

I commend you to God and the Word of His Grace

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: 01 May 2022

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service this evening. As we come before God in worship, we pray his blessing on his word and on our time sitting under that. We're going to sing from Psalm 138.
- Psalm 138. We can read the whole psalm, but we're going to sing from verse 3 to the end. Psalm 138. Thee will I praise with all my heart. I will sing praise to thee before the gods and worship will toward thy sanctuary.
- I'll praise thy name even for thy truth and kindness of thy love. For thou thy word hast magnified all thy great name above.
- Thou didst me answer in the day when I to thee did cry, and thou, my fainting soul with strength, didst strengthen inwardly. All kings upon the earth that are shall give thee praise, O Lord, whenas they from thy mouth shall hear thy true and faithful word.
- Yea, in the righteous ways of God with gladness they shall sing, for great's the glory of the Lord who doth forever reign. O God be high, yet he respects all those that lowly be, whereas the proud and lofty ones afar off knoweth he.
- [1 : 33] Though I in midst of trouble walk, I life from thee shall have, against my foes' wrath. Thou'll stretch thine hand, thy right hand shall me save.
- Surely that which concerneth me the Lord will perfect make. Lord, still thy mercy lasts. Do not thine own hands works forsake.
- Let us sing verses 3 to 8 of Psalm 138. Thou didst me answer in the day when I to thee did cry. Thou didst me answer in the day when I to thee did cry.
- Thou wilt answer me in the day when I to thee did cry.
- O Lord, when thou step from thy mouth shall hear thy truth, thy faithful word.
- [3 : 22] In the righteous ways of God, with God, let me see shall be.
- For this the glory of the Lord, through the forever end.
- Though God be high, yet will respect all those that do thee.
- Where last the blood of the Lord be once a man of no one be.
- Though I am blessed all the world, I thy glory shall have.
- [4 : 53] Yet my voice, O Lord, thou shalt thy heart. Thy right hath thou receive.
- Surely in thy wish, O Lord, send me. The Lord will perfect me.
- Lord, to thy mercy, O Lord, do not die on earth's worth for thee.
- Let's join together in prayer. Let's pray. O Lord, we give thanks for the psalm that we have been singing.
- It is so full of encouragement to every one of us. When we are confronted with the problems of life, that we can come to God.
- [6 : 20] God, and that you are able to deliver us from many of these things that are wearisome, and that affect us in so many different ways.

We do not come to God. We do not come to someone who is incapable of understanding where we are coming from.

We are thankful for the many that live in this world with us, who have expertise upon which we can draw.

And that we can go to, and that we can depend upon to alleviate our sufferings in different ways, whether it is physical or mental, or even spiritual.

But there are limits to their abilities. There are ways in which they are unable to resolve the issues that are brought to them, whether these affect the body or the mind or the soul.

[7 : 44] But there are never issues that we have that are beyond the capacity of the God of heaven.

And for that we give thanks that whatever it is that confronts us and that we have to encounter, that we can pour out our heart before our God.

And that we are ever ready to dispense out of the liberality of the provision that you have in store for all who would come.

Even when it is to deny us the things that we crave most, for out of your wisdom you are able to understand what our needs are.

And sometimes that may necessitate in us being deprived of the things that we have solicited.

[8 : 54] And your people understand that better than most. That there is a divine knowledge that is beyond the knowledge of man.

And even as we come before you at this time and we seek that you would pour out your spirit upon us. We know that you have the capacity to answer our prayer and bestow upon us a measure that we cannot possibly hope to endure.

When you have the capacity to endure. When you revealed yourself to Israel of old. And when you came down upon the mountain.

The mountain was displaying characteristics of your presence. The fire and the smoke and the thunder and the lightnings that spoke of the holiness of God.

So much so that those who were eyewitness to these things were afraid. And they drew back. And they spoke to your servant Moses and insisted that he go to where you were.

[10 : 17] So that you would not come to where they were. And such was the terror that possessed them. And we acknowledge that as a God you are high and lifted up.

And that there are many things that you hide from us. Regarding yourself. And the fact of the matter is that we are well prepared to enter into the presence of a God.

Who is the holiness personified. Even as you revealed yourself in the passion of Jesus Christ. As he inhabited the frail nature that is ours.

And that he was assailed by countless enemies. And those who dared to lay their hand upon him. Were forced at one occasion to prostrate themselves in the dust.

At one glimpse of his holy nature. Just one glimpse. And yet he did not come here into this world. To defeat the enemies of our soul.

[11 : 34] By dint of his own divine power. But to do so in a manner that displays the wisdom that is without measure.

So that in taking our nature he bore our sins in his nature. In that nature. And he had to endure death. In order to deal with the fact of sin and its outcome.

And we bless thee for the marvel that that reveals to us. We give thanks for your wisdom in decreeing.

The mode of salvation just as surely as you decreed. That there would be salvation on offer through the gospel. That you are a God of mercy.

This without question. But if not so not one of us would be able to meet in this fashion. At this evening hour. So enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ.

[12 : 43] So that we may marvel at his forbearance with regard to each of us. In that you have allowed us access once again to your word. And to hear it read.

And to have it upon our lips. And to have the light of your own countenance lifted upon us. As we contemplate the truths that are before us within the scripture.

We pray that you would encourage us to delve into it wholeheartedly. And to seek out your help so that we can do so.

And not be thwarted in our desire to discover more about the truth of God. And the God of truth. So continue to bless us we pray.

As we are met here as a congregation. Bless those who are present. And we pray for each of them. According to their need. And also the families and the homes that they represent.

[13 : 47] We pray for those of our number. Who are not just part of the fellowship of believers. But very much bound up with that bundle.

And who feel so much deprived when they are unable to be with us in this place. For every longing of soul. We pray that you would meet it.

And provide for them. A sense of that provision. That you may encourage them in their faith. And that they may find their reward. Even as they pray with us.

And pray for us. We remember those who are incapacitated by reason of physical strength being abated. And mental capacities being reduced.

We pray for those who need to be cared for by others in their homes. In hospitals or in homes that are dedicated to that end.

[14 : 49] We remember all the homes of our community. That have that duty to perform. We pray Lord your blessing upon every endeavour that is made to alleviate suffering.

To heal the sick. And to restore to strength those that have been afflicted. We remember in your presence the grieving and the sorrowful. Your voice has been heard so often in the last few days.

Even weeks and months. There are bridges made within the body of Christ. That only you can fill. Men and women may be born into this world.

New infants born. But we need the grace of God to fill the bridges that are made in the body of Christ. So may you in mercy add to the number of those who would profess your name.

And who do so knowingly. And do so with an earnest belief in the Christ of God being their Saviour. As he is the Saviour of sinners.

[16 : 01] Bless the preaching of the word to the ends of the earth. Remember all that you have entrusted with that word. Encourage them in their labour and bless their endeavours.

Even those who are set to places where hostility is open. And death is sure if they are found preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Remember them we pray. Remember their testimony, their witness and the truth that they seek to expel. We pray for the war-torn regions of the world.

Bringing before you once again the needs of the Ukraine and those who belong to that nation. We pray for mercy and for healing and for the provision that is necessary to alleviate suffering to be imparted to them.

By whichever agency is able to do that. Continue to watch over us as a world. We belong to a world that lies in the grip of sin.

[17 : 16] And were it not for thy long suffering and for your mercy as you look down upon us from on high.

We pray that you would use the time that you have alofted to us for the salvation of souls. So continue to watch over us, bless our time around your world.

And as we listen to it may we do so attentively. Cleanse from sin in Jesus name. Amen. I am going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament.

From the book of the Acts of the Apostles. And chapter 20. Acts chapter 20. Read the whole chapter.

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples and embraced them and departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts and had given them much exultation, he came to Greece.

[18 : 25] And there about three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him into Asia, so father of Berea, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius of Derbe, and to Motheus and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

These going before tarried for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to throw us in five days, where we abode seven days.

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow and continue to speech until midnight.

And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep.

And as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him.

[19 : 44] When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread and eaten and talked a long while, even till the break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul. For so he had appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mytilene. And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Hyos.

And the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Throgelium. And the next day we came to Mylitus. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia.

For he hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem, the day of Pentecost. And from Mylitus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

[20 : 50] And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men.

[22 : 13] For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, nor a parent. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye are to support the weak. And to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

[23 : 36] And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

And they accompanied him up to the ship. Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to the speaking of his word, and to his name be the praise.

Let us sing now verses from Psalm 62. Psalm 62 at verse 7 to the end of the psalm.

Psalm 63. Psalm 63. In God my glory blessed is, and my salvation sure. In God the rock is of my strength, my refuge most secure.

Ye people, place your confidence in him continually. Before him pour ye out your heart. God is a refuge high. Surely mean men are vanity, and great men are a lie.

[24 : 42] In balance laid they wholly are more light than vanity. Trust ye not in oppression, in robbery be not vain. On wealth set not your hearts, whenas in Christ is your gain.

God hath it spoken once to me. Yea, this I heard again. That power to almighty God alone doth appertain. Yea, mercy also unto thee belongs, O Lord alone.

For thou according to his work rewardest every one. You can sing these verses 7 to 12 of Psalm 62.

In God my glory blessed is, and my salvation sure. In God my glory blessed is, and my salvation sure. God, my glory, blessed it is, God, my salvation, sure.

And God, the world is all my strength, my revanche, O Savior.

[26 : 05] If it's a place, your confidence, in Him continually, before Him for the earth, in our God is our refuge, Zdair, surely, ben arghan CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR
SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

He longs the Lord alone for that according to His work, the reward is, every one.

Let us turn to Acts chapter 20 and we can read again verse 32.

Acts chapter 20 verse 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

[29 : 45] And now, brethren, I commend you to God. There is a very full itinerary presented to us in these verses.

Paul's activities are minutely recorded for us.

It's a very full itinerary, as you can see. He's taken a lot on and he is very determined that everything that he plans to do, that he will do it.

And we read that he is at Mylichtes on route to Jerusalem. And verses 15 and 16 tells us why he would want to do that.

We sailed thence and came to the next day over against Chios. And the next day we arrived at Samos, tarried at Throgilium.

[30 : 56] And the next day we came to Mylichtes. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus because he would not spend the time in Asia.

For he hasted, if it were possible, foreign to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. So there are two things there that are important to Paul.

First, that he is able to come into close proximity to Ephesus. I think Ephesus and Mylichtes are about 30 miles apart.

So he summons the elders from Ephesus to come to meet with him at Mylichtes. But he is determined that he will continue on his journey and be in Jerusalem.

At the time of the feast or festival that is going to be held there at Pentecost.

[31 : 56] His main purpose in calling the elders to him is to instruct them. He wants them to be encouraged before he leaves them and goes on.

Elsewhere. So what he does, as we read, he goes over some of the things that they shared together. Some of the blessings that they enjoyed under the gospel.

Some of the things that Paul himself had to endure which were not so pleasant. But he views it all as under God's hand.

Something that is in the plan and purposes of God for him and for the church of Christ on earth. And he gives us a brief summary of the main planks, as it were, of the teaching that he brings to bear upon their hearts.

In verses 26 and 27, for example. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

[33 : 13] And he doesn't delve into the whole of his ministry or everything that he has brought to their attention.

But he is quite convinced and quite content to believe that nothing that they need to know has been overlooked. Everything that is necessary for the salvation of their soul and for the strengthening of their faith to allow them to go on with the Lord has been brought to their attention.

But now he reminds them of their responsibilities. In taking that word and sharing it with others.

Because that is part of their responsibility. And, you know, some of the divines, they look at the different names that are given to the elders that are summoned.

Some of them are called pastors, teachers, and so on. And some, within the Greek language, there are distinct names.

[34 : 29] Names given to them that would suggest different offices. But possibly and more than likely, it is the same people who will exercise these offices.

They will be preachers and teachers and overseers and so on. And that is their calling. That is what they are expected to do.

And as such, he wants them to be prepared to fulfill these offices. And the final warning is but one more that they need to pay heed to.

So we want to think about this message, this word that he has for the elders.

And you would think right before you go on, you're saying to yourself, if you're really speaking to the elders here tonight, there's not much point in us being here.

[35 : 33] Because this word is directed to them. But no, it's directed to us all. Because not only must we understand what Paul is directing the attention of the eldership to, as far as their responsibility is concerned, he is also reminding every one of us, for whom these elders are responsible, where their responsibility lies, what they are expected to do, what is being asked of them, what is their burden with regard to those that they have care for.

So I would expect every one of us to have an interest in that. Whether we are in office or not, whether we are members or not, that we would have some clear understanding of the things that Paul is alerting us to, that they need to understand.

And as they understand it, because of the onerous task that is placed before them, how can they possibly take that responsibility on?

If it is not true, that they can look outside of themselves to God, in order to enable them to fulfill their calling.

So there are one or two things that we can, just focusing on verse 32, but taking on board everything that comes before it, that reminds us of some of the issues that concern the eldership, and concerns Paul with regard to their calling, concerns us, as we see this being fulfilled in our day and generation.

[37 : 33] The first thing that we notice is that he commits them to God. He commits them to God. He says, Now, brethren, I commend you to God.

So we need to understand, I think, what he is saying when he is saying this. The second thing, to the word of his grace.

What is he referring to when he speaks of the word of his grace? And he then tells us what the word of his grace, whatever it is, is meant to do.

It is to build you up, in the first place, and then to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

There are four main things there, just arising, hopefully, from the word that we have before us. Now, he commits them to God, or he commends them to God.

[38 : 46] Thinking about what that means, well, for myself, I was trying to understand what Paul was saying. Is he, in the first instance, saying, to the elders in Ephesus, I have taken you, and I have brought your burden before God in prayer.

I think we can sometimes think of it like that. if we commend someone to someone else, that's what we're doing.

If, for example, if a tradesman is being required, and somebody comes to you asking for your advice, have you used this tradesman before?

And would you recommend him? Would you commend him? Would you say that what he has done for you is of a suitably high standard? So you give a commendation.

And that might be one way of thinking it. And Paul is saying here, I am commending you to God. I am thinking of your role as elders in the church.

[40 : 05] I am thinking of you as office bearers in the church. You have a certain responsibility to the cause of Christ in Ephesus. And I am bringing you to God.

And you notice later on, he prays with them. When he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. He prayed with them.

It could be that he prayed for them. As he commended them to God. Before he even spoke to them, he wanted to bring before God this group of people, this congregation, this people who needed to be remembered favorably.

But it could also be that when he commends them to God, that he is wanting them to understand that they themselves can believe that they are in the best of hands.

That when he, as he has done, you know, you can read back, therefore watch and remember that by the grace of three years, I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

[41 : 31] No, this is what he was doing. And when he goes away from them, and when he goes elsewhere, as he must, they will be expected to do the things that he is no longer able to do with them or for them.

So as he takes, takes his journey and leaves them to take up the mantle, as it were, then he wants them to understand that when they undertake this work, that they will not be doing it in their own strength or simply in their own device, by their own devices.

One commentator puts it like this, whatever you want, go to God and let your eye ever be towards him and your dependence upon him in all your straits and difficulties.

So in a sense, this is what Paul wants this group of people to understand, that they have someone to whom they can go in order to fulfill the duties that they have to the best of their ability and even beyond their ability with God's help.

You know, it's not very long ago when we were talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, when he was taking his disciples apart and he was telling his disciples, I'm going to leave you.

[43 : 02] I am going to my father. But when I go to my father, I'm not going to leave you by yourselves. I'm going to leave you with the comforter. And when the comforter will come, he will do all kinds of things necessary for you to go on in your faith.

And in a sense, that could well be what the apostle is thinking about. But the more you look at what he is expecting from these men of God who have a certain role or responsibility, the more you understand that without the help of God, they are not going to be able to do this.

Paul knows the word of God which says to us that Christ promises I will never leave nor forsake you.

And we need to remember that. We need to be able to appreciate that. That those who are involved in the body of Christ, in the church of Christ, in the congregation here, that when they have the responsibility of the welfare of men and women's souls that they are not to believe that everything falls on their shoulders and their shoulders alone.

Because if it does, well, woe beside us. We have the promise of God that he will that he will sustain his own cause in every location with the help that he alone is able to supply.

[44 : 58] So he commends then to God and to the word of his grace, he says, what they need to keep before their minds and to keep their eye upon as those who are responsible for the flock of God is that what they feed the flock with is what is nourishing to the flock.

What is food for the flock? They do so with gospel fair. They do so with the most rapt attention to what will meet the need of the soul.

Some have interpreted these words to think about the word of his grace as being really speaking to us about the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the word and he is the one who is at the heart of the gospel. But I think we need to have it as broad as possible because the gospel is nothing if it is not Christ and his work.

And I think the whole counsel of God is involved here. That's why he earlier on says that. It is the whole counsel of God. It is all the word that is necessary to strengthen faith, to encourage faith, to correct and rebuke and to direct into the path of obedience those who have stayed out of it and to do everything that is necessary in order that the cause of Christ would be maintained to the best of our ability.

[47 : 02] Do you remember when the Apostle Paul spoke to Timothy? There's a passage there that we often go to because it reminds us of the kind of ministry that Timothy was expected to fulfill as a preacher of the gospel as somebody who had to go to others with God's word.

But he was reminded by the Apostle of the need that he had to look after his own soul also. He says to him, this we find in 2 Timothy 3 verse 14 continue in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise and to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine for reproof for correction for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There's two sides to what Paul is saying there or if you can call it two sides the person who is to do this work must first and foremost be someone who is himself nourished by the word continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned that he has been in this school before and he has been taught from the textbook of this school which is the word of God and as he has learned and as he has applied what he has learned to his life so he must go back to that and bring what he has learned to others and remind he doesn't need another he doesn't need something to supplement it he doesn't need something to improve upon it he doesn't need to graduate to something more stronger meat if you like this word that he has learned from that he was taught from that he was given in his youth he now goes to others with and as those who have received

God's word they are to go on with that word applying it to their own lives as they would seek to apply it to the lives of others it's not simply a primer which they can abandon at a later date it is the Bible that equips the people of God to enable them to do God's work Matthew Henry one of these older commentators says not only as the foundation of our hope or the fountain of your joy but as the rule of all our walking so he is to instruct them here that's what he is doing he is wanting these elders from Ephesus to understand this is how you were taught this is where you learnt your ABCs and

[50 : 50] I'm going your way and I'm leaving you with this word and this is the word that you will commend to others this is the word that you will teach to others this is the textbook that you will use to inform others and guide others and keep others safe from straying from the path of obedience it will give them stability in the face of contradiction and unfortunately that is what Paul is having to remind them of that there will be those who will contradict the message of the gospel and that contradiction they may expect to come from outside but unfortunately it will come from inside as well and not only does Paul say that such a contradiction is there for them it is from their own number he says can you remember that also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them

Paul was speaking prophetically here whether he realised it or not that is exactly how things panned out but they had to know they had to be prepared they had to be equipped to recognise this when it happened that the opposition to the gospel that is in the world would be something that they would encounter and it would come in different forms remember one of the commentators who speaks on the book of Acts an American used this illustration and it's difficult to believe but he uses this illustration he says and this was true I don't know when the commentary was written maybe 20 or so years ago but he quoted figures from America he says in the last year he said \$1,300,000 has been stolen from

American banks \$1,300,000 has been stolen from American banks but he said in the same year \$9,500,000 has been stolen by employees of the bank he was just using it as illustration of what Paul was teaching here and that there were those who were guilty of theft of a different kind but what we're talking about here is a spiritual truth but unfortunately that same spiritual truth is a parallel that we can recognize there are those in our world who have no interest in the gospel or those who preach it or the church they don't care whether the church is there or not but there are those who are interested in the church but not in a hospitable way not in a way where they find the church something that they can tolerate or live alongside they are very much hostile to the church wherever that hostility comes from whatever inspires it or motivates it it's there but what's more personal is why people would want to go inside the church and demonstrate hostility from within but Paul was aware of it and when he spoke to these people the defense the best defense that you have is the word of

God that will enable you to recognize the hostility what it is where it comes from what it what it intends to do it will build you up it will prepare you it will strengthen you you need that that's what he says but he says also something equally important you look to the word of his grace to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified those who are of the church those who are in Christ those who have come to faith their faith will need to be nurtured will need to be fed will need to be stimulated will need to be encouraged but you also believe that the word that is preached and proclaimed is a word that is capable under

God to bring salvation where salvation is yet to be found where it's yet to be claimed as your own where you have yet to close in with Christ where you have yet to believe the truth of God concerning Christ where you have yet to appreciate the necessity of having that salvation as your own salvation and the word that these elders are meant to convey is a word that would stimulate such an interest as I said that the body of men that are called some of them may be preachers some of them may be members of the church session however well developed the Presbyterian system of worship was at that point but what they are to do is ensure that those who have come to faith that they would go on in the faith that they would grow in grace and in the knowledge of the

[57 : 21] Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and what Peter was saying in the first epistle blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you when the Lord Jesus Christ through his ambassadors here in the world makes a convert it's not job done to see that convert translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his light to have a sinner saved is not the end product is to have that sinner not just converted but sanctified not just taken out of the clutches of Satan but conformed to the image of

Jesus Christ his saviour he is intent on forming Christ in them so that when the time for them comes they will be ready to go with him Paul says elsewhere when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him in glory and that is what Paul wants his emissaries Christ ambassadors Christ ambassadors Christ preachers and teachers and those who are part of his cause here on earth to be involved in we may be obsessed with the formal structures but we need to remember that the bulk of the work of Christ's kingdom should be carried out by those who are who are part of that body of Christ through their testimony through their personal witness through their personal intercession on behalf of those who are estranged from God who are strangers to God that's what's come into to us that's what's yes we need to have a church we need to have a congregation we need to have ministers office bearers and so on and so forth but we need also in this day and generation to use the membership to the best of our ability so that those you speak to if you are not an office bearer or even if you are an office bearer those that you speak to those that you interact with on a daily on a daily basis those that you work with those that you that you share time with that part of that time should be given over to reminding them of the fact that they have a soul that they need to care for that they need to care for it in the best way possible which is by reminding them that the only way to do that is through

Christ Jesus Paul says to them here in verse 35 I have showed you all things how that so laboring you are to support the weak to remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive and the theologians have a field day on that word and they say you can't find that word in the scripture we can't find that quotation verbatim anywhere and they say oh maybe this was one of the occasions when Jesus spoke these words perhaps in private perhaps in a place where these words were not recorded but Paul knows them and he uses them but whatever their origin Paul says this is what Jesus said and he says this he uses these words to encourage us to be mindful of the needs of others to be mindful of the situation that others are in especially those who are in need of knowing about

Christ so what does all this say to us well first and foremost it reminds the office bearers of their duties of their calling of their need for watch for watchfulness twice he says in this very short passage therefore he says watch and remember and he wants us to be watchful to be mindful of the dangers that we are exposed to and may God encourage us to think on what the apostle remember just put it like this to yourself Paul saw foot to ask these elders to travel 30 miles so that he could speak to them before he went away from them and he wanted them to take this on board to understand the importance of what he was saying to them so that this message would be laid up in their heart to act upon in their roles within

God's church within Christ's church and if it's not important then why go to the lens that he did to ensure that this would happen it's a straightforward enough question the answer I'm sure stands out for us all and may God encourage us through these words let us pray Lord help us to understand the need that there is to be mindful of the provision that you have made for us even in allowing us to go to yourself to give us wisdom to give us insights to the truth to give us strength when we are weak to give us light when we are in darkness to give us direction when we are lost and to do so for our own self and for others and to be mindful of the needs of others to be burden bearers with others to be those who have desire to extend the kingdom in our own lives and in the lives of those that we engage with daily here are our petitions we pray cleanse from sin pardon us in Jesus

[64 : 41] Redeemer name Amen the closing psalm is psalm 37 psalm 37 verse 37 to the end mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness because that surely of this man the latter end is peace but those men that transgressors are shall be destroyed together the latter end of wicked men shall be cut off forever but the salvation of the just is from the Lord above he in the time of their distress their stay and strength doth prove the Lord shall help and them deliver he shall them free and save from wicked men because in him their confidence they have mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness it was the journey of the man the land the against be heard then

The world's best, the God shall be destroyed together.

The latter end of the world, the men shall be the God of all heaven.

But the salvation of the justice from the Lord above, He in the disciples, in his friends, their seance is the proof.

The Lord shall have condemned, given each child and free and sin.

[67 : 35] From which it may be caused in the dead of all of his death.

Amen.