men, but he hath.

The Lord of hosts upon their side, does constantly remain.

The God of Jacob's heritage has safely maintained.

I guess now to turn for a short while to the passage that we were reading together.

[35 : 25] The Old Testament Scriptures, the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 40. And we can read at verse 9 to verse 11.

O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength.

Lift it up and be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him.

Behold His reward is with His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

And so on. I'm not sure if it's true for everyone, but I suspect that it is true.

[36 : 36] By everyone I mean every person who has experienced the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Every new convert.

Every person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ for the first time. I suspect that at that time of new conversion, that they are filled with the desire to speak to others about the Savior that they have come to discover for themselves.

The experience may or not be universal. I don't know. I mean, you have to... I'm speaking to Christians just now.

I would expect you to think about how you thought when you came to know Christ first. I know that there are many young people, and at that moment that they are thinking very much about what it is that they can do for God.

Young men would think about possibly entering into ministry. Young women entering the mission field.

[38 : 09] Some service that they can do to God, whatever it may be. And that, I think, is natural. But not everybody fulfills that ambition that is quite clearly formed in their head at the beginning.

Something takes place in their experience that may cause them to question whether that really is something that they want to do as a calling.

It's not that their witness is curtailed, but the formal aspect of it certainly is. That they think...

They discover for themselves through processes, I'm sure, that the calling of God does not require them to go into the path of ministry, of whatever description.

And there are things that may occur to them that make them understand that this really is not something that everybody is cut out to do.

[39 : 37] Now, I want it to be understood that I believe, and God's word requires me to believe, that those that God wishes to serve him in that capacity, he equips, he calls them, and he equips them, and he sends them with that work that is to be done in his name.

And that is not true for everybody. But that's not the same as to say that they're not expected to serve God in some other capacity.

But one way that God has of informing his people is that the work that they are going to... that they expect to do, that it will be a work that is tested.

It will be a work that is tried. And perhaps the best way of understanding that is to remind yourself of this prophet of the Lord, Isaiah. And if you were a young Christian, and you were dealt with the way God dealt with Isaiah at the very outset of his ministry, I don't think it would be a surprise if you turned away from it.

I don't think it would be a shame to you to feel that you were unable to do it. Because if you go and read in Isaiah chapter 6, and you hear God's call come to Isaiah, and Isaiah there is convinced, this is God's call for me, this is the work that I've been called to do.

[41 : 26] And yet, when you read of Isaiah's commissioning, you find that God gives them a message to proclaim, and God tells them that this message is a message that is to be believed, and that all who hear it are expected to believe it.

But that is not the outcome. What we see is that those who hear the message that God gives to his servant will be rejected.

Not because the message is bad, not because the messenger is ill-equipped, but because they don't want to hear what God has to say to them. Now, if you've given this kind of information to marry against your own desire to serve God, and you're told, well, this is what it's going to cost you to serve God.

I'm going to tell you what you're going to tell the people. And these people are going to reject you. They're going to reject your message. They're going to turn your back upon the God who sent you.

I don't think we'd have many volunteers who would take up that challenge. But that is exactly what we have in this most wonderful of prophecies.

[42 : 58] God speaking through his servant, a servant that he has given the most onerous responsibility to preach and to share the whole counsel of God with everybody that ever comes his way.

and to do so without expecting that his message to them will be well received or not, which is challenging.

But in this passage that we're looking at, having made known what God intends, and God tells the people what he intends for them, he tells them that maybe you would, if you were in shoes, you would hold this back.

God tells them you're going to be invaded by your enemies. And your enemies are going to defeat you. Not only are they going to defeat you, they're going to lead you captive into their own nation.

they're going to deprive you of your property, they're going to deprive you of your land, and you're going to be displaced and taken into captivity where you will experience the sorrows of that.

[44 : 27] And that's his message. And you wouldn't expect them to feel anything other than resistance to it. But the prophet has said, go, go, tell them.

Tell them this. Tell them this is what God is going to do. And yet in the midst of all that he has to tell them, God, in his mercy, says to them, this isn't where the story is going to end.

He tells them that the people that God has allowed to be taken captive are going to be restored to their lands. They are going to be allowed to return to the homes and the lands that God allowed to be taken from them.

They're going to be reinstated and God will once again be their God. And this message is far better.

This message is much more easy to go. But you see, what you remember is this, that it is the role of the prophet to declare God's word, good or bad, wholesome or sour or bitter as it may be.

[45 : 50] And that's what the prophet does. Looking at the passage before us, it is a message that is also the message of good news.

It is good news to our people who are displaced. Good news to our people who have fallen out of favor with God.

Good news to our people who are apostate and rejected, rejecting the God of grace. Christ. And while it has a historical application which is most clear, it is also by virtue of the Holy Spirit's own teaching used to describe to us the way the gospel of Jesus Christ works.

And the New Testament and the use of this passage in the New Testament by Christ himself and by his apostles allows us to understand that undergirding the promise of God's restoration to a people when they return to himself, that there is a reminder to us of the real good news that the gospel brings to us.

The promise of gospel blessing salvation which he declares through his servants in the Old Testament. So our focus is not so much on the historical restoration of a displaced people which undoubtedly took place but about the message that is at the heart of the prophecies of Isaiah and that is that God is going to save a lost people.

[47 : 52] He is going to do it and he is going to do it by means that are his own exclusively by his own power by his own means.

And there are four things that we can think of that that we can glean from these words which we believe we have every right to apply in a gospel setting in a gospel understanding.

First of all where is the gospel to be preached? Secondly how is it to be preached?

Thirdly to whom is it to be preached? And fourthly why must it be preached? These are all intertwined by Grant but we can focus on each one of these headings in turn.

First of all where is the gospel to be preached? Well we read in this version O Zion that bring us good tidings Zion and Jerusalem they should be considered as the picture that God gives to us of his church the people of God to whom he entrusts the proclamation of truth.

[49 : 35] The church of Christ exists to declare Christ to others. He adds to the number of the church that they too may share the good news of salvation that they have come to benefit from.

so he says here get thee up to the high mountain and I think what we need to understand is this that the gospel is meant to be heard it is meant to be heard and you are to avail yourself of every vantage point so that the gospel that is proclaimed is proclaimed to all because it is good news if nothing else.

If you have good news to share I don't there's any hesitance on your part no hesitation on your part to share it. We had the good fortune recently as a family to rejoice at the news of the birth of a new grandchild.

Nobody needed to tell me to share that news something that I delighted in doing and the family rejoiced and rejoiced in sharing that news.

You understand that. If you have news that is good you want to share it with others. Nobody needs to tell you to do it. More importantly when it comes to the gospel those who experience the salvation that is in Christ Jesus those who discovered the healing power of Christ.

[51 : 22] Nobody needed to tell them tell others about that. Go and share that news with us. It was something that if you imagine a bottle that is full of effervescent liquid be it champagne or lemonade or whatever it is you try and put the cork back into that bottle and it is impossible.

It just must come out. And so it is. When you discover for yourself the good news of Jesus Christ you are to share it with others unhesitatingly.

I remember well what the first experience of conversion you wanted to share it with those who knew the Lord that you had discovered their Lord but more so you wanted to share it with others and the disappointment was when you discovered that others were not really interested in the Lord that you had found.

That's very disheartening. But that didn't suppress the desire. That didn't keep you from saying well this is how it is for me.

I have been saved. I have experienced healing. I have discovered what it is for my sins to be forgiven. And Jesus tells us different ways using different parables that this is how it must be.

[52 : 58] You take the vantage point of knowledge and experience and stand upon the high mountains and declare this is how it is.

You know he tells us in the parable of the marriage feast go ye therefore into the highways and as many as you shall find tell them to come to the marriage.

Bid them to come. The parable of the great supper go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in so that my house he says may be full.

that's not something you do behind closed curtains. That's not something you do in a corner. This is something that you go out into the streets and say give me a position where I can declare this word.

Now I confess that I'm not a street preacher. I've never fancied it. I've never found myself to be somebody who could boldly stand in Sochi Hall street or Argyle street and gather a crowd around you there and speak of Christ to them.

[54 : 11] Perhaps I should feel shame for that but I know that there are others who are better suited to it. But the message is such that the words here go up into the high mountain.

speak with all the power that you have of this Christ. Share it with others. An interesting account given to us in the Old Testament in the second book of Kings if you remember there where there was a situation in the days of Elisha where there was famine in the land of the people of Judah where were surrounded by Syrians and their lot was an uncomfortable one.

But God intervened and God saved and the citadel that contained the host of the Syrians. God caused the enemies to flee.

And who discovered the place but four leprous men. And they came to the city and found the city. empty.

And they were there because of their leprosy usually denied access to the cities and towns. They had to keep away from them.

[55 : 42] But there they were and they found the place open to them. And they could help themselves having gone from a situation of famine to a situation plenty.

And there they were delighted with their lot. But one of them wisely said, how can we keep this to ourselves? How can we keep this to ourselves?

others? And that was the way it is. Once you've discovered something that your soul takes delight in, it is not meant to be contained.

It's not meant to be kept under wraps. It's something because of the very nature of the content of the message that is required to be shared.

So preach the gospel. Go to the, use every opportunity at your disposal, God says, to declare God's goodness to any and all.

[56 : 50] How is the gospel to be preached? Well, he says lift up your voice. Lift up your voice with strength, without fear.

Now, that's an interesting one. You would think that that should be the way it is. And yet, in this current climate, which we live in, in our society, of political correctness, it is challenged.

We are perhaps too timid. We have become afraid. afraid. We are afraid that we might offend someone, and very quickly we will be told that we will offend someone.

Now, I have to say that it's not the duty of any Christian to go out to offend people. If at all possible, every Christian should avoid offending others.

but if the message of the cross brings offence, then so be it. The message of the cross must be preached, even though people are offended by it.

[58 : 12] the preacher or witness to the truth cannot be cowardly, cannot be fearful, because God is a God who has told them that he is with them in what he has given them to do.

O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, he says. Lift up your voice, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God.

You are to reveal God to them, and God is to be seen in the gospel, God is to be seen in the provision of the gospel, God is to be seen in the Christ of the gospel, who is God over all.

While we cannot avoid bringing offence, we should be able to understand and be able to explain what we understand by it, that this is God's word to a sin-seek world.

this is God's word, that offends because people are told clearly and unambiguously through the proclamation of truth that they need God, and without God they will die in their sins.

[59 : 51] Without Christ, their sins will remain without healing. one of the older preachers said, you know, there's always the temptation on the part of a Christian and of a minister to make the word of God to be as universal as possible with regard to sin.

you know, to speak about it so that it becomes something that is you know, well, everybody sins.

So you're sitting there as one of this number that is contained in this everyone sins, and you're sitting comfortably with that knowledge.

I'm like everybody else. We all sin. That's the truth. We all sin. But if that is all you're saying, if you're avoiding being personal, if you're avoiding the direct nature of pointing out what that sin is, of revealing that sin, of directing attention to particular sins so that the person understands he's talking not about everybody else, he's talking about me.

It's my sin that's being pointed to. It's my need that's being declared. And to avoid that, your words are indistinct.

[61 : 37] But it shouldn't be. I was reading the stories of the, of a preacher, a Welsh preacher, who lived in a past generation, and he had a rather strange way of preaching, I suppose, by today's methods.

But he was once preaching in a, he was an itinerant preacher. And he, he didn't have a support network of a church to finances his preaching.

He had to go where he felt led by the Lord and he would ride miles to preach the gospel in different places. And he went one day to a place where, where he knew that many people there were notorious as sheep stealers.

And he was aware of that sin in particular. But he also understood his own situation where he needed to have his ministry subsidised.

So there would be a collection taken up at the end of the service. And when he preached, he told them, now he says, I know a lot of you are sheep stealers.

[63 : 01] because I know that's a sin that's prevalent in this community. So when the collection is taken up, I don't want any one of you, you sheep stealers to put your money into the collection.

You keep your money to yourselves. So that when the time for the collection came up, nobody wanted not to contribute, lest they be listed amongst those who had raised their funds through sheep stealing.

It's a clever way of doing it, a funny way of doing it. But it was a very direct statement and service made in a community that he knew had this particular sin that was prevalent in it.

Now, I could preach to you about sins that are common place in maybe Glasgow or Edinburgh, but are not so well known here.

But what about the sins that belong to this community? If there are such, should I identify them? Should I speak them out loud?

[64 : 19] Well, surely yes, because we all need to know that our sins are worthy of God's displeasure and God's displeasure will bring God's wrath and God's wrath will bring eternal judgment to bear upon us and there is only one remedy for that and that remedy is in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who then is the gospel to be preached to? Well, as God's ambassadors you preach the gospel to everyone because everyone is needing the gospel.

Everyone is needing to be saved. Everyone is needing to experience a personal saving encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is a proclamation from on high.

It is also a proclamation from the shepherd to the sheep. Verse 10 clearly lists the work of the saviour, but verse 11 describes the benefits to those he has come to save.

He has come to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. There is a subtle message here that is more clearly articulated elsewhere, but nevertheless it is here.

[65 : 37] He has power to save to the uttermost. He is given the authority of the almighty. He is more than willing to do it even though he has to encounter hell itself.

And the preacher who goes out in his name must have the same spirit as Christ himself. When the gospel is preached, do you realise what the gospel is designed to do?

Maybe you're not aware of it. The preacher Martin Lloyd Jones tells us in his own way the kind of context the preaching of the gospel addresses.

Who is the gospel being preached to? Well, there are forces, he says, that are arrayed against the gospel.

First of all, there is the law of God and its demands. Secondly, the sin that is within and its demonic power over us.

[66 : 53] Satan and all the power of evil and death and the grave, all are arrayed to resist the encroaches of the gospel.

These are formidable forces and only by God's power can they be challenged, only by God's power can the gospel be presented against such forces.

If you are in the grip of Satan's malice, and it is malicious, you remember that. You know, when the devil works in the life of an individual, he will try his best to persuade you that you have no need of salvation because you're a good boy, you're a good girl, you're a good father or a good mother, you're a good son or a good daughter, you're a good citizen, you're a member of the community upstanding and others look up to you and you're a role model and all of these things.

The devil will tell you all of these things. He will tell you all of these things. Out of the goodness of his heart, he'll emphasize all these things to you because he wants you to know how good you are.

He wants you to believe that you're the best thing since sliced bread. But why does he want you to do that? Because he doesn't want you to understand that even at your best you are exposed to God's condemnation because sin is at the heart of your existence here in this world and it debars God from the influence that is necessary for you to live your life to his glory which is what we're made for.

[68 : 48] And that brings us to the last thing. Why is the gospel to be preached? Well, it is incumbent upon us, it is necessary for us, it is a requirement to us to believe it.

We must believe in Jesus Christ. You have heard the text often, you must be born again.

The preacher Robbie Duncan preached repeatedly, fairly frequently, he preached on this most grand of texts, the most wonderful text.

You must be born again and people said to him, well, we've heard you on that before, Mr. Duncan. Why do you preach on this text so often? Well, he said because you must.

Because you must. And that's the reality of preaching the gospel. If we do not believe, if we do not trust, if we do not come to know Christ, we will die in our sin.

[69 : 57] If our life does not include Christ, we will suffer the consequences of that. You know, sometimes I know the conviction that comes from preaching to those who appear not to be listening and thinking to myself, well, I'm glad the word of God is what I go to, to give me comfort.

comfort, because the word of God tells me that however foolish my words may be, however foolish the gospel that I preach may appear to be to others, that I know this to be true, that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the things that are might.

debase things, despise things, things which are not to bring to naught things that no flesh should glory in his presence.

God's word preached, proclaimed, heralded, shared in whatever way, privately, silently, secretly, just whispered in the ears of those who have an ear to hear.

God is willing to bless that and we're thankful that he does that but it needs to be heard, it needs to be believed. The need is everywhere, the need is everyone's.

[71 : 35] Our entrance into eternity can be sudden and unexpected and one of the delusions that the devil has brought into our heart is that, well I've heard the gospel and I'll have time to reflect on it when I see eternity beckoning.

I'll have time to pause and think about what needs to be done. Well let me tell you I've been at too many death beds to see anything but the futility of that hope.

Too many people when they come to their last hours on earth are too busy fighting for their life without thought for their soul. Or God may be who has provided them with his grace in allowing them access to the gospel and the privileges that the gospel affords.

Why should you think that he should be as merciful to you in your last hours when you have spent your days rebelling against and rejecting his word to you?

If we abuse his grace in life why should God have anything to say to us in death except what he will say to us when we meet with him at the throne of judgment?

[73 : 05] O Zion that bringest good tidings bear none let all hear what you have to hear our Lord will come with strong hand his arm shall rule for him his reward is with and his work before him the blessings that he brings are not found anywhere else.

many many many things are presented to us whether it is on the book shelf on the market stall and they tell you this is every bit as good as these other more pricey commodities.

They do the same thing it does the same thing but there is nothing that does what Christ does. There is no one that does what Christ does. There is none that you can go to but Christ if your interest is in the salvation of your soul.

Whoever tells you that take time to hear them take time to listen to them take time to confess your sin before God as a result of it and seek his mercy from his hand.

let us pray. Oh Lord our God we give thanks for the privilege that you have given to us to hear God's word preached the privilege that you have given to some to be able to preach that word and to seek that your blessing would accompany it.

[74 : 55] Pour out your spirit upon us that each one of us may know that we have a need of this Christ and we are to believe in him to the saving of our soul pardon us in his name.

Amen. Our closing psalm is Psalm 46 and we're going to sing the last four verses of the psalm.

Psalm 46 verses 8 to 11 Come and behold what wondrous works have by the Lord been brought.

Come see what desolations he on the earth hath wrought. Unto the ends of all the earth wash and to peace he turns. The bow he breaks, the spear he cuts, in fire the chariot burns.

Be still and know that I am God. Among the heathen I will be exalted, I on earth will be exalted high. Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side, the God of Jacob, a refuge forever, will abide.

[75 : 56] Come and behold what wondrous works have by the Lord been wrought. Amen, behold what wondrous works have by the Lord been wrought.

come see what desolation he only earth hath brought unto the ends of all earth.

For gentry peace returns, the glory breaks, the spirit he cuts, and fire the jack of your ferns.

Be still and all that I have brought among the heathen I will be exalted high.

On earth will be exalted high.

[77 : 46] Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon her side.

The God of Jacob her refuge forever with love die.

God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.