

Know Them Which Labour Among You

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- [0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this morning and welcome to any who may be visiting with us. As some of you will know, today we have the ordination of office bearers at the end of the service, but before we come to that, we're going to join together in the worship of God and hear his word to us this morning. We're going to begin our service singing from Psalm 96.
- Psalm 96 and we're going to sing from verse 7 to 11. Psalm 96 at the verse 7.
- Do ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe? Glory do ye unto the Lord, and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due. Come ye into his courts, and bring an offering with you.
- In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord adore. Likewise let all the earth throughout tremble his face before. Among the heathen say God reigns. The world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving.
- He shall judge the people righteously. Let heavens be glad before the Lord, and let the earth rejoice. Let seas and all that is therein cry out and make a noise.
- [1 : 3 6] And so on. We'll sing these verses. Psalm 96 from verse 7 to 11. Do ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe?
- To ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe?
- Glory to ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe?
- God bless you.
- In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord of people every tribe? In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord of people every tribe? O do the Lord of people every tribe? O do the Lord of people every tribe?
- [3 : 2 0] O do the Lord of people every tribe? God adore. Thy voice had one a LAUGH, and her life less, she burn, Among the healers they operate, the world shall set the team.
- If they stronger may each other judge the people I just be.
- Let heaven speak not before the Lord, and let the earth rejoice.
- Let Jesus and all the miseric's end, cry out a new joy.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Eternal and ever-blessed God, we are invited to worship the God who is worthy of receiving from us the best of what we can come with.
- [5 : 2 6] The people of old would select as appointed the choice of their own flocks and their own land.
- And whatever they were able to come with, and the best of what they were able to provide, they took into the presence of God.
- And therein revealed their devotion to you. And while we are not called to come with sacrifices of animal or vegetable or whatever it is that your Lord decreed, we have a greater and a better sacrifice than these.
- Because all others had spoken of the sacrifice that was once to be offered by the passion of your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

And once offering that sacrifice, you proved to all who had an interest in it that you were pleased that it was acceptable to you.

[6 : 55] And that having entered into the experience of the curse of the cross, but bearing the sins of his own people, he rose from the grave and he ascended to the majesty on high, to the right hand of his heavenly Father.

And that to declare to all that you were pleased to receive of him, what you yourself had appointed and what you yourself had anointed him for.

We meet in his name today and we give thanks that it is his word around which we gather. And we sit under it, seeking that it would be blessed to us, and that our hearts and minds would be open to that truth.

And that we would lend ourselves to be instructed from it, so that the conduct of our lives would reflect that. That we would reveal ourselves to be those who believe the word, and who believe what it says to us about our need of salvation.

Who are reminded of our fallenness and the manifold ways in which that is reflected in the way that we live our life here in this world. Our shortcomings are too many to number.

[8 : 27] God, you know them all.

May we be given hearing ears and receptive hearts. We pray for those who cannot be with us because of their own infirmity in some instances.

The weakness of the flesh is there to see. When old age overtakes, as we find ourselves unable any further to attend the public means of grace.

There are some of that number who are housebound today. Some are housebound. Some are hospitalized. Some are confined to homes for the elderly.

Some also of our number are found in terminal care in the hospice. Some of our number are found in the morning. Some are available to them in their own homes.

[9 : 49] Lord, we pray for your blessing to be upon them. Although their ability to worship publicly has been curtailed, their ability to worship has not.

and you invite them as you invite us to join together in your name and to wait upon your blessing, upon your word.

And as we read it and hear it read, as we reflect on what it says to us, we ask that you would remind us of the greatest need that we have to glorify your name and to enjoy you.

Amen. We pray for your blessing upon the proclamation of truth in this congregation and in all the congregations of our presbytery, all the presbyteries of our denomination and all the denominations that speak of Christ as the unknown saviour of sinners.

We bless you and thank you for the promotion of the gospel, for the great evangel that has been entrusted to your church, to go to the ends of the earth, proclaiming Christ in the gospel.

[11 : 05] And we give thanks that even in places remote from us, that the name of Christ is precious, perhaps even more so than in the eyes of many within our own communities who have from their youth heard much of Christ and yet who have chosen to despise the provision that the gospel has made.

In their hearing, inviting them to close in with Christ by faith, we pray that you would bless those you have sent out with the gospel and you pray that you would bless their labours, remembering in all presbytery those vacant congregations, those places that are waiting on the Lord to make provision for them in the proclamation of truth.

We ask that you would encourage those who have a praying heart to continue fervently in prayer so that you would fulfil your own word with regard to those who are desirous of hearing the word of God and that you would send others, even calling others who have as yet not heard or responded to the call of God upon their hearts to go after your name.

So make provision for a sin-seek world in this way. Remember those amongst us who are grieving and sorrowful, those who are looking at empty places that have been vacated by reason of death.

Your voice is heard so frequently. We are in danger of taking it as something that is natural when there is nothing as unnatural that we confront in this world.

[13 : 09] Man was created in your image. A God who is a living God, a God who has the potential for sustaining life wherever you have created it.

And yet by reason of sin, death entered into the experience of man through the fall. And when we see the soul separated from the body, there is nothing so drastic that our eye can fall upon and seeing life extinct where it should have abounded.

But we give thanks for the promise that is made concerning your people that the day will come when body and soul will be reunited and the believer in Christ will be with their Saviour for all time into eternity.

We ask that you would remember the congregation at this time as we seek at a later point to ordain office bearers here in the congregation.

May that be blessed to us and may we see a continued interest in the Gospel as it goes out here in this community.

[14 : 31] We ask that you would bless the Word of God that is proclaimed in this pulpit from Sabbath day to Sabbath day and throughout the world in which we live that is desperately needing the peace of God that passes all understanding to be declared to them.

Especially when there are so terrible evidences of the wickedness that is in man's heart. We see wanton destruction in theatres of war not because there are soldiers armed to the teeth intent on the destruction of others who are in closing sides but the machinery of war is such that infants and mothers and grandparents are obliterated through the power that is unleashed wantonly in such situations.

And whoever is responsible for it we know that there is no true purpose behind these things other than man's own wickedness.

We ask Lord that you would preserve our peace and that we would esteem it precious and that we would always do what is in our power to ensure that it may continue.

and we look to you to that end because you are the one who is sovereign. You are the one to whom we must come and upon us may we call.

[16 : 19] So bless us and bless all we live in your care today. The hungry, the needy, those who are cast adrift on the shores of a troubled seashore of life we pray that you would remember each place and every person for giving sin in Jesus name we would ask it.

Amen. Amen. I'm going to sing now to God's praise from Psalm 37 Psalm 37 and we're going to sing four stanzas from verse 3 Set thou thy trust upon the Lord and be thou doing good and so thou in the land shalt dwell and verily have food delight thyself in God he'll give thine heart's desire to thee thy way to God commit whom trust it bring to pass shall he and like unto the light he shall thy righteousness display and he thy judgment shall bring forth like noontide of the day rest in the Lord and patiently wait for him do not fret for him who prospering in his way success in sin doth get these four stanzas

Psalm 37 verses 3 to 7 Set thou thy trust upon the Lord and be thou doing good Set thou thy trust upon the Lord and be thy thy U may and ■■■ on the Lord and shall dwell and may yea ■ lee in ha' air.

In Ai-d'I shall ■■■■ Aquacrit I desire to thee, thy witcher God commend us, a prayer to pass your name.

As life is true, the light is true, thy righteousness is great, and ye thy judgment shall bring forth, thy truth died of the day.

[19 : 53] Rest in the Lord's commission, which I will do not let, our heaven who does bring in his way, such as his angel is.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm going to hear God's word as we find it in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, and chapter 5.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travel upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that in that day, that that day should be overtaken as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.

[21 : 26] We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which are...

We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

[22 : 44] See that none render evil for evil, and to any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit, despise not prophesying.

Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray, God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. May the Lord that his blessing to a reading of his word unto his name be the praise.

[24 : 00] We're going to sing now from Psalm 61. And we'll sing from verse 4 to the end of the psalm. Psalm 61, from verse 4.

Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, and under covert of thy wings with confidence me hide. For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord, my God, didst hear.

Thou hast given me the heritage of those thy name that fear. A life prolonged for many days thou to the king shalt give, like many generations be the years which he shall live.

He in God's presence, his abode, forevermore shall have. O do thou truth and mercy both prepare that may him save.

And so will I perpetually sing praise unto thy name, but having made my vows, I may each day perform the same.

[25 : 02] These verses, Psalm 61, from verse 4 to the end. Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide. Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, And under covert of thy wings, With confidence me hide.

For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord, my God, be seen, Thou hast ever been the heritage of those lying in the field.

A life so long upon many this, thou to the King shall live in.

Life can be generated by the years which he shall live.

In God's presence, this Lord, forevermore, in God's presence, this Lord, forevermore, in our life.

[27 : 32] H ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ remot ■■■■■■ And so will I perpetually sing praise unto thine hymn, that thou will me my verse thine name, each keeper horn does dim.

Can we turn back to the passage that we read in the New Testament Scriptures? The first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter 5.

And we can read again verse 12. First Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 12.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves.

And so on. Sometimes when we try and follow the ministry of the Apostle Paul, the path that he took from his own conversion to his calling to preach the gospel, it isn't always straightforward in following his footsteps.

[29 : 56] Sometimes we clearly understand that he goes to certain places, and that he is identified as preaching the gospel in these places, and that through his preaching, that congregations of the Church of Christ are formed.

Sometimes, however, it is not Paul who goes to these places, insofar as feet on the ground are concerned.

And he sends others in his name to go to these places. And in that sense, while he himself is not present there, or has never been present there, his word is sent to them, and the teachings that he brings to them from God become the teachings that are central to the activities of the congregation or church there.

We know for certain that the Apostle Paul did visit Thessalonica. We know from Acts chapter 17 that he came to there, and that he preached the gospel amongst the Jews.

He would gather with them as they worshipped, and he would present Christ to them, which is what he did. And through his preaching, many were converted.

[31 : 36] Some of them were Jews, some of them were Gentiles, who were proselytes to the Jewish faith, and others were simply Greeks or Gentiles, who were not of the Jewish faith.

But the word of God, through the Apostle, was blessed to them. So we know that at the very outset of the church in Thessalonica, that Paul had a hands-on involvement in it.

The letters that are written to the Thessalonians, 1 and 2, are a response to what Paul hears is happening in that congregation that is so dear to him.

And he, I think it's believed that Timothy came to Paul with a report from the congregation there.

And the report about the development of the congregation gladdened his heart. And yet, his response to what he is told about the congregation by Timothy is to send this letter, which is a letter which is designed to exhort, to encourage, to counsel, and also to make sure that those who are going on in the faith are going on as they should.

[33 : 20] Now, coming towards the end of this epistle, the direction of his thought is specifically with a view to the believing membership there.

And he wants them to behave, to live their lives as they would be expected to live as the family of God.

So his instructions to them, his counsel to them, has at its heart a pastoral concern. And that pastoral concern is variously understood, but the desire is that collectively that they would minister to one another and that they would respond in faith to the pastoral concerns that are expressed towards them.

And I think at times, you know, the scripture tells us various things, it describes to us various activities on the part of the church which follow a certain pattern and we can understand them.

For example, when we think of a pastoral situation, we think of care being exercised that emulates the care that is shown by a shepherd or by someone who is caring for their livestock and the care that they are to follow is exemplary so that when they deliver such care to those who are part of the body of Christ, they have the example of a shepherd's way of delivering that care.

[35 : 39] and here in this case it is also the idea of the pastoral oversight is brought to our attention but it is within a family setting so that the care that is being spoken of has elements of fatherly care where the care of the church towards one another is the care that you would expect to be delivered within a family setting so that a parent would express or exercise care towards their children in different ways that they would make sure that they are properly looked after that they are clothed properly that they are fed properly that when the need arises that they are instructed and that they are receiving correction when that is required so

I think that lies at the heart of the verses that we are focusing on in particular and I would have said it before that societal influence on the church has diminished our appreciation for the care that should exist within a family setting and I think that is reflected broadly in the breakdown of family and in the way that we see within society things that probably were not seen as much or as openly in previous generations and that is really reflected in many of the problems that we see that are prevalent in our day now that doesn't mean that it's always been like that but there are times when such breakdowns have come but in the background here

Paul understands that there is a loving relationship that should exist within the church of Christ where care is exercised towards those who belong to that church and it is witnessed to and it is encouraged in all its different forms now looking at this passage I think what is probably at the heart of much of our time when we think of these words is the fact that there is a differentiation made between those who are of the church and those who are not and that differentiation is seen in their appreciation of who Christ is what Christ has done and what Christ has yet to do those who belong to the church who anticipate that Christ's work is not yet complete in other words they are looking forward to the day when Christ will return and take his church to be with himself that forms much of what we have here and they are encouraged by these words who are inclined to feel that Christ has delayed his return to the degree that they are losing confidence in that he will ever come so he is exhorting them encouraging them as believers to remember to remind themselves that he has promised and that he will return and their belief in these promises marks them out as believers in him but I'll focus as I said it's going to be on verses 12 and 13

I looked at these verses many passages considering today that we are going to see the ordination and induction of office bearers that there are thoughts contained within this verse or verses that may lend themselves to thinking about what is important about the role of office bearers in a congregation and these two sentences there I want us to think of them first of all by recognising what they say to each and every one of us who are privileged under God to have the pastoral oversight of others over our lives and how we are to react to that we beseege you brethren to know them which labour among you and are over you in the

Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake and I think if you look at these words you will understand that they're saying to you and to me that we have a responsibility to those who are in a privileged position of oversight in the congregation and this is just one evidence of that but then I want you to in looking at these words to turn it on its head and to do that on the part of those who are in office currently and those who are now to be ordained to office what is it that is expected of me what is it that

[42 : 18] I am expected to do as an office bearer of the church and you can't do that without too much hardship and we'll try and think of that as simply as we can I suppose it comes with a warning that some would look at these words and they would say this is not really a word to the eldership per se it is a word specifically to one elder who has the specific pastoral oversight of our congregation in other words this word is directed to those who are ministers of the gospel those who are elders but specifically who are concerned with the pastoral care of the congregation at the level of delivering ministry ministry now that is possibly the case but I don't agree that it is all that we have in these verses and because I think it expands beyond the role of the elder into the role of other spirit in general

I think it can be argued from what is said that these elements that are within the role can be considered we can break it down in this way they are to know them they are to know that or recognize the place that God has given to them which is one of authority they are to submit to the discipline that that authority comes with they are to recognize the onerous place that being in a place of authority puts them in and will consider it just as it appears there the scripture we have to remind ourselves differentiates at various points in different ways on the tiers that exist within the oversight of God's church spheres of responsibility that are dedicated in specific ways to individuals and along with others first of all

I think it can be easily argued from the scripture that from the very outset when the church was established in the New Testament era that it was always the case that there was a corporate identity the church was the church the body of God the body of Christ in the world and within that church there was always recognition given to the fact that no one individual not Paul not John not Peter not any one of these had oversight as an individual ruling over others they were part of a whole and they were part of those who shared the burden with others of a similar or a like calling so when it comes to the eldership what you find very early on established is that there is a plurality of elders within the body that is the church of Christ not popes not anything that highlights the power of an individual not moderators of assembly the power that

God has vested in individuals within his church is a power that is shared a responsibility that is shared an authority that is shared with others so that there is no one individual that is able to lord it over others and if we don't understand that then and it's easy for us to lose sight of it because traditionally with maturation individuals might be spoken of as senior to others we often use the term he was a senior elder as if the role of senior elder has some kind of kudos or some kind of power vested in the seniority that is persons that others do not possess well that's not right they may be senior in sense of having been longer in office and in sense in that sense respect is afforded the seniority of that individual but as to authority it is a devolved authority shared with those who share the role of responsibility within the body of the eldership and always remember that when we're talking about the elders the elders are decals as well because although they are in the role of elders with external responsibility they have a diagonal role which they must fulfill also and very often I hear elders speak as if they are now above the diagonal role and it is no longer their responsibility it's the deacon's responsibility well that's not right elders remain responsible for diagonal duties along with those deacons that are appointed to it so if you ever see an elder say it's the deacon's responsible remember tell them the deacons as well they have that duty and they can't forego it if we just look at one example that Paul gives well the apostle gives to us we have in the epistle to the

Hebrews reminding us of of the way the church is to be structured and our obligation to these structures as appointed or established by God for our good for our welfare for our spiritual welfare for our material well-being remember them which have the rule over you who have spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation considering the way they live their lives and again in the same passage obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they that must give account that they may do it with joy and not with grief for that is unprofitable for you now if you read these words and you say am

[50 : 32] I to be submissive to an elder am I supposed to yield to that person's authority is that the way we react does it ever occur to you that the role that the elder has is a role that is given by God and that elder is responsible for your soul and that is an owner's responsibility that office bearer has agreed to to submit to the word of God and in exercising the role that he fulfilled as office bearer within the congregation that they have a primary duty to remember the spiritual welfare of all within the congregation for whom they have spiritual oversight and no office bearer can treat that lightly no minister no elder no not a deacon either because there is a spiritual affinity within the body that requires that

James Meyer points to the words of Paul where a distinction is made that allows us to understand yes there are roles of responsibility that belong to the minister roles of responsibility that belong to the elder there's a preaching elder, there's a teaching elder they're not the same and I think the time is passing so I don't want to go into this in too greater detail but their gifting is different and their calling may be different but the thing is that you who are of the body of Christ here believers and those who join, ally yourself with the believer, in being under the gospel you are to know then which labour among you and there's a key truth contained in that word labour because if they are true to their calling, their calling is a labour the word that is used by the apostle here is a word that speaks to us of heavy toil it's an onerous responsibility that they are engaged in and Paul deliberately uses that some may take that burden of responsibility lightly some may take it more seriously than others but we all need to remind ourselves that there is a priority that affects us with regard to how we live our life in this world there are many evidences in the way we live our life in this world that that the time constraints under which we all every one of us have to function it never ceases to amaze me how modern society has developed to such a level that there are so many opportunities to make life easy so many means at our disposal that life is made easier to live and yet the pressure that we are under to use our time in a positive way is incredible

I think the best example that I have heard you so often when you look at people building houses they build big houses and they have all manner of rooms in these houses and one complaint that they have there is a lot of room but all the rooms are full if you have got room what do you do you fill it it is not an empty room it has to have something in it and that's the way it is for our homes build a cupboard buy a cupboard it won't be an empty cupboard for long you'll have something to put in it that's the way it is by nature in our lives within the world as Christians we find ourselves always struggling to make room for God and make room for what's important to our souls because there are so many callings on our time and that is something that those who are in office ministers elders deacons will find that at some point they have to prioritize what is it that

I'm called to do what is it that I'm required to do if I'm to fulfill this office and that is something nobody can do for you it's something that you will have to do for yourself and remind yourself of that as those who look upon these office bearers that this is a constraint that they are under that is not easy for yourself and it's certainly no different for them they are among you as those who you know and they know that it is a pastor of oversight given to them by the Lord they are not over you in the sense that they are standing over you with a stick but rather over you in the sense that they are pastors and they are their role is a pastoral role we mentioned shepherding parenting there is a spiritual leadership that is supposed to be theirs and they are supposed to be able to tell you what to do and not to do because they know the master they know the Lord and that is what they tell you you know you have just had a general election and you have the right to go to the member of parliament and say to that member of parliament you were chosen to serve us you are responsible to us you bring about the laws that we wanted you to do we want you to do to do all kinds of we you are ours you are our servants but the office payers even though the congregation of believers here were required to call them to that role the elders are not responsible to the congregation in that sense they are responsible to God they are

God's servants and they serve you Jesus taught the disciples he girded a towel around his waist he washed the disciples feet and he told them you do as I do he came to serve not to act as an overlord over them and they're serving you is by God's command not by you but by God's and the only pressure they should feel under to do what you want them to do is when what you want them to do is what God's word wants them to do if you feel as a member of this congregation or as an adherent of this congregation that an office bearer is not living up to the word of God and you can justify your argument on the basis of what God's word says not what you think it says but what it does say then you have every right to come to them and say to them look this is how you should be this is what you should be doing but they are not doing it just because you've asked them to or just because you want them to or just because you feel it's the right thing to do but because you are persuaded that the word of

[59 : 54] God which is the only rule to direct the soul may glorify and enjoy him is what they are obliged to obey they're also required to rebuke and correct and they are to do that as those who have a care and a concern for your soul if your behaviour is misbehaviour then they have a duty to bring that to your attention as an individual first and foremost they come to you you go to them they come to you as individuals and if the behaviour is misbehaviour then they have a right then and a requirement to bring another to witness that and if that doesn't bring up a correction then it has to go further before the body of believers that are in that role the ultimate aim is to do what is right for the body of

Christ because we are not individuals in that sense individually we have a collective responsibility in other words we care for one another we love one another and we exercise that duty of care by ministering to each other in whatever way we are called to do briefly turn this on its head I've told you congregation how you should behave and I'm hoping the office bearers are listening because if they listen they will be reminded of what it is that the role of office bearer requires they are to minister to the sheep they are to make sure that the lame sheep has its feet tended to they are to make sure that the sheep that has gone astray is brought back they are to make sure that they know their sheep any person here who knows anything about sheep that whatever they are there are eccentricities amongst them you know they're not they look everybody looks at sheep differently

I suppose and those who have sheep know how to look at them as their own sheep or sheep of others and if you have no sheep then they'll say sheep that's it they're all the same but one thing that's true about a flock of sheep they might have horns or they might not they might have wool most of them do they all look pretty much the same but they're not the real shepherd knows every one of his flock he knows their faces he knows their idiosyncrasies he knows how to bring them in and whether it's the bucket or the stick that will work better but they have to know that I mean that's their responsibility if they don't know their flock then there's something wrong and I think in our own generation that is a failing on the part of the body that is in a role of responsibility over the convocation that we do not know our sheep we do not know them as well as we should we do not know them sufficiently well to be able to minister to them when they need ministered to our busy lives are an excuse they're not a reason and it is part and partial of the role of responsibility for them to know them it is no small matter to pastor a flock there are many programs on the television that speak about the farming life and one thing that strikes me as incredibly it speaks volumes the person who runs a farm with thousands of sheep or cattle or whatever it is the time that they spend it's their whole life it's their whole life they get up early and they go to bed late and their whole life revolves around looking after this farm and its animals well it's not a farm we have it's the church the congregation and we have a responsibility to those who are in it and we exercise that responsibility with God's help we all have our comfort zone and we allow ourselves to stay within it and not go beyond it and you can understand why go outside of it makes us sweat a wee bit it requires of us to use some some savvy it requires of us to use some psychology it requires of us to bite our tongue exercise patience it requires us to know something about human nature it requires of us to remind ourselves of what we are like and what we should not be like and we need all these things before we deal with others as we require to we do so as the ambassador of christ ambassador of christ some people like the idea of leadership the idea it's a great idea to be sitting down there and to be standing up here and to say well

I'm the boss see me I'm not saying that these elders are like that but I know that there are some that they like the idea of being identifiable in this way but it's not an idea it's something that you live out in your life every day you have responsibility you have a role to play you have a privilege that should not be abused and you have the example of christ as lord of your life as how to deliver it and that's the only example we look to and try and follow well I pray that god would just use these few thoughts to feed into the way we think about congregational life and the role of membership and the role of of the gospel in our lives and those who are instrumental in ensuring that that continues may god bless to us these thoughts we're going to move on to the part of the service that requires us to follow certain procedures before we come to the point of ordination

I have to read out a narrative of steps which leads up to the stay it's very similar to an induction of a minister the processes the steps that are followed have to be highlighted at Kavanish on the 16th of May 2024 the Kirk session of Kavanish agreed to the election of new office bearers the election was to be by secret ballot of the membership of the congregation with papers to be returned on or before the 22nd of June 2024 upon the ballots being returned it was found that Mr.

[68 : 47] Murdo John MacDonald and Mr. Kenneth Angus Mackay had been elected by majority to the office of elder it was also found that Mr. Kenneth Macaulay had received the majority of the votes for the office of DECA having established their suitability for the office and being assured of their willingness to serve it was agreed that a date for ordination and deduction should be set with an edict to that effect being read by the moderator on Sabbath 20th June 2024 and that it be intimated that opportunity for objections on grounds of life or doctrine would be given at a meeting of the Kirk session at 1045 on the 14th day of July 2024 as no objections have been forthcoming we will now proceed with the ordinations can the ordinance now please stand to answer the prescribed questions authorized to be put to new office bearers now what we're going to do we have three gentlemen there and rather there are six questions rather than read them from the book the book itself the writing is very small so I've written it a wee bit larger so that I'm able to read the questions there are six questions and rather than repeat these questions for each person I'll ask them once and I'll get a reply from each one of you okay do you believe the scriptures of the old and new testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners start with you yes yes yes yes do you sincerely own and declare the confession of faith are proven by former general assemblies of this church to be the confession of your faith and do you own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which you will constantly adhere to yes yes yes do you own and acknowledge the presbyterian church government of this church by church sessions presbyteries provincial synods and general assemblies to be the only government of this church and do you engage to submit thereto concur therewith and not to endeavour directly or indirectly the prejudice or subversion thereof yes yes yes do you believe that the lord jesus christ is king and head of the church has therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers distinct from and not subordinate in its own province to civil government and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of principles embodied in the claim declaration and protest adopted by the general assembly of the church of scotland in 1842 and in the protest of ministers and elders read in presence of the royal commissioner on 18 may 1843 as declaring the views which are sanctioned by the word of

God and the standards of this church with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the church of Christ and her subjection to him as her only head and to his word as her only standard do you promise to observe uniformity of worship and of the administration of all public ordinances within this church as the same as at present performed and allowed do you accept the office of an elder and of this congregation and promise through grace faithfully diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the duties thereof and for Ken it's deacon so you're not ordained to to by default so these are the questions that you're obliged to say and we have what is called the formula which is a summary of these vows that you have taken and

I'll ask you now to come forward and sign the formula turn the page please the two elders just at the bottom here that they leave your pen Xbox damn state I leave that you okay on on

Thank you.

Thank you.

[75 : 54] We are now going to join in prayer. If your congregation can stand. O Lord of God, as we have witnessed our brethren here taking solemn vows as they undertake the offices of elder and deacon here in the congregation.

We give thanks for them and for their willingness to serve you, their Lord, their Saviour. and do their utmost within the body of believers here in this congregation and all that are supportive of the ends for which the church exists that you would bless them together as office bearers that you would bless their homes and families and remember them according to the needs that they have that are unique to themselves and yet by reason of their being joined in the fellowship of believers these needs are shared with others and we pray that you would encourage us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of God we pray for your blessing upon the Kirk session here upon the deacon's court and all who form part of it may they feel themselves to have been strengthened by reason of this occasion and may the congregation feel the same and that you see fit to encourage those who would seek to serve the Lord in this capacity here in this place we bring before you all the cares of the congregation whatever they may be whether they lie in the present or in a hidden future we are thankful that we can yield our all to the everlasting God whose everlasting arms are underneath us remember those who are unable to be present because of their own circumstances be near to them we pray and remember any of our number who may have cares and concerns with regard to their own health and well-being guide those hands that are responsible for them remember us each one forgiving sin in Jesus name

Amen we're going to right hand fellowship I didn't hear you for God Thank you.

Thank you.

Just a few words before we conclude. Every church member is at the same time a prophet, a priest and a king.

[80 : 00] And we find that difficult to believe. But the scripture is our guide. The Lord's people are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

For in ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. And so on. The relationship that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ is brought to our attention.

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. And you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God. Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Naturally, we speak of the Christian church and the various offices that belong to that church.

There are differentiations within it. When it is the elders, elders, deacons, such a hierarchy in a sense. But there are also clear roles of responsibilities that are shared.

[81 : 29] All are functions described by and appointed by God. And all are spiritual. We don't want to neglect the diaconate.

But the diaconate is something that was, if you remember the appointment of Stephen in Acts chapter 6. Stephen was highlighted as a spiritual man.

Somebody who had the spirit of God. And we don't, while there are roles of responsibility and spheres of service that differentiates between the various offices.

These roles are equally important in the sight of God. For deacons, I think it's R.B. Kuyper who said that a deacon, his concerns are for the physical and the temporal and the material and the natural well-being of the body.

But the fact that it is an honourable office is highlighted by the person of the Lord Jesus Christ himself who reminds the church of its duty to show love to his people in the world.

[82 : 57] I think one of the directories for public worship says that when you read the words of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel where he blesses, where he commends, those who care for, who give the drink of water to his people are doing so as for him.

The temporal needs that Jesus considers to be important are seen in the way that it is administered to the various parts and the elders and the deacons together are responsible for that.

This week, just when I was preparing this, I was reminded of it. Some of you will know the name Charles Finlayson.

He was a regular attender here at various services over many years. He passed away recently and the funeral took place this week, this last week.

And his name was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. If you listen, somebody said to me that he also had Mackenzie in his name.

[84 : 16] And the reason why he had the name of Charles Haddon Spurgeon was that, forgive me if I don't remember this correctly, but I was told that in days gone by, if a mother lost a child, either in childbirth or shortly after, it was the practice to name the next child that was born with the name of a saint or a well-known Christian.

And I think that's where the name Charles Haddon Spurgeon came from. But when I was thinking of this, I was reminded Spurgeon was somebody that was well-known throughout these islands because of his sermons.

And a lot of the church, they read sermons. It was before DVDs or CDs or whatever. Most people, they would read sermons.

And Spurgeon was somebody who was well-known throughout these islands. Although he was a minister in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, he was still well-known.

And Spurgeon himself speak of someone that he knew and he considered a friend. And that man was George Muller of Bristol. And George Muller was somebody who is remembered because of his spirituality and because of his prayerfulness, he was responsible for rescuing thousands upon thousands of children who were abandoned by parents and left on the streets.

[86 : 08] And he created orphanages entirely dependent upon God's gifting to him. And Spurgeon said something very interesting about this and he considered this man to be his friend.

I do not think that I have ever met with more than one person in the world with whom I would change places in all respects. I have thought once or twice that I might do so, but soon maybe not.

I think, he said, that I would not mind changing places with George Muller for time and eternity. Nobody else would I say that much about it.

That shows you something about Spurgeon's affection for this man and for the confidence that he had that he was a man of faith.

But it's a roundabout way of getting to what I want to say, which is this, that this man, George Muller, was a man of prayer, as his biography speak of that.

[87 : 16] And he said something and it caught my eye, and I think it's true, that each one of us who are responsible in any role within the Church of Christ, that these thoughts should be upon our minds.

A guiding principle, he said, in the work he did, was to ask himself the question, Is this the Lord's work? Is this the Lord's work?

The second question was, Is this my work? Then the third question, Is this the Lord's way?

And then, last but not least, Is this the Lord's time? They're very interesting questions. But I think they're questions that those in office should be asking as they consider what it is that they are engaged in doing in God's name.

Is this the Lord's work? Is this what I am doing? Is it for the Lord? And then, you ask yourself, Is it my work?

[88 : 44] Even though, it's the Lord's work, it might not be the work that the Lord has called me to do. And sometimes we need to address that issue.

Not every one of us will do everything the same way or as well. Is what I am doing? The Lord's way.

And Muller was somebody who was convinced that if the Lord wanted him to do something that he would open a door for them.

And sometimes, you know, you say, that's easy. That's easy. Well, if your role is to feed a hundred chamber and you don't have a farthing and the cupboards are bare and you're convinced this is what God wants me to do, how is it going to happen?

And you have this conviction that has to be sustained, that has to be upheld. And only by trusting in God can that happen.

[90 : 00] This is the Lord's time. We're always under pressure to do certain things because others are doing it. But maybe we can't do these things when we think of them.

Maybe we need and it's just a discipline that we have of us of the Spirit to know what's expected of us and to know how best to accomplish what God wants us to do.

Because one thing is true. His time is the right time. His time is the right time for whatever we do. And if we're not persuaded of that then we may need to take a step back.

Well, we're thankful to God that there are men here who are able to take this role or these roles of responsibility on and we pray that God would bless the minute and the congregation with them.

We're going to conclude our service singing Psalm 133. Psalm 133 We'll sing these verses and we'll conclude the service with the benediction but the elders will continue to meet after the congregation is dismissed.

[91 : 49] Behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well. beth behold her great and ...

together such as as In unity to dwell Like precious light And on the head That down the beard And the blood of God In unity to dwell And the blood of God And the blood of God And the blood of God There was good The good of God

On Zion is designed For there the blessing Of comes The church of heaven May grace, mercy and peace From God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Rest and abide with you all, never and always Amen