

To as many as received Him

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] Singing to God's praise from Psalm 80. Psalm 80, and we're singing from verse 14 through to the end.

Psalm 80. O God of hosts, we thee beseech, return now unto thine. Look down from heaven in love.

Behold, and visit this thy vine. This vineyard which thine own right hand hath planted us among. And that same branch which for thyself thou hast made to be strong.

Bugged up it is with flaming fire. It also is cut down. They utterly are perished when as thy face doth frown.

O let thy hand be still upon the man of thy right hand. The son of man whom for thyself thou made a strong to stand. So henceforth we will not go back.

[1 : 02] Now turn from thee at all. O do thou quicken us, and we upon thy name will call. Turn us again, Lord God of hosts, and upon us vouchsafe.

To make thy countenance to shine. And so we shall be safe. Let us sing these verses. Psalm 80 from verse 14 to the end.

O God of hosts, we thee beseech, return now unto thine. O God of hosts, we thee beseech, return now unto thine.

Who can from heaven in love behold. O God of hosts, we thee beseech, return now unto thine.

This vineyard which thy own right hand, Thou thine own right hand, Thou thine own right hand, Thou thine own right hand, Thou thine own right hand, Thou thine own right hand,

[3 : 09] Thou thine own right hand, O let thy hand be still upon the hand of thy right hand, the Son of London, for I shall thou be as strong to stand.

So henceforth we will not go and nor turn from thee at all, O to the quick and as and weak upon thy name we'll call.

Turn us again, Lord God of hosts, and upon thy church save, to make thy condemn us to shine, and so we shall be saved.

Let us join together in prayer. Gracious God, as we come before you in this act of worship, we give thanks that the God whose name is upon our lips, upon whom we call is the same God that has been God over all, from all eternity, before the world was.

God was God, and you are the only living and true God. You are the eternal God, a God who inhabits eternity, and who is marked out by attributes that can only be contained within the eternal.

[5 : 54] And we acknowledge that even as we begin our worship, a worship that saw the psalmist call upon God to turn, to return, to come back and bless his vineyard, bless his people.

Because they were so conscious of that blessing being withheld. They were so conscious of the deprivation that they suffered when God was not making his presence known within the community of believers, even within the wider society.

And yet the psalm concludes with words that acknowledge that they have a need to turn, to return to that God who has turned away from them.

reminding us of the very fact that very often, if we have that awareness of God turning us back upon us, that the fault is to be found at our own door.

that is not because God is indifferent or God is, in some way, engaged in some other activity. As a prophet of old, when he dealt with idolaters who beat upon their breasts and cut themselves, crying out to their myriad host of gods to come and to make their presence felt.

[7 : 47] and the prophet taunted the prophets who were false and said to them to cry louder and to think that they might have been engaged in some other activity that would distract them from hearing and from answering.

That is never the case with regard to the God of heaven. You were never far removed from the centre of the activities of your people, whether they are aware of it or not.

Yes, we know and we acknowledge and we confess that very often we behave as if God is not there and that God is not aware of what we are doing, what we are saying, what we are thinking even.

and yet the all-seeing eye of the God of heaven is upon us at every moment of our experience. Even in our worship today we confess that perhaps since we have engaged in this act of worship we have not consistently adhered to that mode of worship where attention focuses upon the God whose name moves upon our lips in our places or in our prayers.

Every one of us can ask the question how long did we last within this place of worship before our mind was distracted by some other thought that took us somewhere else that took us to think of some other thing and that is the weakness of our flesh that is the weakness of our sinful humanity that even in our most holy things we are we are showing ourselves of what we are in need of mercy and we give thanks that at the throne of grace we cry out to our God of mercy be merciful to us O God that we may experience a sense of your blessing being your portion today as we read your word and as we think about what this word has to say to us may it be meaningful may it be relevant may it be something that we can think about and apply to our lives no matter how remote we may feel ourselves to be from

[10 : 19] God as your daughter of old was chased out into the wilderness and driven from her home because of the hostility that was in the home towards her in a place where such enmity was not right and not proper but it was there and she she was in the wilderness crying out to God and her awareness of God led her to say thou God seest me and so it is that are times when this is the truth that is brought home to us that even in our solitary aloneness when we think ourselves to be alone with our thoughts and with our fears and without deliberations and sometimes these are heavy burdens that we carry when we can't take them elsewhere we sit with them and we cogitate upon them we meditate upon these things and sometimes they are so onerous and so heavy burdens that we cannot even begin to think of sharing them with anyone else and yet in that place you are able to come to us and say to us peace be still just as the Lord experienced the calming of the troubled sea when the storm was about among the disciples who were on board with them were crying out thinking that they would surely sink and yet the God who sat with them the Lord of hosts even in the person of Jesus

Christ was able to control the waves to still the storm and so it is in the experience of those who cry out to you when the troubles this world brings our ways are so many that we cannot overcome them we are thankful your word reminds us that just because your people bear your name that they will in some way be secure from these troubles but your word says many are the troubles that afflict the just in number there are many but the promise to them is out of them all the Lord will bring freedom we pray for the blessings that your promises brings into the lives of your people may they be held dear by them and may they know that these promises are yea and amen in Christ we pray for the outpouring of your spirit so that many would be added to that number we despair of seeing the enlivening of your spirit in our midst because we have seen so many days so many months so many years pass before anyone has obviously cried out to God for mercy and declared that that mercy was their portion but you have not looked over us without seeing what is before you so we pray for grace to pray to continue in prayer to not despair of praying seeking that your blessing would be imparted to those many amongst us who have no knowledge of Christ even those who faithfully attend God's house and yet who come and go and still their knowledge of that

God is not sufficient to make them say that this is God my portion this God is my saviour this God alone is the one in whom my trust is placed for time and for eternity Lord grant to them that knowledge where they would release their hold on all that is temporal all that is of this world and make preparation for the world that is to come for if all we have is of this world it will go the way of the world and we acknowledge that only your people can say that they will enter into the fullness of the possessions that will not perish remember us then today as a congregation as a community visit us in mercy pouring out your spirit upon us remembering the needs that are before you homes that are dark to the gospel may the light of your countenance be lifted up upon homes that are visited by sickness may healing come those who are contained within these homes confined because of their physical weakness or mental weakness or whatever it is that has afflicted them may you mercifully undertake for them guide the hands of those who care for them who are burdened for them who take time to minister to their needs we pray that you would bless them in their care remember homes set aside for the elderly we pray for the care homes of

Rhode Island each one with owners responsibility when men and women achieve the fragility of old age we give thanks that there are those who will care for them and do their utmost to ensure that their suffering is alleviated so guide the hands of nurses and doctors and carers of all descriptions and bless their labors remember the hospice and the hospital and we pray for the nursing fraternity who are delivering care that is remarkable in their patience and their fortitude and their desire to do for others what they are unable to do for themselves we look to the God who is the great physician to strengthen their resolve to do their utmost with your help we pray for our nation we remember our queen and our family we pray for the governments that represent her within Holyrood and within

Westminster we pray Lord that you would guide us in the times that we are given to think of setting up such governments may we be wise in our choice seeking to place those who honour God in places of power those who remember God those who remember your world may we see more and more have an interest in the things that God has to say we fear that that is not the case but you are able to reverse that trend you are able to turn us again as your servant prayed for so remember the world in which we live where there are hostilities that are ongoing think of the Ukraine and much suffering that is ongoing there we think of the other parts of the world such as

[18 : 01] Afghanistan and Yemen and places that we often fail to remember forgive us for our negligence we pay for the places in the world that suffer from drought and from want of various descriptions and it seems so ill to us to see so much of human resources spent on weapons of war while these resources could be directed to meet the needs of the human condition and yet we see so much done that is in defiance of your own command to us not to do any man hard so hear our prayers guide us in the truth we would ask bless your word and bless our thoughts upon it to each of us forgive sin in Jesus name amen we're going to read from the gospel according to john the new testament scriptures the gospel according to john chapter 1 and we can read from the beginning of the chapter down to verse 28 john chapter 1 in the beginning was the word and the word was with god and the word was god the same was in the beginning with god all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not there was a man sent from god whose name was john the same came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all men through him might believe he was not that light but was sent to bear witness of that light that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world he was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not he came unto his own and his own received to him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of

God even to them which believe on his name which were born not of blood not of the will of the flesh not of the will of man but of God and the world was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth John bare witness of him and cried saying this was he of whom I speak he that cometh after me is preferred before me for he was before me and of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace for the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ no man hath seen God at any time the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father he hath declared him and this is the record of John when the

Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who art thou and he confessed and denied not but confessed I am not and they asked him what then art thou Elias and he said I am not art thou that prophet and he answered no then said they unto him who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us what sayest thou of thyself he said I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness made straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias and they which were sent were of the Pharisees and they asked him and said unto him why baptize thou then if thou be not art Christ nor Elias neither that prophet John answered them saying I baptize with water but there standeth one among you whom ye know not he it is whom coming after me is preferred before me whose shoes latchet

I am not worthy to unloose these things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan where John was baptizing so on may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise we we can sing now from psalm 89 psalm 89 and we can read from verse 24 my mercy and my faithfulness with him yet still shall be and in my name his horn and power men shall exalt at sea his hand and power shall reach afar as set it in the sea and his right hand established shall in the rivers be thou art my father he shall cry thou art my God alone and he shall say thou art the rock of my salvation

I'll make him my firstborn more high than kings of any land my love will ever keep for him my covenant fast shall stand whose seed I buy my power will make forever to endure and as the days of heaven his throne shall stable be unsure but if his children shall forsake my laws and go astray and in my judgment shall not walk but wander from my way if they my laws break and do not keep my commandments I'll visit then their faults with rods their sins with just husbands yet I'll not take my love from him nor faults my promise make my covenant I'll not break nor change what with my mouth I speak we're going to sing from verse 26 six stanzas down to verse 34 thou art my father he shall cry thou art my God alone thou art my father he shall die thou art my God alone and he shall say thou art the rock of my salvation

[25 : 12] I'll make him my part for more than kings of any land my my love I ever keep for him my God thou fast shall shine her sea guide by my heart will be forever forever to endure and just the trace of hell the throne shall still be and sure share but if his children shall foresee my laws and goals free and in my judgment shall not walk but wander from my way if they my laws break and do not keep my command to rest and his love his men their cause with wrong their sins with justice men yet

I have not take my love from him nor falls my promise make my love my love and child not praise nor change but with my mouth I sing like us to turn now to the passage that we read together the first chapter in the gospel of John chapter 1 and we can read that verse 10 he was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not he came unto his own and his own received him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of

God even to them that believe on his name which were born not of blood not of the will of the flesh not of the will of man but of God was recently in a company and we were discussing the temptations of Christ and whenever that topic is discussed it becomes apparent very quickly that the temptations of Christ are a mystery to us we find it so hard to believe or to understand how Jesus Christ could possibly be tempted and our reasoning very often is undergirded by the fact that our experience of temptation contains within it our sinful desires we are tempted usually to sin and

I read just this morning the passage in John's Gospel chapter 4 where Jesus has led into the wilderness to be tempted and the comments of a preacher on that passage and this preacher is a preacher well he's no longer with us but he was a well-known speaker a well-known preacher in his own denomination and he very often went all over the world to speak at conferences and his comment surprised me it was just this I like to believe his temptations were real I like to believe his temptations were real now that's somebody who's a

Christian of many years standing who teaches and preaches theology and yet he says that when the scripture clearly says that Jesus was tempted it says it repeatedly he was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil Paul or to the apostle writing the epistle to the Hebrews says that he was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin it doesn't qualify the temptation except to say that his temptation did not involve him being drawn to sin and what has that got to do with this passage here well I think that in this passage that we read we cannot overlook the fact that

[32 : 24] Jesus Christ lived in this world and that he encountered all kinds of different attitudes to him and to God while he was in the world and I don't know about you but I was thinking about this quite a lot what picture do we have of Christ as he is in the world is he somebody who is completely oblivious to the attitudes of those who are in the world with him towards God towards God's world towards him did he just go on as if that did not matter a jot or was he somebody who could not fail to be affected by it in whatever way that did affect him now we don't have an answer

I don't have an answer for that because I don't think the scripture dwells upon you know very often people shy away from discussing or debating the emotional life of Christ as if you're venturing into dangerous territory there you're talking about something that you don't really know much about and some people would almost want you to believe that Christ didn't have an emotional life but his humanity requires him to be somebody who did have an emotional life he had highs and lows in the sense of he encountered occasions where he rejoiced with those who rejoiced it inevitably was the case he was we believe we're told the scripture tells us he was at the wedding in Cana in Galilee a joyous occasion to teach us to visit that occasion without in any way sharing in their joy without in any way experiencing the joy of a rejoicing family that would be strange

I would say we know that he mourned we know that he was grieved we know that he wept and we feel comfortable with these kinds of thoughts perhaps of Christ but if we're going to be equal in our thinking as to the things that affected Christ then we need to think of him as someone who is affected by the way people respond to him and to God and to God's word and I think that has got to come into your thinking and my thinking when we look at this passage because we're reading about something here that tells us about the kind of world in which we live and it's a statement of fact but it's not a fact that's made without the implications of it being in some way brought before your mind whether you choose to address them or not you know if you if you look at this passage we're told something about the world in which

Christ lived the world into which he came and there's no doubt that the words at the beginning of this chapter they're they're precious words they're amazing words they're words that want you to get to grips with what this truth is saying too in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God and so on very short statement but it is a statement that tells us something and then it moves on from saying that to the words we want to look at today I want us to think which one of these verses verse 10 verse 11 and verse 12 the first verse I think describes to us the general condition of the world in which we live everybody is contained within this description he was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not this is the world in which

Christ lived and the world in which Christ lived this was what it was like and I think many of the commentators say we're not just to understand that the world that Christ is describing to us or the word of God is describing to us here through the apostle John that it was a world that was like that when Christ was born into it from the fall of man this was the way the world was from the very beginning when sin entered into the world this was the way the world was it was a world that God made and the world that God made did not know the God that made it that's the thing that's the point that's being made from the beginning not just when Christ came into the world you'd think you can narrow it down because it's talking about

[38 : 47] Christ but it's not simply talking about Christ the incarnate son of God from the point of his birth because the chapter begins with the God who was God before the world was the God who created the world and who existed before the world was created the description that we are given of Christ the creator but one who is God and who is co-equal with God and who existed before the world existed and the God who existed before the world existed came into the world that he created for his own glory for his own good and for the glory of those that he put in it did not know him that's the thing they didn't know him they didn't acknowledge him they didn't appreciate him they didn't give him the place that belonged to him as the creator

God that he was I know there's a lot of theology contained in this remarkable opening description the gospel but the simplicity of it is there for us as well we don't need to delve into the deep things of God to understand that Christ is described here to us as someone who is God and who is the creator God who sustains and upholds what he created by the word of his power and yet although that is what is true what he created is not acknowledged by him when John the apostle speaks of the ministry of John the Baptist he describes his role as bearing witness to the light that the world was and when he bears witness to that when he testifies

Christ to that Christ he wants us to understand who we are being introduced to and I think the emphasis on his existence as creator needs to be understood and appreciated because you would imagine that the created would acknowledge the creator of the last thing on the mind of many I heard on the news this week that somebody with connections with these islands who's a paleontologist or somebody who's interested in rocks and the beginning of things and spoke about the discovery that was made of a creature a huge creature I think it's in the ocean that explains how dinosaurs disappeared and it's just drawn to it from the point of view of the estimate made on the time frame at which this occurred you know it happened so many million years ago and the dinosaurs were destroyed and then after the dinosaurs were destroyed it became a much more convenient and fertile milieu that would allow the growth of mankind by normal process of evolution and

I was just interested in the timings you know there were so many millions of years ago this happened and then there's this blank and then the million years whatever it is before then but there was no software but there was a suggestion there that human beings came into being after the destruction of dinosaurs and the process is explained through the process of whatever needs to happen for mankind to evolve the doctrine of evolution but there was no comment made about where the poor dinosaurs came from how did they emerge what evolutionary process did they undergo to appear on the scene of time and so there are a lot of you know statements made that we are confronted with as factual statements and what amazes me is how convenient the span of time is if we think of these things happening not in 24 hours or 24 years or 24 thousand years or 24 million years even the greater the passage of time the more easier it is to think of things taking place which often contradicts and conflicts with what the scripture is saying now what the scripture is saying

Christ is saying not just that the world was created but that he created it and that when he created it if you go back to Genesis everything that he created and all that was in it was created by him and the reason for it being the way it is now was because of the way what he created had departed from its former glory and Christ is quite happy to proclaim that as truth and he himself as the author of that truth and when the Bible explains that when the Bible sets it before us we choose to discard the truth that the Bible sets before us we look at the world and we explain the world its existence its condition we explain it by simply saying well it just happened it just happened it's the way it is just now because inevitably there's this progress towards whatever now what the

[46 : 04] Bible is saying to us simply here in this very brief statement is that that this is how God was seen in the eyes of many in the world they did not know God they did not know God nor did they want to know God because it was convenient for themselves not to know God you know if you know God God is a complication if you say that there is a God that is something that you have to live with because the God who is explained to you is described to you who speaks to you through the word says I am God and there is no other and this God that is and there is no other is the God who created you who provides for you who supplies you with your material all the material goods that you have but also caters for you spiritually and you live with that God or you don't live with that

God you want that God outside of your life and you want to describe a God that is nothing like the God of the scripture and this is the thing Christ is quite comfortable with being that God and describing to us the world that either accepts this God as God or denies this God for what he is I don't know where you are with regard to God you may have designed one of your own making well that won't do it won't satisfy the very thing that the God who made you and who made you for himself requires you to minister to with God or by God and nothing less than God because it won't satisfy maybe that's a difficult concept listen to what John

Calvin says and he quotes the words of the apostle and he classifies it as an accusation he says John is accusing men of ingratitude in that they were so to say voluntarily blinded even before Christ was manifest in the flesh he revealed his power everywhere therefore those daily effects ought to correct man's sluggishness for what could be more unreasonable than to draw water from a running stream and not to think of the spring it flows from just Calvin is saying there look if you look at this world a world that God created a world that the apostle Paul tells you bears the imprint of

God's handiwork and that testifies to his existence to his creativity to his power and to his sovereign over lordship over his creation you see that you surveyed and you live either accepting it and acknowledging the God who did it or you deny that God and that's what is true many in this world live like that many in this world live like that they find answers to their questions in a way that God has not supplied well the second thing we have here is more solemn I would imagine because in verse 11 it says he came unto his own and his own received him not it is a rejection of God but a rejection of Christ also a deeper

I would say and a more grievous error not only is a lack of recognition its lack is blatantly blameworthy now the scholars tell us that the Greek here is saying to us that he came to his own things not just to his own but to his own things and that doesn't sound very polite language that God would speak of you as a thing but we have to understand the implication of what that means it means that he is considering what is rightfully his and in a sense some people

[51 : 37] I know some people when they look at this they consider the words and they say well you've already said God is the creator you've already said God is the one who possesses his creation it is his to do with as he will because he created it and surely that is sufficient but not specifically here he comes to speak about those that he made himself known to in his word those that he made his own people by covenant those that he embraced as far as the race of Israel was concerned and spoke to them and led them into God's truth revealing himself to them in a specific way describing his purposes for salvation in a specific way speaking to them to the types and the symbols and the worship mechanisms of the Old Testament all of the things which would reveal

God to them and he came to them to make them his own in that sense and when he came to them they did not receive him they did not want him and you know that's what the Bible tells us about Israel it tells us about the nation it tells us about this people that bore God's name in Isaiah for example the ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib but Israel does not know me Israel does not know me the very people that you would expect to know me maybe in one sense when Christ surveys the world and the mess that the world is in he would say well it's no surprise to me that they don't know God they're in our right mess but when it comes to my people when it comes to the people

I gave my world to when it comes to the people I gave instruction to as to how to worship me how to know me better how to understand my purposes in saving this world and yet they did not recognize him maybe you're critical of Israel and you're saying oh Israel what a mess you made of things but you're not excluded I'm not excluded because does he not come to us in the gospel does he not come to us in the word that we hear expounded weekly and it tells us of God it tells us of his purpose it tells us of the salvation that is to be found in Christ and if you are a beneficiary of the gospel if you are a recipient of the gospel if you heard the message you can't shut your ears to it you've heard it it's been read in your hearing you've been taught it in school and in a

Sunday school you've been taught it at your mother's knee you can't undo it you can't not hear word is his own received him not those who received my word those who heard of who I am through the word those who understand who God is and how God reveals himself to us in his son you have not received him and if that's true of you who's to blame according to the word here this is what you have not done you have not received him the thought that came to mind was how maybe this spirit is in you how many people were face to face with

Christ and they heard Christ speak and they saw Christ work they saw his charity they saw his love they saw his power they saw his miracles and yet what did they say shows a sign prove yourself to me convince me that you are who you say you are have you ever said that have you ever sat here and said to yourself well minister if you convince me today that Christ indeed is the saviour of sinners if you convince me personally then I believe but if not forget it have you challenged the pulpit maybe not me personally challenge God in fact to prove to you something that he has proved already

[56 : 53] Christ answered to this people who came to him an evil and adulterous generation seek it after a sign and there shall be no sign given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas in other words what Christ was saying to his own generation as he can say to this one I have done sufficient to save the souls of many I gave my soul a ransom for many the bible that you've read and heard read and reflected upon and considered and concentrated upon and tossed around in your mind and then trodden under your feet that word tells you who he is and you've chosen to despise that word because you despise the gospel that speaks of him no less than that the marvelous thing is this and this is the last thing but as many as received him that's amazing isn't it we have in verse 11 he came to his own and his own received him not but then it says but as many as received him what do you think it would be like if

Jesus Christ looked at the world and said to himself that's it that's it you know that's why I began the way I did when we think of Christ in the world you cannot think of Christ in the world or God looking at the world as someone who is unaffected or disinterested or in any way remote from what the world is doing or what the church is doing or what those who are in the church is doing and if anything don't think of this remoteness or disinterestedness or even when I was thinking of this I was thinking the way we think of Christ being tempted it's as if some people think well here we have a block of fire lighter and here we have a block of asbestos and you put the match to the fire lighter and it will ignite because it's soaked in some combustible material it's soaked in paraffin or petrol whatever but the asbestos it's resistant to fire it's a fire retardant that's the way some people look at

Christ Christ in the world and he doesn't care he doesn't care what you think he doesn't care what you feel he doesn't care what you're doing or not doing is that the way it is is that the way it is you think that Christ does not care that you sit in the church day and day out and you have no interest in it I don't think that's right some people you know they distance themselves from this and say I can't talk like that I can't think like that because you're presenting an image of Christ that's not right but you show me where in the scripture the picture that we have of God as being unaffected by what the world is doing or saying or thinking it's not a picture that's consistent with scripture

I don't think but if we read verse 12 by itself it may seem to us that those who receive Christ are in some way able to do it on a whim or just because they've decided of their own accord to do it but we need to take the two verses together because when we do that we are told that those who believe Christ those who believe in Christ do so because of who Christ is and what Christ has done in them he came to his own his own received him but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name which were born not of blood of the will of the it tells you that to believe in God to believe in Christ to put your trust in Christ is something that is not left to you entirely it is something that God enables you to do and if you feel that you want to embrace

Christ then do so and then discover your inability and discover where your ability is to be found and that is in Christ that's what the gospel teaches us you know I often quote A.W.

[62 : 12] Toser and he's always got something to say and he says many preachers today they say to you come to Christ or accept Christ accept Christ and he says it makes Christ a brush salesman as if he's got something to offer and all you have to do is take it but in actual fact what the gospel is saying to you is more than that the Greek word that is used here is not a passive word it is an active word you are to take Christ you are to take the gift you are to take the salvation you are to take what God in Christ is offering to you as a sinner in need of salvation and the power that enables us to do that comes from himself and we'll go on in chapter 3 to describe to us the fact and to insist on the fact you must be born again you must be born again what does that say to you well I can't be born again but

God can by his spirit renew your spirit he can by his spirit open the eyes of your mind and so on you know it says to them he gave it power not to go on as they were but to become the sons and the daughters of God I think this is a truly remarkable passage it describes to us how we are by nature it describes to us how we are even as we sit under the gospel it describes to us how that must change how that can change how that change is wrought in us by him and where that change brings us you know if you go on to verse 24 onwards you find there that the answer to what is here is all in

Christ it's Christ is everything to us and I hope that we understand when we think of this world a world I hope that speaks to you and to me of something greater than than the mystery of of whatever it is that's a topical name for it who knows I can't if I can't see God in the world around about me if I can't see the creator God in the world around about me if I can't see the grace of God in the world around about me in the lives of those who have been converted and changed by him then I am blind and I am oblivious to what God is doing and has done and I hope that you will appreciate that the need that we have for God to help us to see what we are and what we are in need of he blessed us as well let us pray help us oh

God to understand that this world as you worked you created it you gave life to those who reside within its boundaries it is yours to do with us you will and you are not disinterested in it you have shown that interest in sending your son the only begotten of the father to be a saviour for sinners and we give thanks that the day will come when that lord who is lord of all will come and restore to himself the world that is now lying in sin and restore it to a former glory that we cannot even begin to visualize we pray your blessing upon your word to us today forgiving your sins in Jesus name amen we're going to sing in conclusion verse from psalm 103 psalm 103 at verse 19 and singing to the end of the psalm the lord prepared hath his throne in heaven's foot him to stand and everything that being hath his kingdom doth command o ye his angels that excel in strength bless ye the lord ye who obey what he commands and hearken to his word o bless and magnify the lord ye glorious hosts of his he ministers that do fulfill what their pleasure is o bless the lord all ye his works wherewith the world is stored in his dominions everywhere my soul bless thou the lord the lord prepared hath his throne in heaven's for him to stand the lord be filled at his throne in heaven's church and everything that being kingdom his kingdom does command all ye whose angels that accept who said bless ye the

Lord he who who of may be calm and back into his word all blessed and magnified areiced love O blessed Lord, all ye this word, wherewith the word is short.

[69 : 28] In his dominions everywhere, my soul blesseth the Lord.