

# Persevere to the end!!

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- [ 0 : 00 ] We shall resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 32.
- Psalm 32 from the beginning of the psalm. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned.
- All the transgression he hath done, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile, nor fraud is found therein.
- When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then waxed old, because I roared all day long.
- For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie, so that my moisture turned is in summer's drought thereby. I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, and likewise mine iniquity I have not covered.
- [ 1 : 12 ] I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses said I, and of my sin thou freely didst forgive the iniquity.
- Let us sing these verses, Psalm 32 from the beginning to the double verse marked 5. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned.
- O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned.
- All the transgressions he hath done, All the transgressions he hath done, All the transgressions he hath done, Whose sin is covered in.
- Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, And in his witness, O guide, Nor brought his found therein.
- [ 2 : 45 ] When as I did refill my speech, And silent was my turn, My bones then watched the door because I ruled it all day long.
- For upon me, O day and night, Thine hand gave me light, So that my moisture turned his, In summer's drought thereby, I there upon heaven to thee, My sin acknowledged it, And likewise mine iniquity, I have not covered it,
- I will confess to the Lord, My trespasses at night, And of my sin now be ye, Are given iniquity.
- Let us join together in prayer. O Lord, O God, As we come before you, At this evening hour, We give thanks that we can praise your name, As a God who is able to cover our sin.
- Not only do you possess that ability, Not only do you possess that ability, But you have declared to us, Your interest in your own people, That determines that you will cover the sin, That has separated between them and you.
- [ 5 : 54 ] We do not realise how much you are offended by your sin, Because we have habitually brought you down to our own level, And our readiness to forgive our own sins is all too apparent.
- Our reluctance to show forgiveness to the sins of others, Is also something that marks us out.

And that is just a sign of old fallenness, That we do not realise how unacceptable both these things are, To a just God, A holy God, A righteous God, A God who is too holy to, To allow sin to enter into your presence.

We marvel at your forbearance towards each of us. Every waking moment we are inclined to sin, Every hour that our eyes are closed in sleep, We may be oblivious to the wanderings of our thoughts, They may be deeply in slumber, And yet there are often times when we awake from our sleep, Or are walking from our slumber, With thoughts that are a reminder to us, Of the source of such thoughts.

A heart, as your servant confessed it, That is desperately wicked, And that is incapable of being known, Even by those whose heart it is.

[ 8 : 03 ] But you are the searcher of hearts. You are the one who is able to plumb the depths of our being, Who understands all there is to be understood about, What we are, where we are, And what we are intent on being.

And your knowledge of us, Nevertheless, Does not prevent you from coming to us, And seeking to draw us to yourself.

We give thanks for your mercy, That exceeds our asking. We give thanks for the grace that you have endowed us with, Whereby we can recognize the person of your son Jesus Christ, The alone saviour of sinners.

That is the provision that you have made for your people. Those who had sin darkened minds, And whose walk was consistent with that.

And yet you brought them to yourself. And you revealed to the heart and mind of each of them, One who was perfectly able to deal with them, In their sorry plight.

[ 9 : 27 ] So bless us this evening as we reflect on these things. Bless your people and those who join with them in worship. May they be unified as one, And may each of us here know that we are in your presence.

Make your presence known to us. May it light a fire within our heart and mind, That is even the fire of heaven.

There were occasions when your gatherings, People who gathered in your name in the temples, And the tabernacles of the old dispensation. When you present yourself in their midst, And they were persuaded that it was none other than Jehovah, Who had descended and made himself known to them.

May that be so in our day. That even though we have progressed in many respects, As far as the journey of this world is concerned, We know that there are many things that remain the same.

While the tabernacle is no more, the temple is no more. All these things that were preparatory to the coming of our Lord, Have disappeared from sight.

[ 10 : 52 ] That spiritual truths that they spoke of have been fulfilled in him. And he is the one who stands before us in the gospel. And even now we know that he is able to come into our midst.

And in the passion of the Holy Spirit, Who speaks of him, And who directs our attention, our affection to him.

That we may know something of that. So bless us each one. Bless our homes, our families, All that are near and dear to us.

To us in particular those of that number, Who are careless and indifferent about the needs of their soul. Guard, keep and protect them. Until such time as they may come to know the God of heaven as their God.

We jealously bring them before you. And ask for them that they may have mercy in abundance.

- [ 12 : 00 ] It is inevitable that we begin in Jerusalem and go out to the far corners of the earth. We begin with our own.
- And we look beyond the borders of our homes and families. But we know that each and every one must do the same.
- And that you have entrusted us with the good news of salvation to whoever would hear of it. And grant to us that desire to share a word.
- A word in season with those who would be our fellows in the way. Whatever contact we have with them. May it be impressed upon our hearts and minds that whatever dialogue we may have, it may be our last.
- And if it were so. How truly tragic it would be in our lives if we were negligent in sharing the gospel with those who need to hear more of Jesus.
- [ 13 : 10 ] And they have not heard it as they are from our lips. We pray Lord forgiveness for every dereliction of duty. Every transgression that marks us out as failing in that regard.
- May we be lights that shine brightly in your kingdom. May we be salt. And even though that salt must be sprinkled at times on wounds so as to cause pain.
- That is with a view to healing. Grant to us that understanding. We ask that you would bless us as a congregation.
- All who form part of it. In whatever way they do form a part of it. We thank you for each one. Remembering those of that number that can't be with us in worship.
- In body but are no doubt in mind and spirit. Bless them as they share in our time together. May we be unified as one at the throne of grace.
- [ 14 : 21 ] May we know that unity of spirit that marks your people out. Please serve us from division. Please serve us from disarmony. Please serve us from disarmony. Please serve us from disarmony. Please serve us from disarmony that is so prevalent in our own day and generation.
- Remember our nation we pray. A nation that has departed from the ways of truth. We pray for those who govern us.
- It is our duty to remember them at the throne of grace. and we pray for our first minister, we pray for our prime minister, we pray for our king and his family.
- Whatever we think of them as people, whatever we think of their profession or lack of it, it is our duty to bring them before you and seek that you would make yourself known to them as the God of all grace.
- Bring them to their knees in your presence, crying out for mercy as all must and provoke us to seek holiness without which no man can seek God.
- [ 15 : 36 ] Remember the nations of the earth, we pray for those that are afflicted and there are afflictions many in the world, those who are grieving over the loss of loved ones because of the earthquake in Turkey and the neighbouring countries afflicted in the same way.
- We pray that you would remember them, remember the Ukraine and all war-torn nations, those affected by famine and flood and all natural disasters the world over.
- the greatest disaster that has befallen us as a race is the disaster of sin and it will out on those who who live in the presence of the gods of this world, the darkness that pervades the atmosphere that they must breathe.
- would thou not take the poison from their midst and speak into their darkness the light of your own countenance shining upon them, that the gospel of your grace may be heard.
- may we pray diligently for a day of power and that that may be evidenced even in our moments. Watch over us the short time we're together.

- [ 17 : 03 ] Grant to us focus upon your word, an attentive ear, a discerning heart, a receptive and a desiring mind that would seek the Lord Jesus Christ to be found amongst us.
- Forgive sin in Him. Amen. I'm going to sing again, this time from Psalm 51.
- Psalm 51, another penitential psalm. Psalm 51 at verse 7, singing down to verse 14.
- Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me? I shall be cleansed sore. Ye wash thou me and then I shall be whiter than the snow. Of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
- All mine iniquities blot out, thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within. Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away, restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit me stay.
- [ 18 : 31 ] Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, and those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee. O God of my salvation, guard me from blood guiltiness set free, then shall my tongue aloud sing of thy righteousness.
- And so on these verses, Psalm 51 from verse 7, Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me? I shall be cleansed so. To the way of hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.
- O God of gladness and all joyfulness, O God of gladness and all joyfulness, lift me through the earth.
- O God of gladness and all joyfulness, O God of gladness and all joyfulness, that's all these miracles, which thou hast broken, will thy joyfulness, then may ■■■de hundred, who may deserve me, Give just me our glory in you, our rights to be with him.
- Cast me not from thy side nor pay, thy holy spirit away.
- [ 21 : 09 ] Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy peace let me sing.
- Then will I teach thy wisdom to those that transgressors be.
- And those that sinners shall end eternally to thee.
- O God, all my salvation, God, me from the guilty end.
- Set me then shall my turn, all my salvation, of thy righteousness.
- [ 22 : 44 ] Let us hear God's word as we have it in the gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew. And we're reading from chapter 24, reading from the beginning of the chapter.
- And we can read down to verse 31. Matthew chapter 24, reading from the beginning. And Jesus went out and departed from the temple.
- And his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things?
- Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be?
- And what shall be the sign of thy coming? And of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
- [ 24 : 05 ] For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars.
- See that ye be not troubled. For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
- And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places. All these are the beginnings of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you.

And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

[ 25 : 13 ] But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.

And then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth let him understand.

Then let him which be in Judea flee unto the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time. No, nor ever shall be.

[ 26 : 27 ] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, are there? Believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth.

Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

[ 27 : 44 ] And the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.

And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet. And they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word. And to his name be the praise. Amen. Amen.

We're going to sing now some verses from Psalm 89. Psalm 89. We can read from verse 24.

[ 28 : 51 ] We're going to sing to verse 34 from verse 26. 2.

he shall cry, thou art my God alone, and he shall say, thou art the rock of my salvation. I'll make him my firstborn, more high than kings of any land. My love I'll ever keep for him, my covenant fast shall stand. His seed I by my power will make forever to endure, and as the days of heaven his throne shall stable be unsure. But if his children shall forsake my laws and go astray, and in my judgments shall not walk but wander from my way. If they my laws break, and do not keep my commandments, I'll visit then their faults with rods, their sins with chastisements.

Yet I'll not take my love from him, nor faults my promise make. My covenant I'll not break, nor change what with my mouth I speak. We're going to sing from verse 26 to verse 34, Psalm 89.

Thou art my father, he shall cry, thou art my God alone. Thou art my father, he shall cry, thou art my God alone.

And he shall say, thou art the rock of my salvation.

[ 31 : 10 ] Thou art my God alone.

Thou art my God alone.

Thou art my God alone. Thou art my God alone.

Thou art my God alone. Thou art my God alone. Thou art my God alone. Thou art my God alone. Thou art my God alone.

Thou art my God alone. And do not fit my commandments.

[ 33 : 07 ] I'll visit them their faults when the rods their sins with just immense.

Yet I'll not take my love from him, nor false my promise make.

My time, I'll not break nor change, what with my love I say.

Let us turn to the passage that we were reading together. Matthew chapter 24.

We can read verse 13. Matthew chapter 24, verse 13.

[ 34 : 24 ] But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

For the believer in Jesus Christ, these words are encouraging.

They often are encouraging. Because they tell the believer in Jesus Christ that their salvation is secure.

And it is a truth that the scripture repeatedly brings to our attention. And we find them in various places, spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think you'll find the same statement in Matthew and Mark and in Luke. You'll also find the same statement again in chapter 10 of the Gospel of Matthew.

[ 35 : 36 ] Word for word. But the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter, the Apostle John, also reminds the believer of their security, their salvation, being a salvation that will continue in this world to the end of the world, whatever that is to mean to them.

But we must put these words in a context in which they are found. And in many respects, these words are words that stand out because of that context.

If you have time, when you go home, read the previous chapters, chapter 23. And it's a chapter that is really very solemn.

Because in that chapter, you find the Lord Jesus Christ exposing the religious hierarchy of his own day.

Jesus denounces them, oath and dovet, and condemns their doctrines, their practices, their practices, and their pretended piety.

[ 37 : 04 ] And when you hear what he has to say, and they heard what he had to say, it's not surprising that they hated him with a venom. He told the truth.

And they didn't like the truth. And when you read these words for yourself, verse 13 of chapter 23, Woe unto you, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.

For you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and fathers, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer.

Therefore you shall receive the greater damnation. And so on. There's seven woes pronounced by Christ. And it's all to do with their perceived religiosity.

And they believe themselves to be holier than others, and better than others, and they judge others on the basis of their own righteousness.

[ 38 : 20 ] It would seem extraordinarily brave of him to speak in that fashion. But Jesus does not mind what people think of him.

Because what they think of him really says more about them than they do about him. He concludes the chapter, Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, You shall not see me henceforth till you say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Well, if you read that chapter, and I suggest you do read it, then we come to the words of chapter 24.

And he leaves the temple, and he leaves those who serve in the temple, and those who are masters of the temple, and those who are the figureheads of the temple.

And he turns his back on it, and then the disciples meet with him. I'm not really very sure if the disciples were privy to the conversation that he had with these scribes and Pharisees who were leaders or not.

[ 39 : 50 ] If they heard all he had to say to them, it seems surprising if they did, that when he meets with them, they suggest to him that he come with them and see the temple.

Because they admire the temple, and they want him to see the temple, and they want him to be taken up with the stones and the architecture of this place of worship that is so dear to themselves.

But he says to them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

That's not what they expect him to say. They expect him to come with them and admire this building which is so central to their own religiosity.

And yet, he says, Don't do it. Shortly, that building will be derelict. That building will be razed to the ground, even that city.

[ 41 : 08 ] And there follows then prophecy from the mouth of Jesus. And the prophecy is multifaceted.

It is complex. It is difficult to unravel. And you can understand that by the questions that are asked by the disciples. Because what he says causes them to ask him what, when, where, how, almost.

Questions that are bubbling up in their hearts because of all that Jesus has said. Tell us, when shall these things be?

What shall be the sign of thy coming? What shall be the sign of the end of the world? Because Jesus is clearly speaking to them of events that are going to take place.

And they don't understand how they're going to happen, why they're going to happen. They don't believe it possible that this city, that is the city of God, the sign of God, the centre of his worship, is going to be demolished and destroyed, as Jesus suggests.

[ 42 : 22 ] And then we have the prophecy and all that makes up the prophecy. And it's very difficult even for those who do not, do not have the insight that is necessary to understand the spiritual truth that Christ presents to us.

There's so much to it. There's so many elements involved in it. The disciples are either ignorant or they're fearful or whatever.

So what stimulates this barrage of questions is quite obvious as we can see. The end of the world. When is it going to be?

These terrible events that you speak of, when is it going to happen? You can understand why that is so. But in many respects, the questions that are raised by these prophecies still exist.

Because you're sitting there and the end of the world hasn't happened yet. Some of these things that Jesus is speaking of, they've not taken place.

[ 43 : 48 ] But that doesn't mean that they won't. It doesn't mean that we won't be able to appreciate when they do happen that they are happening.

But that's where the problem lies with many of the attempts that are made to interpret these words of prophecy. you know, when you look at what Jesus is saying here and you approach it in this fashion and you draw up a list.

It can be a mental list. You can sit down if you're dedicated and write down on a piece of paper all the things that you recognize there that could possibly have taken place and that correspond with the words of prophecy uttered by Jesus.

Some of them fulfilled in his own day. Some of them fulfilled shortly after his death. Some of them may be being fulfilled in our own day and you write down your list and you tick the boxes and say oh yes, this is what happened.

This is how it happened. This is the way Jesus said it would happen. But the thing that is necessary for those who look at the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and try and interpret them in a meaningful way is to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is able to speak of events as they occur events as they will shortly take place events that will happen as an outcrop of his own activity on the scene of time events that are yet to take place spoken of perhaps by the Old Testament prophets yet to be realized the coming of the Son of Man with a myriad host of angels we know has not happened.

[ 46 : 00 ] but Jesus wants us to understand that some of these things will always be in this world they are not things that will be unique in the sense that they will correspond to a time and place that we can recognize that's where the disciples I think went wrong they wanted day and date they wanted the calendar to be in front of them so they would circle the day in the calendar that Jesus was going to do these things or that they would see these things evidenced amongst them and be able to say oh yes that's the way he said it and that's how it came into be but there are no dates and there are no definite ways of saying we're sure maybe you know some people are very definite in the way there's plenty books if you want to read the interpretation of prophecy you can do so and find very powerful arguments made for the words of prophecy here to have been fulfilled once and once only never to be fulfilled again and that's that but in the words of Jesus he says he says to us these things are always the way they are the world in which you live will see some of these things again and again

I remember I know that I mentioned you know in his own day Jesus spoke to the disciples and he spoke to them about events that probably some of them saw there are events that he told them about that have yet to happen but it is I think an overarching principle in what he said that the world in which they live would see all of these things repetitively that they were not one of occurrences that they were things that they would see happen again and again the enmity that he speaks of directed against the disciples was not something that ended when the disciples were taken from the scene of time it was an enmity that was initially directed at the saints of God even the saints in the Old Testament it was focused on the passion of the



Lord Jesus Christ but it did not end with the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ it remains it continues it ever will be the same that those who bear Christ's name will be persecuted there's a book that used to be in the book case of many Christians in this island and beyond the book written by a Puritan by the name William Gurnall and it's given the title I mentioned this before I'm always intrigued with not just the title the title seems straightforward enough the Christian in complete armour it was written in the 17th century but it has a subtitle a treatise of the saints war against the devil and that subtitle seems straightforward enough it's a good subtitle to what he handles within the book but then there's a sub subtitle which is what I find humorous

I suppose wherein a discovery is made of that grand enemy of God and his people in his policies power sought of his empire wickedness and chief design he hath against the saints it's a beauty of our title is it not but it describes to you the content of this book and what he's interested in that the Christian in the world is at war he is always at war it's not a war that started and ended it's a war that's ongoing and it always will be ongoing and the reason it is ongoing there's an enemy at work in the world and he's warring against the saints of God and that's what Jesus wants his disciples to understand in this book William Gurnall says the Christian must keep on his way to heaven in the midst of all the scandals that are cast upon the ways of God by the apostasy and foul false of false professors there were ever such in the church who by their sad miscarriages in judgment and practice have laid a stone of offense in the way of their profession salvation and I think that's significant in the handling of this passage that Jesus says to his people that they are going to persevere to the end that they are going to continue that they are going to survive this world advances upon them their endeavors to be affected and destroyed they that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved now

Jesus is saying something there which we must take note of the point that he is making the fact that he is stating the point that Gernal was making the fact that he is stating and restating within that massive tome of his that there is a potential in this world to affect the faith of every believer and the need that there is for the believer to understand that they can persevere in the world even in the face of such a potential to harm them that they can persevere they are able to persevere they are promised that they can persevere if they do not make shipwreck of their faith there is an assurance

[ 53 : 19 ] I suppose given to the believer that it is perfectly possible for them to survive and thrive in a world that is openly hostile to them now that is what Jesus is reminding his disciples of I think we see the forest and we look at the trees and yet the truth that lies at the heart of what Jesus is teaching is this that in this world where all of these things are current and are imminent and that they lie as a specter in the future for all that the believer has every right to believe that they are able to persevere to the end and it is no small obstacle to their perseverance that he presents to them it is no small threat to their survival as

Christian that he brings to their attention now when I say that it is not as if I'm giving carte blanche to the Christian here to think that well no matter what doesn't matter what I do it doesn't matter where I go doesn't matter what I say I'm going to survive I'm going to survive I'm going to persevere to the end you will always find that it's not as simple as that it's not we shall be saved no matter what there is certainty connected with it and the certainty arises not so much from the fact that you can do what you like when you like if you like but that there is a greater power at work in the world than any one of us can estimate and also you have to take on board even before you consider what is being said here that if you are a child of

God and that if you exercise faith towards Jesus Christ you can be persuaded of this that that faith will be tested by the world in which you are called to live that faith will be challenged by those outside of you and by a heart that is desperately wicked that you need to contend with that you need to wrestle with that you need to master with the strength that God affords the person who applies to him for it just as surely as you find words that encourage you to believe that the Christian will persevere therein to the end there are also words that are equally significant like let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall let the

Christian believer who is persuaded of the genuineness of their faith always be on their guard before they slip before they fall before they tripped up before the means of causing somebody else to trip up it is with a view to securing a successful end to their walk that Jesus utters these words I find that because I've been here so long I often refer to things that I mentioned before but sometimes I think it's part of getting old sometimes I think well if it's worth saying once it's worth saying again but I remember as a young Christian being spoken to by an old minister who had recently retired and I don't know what we were talking about or what the conversation was about but

I remember what he did say he said Callum it's not how you begin that matters it's how you end I've never forgotten it it's not how you begin that matters it's how you end and that is true because I know and you know of many people who made profession of their faith and sometimes with dramatic testimonies to verify that their faith was genuine and yet they spectacularly crashed and burned you know there are many Christians and they envied their testimony because of the way that God came into their experience or as they explained it and yet there's no sign of them today on the scene of the church I remember when I was in

[ 58 : 39 ] Aberdeen there were young a lot of young Christians in that congregation and you know I was I was with with grass in my ears going away from the islands and meeting these people and boy did they know how to talk how they were able to express their faith and speak about their background and how they knew the Lord and loved the Lord well I look for some of these people today and there's nowhere to be found nowhere to be found within the church of Christ I would expect them today to be the elders of the church I would expect them to be ministers in the church but they're not they're not there and I wonder what happened to them what happened to their faith what happened to their relationship to Christ but I don't need to go back to outside of my own experience in our island in our community in our churches we can be obsessed with beginnings and it's important for us to ensure that the beginning is as it ought to be but Jesus here is promising not only a beginning but an end a perseverance to the end

I know that when I began as a Christian I'm not embarrassed about sharing with you this fear that I had that I would not I would not persevere having made my interest in Christ public I was saying what if I got it wrong what if I wasn't where I should be with Christ I was at the Shabbos communion this weekend just attending as temporary interim moderator afterwards I realized that it's nearly 40 years since I made a profession in that congregation nearly 40 years and do you know this I'm as afraid today as I ever was that I wouldn't continue you might think that's terrible of a minister to confess but I've seen the potential that there is in each one of us to make shoe break of our faith to go backwards to fall away and I may very bit of have that fear in me but thanks to God that my perseverance is not down to my ability to persevere the church's subordinate standards the confession of faith it has a chapter on perseverance of the saints and you read it for yourself and part of it goes like this those

God has accepted in his beloved effectually called and sanctified by his spirit can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace but shall certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved what could be more definite than that but it also elaborates on this that this is not because of our power to persevere rather it depends upon the electing call of God the intercession of Jesus Christ all these things that depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ being effective in our lives and being a continuous presence with us in all that we seek to do you take time to read the encouraging words in the confession and it will convince you that this is not some golden ticket to heaven but a reminder to us that the ability we have to persevere is God's gift to us but it is a reminder to us of the onslaught that there is in the world against our faith against our profession against our adherence to it against our loyalty to

Christ every way we look we are drawn this way and that away from God's truth and God's truth as it is in Christ what is the remedy for our perseverance well Peter's words are the best encouraged we have where for the rather brethren he says give diligence to make your calling and election sure for if you do these things you shall never fall the onus is there presented to you as if it is yours if it is mine and all the time Christ is saying I have you I have you but we have to be sure of that don't we we have to ensure that our relationship with him is as it should be we have to be sure that that when there are things in our life that should not be there that there are only temporary aberrations that by his grace can be dealt with if there are sins we can repent of them if there are wrong roads that we've gone on we can retrace our steps and come back to where we should be it's never final unless we make it final

Jesus is a wonderful saviour and he encourages his people who have salvation through him to maintain a close walk with him then with that walk being the way it should be the assurance comes with it well may God encourage you to have such a knowledge of him that would that would take away the fears and it would strengthen and deepen your own relationship with him to be as it should let us pray Lord our God as we think of your word we give thanks for the many things within it we can't understand we know that even in our present generation there are wars and rumors of wars there are earthquakes there are famines there are so many indicators that seem plain to us to suggest that we live in the last days and the world is soon to come to an end maybe that is the case you haven't revealed the day or the date the day or the time to us but you have told us that the day will come when the son of man will come and you will come to bring your own to be with yourself and they will enjoy the privilege of being taken and they will enjoy the privilege of being kept not just in this world but kept in the realms of glory where no sin can enter in forgive us every transgression through

[ 67 : 18 ] Christ amen we're going to sing in conclusion words from psalm 145 the first version of the psalm and the last few verses psalm 145 the first version of verse 17 the lord is just in all his ways holy in his works all god's near to all that call on him in truth that on him call he will accomplish the desire of those that do him fear he also will deliver them and he their cry will hear the lord preserves all who him love that not can them annoy but he all those that wicked are will utterly destroy my mouth the praises of the lord to publish cease shall never let all flesh bless his holy name forever and forever the lord is just in all his ways holy in his works all the lord is just in all his ways holy works all

God's near to all that call on him and through that on him fall he will accomplish the desire of those that could appear he also will deliver them and he there cry will hear the lord preserves all who him love that not condemn the night but he he will honor he destroy one the one hai my blesses your never let your flesh bless his holy name forever and forever may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son of the Holy

Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always Amen