

Strangers and Pilgrims

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- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning. As we come before God in worship, we pray his blessing on our time together in this word.
- We can begin singing from Psalm 39. Psalm 39, and we're going to sing verses 4 through to 11.
- Psalm 39, verse 4.
- He vexed himself in vain. He heaps up wealth and does not know to whom a child pertain. And now, O Lord, what wait I for? My hope is fixed on thee. Free me from all my trespasses. The full scorn make not me.
- Dumb was I, opening not my mouth, because this work was thine. Thy stroke take from me. By the blow of thine hand I do pine.
- [1 : 23] When with rebukes thou dost correct man for iniquity, thou wastest beauty like a moth. Sure, each man's vanity.
- And so on. We can sing these verses, Psalm 39, from verse 4. Mine end and measure of my days, O Lord, unto me show. Mine end and measure of my days, O Lord, unto me show.
- For this the state that I never mind, my faith will give well below.
- Lord, O Lord, unto me show. Lord, unto me show. Our God- Speaking night I escort son's doing the same thing.
- template for enseñanza. O Lord, unto me show.
- [2 : 46] How nice, O Lord, unto me show. Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- [5 : 16] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. with the hope that the way of access that has been secured for your people is our way of access and that we are truthfully availing ourselves of it knowing that you give a hearing ear to the petitions and the prayers and the praises of your people here in this world we bless your holy name that even though you are God and we are creatures of the dust that you are creator as we are those who depend upon our creator for every breath that we take as another confessed of old it is in you that we live and move and have our being so we truly acknowledge that and truly recognize it experientially from time to time although we confess that that is not how we are for the most part we are so full of our own energy and vigor and we believe ourselves to be in some way infallible that there is nothing that we cannot overcome our own resources appear to be adequate to anything that presents itself to us and often times we have that challenging declaration made that that we will get the best better of whatever providence brings our way and yet we discover all too often that that is not what is true our resources are far from adequate our mental capacity is fragile at best our physical frame can easily yield to many of the things that this world may bring our way there are many providences that are too sore for us they leave us weakened and incapacitated without us being prepared for such an eventuality even at this time when the world is still in the grip of a pandemic and new forms of the same virus that has been wreaking havoc in the world is still evidencing itself and creating difficulty for parliaments and for nations and even nations that purport to be as well off as our own and who think themselves as a nation the mouthpiece of government suggests that we have adequate resources at our disposal by which to overcome these things and yet it doesn't take much to throw us off that even keel that we believe that is ours

Lord we confess our foolishness and we confess our forgetfulness of the God who is sovereign in all the activities that are in this world even even though the agencies that you may use are often agencies that have no knowledge of God or a desire to offer worship to God we see that even in the history of this world and as it is recorded for us within the pages of scripture we see despotic kings raised up who will be the instruments in the hands of God for afflicting his own people and for bringing them to their knees to the place that should have been there in the first instance but they departed from it and pursued other gods and pursued other lifestyles that denied

God and the outcome was ever the same whoever you chose or whatever means you chose if your aim is to bring a people back to yourself that will ultimately be the end product we pray that you would remind us of that and ask us to search our own hearts and to discover where we are with regard to the God that we claim to be our own as our Christian people may we be Christian not merely in name only but in our lives and in our relationship to the Christ who is the King of Kings who is the Saviour of Sinners we pray that you would remember our congregation at this present time bless all that is done in your name amongst us amongst young our old those who are present within the services of your house those who are unable to be present because of illness or there is another demand that is made upon them that prohibits their attendance we commit them to you and bless the word that is preached and proclaimed from

Lord's Day to Lord's Day from midweek to midweek pray for those who are unwell and confined to their own homes or hospitals or some who are permanent residents in care homes or even within the hospice and we remember all the care that is delivered in all of these places we are thankful for them and we pray that you would sanctify all that are engaged in ministering to the needs of the weak and the infirm we pray for the various agencies that are voluntarily delivering such care within our communities we remember all that are mindful of the needs of those who are suffering from cancer or from dementia and who are supporting those who have to care for such so we pray for many that are unsung heroes within our communities remembering all that is done by them pray for the grieving and the sorrowful the voice of the

[13 : 11] Lord speaks to us through death we do well to heed it because each one of us is in this road that will lead to the separation of body and soul you have promised it and your promises are all fulfilled without exception remember our nation those who govern us we pray for wisdom to be imparted to them and that they would know the difference between what is wise and what is foolish that they would look to the Lord to grant wisdom and that you may provide for those who seek it at your hand remember the Queen and her family and we give thanks for the opportunity to remember her in prayer and we would ask that we would fulfil our remit as a praying people to pray for those who rule over us whichever parliament it may be whichever sphere of government it may be and we remember our own local council and we pray for those involved in that also we ask that you would grant your own peace to be disseminated amongst the nations of the earth especially the war-torn regions where there is a constant upheaval where neighbours are at war one against the other and the suffering are often not those who are on the battlefield but those who are deprived of the resources necessary to feed or to clothe or to house then because the resources that are expended elsewhere elsewhere

I pray for those who are suffering because of famine those who have been driven from their homes those who are desperately seeking a safe haven for their families and we marvel at those who would take to the sea vessels that are barely suitable to to be in shore waters let alone crossing the English channel and they do so overladen with people and many have suffered because of that and we pray Lord that you would grant a heart that is receptive to the needs of the many in this world of ours that has so much resources at its disposal and yet they are ill-used forgiveness for all our shortcomings bless us now and bless all that is done here at this time bless the

Sunday school as they go out to be instructed bless those who seek to give instruction to guard keep and protect us each one giving sin in Jesus name Amen I'm going to read from the New Testament scriptures from the epistle to the Hebrews chapter 11 reading from the beginning of the chapter Hebrews chapter 11 and we'll read down to verse 16 Hebrews chapter 11 from the beginning to verse 16 verse by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of

God so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous God testifying of his gifts and by it he being dead yet speaketh by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death and was not found because God had translated him for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God but without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him by faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which was by faith by faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed and he went out not knowing whither he went by faith he sojourned in the land of promises in a strange country dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob the heirs with them of the same promise for he looked for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of her child when she was past age because she judged and faithful who had promised therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead so many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable these all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they might have an opportunity to have returned but now they desire a better country that is unheavenly wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city and so on may the Lord add his blessing to a reader of his word after his name be the praise and boys and girls before you go out to Sunday school

I believe that today you're going to be looking at yet another miracle that surrounds the birth of the Lord Jesus and the Bible tells us that the birth of Jesus was indeed a miracle but there are many seeming miracles that surround his birth before Jesus was born we are told that the Bible expected him to be born miraculously we find that an angel came to speak to the one who was going to be the mother of Jesus a woman called Mary Mary and Mary we are told was exposed to

[21 : 34] Joseph that meant that in those days a promise was given by a man and a woman they exchanged promises I would imagine that they would marry one another and it was a very complicated arrangement in many respects it wasn't just a matter for for the two people the families would also be involved in it but the promise was made and they hoped to get married now Mary was what we would call engaged to Joseph but an angel came to her and told her that she was going to have a baby and she knew that this couldn't happen because she wasn't yet married to Joseph and the angel said this is how it is going to be you are going to have this baby and this baby will be special and you'll be special because you will be his mother now the first miracle is I suppose recorded for us in the Old Testament in the book of

Isaiah and the prophet Isaiah told Mary I suppose and everybody else who were able to read the Bible that such a miracle would happen but I'm sure Mary would have read these words a long time before and perhaps very often and not believed that these words spoke about her self but they actually did speak about herself and in chapter 7 of the book of the prophet Isaiah verse 14 therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel this was going to be this was a promise that God gave it was to be a sign once it did happen that this was

God's doing and the story that we read in Luke's gospel tells us that Mary was told this was to be fulfilled this was going to happen in her experience not just her experience as part of those who were going to benefit from it as everybody in the world could benefit from it but because she was this woman who was going to give birth to the baby Jesus and she found that so difficult to believe when the angel spoke to her and said to her behold you shall conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus he shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end and there are many things about that story about that promise not only was

Mary going to be the mother of a king which for somebody who was like Mary poor and of a family who had no knowledge of any connection with any king before then she was going to be mother of a king and not just any king but a king who would rule and reign forever this was going to be a king unlike any other king every other king that ever lived would be born he would live his life and then he would die and his kingdom would pass on to somebody else but that was not what was said about baby Jesus once he was born he was going to be a king who would be a king forever and not only was he going to be a king forever his kingdom was going to be a kingdom that would continue and that itself is another thing every other kingdom that we can think of within the history of this world is a kingdom that would come to an end that has come to an end the biggest kingdoms if you think about the empire of the world most famous soldiers who were powerful and to swept swept through the world the king

Alexander the great or the Roman emperors one after the other and they swept through the world and their empire was huge and their power was seemingly without end but they did they all died their kingdoms came to an end another king raised up instead of them but what we promised here about baby Jesus is when he is born he will be born like no other person is born he will live like no other person lived his rule and reign will continue and if you doubt that you remember that this happened this promise was given to Mary just over 2000 years ago if we were able to how many kings could we find that were actually sitting on a throne in whatever kind of place throughout the world when baby Jesus was born that would be something you can do for yourself through the power of Google you find a date that corresponds with the date that you think

[27 : 58] Jesus was born and try and find out how many nations how many kings ruled within these nations if it's written down and you'll probably find that many of them you've never heard of before many of them are completely forgotten perhaps their nations are no longer remembered but Jesus still remembered not only is he remembered his rule and his reign is still ongoing his people are still being born and born again and they will be part of that kingdom forever and ever and that's what the promise that was given given to Mary included we're also told that Mary who was so surprised went to tell her cousin Elizabeth and her cousin

Elizabeth when she heard the voice of Mary Elizabeth was you remember the last time we were speaking about this Mary Elizabeth was carrying in her tummy John the Baptist he wasn't born she was probably six months pregnant at the time but when Elizabeth heard the voice of Mary we're told that the baby that Elizabeth was carrying leapt within her mother's within his mother's tummy and it was a very strange thing but he he we believe recognised the voice of the mother of her Lord of Mary's Lord and Elizabeth's Lord and everybody else's Lord so there are many miracles that happened even before Jesus was born I'm hoping that you'll be told some of them and that you'll remember them as you're going to Sunday school going to sing now as you go out from Psalm 119 and we're singing from verse 17

Psalm 119 and verse 17 with me thy servant in thy grace deal bountifully Lord that by thy favour I may live and duly keep thy word open mine eyes that of the law the wonders I may see I am a stranger on this earth hide not thy laws from me my soul within me breaks and doth much fainting still endued through longing that it hath all times unto thy judgments pure thou hast rebuked the cursed proud who from thy precepts said well reproach and shame remove from me for I thy laws observe against me princes speak with spite while they in counsel sigh but I thy servant did upon thy statutes meditate my comfort and my heart's delight thy testimonies be and they in all my doubts and fears are counselors to me these verses of Psalm 119 with me thy servant and thy grace deal bountifully

Lord with me thy servant and thy grace deal bountifully Lord Lord thy favor thy heart and thy nies disse time Lordake but thy word open my eyes When the cross of thy cross the wonder shall make me I am a ginger on this earth I brought thy rose from me

My soul within me is not a much rich in pure and pure Good walking, not it at all time I do thy judgment pure Thou heartly hear the garden cry Till from thy peace yet there Bring those judgments in Reveal from me

[33 : 38] For I die your soul there I can't be blessed Jesus, dear, with my I play in counsel's heart But I thy servant And in the form Thy circumstances My comfort and my heart Thou art still rise Thy treasure on his feet And in all my doubts and fears

And in all my doubts and fears Thou art shall learn to me I'd like us to return to the passage That we read together In the New Testament Scriptures Hebrews chapter 11 And we can read again At verse 13 Hebrews chapter 11 Hebrews Hebrews chapter 11 verse 13 These all died in faith Not having received the promises But having seen them afar off And were persuaded of them And embraced them And called them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

I'm sure, if I'm not mistaken, that from time to time, many of us have the experience of being reminded of the passage of time.

There are different ways in which we are faced with that. Sometimes it can be a trivial thing that we find bring this to our attention.

[36 : 35] We may be engaged in some work and we're so engrossed with what we're doing, but before we know it, the time that we have spent doing it has passed without us realising how much time has gone.

Sometimes it can be something that we enjoy. Sometimes it can be something that makes the time drag, but at the same time, all of a sudden, it's gone.

That may be a trivial experience, a trivial description of an experience. It can be in the workplace. It can be at home.

Some other times, like for example, you often hear people leading up to Christmas. People say to you, it's here once again, or it's on top of us before we knew it.

It only seems just a short while ago when we were preparing for Christmas as a family. And now we're facing up to it once again.

[37 : 53] Again, a trivial example. But it's something that people say often. They're aware of this event. It's an annual occurrence.

They know that the days are passing and the months are passing and that the year is moving on. And yet, all of a sudden, it sort of dawns on us that this event is there on top of us before we know it.

Sometimes it can be a birthday, an anniversary. Sometimes it can be a remembrance of some loved one that you associate a date with.

And that date comes on top of you. And your thoughts are stimulated by that. Well, if I haven't touched on something that you can understand, something's wrong.

I'm sure every one of us at some point has had that kind of experience. But in this chapter of Hebrews, the example of the relationship of faith of the saints is described to us.

[39 : 13] And there are various examples cited. And even though the experiences that are recorded, and some of them are separated by not just time.

You know, it can talk about Noah, and then it can talk about Moses, or it can talk about David, and centuries separate the experiences that are recorded.

And perhaps the kind of situation these people were in is so different, one from the other.

But they all share one thing, and that is that they have faith in God. And their faith in God means for them that they are anticipating an experience that will be a shared experience, just as surely as their faith is a shared experience.

And the Bible asks of them, or reminds them through the reading of it, to always have that before their mind.

[40 : 32] The example given to us of Abraham might appear to us to be rather strange. But it tells us about Abraham. And remember, Abraham lived many, many years before that event that we were speaking about to the children.

The weeks and the months before the birth of the Lord. And yet we are told that although Abraham lived so many centuries before that event, that he was able to see the day of the Lord and able to rejoice because of it.

Because he was a man of faith. And that day was a day that he anticipated and longed for, and he looked towards the day of the birth of Jesus, the day of the salvation that he would depend upon.

Now, the reason he's able to do that is because the Bible told it to him. The word of God came to him directly, or he, because of his relationship with God, had that unusual to us, but commonplace to him, an experience of God speaking to him face to face.

But what Abraham saw afar off, he believed, and he trusted that what God said would be true for him.

[42 : 14] He believed in God's promises, and he trusted that these promises would be realized at some point.

He longed to see them fulfilled. But we're told in the passage that we read that there were many who received these promises, but never actually saw these promises fulfilled.

But their belief in the promise was every bit as certain as the person who actually saw these promises fulfilled.

their anticipation was so certainly fixed upon the one who made the promise that even though they never saw it come to fruition, they were persuaded that, yes, this would happen.

Now, there is one promise in particular that I want us to think about here, and we've sort of hinted at it in the Psalms that we have been singing.

[43 : 26] And that is that those who are in this world, they are numbered amongst those who are passing through this world.

You know, some of you here will share the same faith as Abraham of old, the same faith as Moses, the same faith as Noah.

You will have more information than any of them had, because you have the scripture in its entirety for you to draw from.

And you will have the confidence arising out of many of the promises that some of these people who received the promises, never saw them come to fruition.

But you have, you've seen that promise that we saw coming through Isaiah of a virgin mother giving birth to the Saviour.

[44 : 36] You've seen the scripture that testifies to that, that this actually took place, that the Christ of which the promise spoke, was born, and that his kingdom came to sight, and it continues to this day.

And the church of which it speaks, exists, because the promise is a promise that will not be made a lie.

God one thing I want you to think about, is back to the very start, is this, that we are reminded that just like these people who have received promises, and who have seen some of them come to fruition, or read of them being fulfilled, that we are like them in this sense, that we like they are pilgrims and sojourners in this world.

And that's the point that I want us to understand, that time is something that does not stand still. And whatever is true of you today, however you compare yourself to maybe a year from today, looking back, maybe you'll be able to think, well I'm not really all that different to what I was a year ago from today.

But maybe some of you will know that because of some event in your life, some experience, maybe a happy or a sad one, that you are different to what you were then.

[46 : 36] and whatever that difference means to you, it's a reminder to every one of us that our whole life is made up of a passage through this world involving many such experiences.

But one day and one day soon, we will be at the same point at which it will be said of us that we will die.

And the thing for us is whether we are able to be convinced or assured of the fact these all died in the faith or is it just going to be these all died?

And what will be true of us at that point? what is true about all of these saints is that they did not and were not taken by surprise.

However death came, there were certainties, there were truths that they were persuaded of, that they embraced wholeheartedly. So there are three things that we can think of arising out of these thoughts and that's first the security of the promises that are made because of the one who makes the promise.

[48 : 03] It's a simple thought but it's a thought that you need to remind yourself of. There are many things that you think are true of you and many things that you believe will be true of you.

And you think to yourself, well this is not going to change, whatever changes. There is nothing in this world that you can say that about if you are not saying it about the person of God and what he has promised to do or be to his people.

Anything else is subject to change. But the promises of God remain just as truly as God remains. The second thing is that the promises that God makes, they are made to a sojourner, a pilgrim.

They are all made to people like yourself and myself who today are not where we were yesterday, tomorrow we will not be where we are today.

Because if you look at your life as a straight line, you are not hurting on that straight line.

[49 : 29] You are progressing, you are moving, you are always advancing. at the point at which this progress began was the point at which you could say, far as Mary was concerned, the point at which the life of Jesus can be spoken of as beginning was the point of conception.

When the Holy Spirit came upon her and the Holy One was conceived within her womb from that point on. And I suppose we need to be respectful of life in the womb, and we do need to be respectful of it, because there is always that challenge within our society that treats the life of an unborn child with disdain.

But if we think about the experience of our Lord within the womb of his mother, life for him began at conception, and we should not treat any child with anything other than the respect that an unborn person deserves.

But that line continues until the day of death. And the promises that God has made concerning that person, however they apply to him, are not nullified at the point of death.

They remain in place, and they are constant because of the one. The recipient of the promise is but a sojourner, but that is what they are. The third thing, the promise that we have here, applies to a sojourner who is anticipating a sanctuary.

[51 : 33] And the passage reminds us, these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, persuaded them, embraced them, and confess that there were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. they know that this world is not. They are abiding residence, it's a temporary residence.

So these three main thoughts. Now we all know the importance of keeping a promise. We all know the importance of having a promise made to us, being kept by the person who made it.

and we all feel grief if somebody has promised us something and they don't fulfill that promise. And we've all experienced it, we've all been guilty of it, suggesting something that we would do and not doing it, not doing it to the point at which it was expected to be done or whatever.

But just think for a moment what it would be like if we could believe that God had made a promise, amongst the many promises that he has made, if one of these promises were not honoured, was not honoured, what kind of God would you think you had?

[53 : 12] A God who failed to honour a promise that he himself had made? Would you believe him to be worthy of the name God if he failed in that respect?

Some people allege that God has in some way failed to fulfil a promise. But I think with closer investigation you'll find that the person making such an allegation are not able to substantiate in what way God has breached his promise.

Very often what they're saying is that God has not done what they wanted him to do or expected him to do, not what God had said he was going to do.

But here in this passage what we are told is men and women of faith who are living their life in the light of God's promises, promises, and especially the promise that he has made concerning the salvation of the soul.

And if we think for example just for this service, I'm thinking of Psalm 90, the contrast that is made in that psalm between the God of the promise and the one to whom the promises belongs.

[54 : 38] The difference that the psalmist makes between the two. If you look at that psalm and it's a very comforting psalm, we often sing it at the time of bereavement and it reminds us of the unchangeable nature of God.

The God who is eternal, the one who existed before the world existed, he was there before he created the world, after he created the world he remains the same, although the world is subject to change, God does not change.

There are many things the psalmist identifies, almost just off the cuff. He tells us about this God who is the God of the saints, for example, the saints that we read about in this chapter.

There's a list of them. Now, they haven't experienced a different God, God. They haven't experienced a new God, they haven't experienced anything about God that was not to be experienced by the saints of every generation, from the beginning to the present.

It's the same God, he has not grown old, he has not grown cynical, as this world would make any one of us cynical.

[56 : 03] he looks, he examines all that is to be seen, and he has not been swayed by it, or turned by it, or made bitter by it, or anything that we would expect experience to create.

God is ever the same. It reminds us again in the psalm that the accountability that is over to this God, because of who he is, he's our creator, he's our judge, he's the one who has promised salvation, who expects salvation to be made use of, and salvation to be embraced through Christ, and when that doesn't happen, well, there is a cost, there is a cost involved in the person who refuses to accept the salvation salvation of the Redeemer.

When you contrast what is true about God with what is true about man, you see that man is talking about a fleeting experience of life.

We talk about days and hours and weeks and years, and soon they're all spent, we're told. Our whole life is as a tale that is told.

Our life is like a blade of grass which in the morning is cut down and before the day is out it begins to return to the dust. Whereas when you speak about God, God is spoken about as someone for whom a thousand years is like a day, but is yesterday or like the sleep of a night.

[57 : 59] His life and our life when contrasted are so different and this is the reality that confronts us all. We sojourn as our fathers before us and our stay here in this world is a temporary stay and our power to keep our promises to whoever we would make a promise does not and cannot extend beyond the point at which our life ends.

However dearly we would wish these promises to be supported, our role in ensuring that these promises are kept comes to an end at the point of our death.

and have heard of many and read of many who have put their affairs in order and organized their estate and insisted that when they die this is what will happen and so and so will get this and so and so will get that and for a while that may be the influence that they are able to accept but even there things cannot be influenced by them because that power that we once had in our life is no longer there.

The psalmist you read through this last psalm that we sang Psalm 119 in that psalm the psalmist describes this earthly house of our pilgrimage the house of our pilgrimage what does a house suggest to you?

there are many historians amongst us here who enjoy delving into the past of our communities and go back 50 years and look at houses that were being raised up out of the rubble of the houses that were part of the community so many years ago where are they now?

[60 : 20] Where are the ruins? They've even the ruins have been swept away and put into roads or whatever it's just natural events move on life has to move on that's not the point the point is this that these things should speak to us about our earthly house an earthly house that is a decaying house a tabernacle a tent that will soon be folded and what are we doing by way of preparation for that and yet such a sojourner receives the promises first of all in word and then its reality Abraham and his descendants were but ten dwellers but God had made them a promise and sustained them by way of that promise

I came across a poem I don't know who the writer was but it was quoted by a theologian a stranger in the world below I calmly sojourn here nor can its happiness or woe provoke my hope or fear nor can its happiness or woe provoke my hope but fear I wonder if that person who wrote these words was a believer I'm sure he was because the believer has received the promises and believed the promises and is persuaded that what God has promised will not be diverted will not be eroded it will not be in any way changed because of circumstance and even though the beneficiary of the promise may feel that they would like to receive all that the promise implies in this world it doesn't really disturb their peace the preacher

Martyn Lloyd Jones makes the following observation if we have a right view of ourselves in this world as pilgrims everything falls into its true perspective we shall immediately take a right view of our gifts and our possessions we begin to think of ourselves only as stewards who must give account of them we are not the permanent holders of these things the worldly man says he owns them all the Christian I am not the possessor I merely have them on lease my possessions my wealth my gifts I cannot take with me because I am but a custodian a custodian we have them for our good while we're here but we know that we won't take them with us you follow what the good man is saying many of us can understand it but too often we fall prey to the allure of things and the possession of things and the comfort we get from things for a time but

I've often seen and I've not been surprised how when a person is unwell for a time and when their world shrinks into a room which is barely big enough to accommodate their bed whatever possessions will sit in a wardrobe and their world shrinks and their life is made up of what they do in that room and what is done to them in that room and when you think of what their life was made up of before that moment before that time and you contrast it and you realise that this is but a preparation for you've taken your leave of this world and what this world has to offer the final brief thought is this the fulfilment of promise in the sanctuary above some of what

God has promised is received in this world we can't doubt that there are many good gifts that the child of God the believer enjoys in this world many privileges many blessings many things our life would be so empty without and they're God's gift to us but the pilgrim will take up residence in a city the sojourner the wanderings will come to an end tent dweller whose eye is fixed on a city will experience the joys of a city like no other some of you will remember the name Lachlan Mackenzie and he wrote many poems in his day some of them many of them are Gaelic but this is a translation of his

[66 : 22] Gaelic poem that he wrote in memory of a dear Christian friend and she was before his mind when he wrote the poem for us a place thou didst prepare a city great and high bright palaces and mansions fair beyond the sun and sky no man nor angel can describe the joys that there abound friendship is there and happiness in full perfection found there's much more in what he said but he was looking like Abraham like the saints to a city without foundations they decide a better country the apostle says that is unheavened wherefore

God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city a city and they will dwell in that city one thing I know I may not be able to say when I die or how I will die but I can say by virtue of the faith that God has endowed me with that because I am one of God's children because I am a man of faith or if you are a woman of faith you can be certain that something better than this world awaits you something better something more enduring something that is not subject to change I have invited you to go back a year in your life and think about where you stood one year to this day it's not an easy task but changes inevitably occur but if you go to be with the saints of

God to this city that God has prepared for the saints none of these changes will take place none of these events that intruded into your life in this world will affect your progress in it and there will be progress in glory I think some people lose sight of that I think when they believe themselves to die at the moment for them will be a moment of perfection and for them they think sanctification will mean that they will be completely entire with with no lack and in a sense you can understand why they are saying that but I can't get away from the thought that when the child of God goes home to be with the Lord that we are told that he will lead them to fountains of living water and we are told that that which is created will be in the presence of the creator what is finite in the presence of the infinite and you cannot put infinity into what is finite so there will be a necessary progressive and constant discovery of truth as it applies to

Christ and it will be a delight for all who will engage in that activity that is what awaits the child of God that is the prospect that is what it persuaded of the promises have been made and you'd be wise today to lay hold of that promise as your own as it is in Christ there are other promises that God has made and they are equally sure and they apply to every person who has failed to secure their salvation through Christ equally God will ensure that such promises will not be overlooked or forgotten the God persuaded of that truth let's play Lord be merciful to us as we try to bring your word to bear upon hard and stony hearts such as our own to press upon us the truth concerning the salvation of the

Christ the provision that he has made even in the words that we hear spoken to a sinner who one moment was suffering on the cross beside him today you shall be with me in paradise what a translation what a what an infinitely great leap from the miseries of death on the cross to glory in the company of the saints and the angels and the Christ who is the saviour we pray your blessing to be on your word cleansed from sin in Jesus name Amen the closing psalm is psalm 90 psalm 90 verse 9 for in thine anger all our days do pass on to an end and as a tale that hath been told so we have years to spend these score and ten years do sum up our days and years we see for if by reason of more strength in some for score they be yet doth the strength of such old men but grief and labelled through for it is soon cut off and we fly hence and soon removed who knows the power of thy wrath according to thy fear so is thy wrath

[73 : 04] Lord teach thou us our end in mine to bear and so to count our days that we our hearts may still apply to learn thy wisdom and thy truth that we may live thereby we can sing from verse 9 for in thine anger all our days to pass on to an end for as thine anger all our days to pass on to an end and as a tale that can draw story out here to spend three score and ten years to sum up our days and years we see are in thy reason all more strength in some force for they fear yet thought the strength of such old men the people never blue for ages to this

God Power some of Round love thy heart according to thy I hear, so is thy wrath, Lord, teach the cross, a land in mine to bear.

I'm so true, come, thou disagree, the heart's mistil of mine.

I hear, so is thy wisdom, how thy truth, but we may live their life.

May we give this mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, address and abide with you all, now and always. Amen.