

The Beauty Of The Person & The Glory Of The Promise

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Preacher: Mr Colin Nicolson

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to you this morning as we gather together to worship God and we pray that each and! every one of us would experience God's blessing as we gather together this morning.

! We begin our service this morning by singing to God's praise from the Scottish Sotter Psalm 139. And that's found on page 432 in the psalm book. Psalm 139 singing from the beginning of the psalm down to the end of the verse marked 10. O Lord thou hast me searched and known thou knowest my sitting down and rising up ye all my thoughts afar to thee are known. These verses to God's praise.

O Lord thou hast me searched and known thou knowest my sitting down and rising up ye all my thoughts the rising up ye all my thoughts afar to thee are known. My first and time I find out my life given that God passes your ways. The Lord so bold and time we are, not quite with all my ways. The Lord so bold and time we are not quite with all my ways.

O, since I be heard, I quit with all my ways.

For if I just before I speak, not yet any other than me, that God forgets that no more Lord,
it is well known to Thee.

[2 : 44] Behind Thee, for the house, He said, Come here, Lord, hear Thee, such love is good to speak for me, to hide to us, their son.

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holy holy The heart of the wind dwell In the natural stars of sea If there are just

Thy sound me leave Thy bright and good shall be Let us bow our heads together for a short moment.

The psalmist said that he joyed when he went into your presence. And Lord, we pray that we would find joy this morning in your presence.

Joy in our togetherness, joy in our praise, and joy in your word. Let us not lean on our own understanding, but fully commit to your sovereign purpose and design.

[5 : 13] Dark providences, let us, being able through faith to cry, that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Speak to us this morning through your word, your word which is sharper than any two-edged sword.

Enable us today to embrace you afresh. Let us not be downcast or dismayed at our moments of failure, but rest fully on your promises, which are this morning, yea and amen, in Christ Jesus.

When we are weak, let us hear the voice which says, you can do all things. When we are tired, let us hear the voice which says, I will give you rest.

When we feel alone, let us hear the voice which says, I will never leave you nor forsake you. This morning, Lord, we pray that you would fill us with our inner peace.

A peace tonight that passes out human comprehension. A peace that assures us in the midst of the storm. A peace that stills us in the cacophony of life's noise.

[6 : 21] In this world of confusion, grant us a serenity of purpose. Grant us, Lord, a clarity of vision and a pursuit of holiness.

Let us seize the opportunities afforded to us in our providences to further your glory. Grant us the courage to embrace the changes that an uncertain future brings, fully acknowledging that there is no uncertainty in you.

We thank you, Lord, that the desire of our hearts is to be gathered here this morning. And we pray, Lord, that as we commence in the worship of your name, that where the two or three are gathered together in your name, we would recognize you in our midst.

And bless these thoughts to us as we open our hearts to you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. And just a wee kind of note to the young folks here, and probably very applicable to the older ones amongst us as well.

Fear. Now, fear is a very, very real thing in the lives of everybody. And the Bible tells us probably well over a hundred times not to be afraid.

[7 : 47] Fear. And fear can very often grasp hold of us and take us in. To certain extents that we can develop phobias.

Now, there are loads of different types of phobias. And I've just got a couple here. And some of them are absolutely ridiculous. There is what we call an arachdiphobe. Did I actually say that?

Probably I've got no idea. But that actual fear is an intense fear of peanut butter getting stuck in your mouth. Imagine. There's also nomophobia.

Okay. Now, I know. Because I teach in a high school. And I know that there are loads of people who have this phobia. Nomophobia is an extreme fear of being without your mobile phone.

Okay. Including not having service. Or even a dead battery. There's anthophobia. That's an extreme fear of the colour yellow.

[8 : 50] There's pupaphobia. A fear of puppets. And of dummies. There's anatagyphobia. Now, where do you hear this one? A specific fear that a duck is watching you.

Well. There's estoprophobia. A fear of mirrors. Or seeing your reflection. Globophobia. A fear of balloons.

And I must confess. And I must tell you. That when I was a child. I was kind of afraid of the dark. I was a wee bit scared of the dark. And at the end of the day. When it was time to turn out the lights.

And go to bed. I wanted to know that I wasn't alone at night. When it was dark. And that's where my little teddy bear. And my little hot water bottle.

Came to the rescue. Now, I don't know if you've got a wee teddy. And a wee hot water bottle. That you go to bed with at night. And you cuddle it up. And it's all nice. And keeps you kind of safe. And calm.

- [9 : 54] So, somehow. The dark is not as frightening. When my little teddy was with me. Have you ever been afraid? Of course you've been afraid. We're all afraid.
- At different times in our lives. It's nothing to be ashamed of if you're afraid. Even adults are afraid. Some of us may be afraid of the dark. Some of us may be afraid of thunder.
- Some of us may be afraid of lightning. That comes with a storm. Many are afraid of bugs. And bees. And snakes. And heights. And one of my fears. I was there actually.
- On Thursday of this week. Was it? The dentist. I have a specific fear of the dentist. And I let the dentist know. I actually went into the dentist.
- To get my teeth checked. And you know the first thing the dentist gave me? A pair of glasses. To put on my face. I was just waiting for the crash helmet. To come out next. Absolutely. I was petrified.
- [10 : 52] Absolutely petrified. I just got a fear of dentists. But one of my biggest fears today. Is the dreaded spider. I'm scared of spiders.
- Big time. And you can be sitting at home. You're relaxed. Okay. It's night time. And the fire is on. And you know. I'm having a cup of coffee. And I'm watching something on the telly.
- Then everything around me. My calm and my solace. Is completely disrupted. As this little thing. Slowly emerges. From under the sofa. Okay.
- And with absolute. Military precision. And with a clear intent. And purpose. This multi-legged beast. Runs across the floor. And all of a sudden.
- It stops. And it looks at you. I'm absolutely petrified. I'm going. Please. Please. Whatever you do. Don't come this way. Please go that way. Don't. Whatever you do.
- [11 : 50] Don't come this way. I'm now actually talking. To a spider. And I'm shaking. And I'm shitting. And the first thing that happens is. My wife will come. And to the rescue.
- Quiet calmly. Grab the spider. And take it outside. I am absolutely afraid. Of spiders. Now when Jesus told his disciples. That he was going to return to his father. They were afraid.
- See when Jesus was going to leave the world. The disciples became afraid. What's going to happen to them? Would the enemies recognize them as his followers? Would they be harmed? But Jesus knew this.
- And he said. Do not be afraid. Have a peace in your heart. Don't be troubled. I am going away. But I'm going to come back for you. Don't be afraid. And these words were great comfort to the disciples.
- And they're a great comfort to us today. Jesus is telling us. Not to be afraid. That his Holy Spirit. Will comfort us. Until the day he returns. And that includes.
- [12 : 51] You and me. So what a wonderful gift. Jesus has given us. He's given us a gift of peace. A gift of comfort. And telling us not to be afraid. So as young people.
- Just growing up in this world. There will be many fears. That will come into your life. But always remember. Without Jesus I said. Listen. Don't be afraid. Okay.
- Don't be afraid. Let's just bow our heads for a wee second. And pray together. Father we thank you. For the Holy Spirit. Who guides us. And calms our fears. We also thank you. For the purpose.
- That one day. We will be in heaven with Jesus. In his name. Amen. Let us continue to praise God. Then together.
- Let us this time sing. To God's praise. In Psalm number 46. Psalm number 46. In the Scottish Psalter. You'll find it on page number 271. Psalm number 46.
- [13 : 45] From the beginning of the psalm. To the end of the verse mark 7. God is a refuge. And our strength. And strength is a present aid. Therefore although the earth we move.

But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from fence, and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. And charged them that they should not make him known.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by his eyes, the prophet, saying, Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my spirit upon him, and he will show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

[20 : 43] And the used wheat shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment into victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Amen. And may God bless to us that day of his own holy word. Let us now just bow our heads as we pray to God together. Amen.

Lord, we bless you this morning for your greatness, for your almightiness, for your sovereign power over all things. We know that though you create, you were never yourself created.

Though you make, we know yourself that you were never made. Though you cause, you were never caused. You are superior cause of all that was, is, and is yet to come.

The number of your years are unsearchable. We can determine the birth of the stars, and we can determine the moment the oceans were fallen. But there was never a moment when you were not.

[21 : 49] You have never not been eternal and not bound by time. And, O Lord, though the weather changes, though the seasons change, we thank you this morning that you are indeed the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And in the changing fluctuations of our hearts, in the indifference of our devotions, in the changeableness of our witness, you are the one that remains the constant, our refuge and our strength.

We thank you this morning for the opportunity to draw close to you. We thank you for the privilege as you created creatures, as you created beings, to feel the real-felt presence of your faithfulness amongst us.

And as we engage with you, we ask you, Lord, to hear our prayers. Prayers that we often speak, that are often awkward and feeble.

But we thank you, Lord, this morning, that since the power of prayer is in the one who hears, and not in the one who speaks, we have this assured confidence that our prayers this morning are firmly in your loving hand.

[23 : 09] Lord, we thank you this morning for the gift of your Son. In our mind's eye, we see Him on a skull-shaped hill. And as we climb this hill, we see Him nailed to a tree.

We see the thorns, we see the blood, we see the tears, we see the pain, we see the darkness. And there on that hill, we see the great provider providing himself.

Lord, let us not descend that hill unmoved, but with thankful hearts and a full appreciation that grace moved.

Amazing grace, how sweet thy sound. Lord God, we are not surprised by your judgment. In a way, it seems right, and in a way, it seems appropriate.

At times, it is easier to understand. But your grace and love and unmerited favor are far beyond reason and our finite comprehension.

[24 : 09] We thank you, Lord, for the day that grace happened to each of us, the day it took us from the miry clay and put our feet upon our walk, the day it shone in our hearts and embraced our will and enabled us to cry with one of long ago, My beloved is mine and I am his.

This is our treasure that mouths and rust cannot corrupt and steal. And we pray, Lord, that we would be enabled by your grace to look forward to that final victory as grace will lead us home, home to the place prepared for us when tears shall be wiped away.

We shall be clothed in white garments and we shall see him as he is and sing to him the song of Moses praise and glory to the Lamb. Lord, we pray that you would bless this congregation with your overwhelming goodness and encourage them on their journey as the witness here for your kingdom on earth.

Be with all that serve here, the elders, the deacons, the Sunday school teachers and any who minister here in whatever capacity. We pray for all who attend here, the young and the old.

And we pray especially this morning for the sick and the infirm, those that this morning are experiencing ill health and that the curtains of dark providence have been drawn over their souls and they see no light.

[25 : 35] Be close to them, we pray, so that one day they will see your hand and that weeping may only endure for a night and in the morning joy will arise. We pray for the church throughout the world that it may be a living testament to Christ's sacrifice and boldly proclaim his redeeming love, drawing all people to the foot of the cross.

Awaken in your people globally as a sense of our own need for you and make us hungry and thirsty for you, both as individuals and as the church of God.

We pray for all leaders of all nations, for those whose difficult decisions to make and for those seeking to bring peace and harmony to a broken world. Whether they know you or not, may they be channels of your grace for all.

We pray that you would grant them wisdom, integrity and compassion in their decisions. Lord, give us now wisdom to receive your word, understanding to know what it means and the will to put it into practice.

May it be a lantern to our feet, a light to our paths, a strength to our lives. You have caused, Lord, this wonderful book to be written for our learning.

[26 : 54] Help us to hear their words, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them so that we are encouraged and supported by your word. Lord, we pray now that you would be with us and forgive us of our many sins.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Before we do turn to God's word, can we again sing to God's praise, this time in Psalm 130.

Psalm 130 on the Scottish Psalter, and that's found on page 421. And we're going to sing the whole of this psalm. Lord, from the depths to thee I cry, Lord, do thou hear, and do my supplications voice, and give an attentive ear.

These verses to God's praise. Lord, from the depths to thee I cry, my voice, Lord, do thou hear, and do my supplications voice, give the light to the earth.

Lord, who shall stand in thy own heart, just not give me with thee, but get with thee.

[28 : 44] For forgiveness is that fear that may be.

I wait for God, my soul doth wait.

My hope is in His word, more than in thy heart, for warning watch, my soul is far and more.

And all his wickedness, he is his love to redeem.

A bruised reed, he will not break, and a smoking flax he shall not quench. Now there are two things I want to look at from this text this morning.

So I'm going to look first of all at the beauty of the person. Who is he? And secondly I'm going to look at the glory of the promise. He, this person, shall not break.

They are called friends. They are called heirs of God. They are called instruments, jewels, salt, light, stewards. In the Song of Solomon, the people of God are often referred to as a garden.

But rather likened here in the verse before us as a reed. A plant that commonly grows in the mud banks of the Jordan Valley.

And the beauty of the person described here as he. Is that he himself is also referred to as a plant.

[34 : 08] He is also of the mud bank. Also of the swamp. Taking our humanness. Taking our nature.
So that we. That me and you may become sons of God.

And joint heirs with Christ. He became sin for us. So that we would become the righteousness of God. The son became a reed.

In order that the reed. Which is me and you. Would become a rose. There was an exchange of properties.

Somebody a long time ago. I can't remember. But I told this particular story. About a trip to Cinderella's castle. Now this castle was packed full with kids and their parents.

And suddenly everybody in the castle seemed to run over to one side. Cinderella the pristine princess was now amongst them. A gorgeous girl.

[35 : 08] Every hair in place. Flawless skin and a beaming smile. All the kids wanted to touch her. And all the kids wanted to be hugged by her. Everybody that is except a little boy.

He was standing alone at the other end of the castle. His age was hard to determine. Because of the disfigurement of his body.

He was dwarfed in height by other kids. And he stood watching quietly. Alone. With nobody seeming to care. Oh how much he would have wanted to have been with the other children.

His heart longing to be one of them. Reaching out for Cinderella. And calling her name. But this little boy is afraid. He's afraid of being rejected again.

He is afraid of being taunted by other children. For who he was. And then something quite extraordinary begins to happen. Cinderella notices the little boy.

[36 : 12] Inching through the crowd. She finally makes her way over to him. She kneels down beside him. And a stunned little boy. Looks at her.

In complete awe. As Cinderella places a kiss. On the side of his face. Friends. What a beautiful picture. Of condescending love.

A beautiful picture of humility. A beautiful picture of downgradedness. Of reductionness. Yes friend it is.

But there's something missing. You see the Prince of Peace. Has done vastly more for you and me. Than the Princess of Disney.

Friend he has done so so much more. You see Cinderella only gave a kiss. And when Cinderella stood up from that wee boy.

[37 : 08] She took her beauty with her. When she stood up to leave. Her beauty remained with her.

When she stood up to leave. His condition remained with him. The boy was still the same. Still disformed. Still alone. But what if Cinderella had done what Jesus had done.

What if in some way. She had given that boy. Her beauty. And taken upon herself. His disfigurement.

Friend. That's what Christ has done. He gave more than a kiss. He gave you. His beauty. So what we say.

Is that what Christ has done. He has. There has been an exchange. Of properties. He is of the mud bank. He is of our human nature.

[38 : 09] He associated himself. He has taken your disfigurement upon himself. And God in heaven this morning. Is looking down with all the angels. And he is looking at you. And he is saying.

Isn't he. And isn't she looking so beautiful. Aren't they just magnificent. So the strength of the promise before us this morning. Lies in the glorious truth.

That God is in the mud. He is a mud God. And if you grasp nothing else this morning friend. I plead with you. That you grasp hold of this. That when God sent his son.

The sender never remained behind. He is in the mud bank. He is in the mire. He is in the ditch. He is in the dirt. And like the stoop to read itself.

The son himself stooped. He was doing his own stooping. And when the son was commissioned to go. He would have looked into the eyes of the father.

[39 : 08] And never for one minute would the son have stopped. And calculated the cost. In the covenant of redemption. That was made between the father and the son.

There was no such thing as arithmetic. No one stopped to calculate what might have passed as the bare minimum. No one paused to calculate.

If the output was greater than the input. Then ever at no point did the son at any point stop. And say to the father. Father I will go. Send me but I am not going to the mud.

At no point did he say. That is too costly. No friend you see him. You see him in Bethlehem. As the star draws over. The cradle.

As God is in a stable. He who created the world. At that very point. Is holding the world in his hand. Is being held in the hands of a young woman.

[40 : 08] Friend enter the stable for a moment. And take a look. Take a look at his son who is in the mud bank. Joseph is pacing the stable floor. Joseph is not aware of the gravity.

Of what has happened here. The animals are oblivious to the fact. That their creator is in the midst. Mary under the dim light of a candle. Put God to bed.

In a manger she lays him. Friends see him on a cross on a hill far away. See him there alone. His closest friends weren't there. They turned and fled.

In the hours of darkness that surrounded the cross. There is a cosmic commotion. The very sun which he had formed with his own hands. And shone in the sky.

That very sun veiled its face. Creation itself had gone. So our comfort this morning. Even before we look at the beauty of the promise.

[41 : 08] Is the beauty of the person. Who has allied himself to our nature. Clothed himself in the complete nothingness. Of our humanness.

And he is found beside us this morning. In the mud bank of life. Himself bruised. And himself broken. So we have the beauty of the person.

He. He friend is our mud bank Jesus. And secondly then we have. The glory of the promise.

This he. This person. This mud bank Jesus. Has promised. That a bruised reed. He shall not break. I won't break.

A bruised reed. And there are three things I'm going to quickly look at here. First of all. The finding of the reed. The losing of the reed. And the returning of the reed.

[42 : 06] These three things very briefly. We could put it this way. There is a melody found. There is a melody lost. And there is finally a melody restored.

So these three things. First of all then. The melody is found. The melody is found. The finding of the reed. And friend.

What an honour it is. To have God looking for you. And if you were lost at sea. And the waves were battering. Your every turn. And no compass to help you navigate.

No water to give you direction. No answer to your cries of help. What a blessed sight it would be. To see the safety of the lifeboat. Coming to your rescue.

And plucking you from the ravages of the sea. And friends. So it has been for many of us. On the ocean of life. The ship of our personal righteousness. Has been battered.

- [43 : 04] Day by day by day. Convicting us of certain doom. And of judgment to come. But as the sea roared. And these waves of conviction. Battered your ship.
- Do you remember these days? When God called your name. And God found you. And he became the captain of your ship.
- Ordering her course. And is now heading. And steering it. To safety and peace. Of the harbour. This is the picture painted for us.
- By the bruised reed. Which had grown on the mud banks. On the water's edge. In complete isolation. Without hope. And without prospect. But someone came.
- And found it. And with a knife. Cut it away. At the main stalk. The reed is now going to have. A change of scenery. It has been found.
- [44 : 03] And has been found. By a shepherd. Now the shepherds. That frequented the Jordan Valley. Often took the reeds. Off the mud bank. They shaped them.
- And they crafted them. And they prepared them. Which often. Was piecing maybe. Three or four of these reeds together. To make a small. Musical instrument.
- And the shepherd. With a smile on his face. Would cherish forever. His handiwork. And his craftsmanship. So the reed was now going to travel.
- As part of the shepherd's. Equipment. Along with the staff. The reef. Would be a comforter. For the dark. And the lonely nights. Dark valleys.
- And weary pastures. Would hear its music. That hollow reed. Which had before. Been blowing in the wind. Was now going to play in the wind. That hollow reed.
- [44 : 58] Which had before. Been isolated. And alone. Was now carved. And held firm. In the warmth. Of the shepherd's embrace. No longer a plant in the mud.
- But a musical instrument. In the hand of the shepherd. Its melody had been found. No longer lost. But is now the companion of the king. No longer in the cold wind.
- Of the Jordan Valley. That passes through it. That wind no longer shapes it. But rather friend. It's the breath of the shepherd. As he whistles a new tune. Friend.
- What a privilege. To have God breathing in your soul. What a privilege. To have an instrument in his hand. What a privilege. To play his music. And to sing his song.
- You know. The reed would never. Sound the charge of the bugle. It couldn't soothe. As the harp could soothe. Or impart comfort like a violin. But that did not matter.
- [45 : 54] There was now a new purpose. For his existence. On these lonely dark nights. On the quiet and still nights. Where the blackness could be felt.
- The reed and the shepherd. Would join together in harmony. Where the melody from the reed. Would seep into the night sky. And this would cause the shepherd.
- To take great delight. In his hand crafted instrument. Of choice. So the reed has been found. Fashioned and shaped. By the hand of the shepherd.
- So that now. It has a new song. So now it has a new tune. To play. It now has a new purpose. For its existence. Friend.
- Looking back across your own life. Do you. Do you remember. The first time. That the shepherd found you. Do you recall. The king of kings. Meeting you in the mud bank.
- [46 : 48] Do you remember. The first time. The breath of the shepherd. Entered your heart. And gave your soul. A new song to sing. Do you remember. The tunes you used to play. And how others still in the mud bank.
- Would envy your music. Do you remember your rhythm. Do you remember your tempo. Do you remember the melodies. And the harmonies. As the composer of your song. And the conductor of your music sang.

A song of freedom. And a song of grace. With a crescendo of. Oh sing a new song. To the Lord. For the wonders he has done. And oh friend.

You may ask yourself. Where did that day go. When I walked. With the shepherd. And our tunes. Were in harmony together. Life's battles. Seem to have taken their toll.

Things are not what they used to be. The personal storms of our human existence. Have caused us to play another tune. Everything has become discordant. The music is all off key.

[47 : 47] The pitch is all wrong. The harmony no longer sounds the same. The reed has lost its tune. The reed now described here in the text before us.

As bruised. As a bruised reed. So secondly then we look. At the melody. That has been lost.

The found reed. Is now a bruised reed. Now this reed was usually carried. In the shepherd's girder. Right next to the shepherd's heart. But now it lies on the ground.

With the animals. Under many hooves. Trotting over it. Bruising it even more. The ministry of the reed has ceased. The darkness has enveloped it.

As it lays now silent. In the mud. Who would now want a battered instrument such as this. Clothed in mud. Bruised.

[48 : 45] And in its own way it's now bleeding. The very need for its existence has now ceased to be. All its usefulness has gone. Lost in the wind.

Perhaps the next thing that's going to prod. On this particular reed. Is going to break it forever. Separated from the sheep. And the shepherd. The songs are replaced.

With sighs. And with dejection. And maybe friend. You were like this reed this morning. Or maybe there was a time. Where this was an experience. You could relate to. A time when the song of your heart.

Had stopped. And the music ceased to play. Like the bruised weed. You may feel helpless. And all you can think about are your bruises. You can tell. When the smoking flax is about to go out.

It gives off a little bit of smoke. And it cries to be relit. It can send out a distress signal. You see the smoking flax. The smoke can do the talking for it.

[49 : 43] It ascends. And then help is immediately dispatched. But friend. There is no such ministry. Deposited with a bruised weed.

It is empty. Its bruises are hurting. Very often they are hidden. But they are tender. And they are sore. This weed is not scratched.

As the scratch is surface based. This weed is not suffering. A surface problem. It is far deeper than that. The bruise is a medical condition.

Which is below the surface of the skin. The symptom is deep. It is not surface dwelling. It is under the skin. And therefore the problem.

Is in dwelling. And our greatest and most fearful enemy. Is nothing outside of us. Nothing external to us. There is no need to look on the surface.

[50 : 40] For scratches or grazes. But it is simply this. The problem is indwelling. And the problem is indwelling sin. And very often we are crushed by this sin.

And you ask yourself. How can I feel this way? How can I feel so much of sin's power? How can I feel so much guilt? And so much heartache? Why do I yield to it? Why don't I grieve over it as I should?

I want to be strong. I want to have peace. I want to have liberty. I know this. But I am so bruised. I am so weak. And I have very little strength. You love God.

You love his word. You love his cause. You love his church. You love his people. You love his day. But yet you don't have comfort. Because of this indwelling sin.

All your fears are ready to overwhelm you. Yet down there in the very bottom of your soul. Can you not say with Peter. To whom else shall we go?

[51 : 43] Who, friend, taught you how frail and how weak you are? Who, friend, taught you to hate sin? Who taught you to moan over your unbelief?

Who taught you to cry like Paul? Oh, wretched man that I am. Who gives you the longing for holiness? Who gives you this eternal desire to cry? Oh, that I knew where I might find you.

Friend, who taught you? Friend, this morning. Your feeling of failure is not a manifestation of your weakness. But it's a symbol of your strength.

It's not a manifestation of your weakness. It is a symbol of your strength. So the melody was found. The melody has since been lost.

And thirdly and finally, the melody is to be restored. See, we today in the 21st century, we live in what can be described as a replacement culture.

[52 : 44] Where it is easier and very oftentimes cheaper to replace something rather than to repair it. If it breaks, we discard it. We go on to Amazon and we buy a new one.

But thanks to God this morning that our shepherd does not have a replacement philosophy. There is no substitution. There is no renewal.

There is no displacement. There is only restoring. So the shepherd begins his search. He has reached for the reed and he finds it is not there.

It must be found. He has lost a precious jewel. He must have his music. The tune of the reed must sound again in his ears. The feelings of his heart must flow again through the hollow tubes.

And he searches over the hills. And he searches into the valleys. And into the streams. Until at last he finds it. Unmoved from where it fell. It is untouched.

[53 : 45] It is cold and silent. And he places his warm hands around it. And brings the reed back up. And close to his heart. Oh friend, we see here not only the ability of the shepherd.

To cut and to carve the reed. But we also see his ability to lift. And to love. To care. And to show compassion. And to play again a new tune.

You felt that way friend? Have you had your melody lost? And now your experience is. That after losing your melody.

And after being found. You are playing a better tune. So after the finding comes the fixing. Whatever happens now. It will be for the best.

Administered through the hands of the shepherd. Its keeper. Its finder. And its player. And its friend. The reed which the shepherd has found is badly bruised.

[54 : 45] And the glory of any shepherd. Is to find a bruised reed. And still be able to play a tune. Now the reaction of many. Would have been to throw the reed away.

But this is not the mind of the shepherd. It is not in his theology. The flag is picked up to be waved again in triumph. He cleans it. And he blows in it.

He is so overjoyed at finding it. That he lets his tears prickle over it. Washing it. And he places it to his lips. So that again the reed may become.

The organ of the wilderness. And at first when he blows. It sounds a little bit off key. The bruising has done something to the music. Where before the music was a little bit superficial.

The music now has death. The music now has feeling. This reed has learnt a new tune. The rain and the wind and the storms. Have been its schoolmaster.

[55 : 42] There were lessons in the mud. Which had to be learned. Things that would never have been taught. By the shepherd's side. Then there is always this mending and the bending.

On the anvil of life. God moulds us. And he shapes us. Into what he intends us to be. He places the template of the sun. Over your life.

And whatever it takes. God will shape you. Into that template. So now the shepherd can play a deeper tune. He can reach higher notes than ever before.

It was lost in the afflictions of life. But it is now restored to a fuller glory. The bruised weed now has a new story to tell. And a new tune to play.

And friend this may be your story this morning. A story of restoration. A story of triumph. A story of conquering. And this conquering is a daily ongoing conquering.

[56 : 43] And just to note here in the passage. The mending of the bruise. The remedy for your internal pain. Caused by this indwelling sin.

What's the remedy? The remedy is its mortification. Now John Owen says that restoration within. Comes with the mortification of sin.

This is how you heal the bruise. Now to mortify. So how do we do that? To mortify means to put to death. Which is what we must do with sin.

That was what John Owen would say. But John Calvin said something a little bit different. John Calvin said. He preferred not to use the term mortification. But rather vivification. So he would prefer that term.

Now this is not an action of putting to death. Vivification is not an act of putting to death. It's an act of bringing alive. Where mortification talks about suppression.

[57 : 44] Vanquishing and quashing. To vivify something. Is the opposite. It's to animate it. It's to activate it. It's to bring it to life.

Like you would a puppet on a string. So. What Calvin is saying here is. Don't try and beat your sin to death. You can't. Don't try to slay it in an open battlefield.

You can't. What Calvin is saying. Is that in order for sin to be suppressed. And put to death. You animate. You bring to life in your heart. And in your mind.

The simple gospel truths. Of atonement. And a cross delivered salvation. Bring to life. Like the strings on a puppet. Watchfulness. Diligence. Faith and prayer.

And watch your soul dance to a new tune. It's not so much about trying to rip it off. But rather about putting it on. Put it on Paul says. The whole armour of God.

[58 : 38] And whistle. A new tune. Friend wear Calvary every day. Go visit that skull shaped. Hill. And wear the atoning sacrifice.

Like a cloak on your shoulder. Put it on. And fill your pockets. With his tears. Fill your pockets. With his agony. Fill your pockets. With his blood.

Fill your pockets. With his mercy. Fill your pockets. With his love. Let that cloak weigh heavy. On your shoulders. That friend is. Vivification.

This very same apostle. Had a two-eyed approach. To mortification. He always had both eyes open. And what did he see?

The apostle Paul in Romans 7. I delight in the law of God. After the inward man. But. I see another law.

[59 : 34] In my members. Warring against the law of my mind. I find a law. He says. That when I do good. Evil is present with me.

Paul sees this law of indwelling sin. He is aware of it. He mourns it. Oh wretched man that I am. He cries. The good that I want to do.

I don't do it. He sees it. He mourns it. He hates it. He despises it. But you know. Paul has two eyes. He saw sin. Yes. But he saw his saviour more.

Oh wretched man. He says. Yes. That is what I am. He cries. Who shall deliver me? He moans. It is as if Paul pauses. And now with both eyes open.

His response comes. Thanks be to God. He says. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Earlier in chapter 5 of Romans. He again moans his sin.

[60 : 32] But with this kind of two eyed. You. This faith. Where sin abounds. He says. Grace does much more abound. So friend.

Friend this morning. You come. With this two eyed theology. Come with your fears. Yes. Come with your doubts. Yes. Come with your hurt. And come with your pain. Yes. You come. Come with all of your guilt.

No. Friend. You don't bring your guilt with you. Because another. This morning. Dear Bruce Reed. Has already been declared guilty.

You have no guilt to bring. Another this morning. Has already been to a cross as your substitute. And because of him. We have victory. He won the battle.

But the war is not yet finished. And D-Day on June the 6th 1944. Marked the end of Hitler's power.

[61 : 29] But it would almost take another year. Before the war was over. But that day on the beaches of Normandy. Was a decisive battle.

That's where Hitler's strength was broken. And a year later came V-E-Day. A year later came Victory Day. Though dear Bruce Reed.

We battle from our D-Day through the storms of life. And our daily battles with sin. Stand firm. Our Victory Day is coming.

Where sin shall be no more. Where the war tools are put away. There will be no enemy left to fight. No more battle scars. No more mud bags.

No more tears. Now crowned and conquered. We will lie down with the Lamb. And we will sing the song of Moses.

[62 : 32] And we will be bruised. No more. Amen. God bless Jesus. God bless Jesus. Dear God.

We thank you today. For your goodness. And your loving kindness over us. We thank you Lord. That you are indeed our shepherd. That you are the one who prays.

In the instruments of our soul. We thank you Lord. For that breath. Which brought us alive. And that breath. Which continues by your goodness. And your grace.

To strengthen us. And guide us. As we sojourn on. Towards the celestial city. We pray Lord. This morning. That we would. Even leave this place. Of worship.

With maybe just a slightly different tune. Newfound. Melodies. And newfound notes. In our hearts. Bless these meditations. To us we ask.

[63 : 27] In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. We conclude our worship. This morning. By singing to God's praise.

In the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Found on page 229. We'll sing the whole psalm. Psalm 23.

The Lord's my shepherd. I'll not want. He makes me down to lie. In pastures green. He leadeth me. The quiet waters by. These verses.

To God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd. I'll not want.

[64 : 29] He leadeth me. The quiet waters by.

The quiet waters by.

In presence of my foes, My dear God, my love, my love, And my love overflows,
Goodness and mercy of my life, Treasure, praise for your me, And in God's eyes
forevermore,

Dear Lord, we thank you for the time that we've managed to spend today in your house. And as we leave, we pray that the grace, the mercy and the goodness of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Would wish and abide with each and every one of us, now and forevermore. Amen.