

# Praise And Joy

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Preacher: Prof. Bob Ackroyd

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] To our service today. It's so good to see you here. Thank you very much for coming. A special welcome to those who are visiting with the congregation today. It's always a huge encouragement and blessing to have you with us so a very, very warm welcome to you.
- And it's a particular joy to welcome our preacher for this weekend, Professor Bob Ackroyd. We are so delighted to have Bob with us again. He's known to many of you and a very dear friend to us all. And in so many ways, Bob has been an encouragement and a support to the work of the gospel here in Lewis over many, many years.
- So it's an absolute joy for us to welcome you. And we look forward very much to the services today and tomorrow. Just a couple of things to note. Again, after the service this morning, well, this afternoon now, after the benediction, we'll just have a short prayer together. And then again, the opportunity is there. The session is open if anybody would like to come and meet with the session.
- Then the prayer meeting will be this evening at 6pm. Just to note, and I must apologise for this, that there was a prayer meeting this morning at half past 10. There'll be a prayer meeting tomorrow morning at 10am. I forgot to put those on the intimations because I didn't actually know that they were happening. So please forgive me for that. I should have checked.
- But tomorrow morning, there is the opportunity to come together for a time of prayer before this service. And thank you to those of you who did remember that and who were able to support it. And again, my apologies that I hadn't put that on the notices before now.
- [ 1 : 4 2 ] So the prayer meeting at 6pm tonight, tomorrow morning at 10pm. And then we look forward to our service tomorrow morning at 11pm and then at 6pm. I hope that it's very much been an encouraging weekend for you so far. We are certainly looking forward very, very much to hearing God's word being opened up to us.
- So Bob, it's with huge joy and with a great pleasure that I invite you to lead our service. Thank you. Thank you. Well, good afternoon, everyone. It's a great pleasure and privilege to be with you. Thank you, Thomas, for a very warm welcome. It's a great opportunity to be here in Kalanish to hear what God has to say, to sing our praise and to join our hearts in prayer.
- So let us now, we're going to worship God. We're going to sing those familiar words of Psalm 100. It's the first version. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Let us so do to the praise of God.
- All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
- Him, serve with perfect grace, praise for death. Come, we before Him and rejoice.
- [ 3 : 2 1 ] Know that the Lord is all in me.
- And for His kingdom, we before Him and rejoice.
- Praise the Lord and bless His name always.
- His mercy is forever true. His mercy is forever true.

His truth has all times good. Let us pray, Jesus. Let us pray, Jesus.

[ 5 : 21 ] Let us pray. Our loving Father in Heaven, we thank You for that open invitation, as those who dwell on earth, to come into Your presence, to come into the presence of the One who creates, the presence of the One who sustains, the presence of the One who redeems and who renews, and the One who is making all things new.

Father in Heaven, it's our prayer that we would indeed come, not only with songs of praise, but hearts that are filled with praise, with joy, with celebration.

Because You, O God, are great, and You, O God, are good. You are great in might and majesty, great in glory and power, and You are good in all that You do.

We thank You that You, the Judge of the earth, will always do that which is right. So we pray that in our time together, that as we turn to Your Word, that the same Holy Spirit who inspired the biblical authors to write these words those many years ago, that the Holy Spirit Himself would accompany the reading and proclamation of that Word, that Your Word would go forth powerfully, that Your Word would go forth personally, that You would speak to us individually and collectively.

We thank You that we have good news. We live in an age where there is so much bad news. We have experienced in our own lives so much sad news.

[ 7 : 06 ] But as we come together today, we come because there is good news of great joy that will be for all the people. In that place long, long ago, in the town of David there was born a Savior of the world.

And that Savior lived, and that Savior died, and He rose again triumphant from the grave. Lord, we thank You that in Jesus Christ, we have the answer to all of life's questions.

We have the solution to all of life's problems. We have in Him God in the flesh. So as we walk through this life, we have one who has gone before.

We have one who knows. We have one who understands. We have one who cares. And as we encounter trials and tribulations and temptations, we are exhorted to come boldly to a throne of grace because we have a Savior who is tempted in all ways, just as we are.

And yet He was without sin. By contrast, we sin. We fall short. We miss the mark. We get it wrong. We often speak when we should be silent.

[ 8 : 24 ] We are often silent when we should speak. We often say the wrong thing, or we might say the right thing, but in the wrong way. Father, we recognize that Your standard is a high standard and a deep standard, that You are not only concerned with the actions of our hands, You are concerned with the words of our lips and even the very thoughts and motivations of our mind and of our heart.

So, Father, we stand before You now as those who are not innocent by nature, but those who are guilty, to those who are not pure, righteous, holy, but as those who are impure, unrighteous, and who are so much away from the standard that You Yourself have set and that You Yourself have kept.

So, we come to You pleading the salvation that is offered to us in Jesus Christ. The One who was righteous, pure, and holy became a sin-bearer and that His righteousness can now be ours.

He gives to us righteousness in exchange for sin, goodness in exchange for evil, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is powerful and transformative.

So, Lord, I pray that we would receive, that we would give thanks, that we would rejoice, that we would celebrate, and that in turn we might be those who testify, who testify with word and with action, who testify with lives that are transformed, that we have a living and risen Savior who has transformed us from the inside out.

[ 10 : 13 ] We pray for this village and the surrounding villages. We give You thanks for evidence of Your grace and of Your power. And we pray that You would sustain us because we often find ourselves weary.

We pray that You would guide us because we often find ourselves wandering. We pray that You would strengthen us because we often find ourselves weak. and we come to You in the name that is powerful, the name that is personal, the name that is above every name.

We have a King who is King of Kings. We have a Lord who is Lord of Lords. We call Him Jesus. And we call Him Savior. And He calls us friends.

What a friend! We give You thanks in His name and pray for Your blessing as we call to You in the precious and powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. Our next psalm, we're going to sing the psalm that begins, Lord from the depths. Psalm number 130. Notice that you begin in the bottom.

[ 11 : 24 ] Lord from the depths to the I cried. And the psalmist takes you to the top at the very last stanza. And plenteous redemption is ever found with Him.

And from all His iniquities, He, Israel, shall redeem. Let's sing together Psalm 130 to God's praise. Lord from the depths to the I cried.

My voice, Lord, will I hear until I stop the creation of mine in my heart and death to the air.

Lord, who shall stand in power, O Lord, to forgive me.

Lord, who shall live with Thee, but yet with Thee, for if it exists, that fear thou mayest see.

[ 12 : 56 ] I wait for God's life's hope, God's way.

I hope is in His word. More than may that, For morning watch, my soul is on the Lord.

I say more than they have to watch, the morning watch, the morning watch to Thee.

It is I am, O Lord, in the Lord, for if in mercy be, and plenty of redemption.

voy voy voy voy Jesus shall redeem.

[ 14 : 55 ] We're now going to turn together to read in the Old Testament. We're going to read from Daniel chapter 9. Now Daniel is a major prophet and it's a book in two halves.

You'll know the first half of Daniel has those magnificent stories. The man in the fiery furnace, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar, the great king.

Then you have Belshazzar's feast. And then you have Daniel in the lion's den. All very visual stories that you can very easily visualize. The second half of Daniel is more future oriented.

The rising and falling of empires and the coming of the true king. But in the midst of the second half of Daniel is this prayer. Which is quite powerful.

Which is quite personal. And basically what Daniel is doing here is saying we need help. And that's what happens when you pray. You see sometimes we kind of think well prayer needs to be articulate.

[ 15 : 56 ] Prayer needs to be eloquent. But basically prayer is saying God I need help. I need help. I've got problems I can't solve. I've got issues I can't fix. And prayer is where we say God I'm bringing this to you.

I've tried my best. I've failed. I've done what I can and I can't. So let's listen to Daniel's prayer. Daniel chapter 9. In the first year of Darius.

The son of Ahasuerus. Of the seed of the Medes. Which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. In the first year of his reign.

I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet. That he would accomplish 70 years in desolations of Jerusalem.

And I set my face unto the Lord God. To seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God.

[ 17 : 01 ] And made my supplication and said. O Lord. The great and dreadful God. Keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him.

And to them that keep his commandments. We have sinned. And have committed iniquity. And have done wickedly. And have rebelled. Even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.

Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets. Which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers. And to all the people of the land.

O Lord. Righteousness belongeth unto thee. But unto us confusion of faces. At this day. To the men of Judah.

And to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And unto all Israel. That are near. And that are far off. Through all the countries. Whither thou hast driven them.

[ 18 : 01 ] Because of their trespass. That they have trespassed against thee. O Lord. To us. Belongeth confusion of face. To our kings.

To our princes. And to our fathers. Because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God. Belong mercies and forgiveness. Though we have rebelled against him.

Neither. Have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. To walk in his laws. Which he set before us. By his servants the prophets. Yea.

All Israel have transgressed thy law. Even by departing. That they may not obey thy voice. Therefore the curse is poured upon us.

And the oath that is written in the law of Moses. The servant of God. Because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words. Which he spake against us.

[ 18 : 58 ] And against our judges that judged us. By bringing upon us a great evil. For under the whole heaven. Hath not been done us. As hath been done unto Jerusalem.

As it is written in the law of Moses. All this evil is come upon us. Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God. That we might not turn from our iniquities.

And understand thy truth. Therefore. Hath the Lord watched upon the evil. And brought it upon us. For the Lord our God is righteous in all his works.

Which he doeth. For we obey not his voice. And now. O Lord our God. Thou hast brought thy people forth.

Out of the land of Egypt. With a mighty hand. And hast gotten thee renowned. As at this day. We have sinned. We have done wickedly.

[ 19 : 58 ] O Lord according to all thy righteousness. I beseech thee. Let thine anger and thy fury. Be turned away from thy city Jerusalem. Thy holy mountain.

Because for our sins. And for the iniquities of our fathers. Jerusalem and thy people. Are become a reproach. To a reproach. To all that are about us.

And now. Therefore. O our God. Hear the prayer of thy servant. And his supplications. And cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary.

That is desolate. For the Lord's sake. O my God. Incline thine ear. And hear. Open thine eyes. And behold. Our desolations. And the city.

Which is called by thy name. For we do not present our supplications before thee. For our righteousness. But for thy great mercies.

[ 20 : 56 ] O Lord. Hear. O Lord. Forgive. O Lord. Hearken and do. Defer not. For thine own sake. O my God.

For thy city. And thy people. Are called. By thy name. Amen. And may God add his own blessing.

To this reading. From his word. We're not going to. Again. Join our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Father.

With honesty. We echo those words of Daniel. Written those many centuries ago. He captures what is true. For us individually.

And he captures for us. What is true collectively. You are holy. And we are not. You are righteous. And we are not. You are genuine. Steadfast.

[ 21 : 52 ] Reliable. And sure. And we are not. We know more. Than we live by. We do not do those things.

Which we ought to do. And we have so often left undone. Those things which we ought to have done. There is no spiritual health. Within us.

Our minds. And our hearts. Our lives. Our past. And our present. Is categorized. By a turning. Not a turning toward.

But a turning from. By our very nature. We are at enmity with you. And yet. These words. While they convict. They are words. Which point us forward.

And point us upward. Because we are reminded. That we come to you. O God. Not because we are righteous. But because you are merciful. We come to you. Not because of what we have done.

[ 22 : 46 ] But because of what you have done. The God who redeems. And rescues a people from Egypt. The God who makes a way. Where there is no way. The God who hears.

And the God who answers. The God who is merciful. The God who is gracious. The God who is merciful. The God who is merciful. Lord we come to you. With honest regret. Remorse and sorrow.

We come to you. In repentance and faith. We come to the God who hears. And who answers. And we pray that these words. Would cut us to the heart.

But not only convict us. But transform us. Because as we call out to you. We ask Lord that you would hear. We ask Lord that you would see.

We ask Lord that you would reply. We ask Lord that you would act. We need help. We need your help. We can't fix what we have broken.

[ 23 : 43 ] We can't restore what we have lost. We can't answer the profound questions of life. But we are persuaded that you can. And that you have.

And that you will. So we ask Lord as we come to you in prayer. And as we turn to your word. That we would behold Jesus. That we would behold him.

Because he is the answer. To our deepest longings. He is the solution to our greatest problems. He is your provision.

Whereby you remain just. And the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Your standards are unchangeable. Your requirements and demands are fair and equitable.

And we find in Jesus Christ the Savior. He lived the righteous life. He died the death on behalf of others. And he now has risen triumphant from the grave.

[ 24 : 46 ] So we not only pray. We turn to you in the sure knowledge that you have provided an answer for this prayer. Help us to turn to him.

Help us to trust him. Help us to recognize in him that while we have sinned, he has not. While we have missed the mark, he has not. While we have turned away, he has not.

And never will. We have a steadfast and a sure and a reliable Savior. And help us to place our hope and our faith and our love in him.

Because he will never let us go. And he will never let us down. And he is faithful, just, and pure. Father, I pray for each one of us gathered here.

There are many of us who carry burdens. Some of those burdens are visible. Many are not. Some of those burdens are known by others. Many are not.

[ 25 : 46 ] Each one of these burdens is known to you. We are weak, Lord. Our shoulders are not broad. We thank you for the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden. I will give you rest. We thank you that we have a Savior whose shoulders are broad. Who can carry weights that otherwise crush us.

So in our weariness, we come to him for rest. We give to him our burdens. And we ask, Lord, that he would teach us and guide us and direct us.

In turn, give us hearts that are filled with joy, not sorrow. Give us hearts that are filled with thankfulness, not regret. And give us hearts that are filled with hope and with expectation that the best still lies ahead.

And Lord, we come to you in our fragility, in our finiteness, and in our flaws. And we come to you who has no beginning and no end.

[ 26 : 52 ] One who is perfect in all that is said and done. And we come to you as children to a father, as creatures to a creator, as citizens to a king, and as followers of Jesus to our Savior and to our Lord.

And we pray in his name. Amen. Amen. We're now going to sing a portion of Psalm 138. Psalm 138.

Psalm 138 is closely associated with Isaiah 12, which I'm going to be preaching from in just a few moments.

So you'll see that there's an overlap or a connection. Psalm 138. We'll sing from verse 1 down to 6. Thee will I praise with all my heart.

I will sing praise to thee. Before the gods and worship will toward thy sanctuary. Psalm 138 verses 1 to 6. To God's praise.

[ 27 : 55 ] They will I praise with all my heart.

I will sing praise to thee. Before the gods and worship will toward thy sanctuary.

I'll sing thy name before thy sanctuary.

Have magnified all thy love. For thy heart has magnified all thy name above.

That gives me answer in the day. When I do thee to cry.

[ 29 : 22 ] And thou my faith in soul with strength. Tis strength and live inwardly.

All kings upon the earth. The earth shall live.

The praise of Lord. When us may come. When us may come. Thy birth shall year.

Thy true and faithful word. In the righteous way, O God, with God's grace shall sing.

For grace, the glory of the Lord, who does forever reign.

[ 30 : 46 ] Though God be high, yet He respects all those that holy be.

Where the hands of earth are not only one, our Father of noeth He.

As I mentioned a moment ago, let's turn for a moment to Isaiah chapter 12. Isaiah 12 is one of these great short chapters of the Bible, but is rich and full with great truth and with great joy.

So Isaiah 12. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me.

Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.

[ 32 : 05 ] He also is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord.

Call upon His name. Declare His doings among the people. Make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for He hath done excellent things.

This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion. For great is the Holy One in the midst of thee.

Amen. Amen. So we come into God's presence. And we come, I would imagine, I'll speak for myself, with mixed emotions.

We come with joy. And we come with sorrow. We come with praise. We come with regret. We come with this variety of experience and emotions because we have a varied experience of life.

[ 33 : 13 ] We do recognize the joys and the triumphs and the praise. And we recognize the sorrow and the sadness and the defeats. And we can share with Daniel that great prayer of personal recognition, of honest appraisal.

What we know about God and what we know about us. And the distinction is so great. God who is high and lifted up. And we who are creatures of the dust.

And God who is high and holy, righteous and pure. And we simply are not. So Isaiah chapter 12 is a chapter of praise.

And Daniel chapter 9 is a chapter of prayer. And the one intersection of these two great truths, prayer and praise, is this. I teach systematic theology, which is a very big subject.

But I've come to realize after 14 years of teaching and 25 years of preaching, that the answer to every question is Jesus. The answer to Daniel's prayer is Jesus.

[ 34 : 27 ] And the object of Isaiah's praise is Jesus. Jesus brings everything together. I don't know how he does it. But I know that he does it.

Because when you have a prayer like Daniel's prayer, Daniel is not saying, Lord, help me be a bit better. Help us to live better lives. Help us to learn and to grow.

No, he's not saying that at all. He's saying this is what we are not. And this is what you are. And the only solution to our problem is you.

And that's what prayer is. Simply saying, God, I have problems that I can't solve. God, I have situations that are beyond my comprehension.

And that's one of the first steps, really, in the spiritual life, is saying, help. Help me. So Daniel is praying and Isaiah is praising.

[ 35 : 25 ] You see, Isaiah is praising God for the answer, as it were, to Daniel's prayer. Daniel is saying, God, you are righteously angry.

You are righteously disappointed with us. We have sinned. We have fallen short. And what is Isaiah saying? That God's anger has turned away.

The righteous anger of God has turned away from us. In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee.

Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away. And thou comfortest me. You know the products that are advertised.

You have the before photograph and the after photograph. So if you were selling a hair restoral product, I would not be the after photo.

[ 36 : 27 ] You would not want to buy hair restoration that gave you this result. Right? I'd be a great before picture. And you see, the gospel is before and after.

The gospel says this is what we are like before. And the gospel says this is what you now are after. And the after picture is completely different. It's a completely different picture.

And it's not an external restoration, as nice as that would be. But it's an internal transformation. You see, the Bible is not given for our information.

The Bible is given for our transformation. And the transformation always starts on the inside out. Now, I work, I've got two jobs.

I won't tell you which one's easier. But I work in Edinburgh Theological Seminary. And I work in Her Majesty's Prison, Edinburgh. Those are my two jobs. And in HNP Edinburgh, there are many good programs that are given to the guys that are there.

[ 37 : 32 ] There are violence protection programs, prevention programs. That's good. People who are violent are given techniques to be less violent. You have addiction programs that help people with drug and alcohol addiction to be less addicted to drug.

All that is great stuff. But generally, these programs are trying to change people from the outside in. Now, someone who has a chaotic alcohol drug problem who stops drinking or taking drugs, that's a good thing.

Somebody who has a history of violence who becomes more peaceable, that's a good thing. I don't want to minimize that for any reason. But the gospel does something remarkably different.

The gospel changes human hearts. The gospel changes human minds. You see, I've encountered many people over the years who have struggled with addictions of one sort or another.

Now, many of these people have been able, by the grace of God and also by the helpful intervention of others, to stop these addictions. But unless the heart is changed, whatever caused those patterns of behavior is still there.

[ 38 : 45 ] The hurt, the guilt, the shame. And that will somehow find its way out a different way. But the gospel heals the heart.

Transforms the mind. Renews the life. So that the prayer of Daniel saying, God, I have problems that are my responsibility, but I'm trusting you because the answer must come from you.

Isaiah chapter 12 says there's a before and the after, and the object of praise is the God who has transformed us, renewed us, and changed our situation because he has changed us.

That's why we describe the message of Christianity as good news. It's not bad news. You see, if you could read portions of the Bible and you could conclude that the message of the Bible is bad news.

But that's only if you read the Bible selectively. That's only if you look at one part and not another. But the overall message of the Bible is a message of good news.

[ 39 : 56 ] You see, there's a, if you look at the whole picture, it's a big picture. You have a beginning. Genesis 1 and 2. Everything's good. Very good. You've got an ending.

Revelation 21 and 22. A new heavens and a new earth. There's no darkness there. There's no death there. There's no decay there. There's no evil there.

And even we're told that the tears that we cry here are wiped away there. So this big story begins good, very good.



And this story ends on a great note. But the bad news, and there is bad news, the bad news as we see in Genesis 3 and in the subsequent course of human history, is that human beings are not what they are designed to be.

We don't think the way we should think. We don't speak the way we should speak. We don't act the way we should act. Our desires and our motivations are simply not right.

[ 40 : 58 ] I think it was Martin Luther, might have been Augustine, may have been both, where they describe sin as a curving in on ourselves. You see, we are meant to be in community.

We are meant to be in fellowship with God. And all of these are outward movements. Movements towards one another. Movements towards God. But sin curves us inward. Instead of being generous, we become selfish.

Instead of praising God, we are looking after ourselves. But just as the message of sin curves us inward, the gospel begins to curve us outward.

We now begin to see God in a different light. We now begin to see each other in a different light. And we now begin to see ourselves in this new light.

You see, when we look at the death of Jesus Christ, you see, tomorrow we're going to be gathering at the Lord's table. We remember his death. And his death is a profound solution to the most profound human condition, to the most profound problems.

[ 42 : 09 ] Now, as we try to understand the death of Jesus, we realize that no one word does it. When I teach on the doctrine of the atonement, we have to use almost a theological dictionary to explain what's happening there, on the cross, at that place, at that time.

Now, some of the more senior of us here will remember that you actually used to take photographs on cameras. I know it seems unrealistic, but we used to have these contraptions.

You didn't have a phone, but you had a camera. And you actually had to put film in the camera. You remember that. Now, you could get black and white film. Black and white film gives you a nice product.

But most of us would buy color film, right? Because you take a photograph and you want to see the colors. The colors of the dress or the colors of the scenery. And that's kind of what we want to do here.

Because sometimes we can have a black and white understanding of something that should be in color. Color is rich and vibrant. Black and white is somewhat flat.

[ 43 : 23 ] The atonement of Jesus, the death of Jesus, is like multicolored film. So much is happening here. So, for example, we can say sin separates.

The death of Jesus reconciles. Sin brings condemnation. The death of Jesus brings justification, a declaration of righteousness.

And the theme that we have captured here in Isaiah chapter 12 is this. Sin brings anger. Righteous anger of a righteous God. He cannot bear to look at sin.

Sin brings anger. But what does the gospel bring? What does Jesus bring? Jesus brings, and this is a biblical term which we see near the end of the Bible.

We see it in 1 John chapter 2. We see it in the book of Hebrews. We also see it in the gospels. This word propitiation. You see, propitiation is a turning.

[ 44 : 19 ] God is angry. And the anger of God is poured out on sin. Poured out on sinners. But the gospel means that the anger of a righteous God is diverted.

Because it's poured out on another. One who did not deserve it. One who did not deserve the anger bears the anger. So that those who did deserve the anger are now free from the wrath or the anger of God.

It's been described this way. That the gospel describes that which Jesus did not deserve. But was able to bear. Because otherwise, we would receive what we did deserve.

But cannot bear. He has the shoulders that are broad. He is able to deal with the anger or the wrath. That place of judgment on our behalf.

And when Jesus Christ died, He died so that the anger that God has upon the sin of people. Not just the sin of people in general, but my sin in particular. And your sin has now been dealt with by another.

[ 45 : 31 ] So even though Jesus is not mentioned in Daniel chapter 9. And even though Jesus is not mentioned in Isaiah chapter 12. The only explanation to the problem. And the only explanation for the solution is Him.

So the before. I will praise thee. Chapter 12 verse 1. Thou wast angry with me. Thine anger is turned away. And thou comfortest me.

That's a great exchange, isn't it? The anger of God and the comfort of God. What would you prefer? Of course you would prefer the comfort of God. And God says comfort is available.

Because anger has now been dealt with. Verse 2. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.

He also is become my salvation. Before I came to this country, I was living in Japan. And I was teaching English. Teaching English as a second language.

[ 46 : 32 ] And when you have to teach your own language. And maybe some of you, if you are fluent in more than one language. And you're trying to teach your second language or your first language to someone else. You need to understand that language quite well in order to teach it.

And one of the times we had lessons on pronouns. And we were told the different kinds of pronouns. And maybe you know these things. I didn't realize this.

But personal possessive pronouns. Personal possessive pronouns. Personal possessive pronouns are incredibly important in the Bible.

David, in Psalm 23, did not say the Lord is the shepherd. He said the Lord is my shepherd. And here, Isaiah says, God is my salvation.

You see, Daniel's prayer was corporate. We, us, our. And Isaiah's praise is personal. And both are true. We have a collective problem. And that collective problem is solved by individuals turning to God in faith.

[ 47 : 40 ] God is my salvation. The Lord Jehovah is my strength. He is my song. He has become my salvation. So there is a problem.

And there is a solution. And that solution is personal. And that solution is possessive. It is not just that you know about. It is that you now have.

It is not just that you understand. But you now receive. And you see, there is always an outcome. You see, if you are, you know, I love being here in the Western Isles, especially on the West Side.

You see the beauty of creation. You see the animals in the field. You see just what you don't see in the city. You know, we in the city, we get milk in the supermarket.

You buy lamb from the butchers. But here, you see it straight away. And just as you're used to here, you know, when you raise animals or when you raise a crop or you plant potatoes or whatever, you expect that you have a harvest of some sort.

[ 48 : 46 ] That if you sow, you get a harvest. If you have animals and, you know, they procreate, that you'll have lambs and then you'll have meat and all of that. What we have here is that when salvation is received, there is always an outcome.

Because this strength, this song, this salvation, what is the outcome? Verse 3, therefore, with joy. With joy. With joy, you will draw water of the wells of salvation.

It's as if Isaiah is saying this task, which is normally onerous. You see, we don't need to draw water from wells. You turn your tap and the water comes out.

But many nations in this world, drawing water is a very heavy work. Quite literally heavy. People balancing large weights of water on their head, on their shoulders, in their arms.

And it's a daily task. They need water to drink. They need water to cook with. They need water to bathe with. But this onerous task becomes a joyful task. You see, the Christian life is no longer a burden.

[ 49 : 56 ] It's a joy. The Christian life is no longer a draining exercise. But the Christian life is now becoming a joyful and an exciting exercise. Because we know that the God who we worship is no longer angry.

But the God that we now worship is comforting us. He has come to save us. He's come to rescue us. He's come to give us his strength.

We're weak. He's strong. We are unrighteous. He is righteous. And verse 4. In that day shall ye say, praise the Lord, call upon his names, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

You see, the good news of the gospel is good news that is first received, secondly, enjoyed, and thirdly, shared.

Now, it won't surprise you by saying that I like to eat. I enjoy food. I'm not of small stature. I enjoy good food. And particularly, I enjoy steak.

[ 51 : 05 ] Now, in Edinburgh right now, where I'm from, the best steakhouse to go, the hottest steakhouse, is a place called the Spanish Butcher. You'll find the Spanish Butcher on North Castle Street.

I've heard about it. And for several months, I've heard people say, oh, you've got to go there. You've got to go there. And we tried. Tried to book a table. Fully booked. Fully booked. Three weeks ago, three friends and I went to the Spanish Butcher.

I tell you what. Everything I heard was true. One of the best steaks I've ever had. That's what sharing good news sounds like. You find a restaurant and the food is delicious.

You don't keep it to yourself. You tell your friends. And when you hear that note, you say, oh, I've got to go there. I trust what he says. And I know that I would enjoy that.

You see, when we share the gospel, sharing the gospel is not a burden, but it becomes a joy. You see, we want to tell people of the good news that we have now received. We want to share with people the joy that we now experience.

[ 52 : 11 ] We want others to know. We want others to see. We want others to experience. And in these six short verses, Isaiah is capturing the transformation of the gospel.

And he is then capturing the expansion of the gospel. Tell people that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things.

This is known in all the earth. We want to receive. We want to enjoy. And we want to share. I'm reminded, I'm a history person.

I not only like to eat, but I like to read history. And one of the things I love is reading the history of God's people. Because what you find is throughout history, there are times where it seems like the cause is quite low.

It seems like the number of followers are quite few. It seems like the impact of the gospel is quite small. Back in 1742, almost 300 years ago, John Wesley came into the city of Newcastle.

[ 53 : 24 ] Now, I don't know if you're looking for a night out or a weekend away. But if you are looking for the party highlight or the most famous night spot in the UK, year after year, Newcastle is the place to go.

Or the place to avoid, as the case may be. The same was true 300 years ago. It was a Friday afternoon, and John Wesley captured this in his diary. He said, we came to Newcastle about six.

And after a short refreshment, walked into the town. I was surprised. So much drunkenness, cursing and swearing, even from the mouths of little children.

Do I never remember to have seen and heard before in so small a compass of time? Surely, this place is ripe for him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

You see, our reaction might be quite different. This is not the place we're meant to be. This is not the kind of place we're meant to hang out. This is not the kind of people that we're meant to associate with.

[ 54 : 34 ] But John Wesley says, I'm in the right place. Because I've got a message, not for saints, but for sinners. I've got a gospel that doesn't tell good people how to become better. I've got a gospel that tells lost people how they can be found.

I've got a gospel that says to blind people you can see. I've got a gospel that opens the ears of the deaf and gives life to the dead. On Sunday morning, that same weekend, it was seven in the morning, he said, I went to the poorest part of town.

And he stood at the end of the street. And with his friend John Taylor, he began to sing the same psalm that we sung a moment ago, Psalm 100. And he said, three or four people came out to see what was the matter.

Seven in the morning, unaccompanied psalm singing at the end of your street. You might come out. That soon increased to four or five hundred. And I suppose there might be twelve or fifteen hundred before I had done preaching.

To whom I applied those solemn words. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And by his stripes, we are healed.

[ 55 : 45 ] He said, he went on to say, if you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I designed to preach here again.

And at five, the hill on which he designed to preach was covered. He said, I never saw so large a crowd, even in London. So what does this say to us? It says to us there is a profound searching for the truth.

There is a profound thirst for the water of life. And the problem today is, is that so few people know what the answer is.

They know what the problem is. Deep down, we know there is a problem. If you're a Christian here today, you know that there was a problem. And that problem pointed you to Jesus.

And if you're not a Christian here today, you do know there's a problem. There's a problem in this world. And there's a problem in your life, in your heart. We know there's a problem.

[ 56 : 43 ] But the good news of Jesus tells us that there's a solution. And the enthusiasm that John Wesley had 300 years ago should be the same enthusiasm that we have today.

Not every one of us is called to preach in the streets, of course. But if we've received, we want to share. If we've experienced, we want others to know. So the anger becomes praise.

The praise becomes joy. And the joy becomes celebration and sharing. That's what the gospel does. And that's what the gospel is able to do in us.

And what the gospel is able to do through us. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion. For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

We have reason to shout. We have reason to sing. We have reason to rejoice. Not because of who we are, but because of whose we are.

[ 57 : 41 ] He is my salvation. He is my strength. He is my joy. He is my comfort. He is my savior. And he is my shepherd.

Many years ago now, there were many, during the Reformation, one of the great elements of the Reformation was translation. We have English versions of the Bible.

There were German versions of the Bible. There were French versions of the Bible. People could now read the Bible in their own language. And it was published and mass produced. One edition, it was a French edition, was written by a man called Pierre Oledetan, who had a more famous cousin.

His famous cousin was called John Calvin. And John Calvin was asked, could you write a preface? Could you write an introduction to the French edition of the New Testament? And the theme that Calvin focused on was the theme that I've been focusing on this morning.

The gospel. Listen to what Calvin said. He said, without the gospel, everything is useless and vain. Without the gospel, we are not Christians. Without the gospel, all riches is poverty.

[ 58 : 54 ] All wisdom, folly before God. Strength is weakness. And all the justice of man is under the condemnation of God. But, by the knowledge of the gospel, we are made children of God.

Brothers of Jesus Christ. Fellow townsmen with the saints. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Heirs of God with Jesus Christ. By whom the poor are made rich.

The weak, strong, the fools, wise, the sinners, justified. The desolate, comforted. The doubting, sure. And slaves, free. The gospel is the word of life and truth.

It is the power of God unto salvation. For all those who believe. It is the key to the knowledge of God. Which opens the door for the kingdom of heaven.

That's why we call it good news. Freedom for the captive. Light for those in darkness. Life for the dead. Joy for the desolate. This is what God has done in Jesus Christ.

[ 59 : 57 ] And this is why we remember his life. This is why we remember his death. This is why we celebrate his resurrection from the dead. Our problems, his solution.

Our sorrow, his joy. The anger of God turned away. And salvation has been given in its place. That's why we are gathered today in the name of Jesus.

We have cause for praise. And cause for joy. And cause to say to other people. Come. Let us do you good.

Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Our Father, there's much that we don't understand.

There's much that we don't understand about you. and there's much that we don't understand about ourselves. But what we don't do know is that you are great and good. And what we do know is that we've missed the mark and we've fallen short.

[ 61 : 01 ] We thank you that we have a message of hope that is found in a person. That he, Jesus Christ, is our hope. He is our help. He is our comfort because he is our Savior.

We recognize that sin and anger go together, but we also recognize that salvation and joy go together. So let us recognize what Jesus has done. Let us receive what he has offered.

And let us, in turn, celebrate with songs of praise and joy and thanksgiving. Let us receive good news and let us share good news.

Because you have done great things for us. You have done great things in us. And you desire to do great things through us. For we pray in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Now folks, we're going to sing a version of Psalm 124. And if you don't know it by the start of our time together, I'm sure you will know it by the end.

[ 62 : 03 ] Psalm 124, it's the second version. It's the irregular meter. And it's a magnificent psalm, a magnificent chapter. Now Israel may say, and that truly, if the Lord had not our cause maintained, if that the Lord had not our right sustained, when cruel men against us furiously rose up in wrath to make of us their prey.

And it closes on this note. Therefore, our help is in the Lord's great name, who heaven and earth by his great power did frame.

Psalm 124, it's the second version to God's praise. Psalm 124, it's the third version.

When cruel men against us furiously rose up in wrath to make of us their prey.

Then certainly they had diverted us all, and swallowed with the power that we could deep.

[ 63 : 55 ] Such was their rage as we might well esteem.

And as fierce plots be, for them all things crowned, so have they brought their souls to death, quite down.

The raging streams with their proud swelling waves, had then our soul o'erwhelmed in the deep.

But blessed be God, who doth us safely keep, and hath not given us for a living way, unto their teeth and bloody cruelty.

He, as a bird out of the fowler's snare, the escape's awake, so is our soul set free.

[ 65 : 42 ] Throon are their nets, and thus escape it we.

Therefore our help is in the Lord's great name.

Who doth us safely keep, Let's close with a benediction.

Let us pray. Amen. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon, abide with us all this day, and evermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.