

Seek Ye The Lord ...

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[0 : 0 0] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 119. Psalm 119, and we're going to sing section beginning verse 57.

Verse 57. Thou my shoe portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said, that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free. According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try.

And to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turned and die. I did not stay, nor linger long, as those that slothful are.

But hastily thy laws to keep, myself I did prepare. Bands of old men me robbed, yet I thy precepts did not slight.

[1 : 1 1] I'll rise at midnight, thee to praise, even for thy judgment's right. I am companion to all those who fear and they obey.

O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy laws, I pray. The section of Psalm 119 from verse 57.

Thou my shoe portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord. Thou my shoe portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.

I have resolved and said that I would give thy holy word.

With my whole heart, I did and free. Thy face unfaitheth free.

[2 : 3 2] According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former ways.

And in my life well try. Until thy testimony spewed, my feet and turn it die.

I did not say, nor linger long.

As those that lost, O Lord. God bless you. But history is I lost to thee.

[3 : 5 8] My self I did refill. My self I did not give. But so firm made me rob, yet I.

Thy peace is dead, nor sight. I rise at midnight.

I rise at midnight. Thee to place. In for thy justice right.

I am companion to all those who fear and be obey.

O Lord, thy mercy fills the air.

[5 : 1 3] o Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord.

O Lord, my Lord, O Lord, O Lord your God. those in need of access to a God who is our God who is sovereign in all our affairs not one of us is served with a sphere of influence that is divine you are our King you are the one who is sovereign and whose rod of power is extended over the whole earth you are in control of all that is within the sight of your eyes nothing happens by chance even though we would wish to conclude that there are events that go on in the world about us that are just that events that are chance occurrences we would deify the events that are providential so that they are beyond the influence of the God who alone is God we give expression to the influences that are witness to in this world things that we see occur events that take place and that we would argue are circumstantial even those who would have us believe that the world in which we live is a world that is subject to evolution and the powers involved in bringing that process to the place that it exists in today not just within the natural world but even in the history of mankind that we are just the effects of events and occurrences that none controlled and yet the truth is far different you are the creator of heaven and earth you have given life to the world its inhabitants and all the creatures within it that depend upon whatever sustains it we work together or alone and we are subject to the power that you alone possess another confess that it is in you that we live move and have our being how much we we fail to comprehend the extent of what that confession means but we

acknowledge it afresh this evening as we come into your presence as a worshipping people seeking that you would deal with us collectively as a congregation and individually as those who are found present here in this place this evening we pray for your blessing to be imparted to us especially by way of your word communicating to us speaking to our very souls reminding us of our creaturehood and of the fact that we are in the elevated position of having been created in our first parents in image of God possessing faculties of soul that those creatures that occupy time with us do not possess for we are in possession of these never dying souls and thereby accountable to the God who created us answerable to you on the day of judgment for what you have done in us and through us and with us we will answer and we pray that you would remind us afresh even through your word this evening of the significance of that we pray for your people here in this place and all who reside within our community who obey that title remember those who are with us in the way who have yet to acquaint themselves with the

Christ of the gospel having a surface and an indifferent knowledge of them the alone saviour of sinners how incredible that is and yet it is what we are by nature ignorant of God and his ways and blindly indifferent to the work of salvation brought by the son of the most high open the eyes of our understanding that we may marvel that you have taken time to impart to us the blessings of the gospel even as it is preached and proclaimed in our hearing in our own generations we pray for your blessing and all that has been done today in whatever location your people have met we remember places where they have met to remember the death of

Christ until he come the congregation in Harris and the congregation of Barbers we pray for them and we pray that the remembrance of Christ would be blessed to them as congregations we pray for the ongoing outreach of the gospel and we pray for your blessing to be upon your servant who was with us today as he enters into the final process is connected with his training may his word to us be blessed may his labor wherever his love is cast know the favor of God may his mouth be filled from on high as we would seek that to be true of all who would go out in your name remember our congregation in all its needs especially those amongst us who are unwell we pray for their recovery and ask

[13 : 21] Lord if that is thy will for them that they would see a stronger and more enduring life here in this world but if that is not thy will for them that those who belong to you as God and Saviour that they would know that the day will come when the frailties of mind and body would be behind them and they will in Christ be reinvigorated with the fullness that we know nothing of in this world that fullness of faculties be the body and mind ultimately but you people until the day of judgment when the graves will open and the dust will rise will experience eternity in company with their

Lord as disembodied spirits whatever that entails until the time that they are reunited and to be in the presence of Christ where they will be like you remember before you the grieving and the sorrowful we know of some who have entered into the veil of tears in recent days and we pray for your blessing to be their portion as they go on looking at places that were once full and now emptied of loved ones we think of the parts of the world where there has been devastation wrought by your hand by way of earthquake and horrific powers of flood that has decimated large tracts of this world we remember the grieving and the sorrowful there and pray that in your mercy that you would enter into their grief with the knowledge of

Christ presented to them even in the endeavors that are made to alleviate suffering think of the parts of the world where there is rampant hostility against the church of Christ even in the shadow of such awful realities in these very areas of the world there is rising up against the people of God persecuting those who would proclaim Christ and seeking to destroy the name of the one whose name is above every name we pray for your mercy that you would pour out your spirit upon us as a sin sick generation that we would learn what it is to kneel at your footstool and cry cry cry cry to the God of heaven to rend asunder the heavens and come down

Lord help us to that end hear our prayers and petitions we ask much over us cleansed from sin in Jesus name Amen let us sing again to God's praise from Psalm 34 Psalm 34 from verse 16 to the end of the psalm the face of God is set against those that do wickedly that he may quiet out from the earth cut off their memory the righteous cry unto the Lord he unto them gives ear and they out of their troubles all by him delivered are the Lord is ever nigh to them that be of broken spirit to them he safety doth afford that are in heart contrite the troubles that afflicted just in number many be but yet at length out of them all the Lord doth set them free he carefully his bones doth keep whatever can be fall that not so much as one of them can broken be at all ill shall the wicked sleep laid west shall be who hate the just the Lord redeems his servant souls none perish that him trust he said he said he said the face of God is set against those that do wickedly the face of God is set against those that do wickedly that he may quite have drawn the earth cut of their memory the righteous cry unto the

Lord he unto them gives the earth and they adore their troubled soul by him given word I the Lord is ever nigh to them that be a broken state to them he saved he doth afford that are in heart contrite the troubles that afflicted the just in number may he be but yet hath laid out of them all the

[20 : 40] Lord Lord does set him free he carefully he carefully performs the feet whatever can be fall that not so much as one of them can broken be at all ill shall the wicked slave slave with waste shall be who hate the just the

Lord redeems his servant souls not perish not in Christ not in Christ not perish not in Christ in the prophet Isaiah chapter 55 we'll read the whole of this chapter oh everyone that thirsters come ye to the waters and he that hath no money come ye buy and eat ye come buy wine and milk and milk and milk and he that hath no money come ye buy and eat ye come buy wine and milk without money and without price wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which satisfieth not hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight light itself in fatness.

Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the true message of David.

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God and for the Holy One of Israel.

For he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

[24 : 03] And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts and your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands, instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Amen, and may the Lord out of his blessing to the reading of his word, to his name be the praise. Let us sing now the words of Psalm 125.

[25 : 53] Psalm 125, we're singing the whole psalm. They in the Lord that firmly trust shall be like Sion Hill, which at no time can be removed, but standeth ever still.

As round about Jerusalem the mountains stand all way, the Lord his folk of Campasso, from henceforth and foray. For ailments wrought upon the lot of just men shall not lie, lest righteous men stretch forth their hands into iniquity.

Do thou to all those that be good thy goodness, Lord, impart, and do thou good to those that are upright within their heart. But as for such as turn aside after their crooked way, God shall lead forth with wicked men.

On Israel peace shall stay. The words of Psalm 125 to God's praise. They in the Lord that firmly trust shall be like Sion Hill.

which at no time can be removed, but soundeth ever still.

[27 : 37] As round about Jerusalem and the mountains stand all way, the Lord his hope doth come as so from henceforth and glory.

for the Lord for the Lord men's rock upon the Lord of just men shall not lie, their righteous men and stretch forward and hands unto iniquity.

Do thou do all those that be good thy goodness Lord, impart, and do the good to those that have a pride within their heart.

God shall lead forth with wicked men God shall lead forth their crooked way God shall lead forth with wicked men and for Israel and for Israel he shall shall stay.

Shall we turn to the passage read? Book of the prophet Isaiah chapter 55.

[30 : 14] Can read again at verse 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found call ye upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

Amen. This week I was thinking for a while at least about the necessity that there is for every one of us to repent to know repentance not just to know the doctrine of repentance but to understand the experience of it to have a personal experience of it to constantly be engaged in it.

We often talk of it as something that is recognisable at the outset of Christian experience and so it should be.

And it's recognisable at the beginning of Christian experience because very often it is not something that a Christian has ever done until they are Christians.

They may experience remorse regret they may even weep tears copiously because of something that they have done or not done without experiencing repentance.

[32 : 17] But once you do experience it you know the difference you know the difference that it is not simply a shallow sorrow that you have experienced before countless times.

So when my thoughts were on repentance as an experience I was thinking also perhaps I need to explore this further.

there are so many things connected with it. The ability to forgive the ability to forgive we expect God to forgive and this passage reminds us of that.

Repentance is accompanied with God's mercy and exercise. that has to be the case.

But at the same time it is one of the hardest things that we do to show forgiveness to somebody who has wronged us.

[33 : 37] And yet we expect it and even Christians expect it forgiveness to forgiveness means nothing to the Christian if forgiveness is not their experience.

And yet when it comes to wronged somebody and that person seeking their forgiveness it is not easily given. That's something that we need to think a lot about.

Think long and hard about. But these are my thoughts and my thoughts went to parts of the scripture and I came across this passage and it's a passage of scripture that I'm fond of for different reasons.

And I know I've preached on this passage before but I don't think you're going to hear a sermon I've preached before because usually I check at some point whether I've preached on a text before and the sermon that I've done is probably a different one to the one preached before.

But that's neither here or there. But I would say to you if you're a Christian and you've heard this sermon and you're thinking you've heard it before then you'll take pleasure in hearing it again.

[35 : 12] But if you're not a Christian and you think you've heard it before you need to hear it again because if you've not repented if you've not experienced genuine sorrow for sin and turned from your sin to God then you haven't heard it you haven't listened to it.

And I would hope that having read this chapter one thing that you're convinced of more than anything is that repentance is something that needs to be done urgently.

It is something that requires haste. It is something that needs to be done now not tomorrow now before you do anything else.

When I was preparing this I was reminded of passages of the scripture that are so much full of the urgency that God means us to understand belongs to hearing the gospel and responding to the gospel that we hear.

how many passages can you think of that bring to your attention this wonderful provision that God has made in the person of Jesus Christ words that convey that truth to us and the need that there is to respond to that at once.

[36 : 52] There are many of them. One passage I was reminded of was a passage that was involved in, I found it at the beginning of my own Christian experience and well a while into it.

And it was a passage to do with the words of the Lord. The harvest is plenteous the Lord said. The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few.

Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send out labourers, send forth labourers into his harvest. And I can speak of that text personally because I felt the duty at the time to pray to God that he would send out labourers.

And I felt the burden of prayer for God to send out labourers into his harvest because the harvest was truly plenteous.

But what happened in my experience was that verse was used for convicting me of the need that I had to go out into the harvest and preach to others concerning the need that they had in Christ.

[38 : 14] I never got away from it. It didn't matter how far I went down the road of turning my back on it. But this verse was not just something I needed to pray about but I needed to respond to it rightly or wrongly.

Now what has all that got to do with this passage? Well I think that what we have to understand about what the prophet Isaiah is saying to us in this passage is this that the urgency that permeates the whole of the chapter lies in the fact as Abiy Kuyper says again and again in his own teaching on evangelism it lies in the fact that God is God that God is God something that doesn't change something that is always behind the divine imperative that requires sinners to turn from their sin and to come to God man is anything other than holy which God is he is a sinner from birth and as such deserving of God's wrath

I want us to think of the verses of our text but tying them in into this passage in such a way that we can first of all recognise this necessity that there is for the sinner to repent of their sins and tied in with that necessity there is the urgent need that accompanies it necessity and urgency are not necessarily the same word but they are companions there is a need but there is also an urgent need we also need to understand that what the prophet is telling us here is that when we turn to the Lord when we respond in faith to what God is telling us to do what we discover is that we have to be earnest and honest in our appraisal of what we are turning to

God from and what we are turning to God for and I suppose essential to our understanding is this that throughout the world that we have here is the understanding that the time of grace is God's appointing he has set limits on it which we don't know hence the need that there is to act with urgency and with favour but having done that what awaits us is the grace that is needed in order to deal with what has brought us there in the first case so we try and deal with some of these things as we go on the necessity of repentance is something that may be obvious to all of you but I believe it's something that it needs to be said concerning repentance it needs to be said because we don't give it sufficient airtime we don't give it sufficient consideration why it is so necessary because when we get to the heart of what repentance is what it fixes before your eyes is this that it involves coming back to

God it involves coming to God and if that means that when you repent you come back to God it requires you to understand that you are away from God you know it's a simple matter if you are already in close proximity to God if you're living cheek by jaw with God if you are in intimate fellowship with God then the need for repentance almost diminishes but even as we shall see the most holy of individuals who live in this world and who suffer from the worldliness that is in the world and assails the sinner at all times even the sinner saved by grace that they understand that there is always something driving them away from the presence of

[44 : 10] God be it thought be it word be it deed that is the experience of it and what we need to understand I suppose every one of us is life apart from God is no life at all whatever impression you may have about what life is all about life apart from God is no life at all this is something you hear so often particularly if somebody is suddenly struck down by death and the best thing a person can say about that person is well he lived his life to the full he lived his life to the full whatever they mean by it well let me tell you that if

Christ was not in their life they weren't living life to the full it's just not possible to live life to the full and exclude Christ from it it's not possible remember the psalmist says to us in Psalm 36 with thee is the fountain of life with God is the fountain of life now if you are cut off from the fountain of life by reason of your of your sin by reason of your lack of a relationship with God you have not got that life in you and you have not got access to the fullness of that life so you cannot be living the full life that is possible to you if the channel is blocked if the channel is redirected in some other way then that life that you profess to have is not really what you think it is

John John Calvin in his own way he's talking about the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ in particular he's talking about the way that he is the redeemer of fallen sinners and he says of that redeemer he was to be truly God and man he says because it was his role to swallow up death and who he asked the question who but life could do so Jesus was in the world as the sinner as the saviour of sinners who but life could do that the one who says he is the way the truth and the life and is that not the real issue is that not the problem that the prophet is confronting here whatever we cram into our lives if it does not include the passion of the

Lord Jesus Christ if it does not include God as our God then it lacks the fullness that we may imagine it possesses the apostle Paul you remember his words he speaks again of the saviour he speaks of the Christ that he preaches and proclaims to others and he says of that Christ for it pleased the father that in him should all fullness dwell pleased him that in him should all fullness dwell but he doesn't leave it there he says and having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things to himself maybe you're familiar with these words he goes on to elaborate but just focus on these words again by him to reconcile all things to himself the

Christ that in whom the fullness dwells that God has given to him is the one by whom we are reconciled to that God from whom we are estranged by reason of our sins the only way to God is by way of Jesus Christ and it is necessary for us to return to him by way of Christ and that is what this gospel of the old testament is telling us the first announcements of the clarity of the gospel as it applies to the person of Jesus Christ coming from the mouth of the old testament prophet Isaiah shall Gröning but maybe what am trying explained in this way when you accompany it or when you pair it with the necessity with the urgency you'll notice at the beginning of this chapter that the word ho appears.

[50 : 04] And it's interesting. If you want to carry out word studies of various parts of the Bible, they bring to light a lot of information that maybe you didn't give very much time to.

But if your Bible version, whatever Bible you read, if it's the ESV, for example, or the NIV, both of these versions, instead of ho, the word can is there.

If my memory serves me right. Now, the word ho that we have in the authorised version is a translation of a Hebrew word which is so hardly a word at all.

Some describe it as a grunt or a gasp coming from the mouth, as we'll be aware. Now, to call it a grunt is to do it an injustice.

But it's as if the prophet is wanting us to understand this thing that we need to understand.

[51 : 35] We need to take this thought and have it before the forefront of our imagination so that we understand the need for it and the necessity of it.

Now, that begins the chapter and when we get to verse 6, we have the same emphasis again. Have I got your attention?

For what follows must be done. Come and do this. And I can't remember which one of the theologians brings that thought to light.

that there we have at the beginning of the chapter what is replicated in verse 6 an imperative, a burning necessity, something that you cannot not do.

You have to do it. And when you do it, you do it with your whole attention focused on what you do.

[52 : 54] Not something you do haphazardly. It's not something you do with gay abandon. It's not something that you treat with trivialities. Along with many other things that you would want to do in life.

This is the most important thing that you can ever think of doing. It's not a request.

It's not a bit of advice that he is giving. But something that requires attention urgently.

Professor John L. Mackay, a late professor, says it is something that requires your meticulous care and attention.

I think that's something that you need to think about and I need to think about. In our presentation of the gospel to others, we may sometimes give the impression that what we can, that what we are wanting people to do, that they can do so at their leisure.

[54 : 23] That they can do so if they are of a mind to and when they have a convenient season, as another put it. that's not the way.

This is something that God says is of the utmost input to all. And perhaps when you read on into verse 7, you're saying to yourself, oh, I understand better.

You know, if you leave it at verse 6, then maybe I'll feel a bit of guilt. But, when you look at verse 7, it's talking there about, you know, not just sinners, I might be willing to confess my sin.

I might be willing to acknowledge that I'm a sinner, but it says to us here that the wicked, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him.

The wicked, the unrighteous, well, so they should. These are the very people who should turn to God. These desperately wicked people, these awful people who have given their lives over to all manner of sinful behavior, they should turn to God.

[56 : 00] Now, maybe none of these desperately wicked people are present. Maybe none of these unrighteous people are here in this congregation.

They're somewhere else. It's because they're wicked they're not here. It's because they're unrighteous they're not here. Well, I have a question for you.

Where do you think you are? Where do you think you are? Do you think of yourself as if you're in some spiritual no man's land?

Do you think of yourself as, well, I'm not, I'm not good but I'm not bad. I certainly am not wicked. Certainly that word unrighteous if it means anything I adhere to the law I keep the rules I walk a straight line as far as I'm able but I'm not like these.

Well, maybe that's what you think but I often think that the person who attempts to do that is measuring himself or herself using some measure that is quite at odds with the way God records things.

[57 : 35] You are either in Christ or you are not. You are either a believer in Christ or you're not. you have put your faith in Christ or you have not.

You have given your life to Christ or you have not. Perhaps you've convinced yourself that someday that will change.

Someday that's going to change for you. You're going to be a good person. A good person in the sense that you'll be as good as all these Christians who have professed to be Christians and yet they're not as good as you are.

But you'll be better. You'll do better. You'll toe the line far more than they are. How long have you been telling yourself that?

Some of you perhaps a lifetime. some of you have been convincing yourself that one day soon your life is going to be different.

[58 : 50] Well, listen to these words and they're very solemn. The time of grace is brief.

Once it is gone, it can never be retrieved. When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, when the books of your life are opened, it will become clear how you spent the precious time that God gave you to seek him.

When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, having not repented, having not turned from your sin, having not turned to Christ, having told yourself repeatedly, well, some other time, some other time soon, I'll be able to do that.

time is a luxury, and every one of us will realize that one day.

God has given us a time of favor, a day of grace, a set time, and beyond it not one of us will go.

[60 : 15] all. But now is the day of grace, and God calls us to turn to him away from sin. And if you notice in the passage before there are two things that stand out.

There is an outward perspective, we see things outwardly, and we see that there is an inward turning involved.

his thoughts, his ways. John L. Mackay very wisely says that these two elements are there.

I was thinking of this, and to suppose it's better understood like this, I remember it well, when somebody for some reason decided that he was going to stop some transgression that was part and partial of his life.

For example, when it comes to drink, how many people have you come across who are said to be on the wagon? They are on the wagon.

[61 : 37] What does that mean? It means that they've stopped drinking for a time. I was never on the wagon. I was never on the wagon. I'm not better or proud of that fact, but I saw people and the same people who would be one week on the wagon and one week off.

One week, they would say, never again will I touch a draw. The next week, they would be back again, the way they were were. But that kind of thinking is the way we are with sin as a whole in general.

If we come face to face with the sinfulness of our behavior brought home to us by God, then we realize that things are not the way they ought to be.

the course that is advised here, the course that is taught here, the course that is insisted on here, the course that God says must be done as an imperative is to forsake the way that is repeatedly bad, the recurring sins that are part and part of our life, to turn our backs on it with God's help, which is the only way we can do it.

turning from our sin and simultaneously turning to God, you know, it's a very difficult thing to explain, I suppose, the way repentance works.

[63 : 13] You can't remain in your sin and turn to God. You can't turn to God and remain in your sin. Some people think they can take their sin with them and make some kind of motion in following God.

That's not possible. The same God who speaks to us in the scripture has by these words in the mouth of his minister called us to his footstool to acknowledge our need of him, our dependence upon him for saving grace for life that is without end.

You know, perhaps the best example for you is somebody who was, you know, he was a bad person. He was a bad person.

He was a wicked person. God forbid, his heart was controlled by evil and yet you wouldn't have thought that.

Who was that person? Well, his name is Paul. He speaks of himself like this, what shall we then say?

[64 : 39] Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law. For I had not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet.

But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once.

But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death.

For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me. So on. Paul is describing there somebody who lived as if they were lucky push father than law breakers.

But he was somebody who derived life from that lifestyle and all the time he was in the grip of sin its slave incapable of fulfilling the law of God.

[65 : 57] How did Paul come to discover that? How did Saul become Paul? well he became Paul by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

God by the Spirit convinces him of his sinfulness. Not just his sinfulness but the sinfulness of sin. And it's amazing what God can do even to you for you.

I was thinking of this and I could be completely wrong in the way that I'm thinking. You know Job in the Old Testament do you know the testimony that God gave concerning Job?

He spoke to Satan and this is what he said Have you considered my servant Job? That there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and shuns evil.

That's God's word, God's testimony concerning this man, somebody who was upright, perfect, one that feared God, and shuns evil.

[67 : 26] I think that encounter with Satan is quite remarkable in any case. But read on to the end of the book of Job and what do you hear that man of God say?

That man who had a life experience of discovering who he was and who God was and what kind of world he was in, amongst other things.

He says this in chapter 42, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I upon myself and repent in dust and ashes.

what's that got to do with you? Well, I'll tell you what it's got to do with you. If this man that God considered to be right with him, upright and just and holy and good, if his own confession of what he was like, as he understood God's eye to be on him, as he understood God to be delving into his heart, and his confession to that God was, I hate myself, I upon myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

sorrow for sin is appropriate to the person that God convinces of it, and if you're not convinced of it, then there you must begin, there you must begin, there you must start, and discover yourself in the eyes of God for what you are, as a sinner in need of salvation.

[69 : 20] You've got to start somewhere. If you haven't begun, then this is where you must begin. Sorrow for sin, contrition, remorse, self-condemnation, all God's doing by way of the Holy Spirit.

If you're a Christian tonight, you've experienced that. If you're a Christian, you've experienced that. God convinces you, God convicts you, God brings your sin before your eyes, and you feel shame, and you feel loathsome.

But what would you be like if he left you there? What would you be like if he left you there, having taken you to this place? What does the prophet say?

God will tell us what awaits the penitent sinner who turns to God. What awaits the penitent sinner?

There's acceptance, there's mercy, there's abundant pardon. And is that not what the sinner has received at the footstool of God when they came to him?

[70 : 41] Have you experienced that embrace of God?

Have you experienced the willingness that he shows to receive you to himself because your sin has been confessed and you've sought solace in the one who is the great sin bearer?

Or repent? I have to repent of my sin daily. I repent of my sin, I accept my sin as something that God is offended by, that God sees as something that is loathsome and hideous and that cannot be tolerated and will not be tolerated by.

Where can I go? Who can I go to if not to God in the person of Jesus Christ? Repentance is not just a doctrine.

Repentance is an experience that you and I must both have, that we must have, for without it there's no salvation.

[72 : 07] you're not saved because of your repentance, but you're not saved without it. You're not saved without it.

May God convince you of where you need to go and what you need to take to that very place and that very person who is able to deal with this.

Let us pray. Lord of God, we pray for your blessing to be upon your word. We confess that we have clarity of mind in preparation and in thinking these things through and we think that we've got a handle on it all and we don't.

We think that we've managed to unravel these thoughts that need to be straightened out for ourselves, let alone for others.

We give thanks that we can go to you and allow you to do the unravelling. Allow you to put straight what we have in some way distorted.

[73 : 21] We pray for your grace. We pray for your spirit to be poured out upon us that we may appreciate the provision that you have made in mercy in Christ.

Forgive us in his name. Amen. We'll sing in conclusion from Psalm 85 Psalm 85 verse 6 singing to the end.

That in thee may thy people joy. Wilt thou not us revive? Show us thy mercy. Glory to us, to thy salvation give. I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk.

He'll speak peace and to his saints, but let them not return to foolishness. To them that fear him, surely near is his salvation, that glory in our land may have her habitation.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness and peace kiss mutually. Truth springs from earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven high.

[74 : 33] Yea, what is good the Lord shall give, and land shall yield increase. Justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face. These verses Psalm 85 shall give.

I'll hear what God the Lord will speak. To His folk He'll speak peace. And to His saints but let them not return to foolishness.

To them that fear Him surely near is His salvation.

That glory in our land may have unhabitation.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness, and peace is mutually.

[76 : 32] Through springs from earth and righteousness looms down from heaven high.

Yea, what is good the Lord shall give. Our land shall yield increase.

Justice to set us in His steps shall go before His face.

Lord, 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.