

But you know

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

Date: 15 April 2022

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] We're going to worship God by singing to his praise from Psalm 139. Psalm 139, from the beginning of the psalm.
- O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down and rising up, yea, all my thoughts are far to thee are known.
- My footsteps and my lying down, thou compasses always, thou also most entirely art, acquaint with all my ways.
- For in my tongue before I speak, not any word can be, but altogether, O Lord, it is well known to thee. Behind, before, thou hast beset and laid on me thine hand. Such knowledge is too strange for me, too high to understand.
- From thy spirit whither shall I go, or from thy presence fly? Ascend I heaven, lo, thou art there, there if in hell am I.
- [1 : 10] Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea. Even there, Lord, shall thy hand me lead, thy right hand hold shall me.
- And so on. I can sing these verses. Psalm 139, from the beginning, O Lord, thou hast me searched and known.
- O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down.
- Come right by hand look at me, over the side. ekk Koetaleros, those are my thingy-skullers who have been ■■■■■. And now have you searched and known, all my thoughts shall part Drink in a place where they are known.
- My perception, my lying down, thou compasses always, thou Thompson's on Oh God, you praise attainest all says. Pal prescription, My dying down, thou compasses always.
- [2 : 17] That also hold them timely, Lord, but with all my ways.
- For in my tongue before I stay, not any work can be.
- But all together, Lord, are great is well known to thee.
- Be high before the last be set, not lift only thy hand.
- Such knowledge is to switch for me, to light, to understand.
- [3 : 30] Take I the morning, which I dwell in the cold hearts of thee.
- If there, Lord, shall I not be, thy right and bold shall be.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray. Lord, O God, as we come before you in prayer, we give thanks that we can believe that it is not simply the person who is leading the prayer that is praying.
- That we are called to at times take that place of leadership in praise and sometimes in prayer.
- But always we expect to be accompanied by your people as they join in your worship.
- [5 : 29] Sometimes with melody in their heart. Sometimes their words are in unison with the words that others utter.

And sometimes, although they might feel themselves incapable of praising you loudly or audibly, they are still able in their heart of hearts to join in that praise that belongs in your presence.

And similarly, in our prayers. And similarly, in our prayers, while it may be one person who is called to lead, the others can pray to you in their hearts and join in calling upon your name.

And then, in our prayers, while it may be one person who is called to lead, the others can pray to you in your prayer. And we give thanks that we find ourselves so often lifted up by others as we sometimes find ourselves struggling.

In the duty that evolves upon us in an act of leadership. And yet, we give thanks that while we may struggle, that our struggles are impacted upon by the help of others.

[7 : 22] And it is our desire even tonight as we engage in your worship, in your singing, singing of your praises, in the offering up of our desires to God at the throne of grace.

May we have that unity of spirit.

That uniformity of desire, where we would wish above all to lift up the name of Christ and to praise and magnify that Christ for all he means to us as the saviour of this sin-ridden world.

May we give thanks that he took upon him the burden of that saviourhood.

That you called him the burden of that saviourhood. That you called him to it in the midst of eternity. And that in the trinity, that is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[8 : 52] Whatever dialogue was involved in it, that it was the Father's pleasure to send the Son.

It was the Son's pleasure to come, and having come to send the Spirit to reveal to us the truth concerning the mystery of the divine will for the salvation of sinners.

We give thanks for the gospel that the Holy Spirit to us.

We give thanks for the mighty clay and set our feet upon the rock. Establishing your way. Ensuring that you would set us in the path of life.

And that the ultimate aim that you have for us is to bring us to be with yourself. And to be like him who came to engage in that most lofty activity of being the redeemer of that lost fallen people.

[10 : 28] We pray that you would encourage us even tonight as we read your word. To understand the mystery that surrounds the good will of God towards man.

Even when it is something that we may struggle to discover in the complexities of our lives here in this world.

That we may understand that even though we are often misinformed by the enemy of our soul that God intends evil for us.

That it is but a lie from the father of liars. And that he is one that who would usurp the authority of one who sits upon the throne and who has right to possess that throne.

And none dare attempt to remove him from it. We pray that you would encourage us to understand even in the ways in which our lives are at present.

[11 : 39] To discover what you are engaged in doing in our lives as individuals. As families corporately as a congregation.

As a denomination. As a church here on earth. We pray for your blessing upon all that is wrought in your name. In the proclamation of truth may Christ be magnified.

In the way in which men and women need to discover for themselves. Even our young people. That they need to be reminded of.

That their lives however it may appear to us. That these lives are in the beginning of their lifelong journey.

Not one of us can say how long that journey may be. We mistakenly think that as we see the youth of today.

[12 : 43] That they may live up to a ripe old age. And no one has a right to presume upon that as being the truth. Remind us Lord of the need that we have to make haste.

And to avail ourselves of the provisions of the gospel. While that opportunity is ours. And we see so many who have been raised under the sound of the gospel.

Who have hardened under it. And now their place is empty in the places of worship. Places that they once frequented.

And in the eyes of many. They were seen to be ripening. To take their place in the courts of your house.

As posts. And as witnesses to the truth. But they are no longer to be seen. We wonder at that.

[13 : 47] And it is not ours to reason why it is the way it is. But there is a danger there for us. And these are beacons of the truth.

That remind us of the way that sin hardens the heart of those who are given place to unbelief.

Just as clay is hardened under the sun. So the heart hardens under the gospel if it is not paid heed to. So remember us Lord in mercy.

To pour out your spirit upon us. That our hearts which we fear are so hard. And so yielding to the truth of God.

That you may melt it by your spirit. That we may find ourselves hearing what God the Lord has to say to us. And in faith responding to it.

[14 : 49] Trusting not in the arm of flesh. But looking instead to the God who is spirit. Oh bless us together we pray this evening.

Bless our homes, our families, our congregation. Bless all we entrust to your care and keeping. Especially those whose hearts may be sore and heavy.

As your voice has been heard so frequently in past days. Once again we know that one who was associated with the church here in the world.

Has been taken from the scene of time. And we believe ushered into your presence. Where he will enjoy the fullness of what that means.

We give thanks for any who have that hope in them. And for all who have that hope concerning them. Encourage the grieving we pray. Especially when you denude your church of its witness here in the world.

[15 : 54] We pray for others to be raised up. That you would add to their number even from our own midst. That you would work amongst us. That you would quicken those who are spiritually dead.

That you would disturb the nests that they have made for themselves. While they are so at peace. And so content with their lot. Not reckoning on what it will mean.

For the hour that is fast hastening. Where answer must be given to the Christ. Who will call all to stand before him on the judgment day.

We pray for this world in which we live. That has so desecrated your name. And denied its veracity and truth.

The truth of the gospel. We pray for mercy. We pray that you would remember our kingdom. And those who govern us. The Queen and her household. Remember the nations of the earth.

[16 : 56] Particularly where there is war. And where there is strife. We pray for those places that we know of. And many that we know nothing of. Remember those nations that are famine ridden.

That are parched because of lack of water. We pray for those who are destitute. And there are many in this world who are in their thousands upon thousands.

Who live on the downhill. And who have no thought of their soul. We pray Lord for mercy. And an outpouring of your spirit as we said.

Accompany the gospel. As it is preached and proclaimed by whosoever. That they would know that the Lord is with them in their labors. Continue to watch over us a short time.

We're together. May this communion season. May it be blessed to each of us. However different it is to what we have enjoyed in the past.

[17 : 57] You have not changed. Your word is the same. The Christ that we seek to remember. But it is the same Christ who came and died on the cross.

And who is to be remembered in his death. Enable us so to do by faith. Cleanse from sin. In Jesus precious name we ask it. The forgiveness of sin in him.

Amen. I'm going to read from the Old Testament scriptures. And from the book of Job. The book of Job.

And the reading chapter 23. Job chapter 23. Then Job answered and said.

Even today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him.

[18 : 56] That I might come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him. And fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me.

And understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me. With his great power. No but he would put his strength in me.

There the righteous might dispute with him. So should I be delivered forever from my judge. Behold I go forward. But he is not there.

And backward. But I cannot perceive him. On the left hand where he does work. But I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand.

That I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me. I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps.

[19 : 58] His way have I kept. And not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth.

More than my necessary food. But he is in one mind. And who can turn him. And what his soul desireth. Even that he doeth.

For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me. And many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence. When I consider.

I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft. And the almighty troubleth me. Because I was not cut off before the darkness.

Neither hath he covered the darkness from my face. Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to this reading. Of his word and to his name.

[20 : 57] Be the praise. We are going to sing now verses from Psalm 77. Psalm 77. At verse 3.

And we can read from the beginning of the psalm. Unto the Lord I with my voice. I unto God did cry. Even with my voice and unto me his ear he did apply.

I in my trouble sought the Lord. My sore by night did run. And ceased not my grieved soul. Did consolation shun. I to remembrance God did call.

Yet trouble did remain. And overwhelmed my spirit was. Whilst I did sore complain. Mine eyes depart from rest and sleep.

Thou makest still to wake. My trouble is so great. That I enable and to speak. The days of old to mind I called. And oft did think upon.

[22 : 05] The times and ages that are past. Full many years are gone. By night my song I call to mind. And commune with my heart. My spirit did carefully inquire.

How I might ease my smart. Forever will the Lord cast off. And gracious be no more. Forever is his mercy gone.

Fails his word evermore. Is it true that to be gracious. The Lord forgotten hath. And that his tender mercies he.

Hath shut up in his wrath. And so on. We're going to sing from verse 3 to 9. I to remembrance God did call.

Yet trouble did remain. I to remembrance God did call.

[23 : 06] Yet trouble did remain. And over ambient.

Jesus Senhor is not locked. In his wall was favored. My night's depart from wretched sun's sea, the wicked still to win.

My trouble is so great that I a little long to see.

The days of old till my night come, and all day live upon.

The times of years have passed for many years have gone.

[24 : 27] By night my soul died, all to mine, and called you with my heart.

My strength in care, holy and crime, how I might reach my heart.

Forever will the Lord cast off, and gracious be your Lord.

Forever is His mercy on, and is His word evermore.

This should not to be gracious, the Lord for all will not.

[25 : 46] I'm glad to be with you. I'm glad to be with you. I'm glad to be with you.

We can turn to the passage read, the Old Testament Scriptures, the book of Job, chapter 23.

And we can read again at verse 10. But he knoweth the way that I take.

When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. But he knoweth the way that I take.

When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. There are many who consider the book of Job a difficult book.

[27 : 00] Difficult to read. Difficult to deal with the subject matter that confronts them in the book.

Difficult to reconcile the way God deals with a person that he calls his own.

And yet, it has in it sublime statements of truth that speak to us of the grandeur of God's providence.

One theologian speaks of it as a book dealing with the problem of suffering under the moral administration of a righteous God.

And it is something that confronts us within this book.

[28 : 05] Nobody can question. But that God's servant Job suffers greatly in many different ways. Others see a book that we can study in order to marvel at the mystery of the way in which God's sovereignty and God's providence come together.

Come together. Work together in tandem. So that God's glory is preserved and the good of his own people is encouraged.

Our focus this evening is going to be on verse 10. But we cannot separate it from its context. And essentially what I have in mind or had in mind when I was looking at this was the way faith, the faith of Job comes to the fore in the way he deals with his circumstances.

I'd never thought of it before, but you don't find the name of Job in the list of saints who are mentioned for their faith.

He's not numbered amongst those who have a name for being saints whose faith shines, as it were.

[29 : 55] And yet I don't believe that there is any one of the ones who are listed who have a greater faith than Job. In the book of the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle James, both of these books make mention of Job.

But Ezekiel says the following, Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.

It's interesting that Ezekiel, or the Lord, makes mention of Job in that sense. But it's not out of keeping.

It's not, it isn't anything other than what you would expect of this person. And our focus this evening is on his faith.

Many would look at this book and think of God's providential dealings with the saints and his sovereign overlordship of that providence to that end.

[31 : 17] But at the heart of what we have in this book is somebody who is a man of God. Someone who is a man of faith. In fact, God himself describes him as one such.

You remember these words, And that's a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and shuns evil. And that's a description God gives to him.

So, if he's not a man of faith, then what is he? But we're looking at this verse in particular, and we're just going to mention three things, I think, that we need to consider.

First of all, there is this word, but. And it's all important. But, he says, he knows the way that I take.

And that but must follow on from what he has said before. And what he has said before makes that but all important. The second thing we have is a confident assertion based upon what that but is saying to us.

[32 : 30] And the third thing, the understanding that Job has of what God is doing. And it is quite remarkable that he has that grasp, that he has that understanding.

And only by faith can he have that understanding. And we'll hopefully see how that is possible. Well, the word but, it comes after his description of how he finds himself looking for God and not able to discover God.

He is looking for him where he would expect to find him. But he cannot find him.

And clearly, if we believe him to be a man of faith, which he is, if we believe him to be a man of spiritual discernment, which he is, then Job is not somebody who is looking for God in a physical sense.

Because he knows God is spirit. He probably knows the theology concerning God, although he's an early saint. Many believe that he's a contemporary of Abraham, or one of the earlier patriarchs.

[34 : 12] He's a contemporary of Abraham, or one of the earlier saints. Whether he is or not, that doesn't mean that he is not acquainted with who God is. So he's looking for God, but not in the physical sense.

He knows that God is invisible. He knows that God is spirit.

But he wants to be able to discern his presence. He wants to be able to see God at work, and to know that it is God that is working.

For Job, it is not a contradiction. The absence of God was the result of God hiding himself from him.

At least denying him a sensible presence, a sensible experience of his presence. If I put it to you personally, you're theologians, because I believe that under the teaching of the gospel for many years, every one of you understands that your God, the God that you're here to worship tonight, is a God that is present.

[35 : 45] A God who is ever-present. A God who is omnipresent. Do you understand that?

Because you understand who God is. But because many of you are believers, you also believe that in the presence of God's people, where they gather together to worship him, he is present in a very special way.

Or you would expect them to be. But does that mean that you have that experience of discerning the presence of God, even though you know that God is present, and that God has promised to be present, where the two or three are gathered together in his name?

Does that mean that for you tonight you are aware of being in the presence of God? Or that God is discernibly present to your mind's eye, or to the eye of your soul?

Now that is what concerned Job. He understood what God's word said. He understood all the truth concerning God.

[37 : 09] And yet what did concern him, what did trouble him was that he needed to find God, and he was not finding him the way he wanted to find him.

Behold, he said, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him.

He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. That was his predicament. That was his experience.

But, and there is a but for him. And this is the remarkable thing. This is where faith comes in. This is somebody whose eye of faith is fixed upon a God that he knows is there, even though he is indiscernible to the faculties that he most wants to be exposed to him.

I know you are there, and that you know, not just that your people are there, you know where I am, he says.

[38 : 29] You know the way that I take. I think that Job is there, making an expression of confidence that he knows that not only is God able to discern him physically, and to know where he is situated geographically, and to know where he is situated as far as family is concerned, as far as genealogy is concerned, as far as his history is concerned, he knows where he is spiritually.

He knows where he is with regard to himself. Now that doesn't mean that there's not a struggle going on in the life of Job.

It doesn't mean that because of that struggle that he can't confidently assert that God is there.

That's the thing that's remarkable about the way Job is. You know, sometimes when you're talking to some people, and you can find it in the Psalms, where the psalmist is saying that he is looking for God, and God is not to be found.

And there is no hint at that moment where that declaration is made that they are confident that God is there to be found.

[40 : 13] Because a person can go and be in that situation, they can come to such a place where they are convinced that God is beyond them.

God is not only just hiding from them, but he has put himself out of their reach. He doesn't want them to reach out to him.

He doesn't want them to touch them. But Job is not like that. One of the commentators, Bill Cotton, puts it like this.

He is confident in the midst of his pain. He clings to the essential goodness and justice of God, even when experience would seem to deny it.

And you know the experience of Job. You know what he's gone through. You know what he's going through. You know that he is being bombarded by all kinds of vain counsel who are trying, people who are trying to interpret his providence and who are not able to.

[41 : 37] Job is saying, even though I am fumbling as it were in the dark, even though I'm stumbling, even though I'm tripping this way and that, I'm not able to discern my way.

I still know that you are there and I know that you know where I am. The way is hard and the hurt is real, but I'm still able to believe that you are my God.

My belief, he says, is God knows. Now, that is not a natural thought process.

That is not something that we instinctively arrive at by order of, by process of elimination. this is something that grows from the root of faith and that is present in the life of the believer who is firmly clutching or holding on to what, what is true about God.

This personal misery and awareness of the divine presence yet not in a in a comforting way.

[43 : 05] Isn't that strange? Job knows God is present. Job is convinced that God is where he should be and yet Job at the same time is not able to recognize the presence of God in a comforting or a consoling way.

He is not able to discover afresh the loving kindness of that God, the covenant faithfulness of that God at that moment even though he is persuaded of it.

We know that Job lived, well, very probably lived long before the prophet Isaiah and yet I believe that Job would say his amen to what Isaiah said many years afterwards.

Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. Thy walls are continually before me. You know that truth. Job knew it.

[44 : 37] Maybe not this truth but he knew what was at the heart of that truth uttered many years afterwards through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah. But there is more to his understanding than simply knowing that God is omniscient, that God is omnipresence.

Because he says, he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, he says, I shall come, I shall come forth as gold.

because he says, I am on the way of trying. I am on the way of testing. And it's not just a way that I am on randomly or by chance.

It is his way for me. It is this place that he has put me in. He is the one trying. He is the one testing. And he knows that because he has put me there.

It's not difficult to understand. It's not difficult to make sense of how that can possibly be. And yet, I think that when somebody says that to you about themselves, it's very difficult for you to enter into their experience, if not impossible.

[46 : 20] Very recently, I heard somebody say about their own experience, an experience that was filled with grief, filled with physical pain, filled with a certain knowledge that death was imminent, and at the same time, say perfectly, clearly, lucidly, with a full measure of understanding of what he was saying, that God was good, and what he was doing was good.

Now, you hear that, and you watch that taking place, and you're probably no different to Job's comforters, you're askance, you're looking at it from a distance, you're looking at it and saying, how can that person say that?

How can that person think that? Because what you're seeing is external to you, what you're seeing is what God may be doing, but you can't fully understand the intimate outworking of it and the experience of that person.

What were Job's comforters saying to himself? Well, in chapter 22, he was whereas our substance is not cut down but the remnant of the fire consumeth.

Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace. Thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth and lay up his words in thine heart.

[48 : 17] If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. That's what they were saying to him.

They were interpreting his providence, they were interpreting his pain, they were putting their own construction on what he was going through because they didn't understand it.

They couldn't appreciate it. They couldn't delve into the sufferings of Job or what God was doing in his life and soul through what was taking place.

sometimes God works in mysterious ways. His wonders to perform was the hymn writer's words.

I read recently a Mulder Campbell's biography of Happy Norman, the king's servant, and he cites an example there of something that's mysterious to many of us today, of the way Norman encountered and came to know a young Christian woman.

[49 : 31] And that young Christian woman suffered a lot. Didn't explain what the suffering was, but she was suffering.

and in the biography we read that Happy Norman was constrained to pray for her because of her suffering.

But he said he took it upon himself to ask God what her suffering was. Why was she made to suffer in this way? And he said, no sooner asked the question, of God, but that God gave an answer to him why the affliction was there.

And maybe we wouldn't understand. We wouldn't be able to have the discernment to appreciate or even ask the question of God.

But the answer that he received was evil communications corrupt good manners. That was the word that came to him from God concerning the girl.

[50 : 49] And he understood from that rightly or wrongly this is his discernment at work that this young Christian woman was inappropriately associating with those who were belied on her spiritual life.

life. Now could we do that? Would we be able to understand why there was suffering in the lives of those that we know, or even our own lives?

it may be that we're not in that privileged position to do that. But the thing for Job is that there were experiences that he had that he could not understand and he sought God because of these experiences and the answers that we would seek from God were not made available to him because he couldn't find God where he was looking for him.

But did that suppresses faith? Did that discourages faith? Did that destabilises faith? Is that not what happens when we find ourselves being hard pressed?

Is that not what happens? we rock and we roll and we run our backs before you know it?

[52 : 28] But for Job his confidence remained firm. The afflictions of Job were understood to be from God.

Now that doesn't mean that he understood why God afflicted him. It didn't mean that he understood with clarity what was behind them or what was ahead of them in understanding what God was doing.

The Puritan George Swinock makes the following comment. He says when Israel dogged on Egypt as a palace God made it an iron furnace to make them weary of it.

He further says till the prodigal met with a famine he regarded not his father. In other words that Puritan is saying sometimes God has to intervene in the lives of his people.

They're his people remember and his intervention has to do with where they are with him or where he would want them to be with him.

[53 : 53] It's the easiest thing in the world to consider the justicement of God being upon his people entirely the result of sin.

In a sense many people look at the book of Job and they say it's all down to sin. There's sin in the world and this is why Job has to suffer because there's sin in the world but there's more to it than that.

And sometimes God works in the lives of his people because he wants them to be closer to himself.

His love is behind as justice knows. God knows the way that I take he says. And once he has finished his work I shall come forth as gold.

Now can you think of that of yourself? Maybe you're thinking of others. Well I'm seeing this person here have come to my mind. I've got a clear image of this person who's bedridden or this person who's struggling with physical infirmity or this person who has had a sore providence and I can see that God is at work in their lives.

[55 : 21] He's trying them. He's testing them. He's taking them through his fullness and I can see what he is doing. I can recognize what it will be like when he is finished.

But if you're in the crucible, if you're in the furnace, if you're in the place of testing, is it easy for you to say, oh God, I know what you're doing with me?

One of the commentators, Peter Wilson, Peter Williams, he says the following, Job is convinced that he will come through this testing stronger even though God is not finished with him yet.

It's a remarkable statement. Even though God is not finished with him yet, the refining process whereby faith is strengthened is sometimes best accompanied or accomplished when all the props and supports of life are taken away from us, even the seeming withdrawal of God himself, and all we have is a naked faith.

I'm not too comfortable with that last statement, a naked faith. But I know what he's saying.

[56 : 54] The Apostle Paul writes in the epistle to the Romans, we glory, he says, in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

Who would want troubles? Who would want trials? Who would want testings? Who would want the furnace?

Who would want the crucible? Not one of us. But Paul understands that these troubles work towards a more glorious end.

Job understands, I shall come forth as gold, he says. It doesn't mean that he's comfortable, it doesn't mean that he's at ease, it doesn't mean that he's not feeling the pain, but he understands with the faith of a believer in a God who doeth all things well.

While we cannot know what God keeps hidden, we do know that what he hides he does for a reason. His word tells us that his way is in the sea, and his path is in great water whose footsteps are not known.

[58 : 39] We've discovered that. If you're a child of God you can't but have discovered that. Look back at the tapestry of your own life and look at the way God has dealt with you hitherto, but hitherto you're able to see the Lord has helped you.

Why has he helped you? because you're his own. What does he intend for you? Nothing but good. And you can rest your faith on that truth.

It's John Murray that says, I do not know, but I know, God knows.

I do not know, but I know, God knows. And that is where the faith of the believer often has to rest.

You know, you want certainties. You want things that you can reach out and feel and touch. You know, one of the commentators that I read, and I possibly quoted before.

[59 : 58] He describes the grief that was in his life when his young wife was taken from him, and he was left with a young child to care for.

He struggled to deal with that situation, and so too did the child. And he tells of how he took his own bed into her bedroom because the weeping of the night was so difficult to bear.

But as he lay beside her one night, shortly after the bereavement, he heard her cry, and he reached out and touched her, and she went quiet, and he said to try not to cry, God is near.

And I think her reply was, oh I know that, but it is good to feel his skin, you know, the touch of a loved one.

And that's the way we are with God. We want his touch, we want to know his touch, but sometimes he doesn't allow us that. Sometimes what we have is the most precious gift that he has given us, that grace of faith that may lay hold of him in the most extreme places.

[61 : 35] May that kind of faith be your faith. May it sustain you in all the changes that life brings your way, your ups, your downs, your confusion and your certainty.

May God be your portion, and may you be as confident that whatever he is doing, whatever trial he's taking you through, that he will take you through it as the gold that is most pure.

Let us pray. O Lord, O God, help us to understand that you are always there, even though we are at times thinking that you are not, because you are silent.

You hide yourself from us with good reason. Forgive us the many reasons that you give to us for keeping yourself hidden.

continue to watch over us, even when we are careless about looking after ourselves. Hear our prayers and guard us from all evil.

[62 : 47] In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. we shall conclude by singing from Psalm 42.

Psalm 42. And we're going to sing from verse 8 to the end of the psalm. This loving kindness yet the Lord command will in the day.

The songs with me by night to God by whom I live I pray. And I will say to God my rock why me forgetst thou so? Why for my foe's oppression this morning do I go?

Tis as a sword within my bones when my foes me upbraid, even when by them where is thy God to still lead to me said.

O why art thou cast down my soul? Why thus with grief oppressed art thou disquieted in me? In God still hope and rest.

[63 : 51] For yet I know I shall him praise who graciously to me the health is of my countenance. Yea, mine own God is he.

These verses, Psalm 42 from verse 8 to the end, his loving kindness yet the Lord command will in the day.

His loving kindness yet the Lord command with the day, his songs will be by night to God by whom I will breathe.

But I would see you on my road by him or his love hope I form my bones so wretched of the morning till I go.

Tis us the storm within my bones when my bones be afraid it went by them where is thy cause till still be to be said O why art thou amar mag~~■■~~ in him

[66 : 28] For yet I know my child in grace through Christian's victory.

The heavens of my counted hands, yet I know not with thee.

May grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen. Amen.