

Our Dwelling Place - Near To God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: Mr Stuart King

- [0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our morning service. I wanted to be working again a couple of weeks ago. I was here and it was a wonderful fellowship together.
- I'll just read out a couple of the notices, I think most people have had them. There will be tea, coffee or a cup of tea, may not be coffee, I'm not sure if that's there, but there will be a cup of tea afterwards. And it will be great if many of you are able to stay around and continue fellowship together there.
- The evening service will be at 6pm and I'll be taken by Mr Gordon McLeod, my own congregation in North Pass. I encourage you to come out to see that if you are able.
- Again I will always encourage those in the congregation to come out to prayer meeting. I'm saying the midweek prayer meeting is 7, 15, 30. So again I would encourage you to come out, there's no better place to be midweek.
- I don't know who was that said it, but I remember a number of years ago somebody saying that our two Sundays, two Lord's days are out there at the washing poles. And in the midweek if they have the poles that we use to prop up the washing line in the middle of the week, we often become quite deflated.
- [1 : 09] The further we are from coming into God's house and we'll touch a little bit on that inner service, I would encourage you to come out and teach you to hear prayer, hear open prayer and even the prayers of our own hearts in silence, I would encourage you to come and join in as well.
- There's an evening meeting at 7pm on Thursdays prior to the prayer meeting, so we encourage you to go to that and then there's re-induction. Unfortunately another date you can see in the press retreat, the induction of the word of Calvary and the knock rain.
- So you can see the dates and information there if required. But just before we begin, we'll just take our call to worship from Psalm 138. Psalm 138, Psalm 138, I will praise thee with my whole heart, the Holy God, so thy will come unto thee, I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name, for thy loving kindness, and for thy truth, For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
- In the day when I cry, thou hast answered me and strengthened me with strength in my soul. We pray that we come to hear God's word and sing praises to his name that will be strengthened and that will be encouraged as well.
- We'll begin our public worship of God then by singing to his praise in Psalm 63. Psalm 63, we'll sing the first eight verses of the psalm.
- [2 : 49] Psalm 63. Lord be my God, I will ever see my soul but thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry heart's lamp wherein the waters be. That I thy power may be whole in brightness of thy face.
- As I have seen thee here before within thy holy place. Since better is thy love and life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and praise thee while I live.
- Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall fill in thee. Then shall my mouth rejoice when I sing praises unto thee. When I could be a fortnight, then I never would delight.

And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night. In shadow of thy wings I am joy. For thou might help hast thee. My soul befalls hard and meek. Thy right hand doth sustain.

So we'll sing these verses. Verses 1 to 8 of Psalm 63 to God's grace. For thee, my God, I will sing.

[3 : 49] For thee, my God, I will sing. My soul, the earth for thee.

For thee, my God, I will sing. God bless you.

God bless you.

God bless you. I hear in thy name, will lift my hands.

I bless thee while thy will. If not with my, O I will rise.

[5 : 41] My soul shall fill with thee. Then shall my heart with God for this.

Send graceless love to thee. When I do thee upon my death, I will rise.

And pray on thee, I let it in. In watches of the night.

Then shadow all thy wings and joy. For love and heaven and king.

My soul in God owns heart and me. Thy light and justice day.

[7 : 19] Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us join together in prayer. Amen. Amen. Amen.

God, we say a just God, and we give you thanks for that, Lord, we thank you that you are a God that's near to us, you're not a distant God, you're one that we can come to in prayer, you're one that we can come to in the challenges of life, we can also come to you through the good and the joyous times in life, Lord, we give you thanks for that, we thank you that when we look to the names of your son, Lord, we see the name Emmanuel, which means God with us, Lord, and we give you thanks in recent weeks as we may have looked at the glorious gift of your son, who came to be with us, Lord, and is still with us, Lord, we give you thanks for it, we pray that we would recognise that, that we would be drawing ever nearer to you, that we would not be distant from you, that we would find ourselves in your house, at every opportunity, each Lord's Day, each Thursday for a prayer meeting, and any other gatherings that take, that we would be encouraged to long to be near to you, to come to you, to find ourselves recharged throughout the week and coming into you, Lord, and although there may be times where it's difficult, or we've got other things going on in our lives, but that we would be prioritising the minutes and the hours, the summer day, that we would be giving in to you, that we would be seeking to turn to you in all that we do, and we think of the cross this morning, Lord, we think when we see that love from you, we see it so evidently at the cross, and we give you thanks for what happened there, we thank you that you saw fit in the beginning of time, to institute that salvation plan, that your Son would come into this world, that he would live a life here, a perfect life, that he would die and then rise again on the third day, so we pray that we would be remembering that, not just at one particular time of year, but that we would be continually bringing that to the forefront of our minds, that we would always have eternity in you, for we know not when you will take us from this world, we pray, Lord, that we would be living a life knowing that today is indeed the day of salvation, that we would be remembering that we are just passing through here, that we have no continuing city here, there is an eternal life and an eternal death before all of us, Lord, so we pray that we would be seeking an eternal life, that we would be laying up treasures in heaven, not treasures here on earth, where morn and rust destroy,

Lord, that we would be living a life that is pleasing to you, that we would be fulfilling what so many of us know from the first catechism, that our chief engine would be to glorify you and to enjoy you forever, Lord, for there is much enjoyment in following you, and we pray that we would remember that, and that we would show that for those people that we would encounter, even this very day, those who have no thought of coming into this house, Lord, whenever we speak to them, let them see the joy that comes from us, let them see the warmth and the love of our heavenly Father, let that be something that's evident in our lives, let us stand out in the town, let it be known to others, let us stand rooted and grounded in an unchanging, Lord, we know this world around us is ever-changing, we don't have to go back too many years to see changes in identity and gender started to come in, Lord, and we give you thanks that when we come to you, no matter how much our world changes, we know that you are the same today, you are the same forever, Lord, you are the same in every single day,

Lord, we give you thanks for that, and pray that you would be remembering that, that we would not live at your mercy, that we would not try to deal with things in and of our own strength, for we know that apart from you we can do nothing, that we would be turning to you in everything in our lives, that we give you thanks, and that we find ourselves safely here, reading your word, looking into your word, and we pray for those around the world where that's not the case, we pray for countries where there's severe persecution, we pray for those governments, and those leaders in those places, and ask that you would make yourself known to them, that you would reveal your light and your peace to them, that they would turn away from the lives that they are living in at this moment, focused on self, puffing up self, Lord, but they would be turning to you, and that they would be seeking your face, your wisdom, your counsel, and all that they do, Lord.

We give you thanks for the congregation here in Calvary, Lord, and ask that you would continue with them through this period of vacancy, that you would make it a time of blessing as well, Lord, that there would be encouragement through these weeks and months, Lord, that you would go before them and all that they do, with the vacancy committee, Lord, we give you thanks for those willing to do that important work, Lord.

[13 : 02] And we pray for those preachers that are asked to come here with a future call, Lord, and we pray for them and ask that they would indeed be prayerfully considering where you want them to be.

We all know that our mission field is as long and as wide as our own feet, wherever we are, but we pray that you would lay it upon the hearts of a servant of your choosing to come into this group, to proclaim your word, not to proclaim the word of man, but to proclaim the glorious gospel message.

It gives us joy, it gives us a jolt, it gives us encouragement, and it gives us refuting, Lord. So we pray that you would be in that situation, Lord, and that we would be able to see this toolkit filled, and the flock here led by that man of your choosing, Lord, to be with them, Lord.

We pray for the office bearers, the elders and the deacons here. We ask that you would continue to go before them, that they also would be seeking your wisdom and your counsel, and every decision that is made and every consideration that is looked at.

We give you thanks for them, Lord, and that we would continue to discharge their duties in a way that is pleasing to you, and seeks to glorify you, and to enjoy you as well, Lord.

[14 : 14] We pray for our presenters as well, we give you thanks as well, as we seek to sing praises to you, Lord. We give you thanks, you've given us voices, not just to speak, but to sing praises, to sing praises to our most holy God, and we give you thanks for them.

We pray for the young ones, Lord, and that you would be with them, that you would prepare to head back to school, Lord. We pray for the teacher, we pray for all those in this new year, Lord, that they would be able to go into the start of this year with you in our minds, with you being the focus of all of our minds, not just the young ones, but for the older ones as well, for all of us, that we would be seeking to see you in our minds, and that we would be everybody showing a faith in you, Lord.

So we pray for Thomas as well, Lord, as he seeks to continue as well as into the moderator for your Lord, ask that you would bless him, that you would equip him, and you give him all that he is able to do to have this chance for our Lord.

We also look to the other congregations in our realm, those other vacancies, Lord, we particularly bring before you those in Barbas at this time, those in Shabbos, and across our island, Lord.

We think of the many vacancies, Lord, and ask that you would lay up on the hearts of young men to go into the ministry, the old men into the ministry, whatever you have set upon their hearts, Lord, that they would go in and they would seek to undertake that high office, Lord, of seeking to share your word with those in our communities, and our islands, and on the mainland as well, Lord.

[15 : 50] So we pray for these vacant congregations, Lord. We pray for those going into the ministry, we pray for Gordon and our own congregations, we do the process, and Tam, as we heard of this morning, myself, and for Scott as well, Lord.

Scott and our own congregations minister in the training. We pray for these ministers, we pray for all of them in their denomination, and ask that you would go before them, you would equip them, and that you would lead them and guide them in all that we do, as they seek to see you glorified, and they seek to see your will done on earth, and it is in heaven, Lord.

So be with us just now, Lord. Go before us in all that we do. Allow us to meditate, according to your word, to cheer upon it, to think upon how it applies to our own life, Lord, and forgive us for all of our sins.

In Christ's precious and glorious name, we pray. Amen. Amen. I've seen a couple of young ones. Well, you can put yourself in the category of young if you wish.

But I've seen a distinct couple that are a little bit younger. So I've got something to show you. Now I'm not going to open it, because I'll maybe give it to you afterwards. But have you ever seen a packet, maybe you've probably seen too many of these at breakfast time over the last couple of weeks.

[17 : 02] But have you ever seen M&Ms;? You can just get that on, you don't have to speak. You see M&Ms;, yes. Now, another thing. You've probably seen about a hundred of these. Have you ever seen that packet of Smarties?

Yes. So, we've seen Smarties. Now I've not just got these up here, so I can have a wee cheeky munch halfway through the sermon. I've brought them up for a reason. I'm not going to open them. I've got a couple of questions.

And if you want to answer, it would be great if you could. I may even give you a packet of Smarties on the way out. So that's an encouragement to help me. So if you've got a Smartie in one hand, and you've got an M&M; in the other, they look very similar.

They're both chocolatey. They've both got a shell around them. How could I tell the difference between an M&M; and a Smartie? If they were just out of my hand. Is there anything about them that looks slightly different? Is there maybe something written on them?

Yeah. A big lighter M. So there's a difference between the M&M; and a Smartie, which is absolutely nothing. Are they all different colours? Yeah.

[18 : 03] Both hats are completely different. Do they both have chocolate in them? Yeah. Favourite. I agree. You're nodding quite quickly at that one. And they've got a shell around them. And you know, it made me think, I'm not going to open these up, very tempting to open them, but I won't.

It made me think about the Christian. I was mentioning a little bit, when I were clear, that we should be different. And thinking about M&M;'s and Smarties, my daughter prefers Smarties, doesn't like M&M;'s, so she'll always look to see if there's an M there, discard the M&M;, and eat the Smarties.

But it made me think about the Christian. The first thing I think about, when I look at an M&M;, and I think about the Christian, is that letter M. So there's an M on it, so there's something different. If there was a big bowl of Smarties, and one M&M;, do you think you'd be able to find it?

You could, because there's an M on it, you would be able to find that M&M;. And it should be the same for the Christian. There should be a mark on us. There should be something that is different about the Christian. Whether that's in the school playground, whether that's in the local shop, whether that's on a fishing boat, wherever we are, there should be something that's a little bit different about us.

Someone should be able to look at us and go, there's something different about that person. And it should be Christ that's coming out. It should be mediating through us. So there should be a lovingness. There should be a warmth.

[19 : 19] It should be obvious that we follow Jesus. It might even be when somebody says, well, what did you guys do over the weekend? And if you tell them, I was in church yesterday, you're standing out, you're showing people that you are a Christian.

So that's the first thing at the end that reminds me of a Christian. What else is, we mentioned that a little bit earlier. So there's lots of different colours. So Christians come in different shapes and sizes.

You look at me, I'm a different shape to many around. Different shapes. Some of us have got hair. Unlike me, some of us don't have hair. So we all look differently. So like a packet of M&Ms;, there's a blue one, there's a green one, there's a red one, there's brown ones.

We all look very different. And it's the same for the Christian. We don't all look the same. We should be led by what is going on in our hearts. That's the thing. It's the same. But we all look different.

God has created us all very differently. He's created us to be unique. But ultimately, to be giving Him the glory. We should be looking to God in everything that we do. Whether it's doing a test at school, whether it's doing a really difficult report at work, whatever it is we're doing, we should be doing it with God in our mind and doing it as hard as we can in the best way that we can for the Lord.

[20 : 34] So we're all very different. And we all look different. We have different personalities, different backgrounds. You can tell, although I learn Harris, my voice isn't quite like I'm from Harris. probably sound a little bit south of Harris.

We're all from different places, different backgrounds. So that's another way God uses us in different places. He takes us from different places. We've got different ministers that have different approaches.

We're all very different, but we're all led and guided by God. So we're all look different. We've got that M that maybe helps us to stand out as Christians. And I'm going to ask for an answer here.

What's the best bit about an M&M;? I know the worst bits when the packet's empty. What's the best bit about the M&M;? Think this is chocolate inside. I think I'm okay.

This is chocolate inside. And what do we love about chocolate? They're sweet. It tastes nice. Do we like the smell of chocolate as well? We love it. We have melting chocolate. If someone's baking at home, we smell that chocolate.

[21 : 33] Chocolate is so lovely. We do indeed love it. But I want you to imagine you picked out an M&M; with a little chocolate in it. Do you think that would still be quite nice? Or it would be...

No, you're... Totally, I totally agree. That was a very quick treat to the head. Absolutely useless. We would probably chuck it in the bin. If we just had a shell, it would be absolutely pointless.

It's the chocolate that makes it. And that reminds me, when we find that the Christians, what's on the inside of the M&M;, the same was on the inside of the Christian, and it's Jesus. And it should be Christ that's in her heart.

Anything that somebody sees from you, somebody says, oh, I'm really pleasant. I'm really nice. That's not because of me. It's because of God. Everything that I give should be showing off the Lord and Christ's work in my life.

It's not about me. It's not about anything that I've done. Because I'm a sinner. Anything that's good in me, anything that's good from me, is of the Lord. And when we take that away, if there's nothing sweet in our lives, if we don't have that chocolate, I want you to think of this M&M; without chocolate in it and one with chocolate.

[22 : 39] If I was to pinch them, do you think I would be able to break the one without chocolate in it easier than the one with chocolate in it? Yeah. Because there's nothing inside it. There's nothing holding it together. There's nothing strengthening it.

So I would be able to pinch that. And it's the same for those that maybe don't have Christ in their lives. It's very fragile. It's a fragile life to live. Things can break easily. But when we're rooted and grounded in God and we have Him in our hearts, like that M&M;, there's the chocolate in it, the sweet chocolate, there's that sweetness and that aroma of Christ.

If it's in us, we're strengthened by that. We're rooted in that. And we have that safe, solid ground that we stand on. Now I want to just quickly read a very brief passage before we close in a wee word of prayer.

It's 1 Corinthians 12 verses 4 to 6. And it says, Now there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations but it's the same God which worketh all in all. So where's the M&M; look different? It's the same chocolates on the inside.

[23 : 46] And that's the bit that we're attracted to. And I want you to remember that as you grow up as young ones and older ones as well, those of us that maybe don't know the Lord, that we should be trusting in Him, that we should be seeking to have Him in the hearts of our lives, that everything we do, the strength that we find is in Him and that we're encouraged to share that with others around us, that we stand out like the M on the M&M;, that we're a little bit different to those that are around us.

We might be very similar to other people but we want that one thing to be very different in our lives and that's the same Christ that shows out and shows our sweetness in our lives. So we'll just say a wee word of prayer for you, young ones, especially just now before we continue.

Lord our God, we pray for the young ones here and maybe the young ones not able to be with us, Lord, maybe on holiday at this time, we pray for them, Lord, and ask that in their young lives that they would be placing their trust in you, that they would be grounding themselves and rooting themselves in you, Lord.

And that the sweetness that we think of in the M&M; and the distinguishing heart of that M&M; would be something that resonates in their own life, that they would be different from those around them, that they would show that sweetness and that love of Christ, that they would show care, kindness, compassion, generosity to their friends, to their family, that they would listen to parents, that they would obey their parents, Lord, and that that, again, would be that symbol of them having you in their lives and the distinguishing marks of Christ our Lord.

And no matter what the differences are, no matter what the different talents are, what gifts you've given us, that we use them for you and that we use them to see you glorified and not ourselves but we do everything for you, Lord.

[25 : 26] So we pray for them as they go back to school, Lord, that's it you'll go before them and you'll strengthen and you'll encourage them at this time as well, Lord. So we give us for all of our sins in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

And make sure you grab the door, I'll give you a pack of sweets where both of you and for those of you that think you're younger, if I go some sweets this little, we'll go some and we may have some available. So we'll continue a public worship of God, this time singing from Psalm 27.

Psalm 27, the first five verses. Sixth standard is called to Psalm. The Lord my light and saving him who shall make me the same.

My life strength is the Lord of whom then shall I be afraid. Then as my name is in foes the most wicked persons of to eat my flesh against people they stumble and they fall.

Down to the end of the verse marked five. For he and his pavilion shall be hide in evil days and seek it of his tent and on a rock. We will sing these verses of Psalm 27 to God's grace.

[26 : 33] the Lord's The Lord's my light and save is well who shall make me dismay my life and bless the Lord's home

O what against me, Christ, I will be confident in this.

One thing I ought to adore, desire, and will seek to obtain.

The dawn days of my life I made, within God's arms remain.

But I am to see of the Lord behold me and admire.

[29 : 08] And I am to see of the Lord behold me and admire.

For here is the heaven's name, behind the evil days.

In secret, O this heaven's name, I am on the road me raised.

We can turn it right up to the book of Psalms. We'll text it, the book of Psalms in Psalm 84. This is the psalm we're going to explore.

It's already called the land. Psalm 84, we'll read the whole psalm.

[30 : 29] So the chief musician upon Gittin, a psalm for the sons of Korah. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, ye even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and flesh cryeth out of the living room. Ye the sparrow have found an house, and the swallow and nest for herself. We shall lay my young.

Even my altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell at thy house. They will be still praising me, Selah.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, and whose heart are the ways of them. As we passeth through the valley of Wacom, making a well, the rain also filleth the pools.

They go from strength to strength. Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O God of Jacob, Selah.

[31 : 27] Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointing. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of workiness.

For the Lord God is a son and shield. The Lord will have grace and glory. No good thing will need to fall from them that walk up right away. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Amen. And may the Lord bless the reading of his own holy word. We will now sing that Psalm, Psalm 84, to God's face. Psalm 84, to verse 6, verses, 6, and 6, and 6, and 6.

To God's face. How lovely as I dwell in place, O Lord of hosts, to thee. The tabernacles of thy days, how pleasant, O Lord, they be. My thirsty soul, Lord, came in thee.

He faints, thy courts, you see. My very heart, with the flesh, tired, will live in for it for thee. Behold, the sparrow find the great, and how deep way round the west. The swallow also for herself, and the purchase of the nest.

[32 : 40] Even thy will offer us where she's safe. For young ones, forth may bring. O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King. Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man whose strength thou art, in whose heart are thy ways. Who passing thorough baker's veil, they hinder dig up wells. Also the rain that falleth down the pool with water full.

We'll sing these verses, verses 1 to 6 of Psalm 84, to God's grace. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord, of all, to me.

The tabernacles of thy days, how blessed, O Lord, they be.

My heart is so long, dream and me. If inside thorns to see.

[33 : 45] My very heart, a flesh, my heart, O living God, for thee.

Behold, the shadow, find the light, on thy swim to rest.

As for the once of all our self, thou purchase it unest.

In thy own waters, where she's safe, thy young ones, forth may bring.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

[34 : 44] Blessed are they in thy heart, the wealth they ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man whose strength thou art, in whose heart are thy ways.

Through passing thou art, O angels, the wind, to dig up wells.

For so the rain that falleth down, the pools with water fills.

Amen. Well, just before we come back to the Psalms, Psalm 94, we'll just ask a blessing, a blessing Our gracious and our blessed Father, Lord, we ask that you would bless our time that is remaining today, Lord, that you would bless this work before us, Lord, we thank the book of psalms that give us much comfort and also at the beginning of a new year we pray that you would be looking to this psalm and that you would be seeking to draw nearer to you that we would seek to to live a life that sees us longing to dwell with you lord so we pray that you would bless us as we look at this work you would go away from this house as we go to read it further again this afternoon or into the evening you would bless the word lord and pray for the word we preached this evening as well lord as he seeks to open up your word as well lord that it would also be blessed and then we would go away from it learning more about you and more of what you desire for us in our life so be with us just now forgive us for all of our sins in jesus name we pray amen i wonder before we look at this psalm if you could maybe just go from your bibles to the beginning of our scripture it's genesis chapter 3 i mentioned in prayer that we particularly christmas we know of the of the name of anduel which means god with us and i was just thinking in confectations for for today as i'm looking at this passage again it would really just that it would maybe be i don't do new year's resolutions myself but it would maybe be something that we would really focus on this year i speak to myself first and foremost and that we would enjoy ever near to god that we would enjoy being near to god but i talked to me in the first 10 verses um of of chapter 3 of genesis so let's read that just now just as a kind of introduction to our passage now the serpent was more subtle than any piece of the field which the lord god had made and he said unto the woman yea hath god said you shall not eat for every tree of the garden and the woman said unto the serpent we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden god hath said he shall not eat of it neither shall he touch it lest he die and the serpent said unto the woman he shall not surely die for god does know that in the day he eat thereof then he rises it shall be opened and he shall be as gods knowing food and evil and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat and the eyes of them were both open and both were open and they knew and they knew that they were naked and they sewed families together and made themselves aprons and they heard the voice and they heard the voice of the lord god and i hid myself and the lord god called unto adam and said unto him where are thou and he said i heard the voice of the the garden and i was afraid because i was naked and i hid myself if you move back to psalm 84 um but i want to use that brief introduction there to psalm 88 to the chapter 3 of genesis we were able to see here animated in the garden their dwelling with god mankind well directly with god at the time of creation and also at the loving relationship and

[39 : 32] friendship with him as in sam 84 israel's temple was the place where the priest is god's unique and eden was the place where adam walked and talked with god we see that in the passage that we read the verses uh 1 to 10 of chapter 3 we're in fact told that as we were very much well acquainted with being in the direct perfect presence of god he walked with them in the cool of the day they were familiar with the sound of his voice they were familiar with the sound of him walking in the garden with them and it shows us that we were indeed created to be in a close relationship with a perfect creator and that nearness that we read of in chapter 3 that we had with god in the beginning was very quickly spoiled as we see at the beginning of that chapter when adam leave disobeying god that glorious fellowship that they enjoyed with their creator ceased to exist now we were created to be in relationship with him as well yet now as we see that i believe we often try to hide and we often try to avoid him and you might feel that the fallen man was that was adam and eve's fault now i don't know your own hearts but you may be resent the fact that adam and eve did that if you were in that situation you would have never listened to the serpent and you might feel that the fallen man is solely their fault and nothing to do with me but if we all look inwardly we can often see ourselves in them now as a pain i know just whenever we're younger she's two and a half particularly when christmas has done something wrong she'll often try to avoid you so the boy eye contact you'll see the face and we know there's something going on or she's dropped something she's broken something you can see but she'll try to avoid us at all costs so when's the corner she'll take away but then this eye contact and whether she doesn't want to be reminded that she's done wrong she will often see the disappointment in her face but the interesting thing is when we look at it it's not in our fallen nature it is in their fallen nature sorry to avoid and to hide much like that young child at my home who's not long gone to there's a guiltiness there's a conscience she knows she's done wrong and she knows that something has happened and she knows she ought to try to get away from the situation and she will try to hide we as people run from god and we try to hide ourselves from him on a regular if not constant basis but we see here in genesis that after sending both adam and eve hid themselves from god in verse 8 we see that god was walking in the cool of the day and was looking for adam him yet after healing the familiar son of god being near him he was afraid and found himself hiding from god it was the sin and it's indeed the sin today in our lives that has destroyed our very purpose of enjoying and treasuring that perfect nearness with god thankfully though our almighty god is perfectly faithful to us and does not give up on us when we think about christianity a lot of people think christianity is man searching for god the rosy opposite is god searching for man he's persistent in his pursuit of us in order to have that sweet fellowship with him regardless of the similar lives let's skip forward in our minds to further into the old testament we take our minds further through when israel had been redeemed from egypt and god designed his own tent in order he can dwell with his people he wants to dwell and be with us even when we can have sinful ways to run and hide from him

now he doesn't sit back and watch from a distance no he opts to set up a dwelling place in the middle of his people to be near to them he wants to be with us and to be near to us he is not a distant god i know you probably think it's quarter to when are we going to get to psalm 84 but we've just got one more very quick stop on our tune of the old testament before we come to psalm 84.

we take the castle minds again forward to when god's people have entered into the promised land we see the temple of the tabernacle is exchanged for a permanent and fixed dwelling among his people god then came to that place where he could permanently be near to his people and they also with him and it's believed that psalm 84 was in fact written in the temple either when god had that fixed dwelling place amongst them the psalm 84 was a longing to be near to god in a strict place where he is found in thinking back to adam and eve we were created to be in that sweet fellowship with god yet our immediate response is often to avoid being near him to turn away to hide and to get rid of the things that we know are wrong in our own lives trying to minimize them and to shun them away it's not in our fallen nature to draw near to god it's something we have to work on and it's something that i think this psalm very much helps us to do particularly this same year as we enter into a new year i think it's helpful if you look at this psalm and consider how we will approach the rest of the year we're not wired in a way that sees us gravitate to god in our fallen nature so for the service this morning i want us to look at three things in this passage and it's helpful that really the way the psalm is written it's written into three parts you'll see that it separates at the end of verse four by that word selah which really just means a break so end of verse four and then we see about the end of verse eight another break so we see that psalm is written into three different parts and the first one i want us to look at is a longing to be near god the second i want us to explore journey meaning to be near god and the third point i want us to look at is then cherishing being near to god so being near to god so we did verses one and two there i'll just have a minute we're going to navigate through the whole psalm so just maybe have your thumb in psalm before as we walk our way through psalm verses one and two how amiable are like tabernacles o lord of hosts my soul won't yet even faint for the course of the lord my heart and flesh cried out for the living god now just a question have you ever been in a situation where you're cleaning or you're deciding something so much that it becomes a physical feeling not just an emotional one but it's physical maybe it's been away from home maybe you've been away to study or you've been away to work and homesick homesickness overcomes you you want to be back in that place so much so that there's a physical feeling associated with not being there you're longing to be back home that you have a physical reaction to that one of the commentators said this word longing my soul longeth says it's the word is used of the direct parent crying out for the children whom she has lost the psalmist here is longing to be near god in his temple some translations have the word longing down as yearns for my soul yearns there's a wonderful intensity to this feeling it's not just something that you're in the mood for there's a strong intense longing to be near to god the psalmist here longs to be with his god so much that he even envies the birds that have made their nest in the temple look at verse 3 he had a sparrow a dove in his house and a swallow and next for himself for she may lay but young even i know for the lord of hosts my king and my god the psalmist said he would wish to be like one of those birds that were always near to god in the temple he wishes he could also be near the living god in this dwelling place in verse 4 he said blessed are they that dwell in thy house they will still be praising thee he longed so much to be with god that he would rather be an excellent bird in the corner of the temple just to be near to his god

and it's a question that i ask myself first and foremost it's a question i think we ought to ask each of ourselves is that you do you long to be near to god do you have that physical feeling in your body that cries out to be near to god was it like that for you this morning was it like that for you the last prayer meeting maybe you missed one recently maybe you missed a service how do you make you feel missing that service do you wake up longing to be near to god's house more often than not i think if we're honest to ourselves we would probably say no we don't often long in the way that we ought to long to be in god's house and to be near him we don't long to be with him as we ought to now just yesterday i was just added this into my sermon last night i i was scrolling through i saw a video which is quite an interesting one point i wanted i was on my phone but it was a pastor in america and he was speaking to the congregation and he said he looked up the average time that a teenager spends on their phone and it's four hours a day four hours a day whether it's on the phone tablet playstation television whatever it is whatever screen time they have it averages four hours a day for adults it was four and a half hours a day and this pastor was on to say have you ever or can you even imagine what it would be like to spend four and a half hours in god's word we'll often say that we're too busy or i'll just i'll just read a couple of verses tonight or a family worship we'll just do a quick couple of verses and you don't devote some time you maybe just go just read one chapter too much going on at home things going on in work things going on even just in church they can often be the things that um can see your time busy the reality is if we're able to somehow find four hours or four and a half hours if we're not to sit and watch television maybe even to watch the news can you just imagine what it would be like how much insight we would get how much encouragement we would get if we spent that even half of that time in god's word do we long to be in god's word do we long to be with him as we read his words as we even sign his word do we have that longing in our lives i think the answer is no we often let other things in others come in and distract us from that nearness of god whether that's prioritizing our careers whether that's maybe let our hobbies take control maybe like televisions devices all these other things take control of our lives i think we often find out that we don't get the time and don't get the time we don't get the time that we have whether that's hobbies or careers these are the gifts of god but when we fail to see god in them they quickly become deadly substitutes for god we're so often distracted that that physical or painful longing for god it's really not something that we're familiar with as the psalmist is here the psalmist here longs to be with god more than he longs for anything else in the world and that's quite a challenge to us all we looked at that kind of longing to be near god and maybe reflecting any more there on our own lives moving through the second part verses five through eight i want us to look at that journey to be near god look at verse five there let's see this the man whose strength is in thee and whose heart are the ways of them who passing through the valley of faith and make it a well the rain also filleth the pools they go from strength to strength out is one of them in zion appeared before god oh lord god of hosts here my prayer here oh jacob oh god of jacob say that now zion is the city of god where god had made this fixed well in the temple but what's the focus of those words in verse five the psalmist is saying that blessed are those whose heart are the highways to zion and whose strength is in the and whose heart are the ways of them i want to think

about how easily we have access to directions in our phone um i did it today but first when i came a couple of weeks ago on the 22nd and to come and be with you i've driven past here multiple times but i thought i'm just going to be sure i'm going to put calender's free church into my phone just to make sure i'm the right distance away i've not left too late too early and i know exactly where i'm going just to double check we have been so regularly available to us to help us know where we go but however the place is known to you so today i didn't need to use it um or you could if i was going somewhere in Glasgow where i'm from i would probably be able to tell you where to go without the need for a google maps without the need for a sat map i was born brought up there so navigating around the city is easier for me to believe and it's the same if you look at the psalms what they are saying here when we know a place by heart we don't need directions in the way to go those that have the lord in their heart know the way through him as they are regularly coming to him in worship and in prayer and in praise the way to god is so strongly etched upon their hearts that they know he will supply their needs on the journey look at those people's verse 67 they receive that they go through the valley of beca and they make it a place of springs and the exact location of beca is unknown however one of the commentators explains that the word itself that word beca means weeping as they move through the valley of weeping it turns fertile as they near the holy place john beller the commentator says the reign of divine love covers the passengers with spiritual blessings so what we're told here by the psalmist is that those who trust in god will find refreshment in a dry and desert place what's even more amazing in these short verses is what we see there in verse seven they go from strength to strength every one of them in zion appeared before god so not only does god supply their meat with refreshment but each one of them appears before god every one of them in zion appeared before god we don't hear anyone being left behind we don't hear anyone not making the journey's ending we don't hear anyone struggling or not surviving every one of them in zion appeared before god each one appeared before god the most of us that trust in the lord will find he supplies your need on the journey but he also makes your journey a successful one and again the question for ourselves is how are you doing on this journey today can i ask myself the same question how am i doing on that journey i will say not doing too well in terms of longing to be with the book with god each and every day as i ought to think i'll often think if i was to audit the 24 hours in my own life i think there would be a small quarter there a small section of the pie chart that would be given to the things of the lord to be filled in with work other pressures other anxieties is a thing i want to hopefully continue to to pray and ask for the lord's strength to change in my own life maybe you find yourself in the dry and desolate valley today but you should be encouraged by those words in verse 7 every one of them in zion appeared before god these words you give a sure promise for your encouragement this morning even in great hardship god will provide reflection and strength to those who put their trust in him the journey is not a nice straight tarmac road it's those twists and turns there will be many challenges there will be many ups there will be many downs but god will provide for you at the point of your need we can be assured that we will make it a successful journey you might feel weak and you might feel weedy on your journey it might have been a really tough 2024 and you may be not looking forward to heading into 2025 but we ought to keep on keeping on trust in him and make him your strength

[56 : 14] not trying to navigate through these things in our own strength for when we can't we should be relying on the lord as we see the sadness desiring to do so here so we see through this journey that not only will the lord be with us on that journey he will strengthen us he'll give us refreshment and encouragements along the way but those words in verse 7 are the ones i want us really to take away from today every one of them in zion appeared before god we should be encouraged to know thinking beyond this life there will be struggles in this life there will be difficulties in this life we need to think eternally and thinking of our eternal destination i'm just going to bring up i just gave to my mind there a quote that i read over the christmas period or it came from john newton and i think it's something that we it's hard for us to do just now but i think if we have a look at it and think about the words and we'll maybe reflect on it better possibly as we get older but john newton says here the hour is coming when we shall be astonished to think what mere trifles were once capable of discouraging us the hour is coming when we shall be astonished to think what mere trifles were once capable of discouraging us and it's the same even if we look back over the last couple of years there will be things and we think why did i let that border me why did i let that interaction at work ruin the rest of my week ruin the rest of my month these are small things and we need to be reminded like the hand verse sitting there that every one of us on this journey no matter how difficult no matter how easy the journey will be those of us that trust in the lord will find that we each one of them appeared before god i just briefly moving on to our final point i want to spend a wee bit more of our final time looking at the last part of the psalm verses 9 through 12. i read them just now behold o god our shield and look upon the face of mine anointed for a day thy court is better than a thousand i'd rather be a door to permit the house of my god than to dwell in the temple of earth the lord god is a son and a shield the lord will give grace and glory no good thing will give a cold from them that walk uprightly o lord of hosts blessed is the man trusted in thee so much of the way we look to longing to be near god then journey to be near to god and everyone has to look at cherishing being near or really treasuring being near to god what wonderfully challenging comparison we have here in these churches the psalm is we'd rather live one day in the course of the lord than to live one thousand days anywhere else how could that be true you ask i don't know maybe you're thinking you've obviously never been to challenge before um but how is it possible think of the the most glorious place you've been a place you maybe would love to desire to go and just think of that rather spending one day even in here in this house we've asked them one day even a thousand anywhere else go back to thinking about my uh her youngest who's i said two and a half pretty much every week myself and my older doctor used to go to the prayer meetings on a wednesday and i could probably count on one hand the amount of time that she has not broken out into tears because she can't come and we're told we're off to the prayer meeting or we're going to church and she's not able to come so she's got to get to bed early and so first of the tears she can't come or if we're leaving church on a sunday morning we've had the teas and we're about to go throws her clothes lights her off flints of tears she has to leave she wants to stay there and just think of something even your own mind's eye somewhere you love being um place you love to go and holiday how true is it that that you would desire to go there you actually feel that physical feeling where there's an emotional attachment to it as well have you ever not made it to a fair meeting have you ever been unable to make it and it's brought you to tears just like um the reference there to my daughter has there been anything that has made you think i

can't make it today and it's devastating to you um it's probably not the first feeling that we have when we're not able to make it what's important to the sanity here is it's nothing to do with being anywhere else there's supposed to stay around elsewhere for a thousand days no matter how lovely it is no matter how beautiful it is he would rather spend just that one day in the presence of his lord now god is so unimaginably gracious and glorious we must ask the question why do we continue everyone why do we not give him as much time as we ought to do why do we distract ourselves with earthly and unsatisfying things why do we choose almost everything else our phones our televisions before we draw near to god even our newspaper why do we choose these things that we're coming and spending time with the lord even in prayer or in his work what we're saying when we do that is if i spend time over here with god and i look into his word then i'm going to miss out on whatever it is over here but very sinful nature means that we so often choose those thousand days of running and hiding from god samus doesn't stop there though with this comparison look at the list of verse 10 he would rather be a door keeper in the house of god than dwell in the tents of wickedness it's far better it's far better for him to even be at the edge of god's house not even having a few but just to be at the edge of god's house rather than be at the heart or at the center of those tents of wickedness if you notice the words that were chosen there look at the end the end second half of the verse 10 i'd rather be a door keeper in the house of my god than to dwell in the tents of wickedness we've got a house and then you have tents the door keeper is at the door of a fixed place in which god the wickedness that he refers to is in the center of the tents the house of god is fixed and stable yet the tents of wickedness are so desperately temporary and fragile even the winds may take them down look at the verse 10 as a whole i want to ask you and i whether or not we are indeed drawing near to god are you choosing to be near to him today or are you opting for the temporary pleasures in the tents of wickedness now a preparation by study bible put it quite succinctly the wickedness offers no reward that can even remotely compare to the joy and pleasures of god's house remember as the psalmist has said so wonderfully it's better to be in the presence of the living god than to be any way else no matter what you come to in your mind no matter how beautiful a place you've been even harris you can find nowhere that is as good as being in just one day with the lord and the well-known commentator Matthew Henry said it's better to serve god in solitude than serving sin with the multitude better to serve god in solitude than serving sin with the multitude you may be listening to this message this morning thinking that it sounds really onerous or this is a really difficult life to live there's no joy and drawing near to god it sounds like a really onerous task you may wish to remain in those thousand days elsewhere in the tents of wickedness doing what you think is good maybe you don't want to miss out whether it's a hobby whether it's something you really enjoy doing maybe you don't want to miss out on that thing look at verse 11 for further encouragement for you it says for the lord god is a sun and shield the lord of good grace and glory no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly there is no missing out when you draw near to god you will receive rich blessing and strength if you long to be near god and indeed if you journey to be near god which is absolutely cherishing being near to god knowing that he will

ensure no good thing is withheld from us this psalm ends with a final blessing in verse 12 the lord of hosts blessed is the man that trusted in thee do you want to receive this blessing and goodness if so there is not found in tents of wickedness it's found only in the house of god where he is there but where do we go from there now we've looked through this i'm very quickly going through it we could spend weeks and weeks going through it and getting a lot more from it where do we go from it now as we've looked at that longing to be near god journey to be near god and then cherishing being near god well the best place for us to go and anytime we're reading the word is to go to the cross anytime we dig into god's word we should be seeing christ and the cross in it and this wonderful psalm very well-known psalm we love to sing finds its absolute fulfillment in jesus christ now in my declaration i found just at least two ways in which jesus goes through this psalm so i'll briefly touch on those just before we close the three points that i've spoken of this morning that longing to be near god journey to be near god and then cherishing being near god will carry out in absolute perfection for jesus himself he lived out the very heart of this psalm so perfectly and far better than you and i ever well we're told of the story in luke chapter 2 if you want to go forward to luke chapter 2 that might be helpful just going to read a few verses um i'm going to show you again luke chapter 2 verses 41 uh through 49 this is the story of jesus in the temple of the young boy and so look chapter 2 verse 41 through 49 that now his parents as jesus now his parents went to jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover and when he was 12 years old they went up to jerusalem after the custom of the feast when they fulfilled the days as they returned the child jesus carried behind in jerusalem and joseph and his mother knew not about it but they supposing him to have been in the company waited a day's journey and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance and when they found him not they turned back again to jerusalem seeking him and it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them and asking them questions and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers and when they saw him they were amazed and his mother said to him son why hast thou thou best tell for us behold thy father and i have sought thee sorrowing and he said unto them how is it that ye sought he was he not that i must be about my father's business this is not the work of a young rebellious child running from home which one of the many ways we see jesus on earth fulfilling the words of this psalm by perfectly longing to be near to god the father he was to dwell in the place of his father jesus is often finding the new testament disappearing to be near to be to be near to god with a perfect commitment jesus was truly devoted to drawing near to god and we should not walk in our failings to do so because his perfect righteousness was exchanged for our sin his perfect longing to be near god was exchanged for our pitiful efforts the fulfillment of this psalm is found in jesus in his flawless devotion on our behalf and the second way in which jesus fulfilled us is that he now is the place we go to be near god it is the resurrection that marks the first visible act of the temple we know that it's not since it appears that christ is like the temple yes he is

like the temple but that is because he now is the beginning fulfillment he is the place he is the place that we go and as in our temple the dwelling place that we ought to long for and rather spend it one day in than a thousand elsewhere now is jesus christ the earthly tents and buildings where god once dwelt are now no longer required and that's seen in matthew 27 51 where jesus dying on the cross we see the temple curtain being torn in two rendering the temple obsolete we no longer have a need for a temple on earth we wish to draw near to god now we do so through jesus christ himself he is the meeting place where we dwell with god really interesting book by gregory beale on the temple and there's a section in it that i was reading i'll just read it out i just stole it entirely and i credit it to himself now he says at the cross clinch biases to become the cornerstone of the temple and believers are first spiritually part of the temple through spiritual resurrection but later the natural physical part of the temple too at the time of the final resurrection when the entire cosmos becomes the temple so we should be encouraged that when we long to be near god we have a perfect perfect savior to go to when we have faith in him will allow us to draw near to god so whether you're fulfilling this time or not we can confidently draw near to god because in christ we are made fit to do so now i want us all to inwardly look and to pray for this longing to be near god that we would be journeyed to be near god and we would be cherished being near the head i'm moving to anyone that's not yet a christian i would urge you to make right with god for no good thing does he withhold there is no missing out you're not going to give anything up there are still sacrifices but there is nothing good that is withheld from us today is the day of salvation none of us are guaranteed to enter into tomorrow let alone you entering into this evening our time here on earth is so temporary and fragile make sure to have eternity firmly in view ask god to have mercy on you as a god that seeks for you to see as we sang how lovely is thy dwelling place how wonderfully this psalm closes oh lord of hosts blessed is the man who can trust in thee so in closing going back to genesis we were each created to be in a perfect relationship with god and then we look to the cross on calvary we can have a wonderful relationship once again because the sin that once separated us from god has been dealt with by christ like the birth of the temple we find a home in jesus a nest for ourselves who we may live in the presence of god what a merciful and gracious god we have amen and may the lord bless these very short reflections on this and we'll say a short word of prayer we'll say this is an omniscient father we've given you time for this and we've given you time for this and we've given you time for it teaches us and shows us how we ought to long to be near to you to journey to be near to you knowing that each one every one will appear before god those of us that trust in you and that we would indeed cherish you that we would enjoy being near to you that we would enjoy our time of fellowship that we would enjoy our time of worship and that we would enjoy being with one another so we pray that as we journey through this life this temporary and fleeting life where there is we have no continuing city here lord we pray that you would continue to equip us and that we would be living a life that the cedar is drawing ever near to you and seeking to draw others to you as well lord we pray that we would be

having opportunities to share even the stamp to share the gospel of those around us even in our homes we pray lord not just for the opportunities to share the gospel but that we would have a boldness that we would have a courage to take those already multiple opportunities that we have to share this glorious work whether in the workplace whether in the home grant us that courage to only speak about our own faith speak about the word to speak about christ and christ crucified so we pray that you would continue to equip us and that we would indeed long to be near to you that we would look to this house that we would look even to the parts around the corners of this house lord that we would be like the doorkeeper even just to be on the edge to be on the outside rather than the tents of wickedness that are so temporary and fleeting lord so be with us all this night lord forgive us for all of our sins and bless our time together bless the rest of the afternoon and bless the worship this evening as well lord in jesus name we pray amen so we conclude psalm 73 psalm 73 and we'll sing from verses 23 down to the end of the psalm verse 28 and that reported words there in verse 28 but surely it is good for me that i draw near to god in god i trust that all my works i may declare tonight pray that it would indeed be good for us that we would draw near to god today and then to the rest of this year as we'll sing these verses 20 down to the end of psalm 73 p■■■■

[74 : 36] Nevertheless, continue, O Lord, I am with thee.

Thou guide me, O bright, my right, not still the foolishly.

The words thy counsel, one of the world, be called and unguided.

And to thy glory comes the Lord, receive me to abide.

Whom hath a year of heaven's light, but thee, O Lord, I am old.

[75 : 51] And in the earth whom I give sigh, besides thee there is none.

My passion, heart of faith and faith, but God doth in thee never.

For all thy heart, your physical strength and fortune forever.

For all thy heart, your heart from thee forever.

For all thy heart, your heart, your heart, your heart, your heart.

[77 : 11] But surely it is good for thee, thou guide all near to God.

In God I trust that all thy words I may declare abroad.

And we will close with the words at the end of the book of Jude. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, and exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and for our hope, and for our hope, and for our hope, and for our hope.

Amen.