

Then Opened He Their Understanding

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Date: 03 October 2021

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 0 0] This is him, when in the sin he's overcome, upon his holy hill.

My child stands, most beautiful, my joy of all the land.

The city of the Lord, the mighty name, on Thine State's land.

The Lord made them by my will set, in the Lord Our Lord, For those are kings And other clattered Yet I have known But when they should behold The sin They won't They won't No sin But being God

The one Of the time They can Just The other went take it from the You're here, it's original errand, And transition with ease and grace

[3 : 0 3] I give a very door To rent the city of the Lord And I give a very hope Let's turn together in prayer Let us pray Ever-blessed God as we come into your presence with praise May it be adorned with thanksgiving With delight in being in your presence in this act of worship I joyed when to the house of God go up, they said to me That was the truth concerning your servant

As he entered into the courts of your house within Jerusalem Delight filled his heart because he was met with those who had the same desire to worship their God And to be in fellowship and company with them As they approached your throne But delight also at the ministrations of your spirit As he took pleasure in the world of the Most High God Speaking to his soul And so it is with your people When they discover that your world is especially meaningful to them Wherever they are at

Not just geographically Or even in the temporal setting that they find themselves in But in particular with regard to their locus spiritually That the God of heaven is addressing them In a way that can only be specific to themselves Even though there may be countless numbers present with them in that act of worship Not just in the physical vocation But we believe even as we are met in numbers that are comparatively few That there are others who meet with us in the villages surrounding us At this very moment And they too engage in worship And they too call upon your name

And they too anticipate your blessing And decide it above all else And so as this gathering of people meet Together yet you are able Because of your capacity to minister to the needs of the individual Just as you are able to meet the needs of the many And we pray that you would remind us afresh Even through the ministrations of your spirit In our own lives at the present We pray for your people And ask that you would bless them According to their need in this world We are but creatures on the scene of time We share that With others who are like us in so many ways We are creatures of the dust Our sojourn is a brief one We have entered upon the scene of time

At a given moment And the time appointed for our exit Has been marked even on the pages Of the eternal register that is hidden from you For the day appointed as before us all And just as surely we are reminded that the day of our death Will bring the day where we meet their God in judgment These things are said before us in your word And we do well to bear them in mind And all the things that we have to encounter within These pages of our lives The good things and the bad things The things that we take delight in sharing with others And the things that we must inevitably endure in secret The things that no one knows about us Save the God who knows all things The things that others delight in sharing with us

[8 : 16] That may be heralded Beyond the borders of our normal experience And yet Lord All of these things are caught up And brought before us As something that will mark us out For the part that we have played in this world We pray that you would remind us of these things Even through how we deal with them And very often we are disinclined to seek any help Because we are so self-confident And self-indulgent even And so certain of the capacity that we have To deal with all things in our own endeavours And by our own endeavours And yet there are occasions when we are reduced to To the puny shell that we are Without the wherewithal to deal with these things

We are laid low by them And we discover for ourselves What we are in reality And if we have God in heaven to resort to In all our times Be they good or be they evil Then we are the most blessed of folk Humankind looks upon life and sees something different But those who are your people Have discovered Through the teaching of your word That what we have under your hand Is all for the good of our soul If we are your people We have discovered How man sees things Even as we would see a field of corn And the field of corn Ripe unto harvest

And it sees the eye of man Beholds what is upright And what seems to appear to be full of matter And yet it is really what is bent low In which the true matter lies The very thing that cries out My leanness, my leanness When they look upon the stalks Of the burden carrier That marks them out They think themselves to be of little consequence But the way you see things Is different And we believe that you will teach us otherwise So we pray as we are sat under your word Today that we would learn What you have to teach to us We pray good blessing on every single soul

Be the young or old We pray for our young We are mindful of the world In which we live That brings so much distraction So much Bordels and beads That appear so attractive And so full of Meaning and purpose And worth And yet Perhaps these things Are but that Bordels and bubbles And beads We pray Lord That you would Mercifully incline them Towards the things That are of worth The things that you commend to us That are treasures That we lay up in heaven And that will last The tiles And the testings That will inevitably come upon them Grant wisdom To our young Even in their youth That they may be Precious in your sight As they live And go about Their lives in the world

We pray for Mothers and fathers For grandparents We pray for Friends and neighbours Who may be concerned For them We give thanks For the many good things That we enjoy Within our communities Things that Others may View with envy But things that we believe Are owed by Virtue of the gospel Of your grace That Has so affected So many lives In our midst And as these things Inevitably Are eroded The more the gospel Is withdrawn And the blessings Of the gospel We fear For Our nation We fear For our young We fear For Those who live In this world When we see So many things That teach us That Your displeasure And Your disfavour Is upon us Here is in mercy Lord That we may

[13 : 20] Find Once again A day of Power A day Of outpouring Something that We are eyewitness to And partakers of Thank you People That they may be A praying people That they may hear The voice of God Speaking peace Even in a day When there is so Little evidence Of it Be mindful Of our needs As a Congregation As a denomination As island communities And as a nation Be merciful To those who govern As open the eyes Of our understanding So that they will Look beyond What they see As wisdom To the wisdom That is from On high Bless our Prime Minister Bless the First Minister Various members Of parliament We pray for Your own Quickening Power To be evidenced Amongst them That they may Turn From this

Path upon Which they are Set That obliterates The grace Of God And seeks To destroy That which You have Disclosed to us As being Truly Of worth And merit We pray Lord That you would Bless the royal Family Especially Her queen We are Empowered To pray For her Majesty And do so Earnestly It's our Duty To do so That she may Be upheld In the frity Of her old age And that she May Be Numbered Amongst those Who will Bow the knee Before the King of kings And lord of lords We ask Lord in mercy For this world In which we live That knows many Ills Not just By reason Of the Covid pandemic But other Issues that Are constantly With us

Where there is Want and poverty And where there Is conflict In the world And the enmity That is Expressed In many Quarters One Against the other Hear our Petitions We pray Continue to Watch over us Blessing your Word to us Pardoning every Transgression In Jesus name We ask It all And given us Of sin in him Amen We are going To read from The scriptures Of the new Testament The gospel Of Jesus Christ According to Luke Chapter 24 This is the Last chapter In the gospel Of Luke And we can Take up the Reading at Verse 13 The gospel Of Jesus Christ According to Luke Chapter 24 Verse 13 And behold

Two of them Went that Same day To a village Called Emmaus Which was From Jerusalem About three Score Furloughs And they Talked together Of all these Things which Had happened And it Came to pass That while They communed Together And reasoned Jesus himself Drew near And went With them But their Eyes were Holden That they Should not Know him And he Said unto Them What manner Of communications Are these That ye Have one to Another As ye Walk And are Sad And the One of Them whose Name was Cleopas Answering Said unto him Not thou Only a Stranger In Jerusalem And hast Not Known The things Which Are come To pass There In these Days And he Said unto Him What things And he Said unto Him Concerning Jesus Of Nazareth Which Was a Prophet Mighty Indeed And Word Before God And all The People And how The chief Priests And her

Rulers Delivered Him To be Condemned To death And have Crucified Him But we Trusted That it Had been He Which Should Have Redeemed Israel And beside All this Today is The third Day Since these Things Were Done Yea And certain Women Also of her Company Made us Astonished Which Were Early At the Sepulchre And when They Found Not His Body They Came Saying That They Had Also Seen A Vision Of Angels Which Said That He Was Alive And Certain Of Them Which Were With Us Went To The Sepulchre And Found It Even So As The Woman Had Said But Him They Saw Not Then He Said Unto Them O Fools And Slow Far To Believe All That The Prophets Have Spoken Ought The Prophets He Expounded Unto Them All The Scriptures The Things Concern Himself And They Drew Nigh Into

[18 : 22] The Village Whither They Went And He Made As Though He Would Have Gone Further But They Constrained Him Saying Abide With Us For It Is Toward Evening And The Days Far Spent And As He Went In To Tarry With Them And It Came To Pass As He Sat With Me With Them He Took Bread And Blessed And Break And Gave To Them Their Eyes Were Opened And They Knew Him And He Vanished Out Of Their Sight And They Said One To Another Did Not Our Heart Burn Within Us While He Talked With Us By The Way And While He Opened To Us The Scriptures And They Rose Up The Same Hour And Return To Jerusalem And Found The Eleven Gathered Together And Them That Were With Them Saying The Lord Is Risen Indeed And Hath Appeared To Simon And They Told What Things Were Done In The Way And How He Was Known Of Them In Breaking Of Bread And As They Thus Spake Jesus Himself Stood In The Of Them And Said To Them Peace

Be Unto You But They Were Terrified And Affrighted And Suppose That He Had Seen A Spirit And He Said Unto Them Why Are You Troubled And Why Do Thoughts Arise In Your Heart Behold My Hands And My Feet That It Is I Myself Handle Me And See For A Spirit Hath Not Flesh And Bones As Ye See Me Have And When He Had Thus Spoken He Showed Them His Hands And His Feet And While They Yet Believed Not For Joy And Wondered He Said Unto Them Have Ye Here Any Meat And They Gave Him A Piece Of A Broiled Fish And Of An Honeycomb And He Took And The Deed Before Them And He Said Unto Them These Are The Words Which I Spake Unto You While I Was Yet With You That All Things Must Be Fulfilled Which Were Written In The Law Of Moses And In The Prophets And In The Psalms Concerning Me Then Opened He Their Understanding That They Might Understand

The Scriptures And He Said Unto Them Thus It Is Written And Thus It Behold Christ To Suffer And To Rise From The Dead The Third Day And That Repentance And Remission Of Sins Should Be Preached In His Name Among All Nations Beginning At Jerusalem And Ye Are Witnesses Of These Things And Behold I sent the promise of my father upon you but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high and he led them out as far as to Bethany and he lifted up his hands and blessed them and it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven and they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy And And And And And Amen May the Lord add his blessing to a reading of his word and to his name be the praise.

Well boys and girls before you go out to Sunday school just a word to you. Today is a special day. I wonder if you knew that.

It wasn't on the news or anything. Well it's my birthday today. You didn't hear that on the news or anything. No? Well it's my birthday today. And You'll want to know how old I am.

[21 : 55] Well I'm A day older than I was yesterday. And A year older than I was This time last year. And for many people Birthdays are a very special thing.

They think of birthdays because they think of it because they're going to have a party. Or they're going to get presents. Or they're going to do something special.

But when you get older. But when you get older. Sometimes you begin to think about how old you are.

And very often you hear people like myself. And they'll say something like Well where have all the years gone?

Well where have all the years gone? Or maybe they'll say something like What have I done With these years?

[22 : 56] These are two important questions. And we often don't Ask these questions Enough. What is it That we do With our lives?

I'm sure when you're young When you're going to Sunday school You don't really perhaps think about The things that you're doing To be Of Great import.

But I think one of the most important things you're doing When you're young Like you are Is to go to Sunday school And to learn about The things of God To learn about Jesus To learn about what he means to his people And to get to learn more about him For yourself That's important And When you get to be as old as I am You may think Well what are the things that I have done That I shouldn't have done?

Or what are the things that I would like to have done That I haven't done? And When you start thinking about these things You start thinking perhaps With a A measure of regret You know Things that you did That you wish you hadn't done Or things that you Would like to have done And didn't do And then you feel sorry for yourself But one thing I would hope That you would never be sorry for Is that You would come To know Jesus Christ Sooner rather than later To come to know him for yourself To come to know who he is And what he came to do And how important How important he is to his people So that No matter how old you are Even as old as I am You would never feel Well I am sorry That I didn't do that I am sorry I didn't get to know Jesus

And we know And there are I know There are some Christians And they came to know Jesus When they were very very very young They came to know them as boys and girls And if you ask them Is there anything that you regret About your life And I don't think I know Any one of them That would ever say That they would regret Coming to know Jesus When they did Whenever you do Even when you are as old as I am Or as your mums and dads Or your friends and Gnallies And I hope That you remember To Make as much use of your time In this world As you can And to Find out for yourself As soon As you are able All that is important About the passion Of the Lord Jesus We are going to sing As you go out To Sunday school From Psalm 119

[25 : 57] Psalm 119 At verse 129 Thy statutes Lord are wonderful My soul Them keeps with care The entrance The entrance Of thy words Gives light Makes wise Whose simple are My mouth I have wide open And panted earnestly While after Thy commandments I longed exceedingly Look on me Lord And merciful Do thou Unto me prove As thou art Want to do To those Thy name Who truly love O let my footsteps In thy word A right still Ordered be Let no iniquity Obtain dominion Over me From man's oppression Saviour me So keep thy laws I will Thy face Make on thy Seven shine Teach me Thy statutes Still Rivers of waters From mine eyes

Did run down When I saw How wicked men Run on in sin And do not keep Thy law We can sing This section Of Psalm 119 Thy statutes Lord Are wonderful My soul Them keeps With care Thy statutes Lord Are wonderful My soul And peace With care The entrance Of thy Worth Is high Make wiser Share The heart Myographer Hell

Make Be patience I Want I attract Fear I Shout To His Chess!

I will do to Lord, thy gift will truly love.

O let my footsteps and thy work arise, dear Lord, hurry.

[29 : 22] Let no inequity of sin, nor may I adore thee.

From Thine so precious in the me, to keep thy laws, thy will.

Thy haste bring on thy seven shine. In me thy side to fill.

Reversal wonders from my eyes.

From my thunder and my soul. A wicked man, the Lord of Israel.

[30 : 44] And do not keep thy law. We are going to turn to this passage of scripture that we read in the New Testament scriptures in the Gospel of Luke chapter 24.

And we can read again at verse 44. Luke chapter 24 at verse 44.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.

Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And he said unto them, Thus it is written, And thus it beheld Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.

[32 : 14] And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And so on. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. When I was a lot younger, I used to read every book that was in the house that I could lay my hands on.

Some of them I read twice. So I had a voracious appetite for books, and most of them were books of fiction.

And occasionally I would read the Bible. We were encouraged to read the Bible, and I did read the Bible. But I have to say that I didn't read the Bible as often as I should.

And I preferred to read these other books. Sometimes I would read books by the same author.

[33 : 26] And very often you would find that such an author would have distinct ways of writing. The same characters might occur, or the same kind of situations would arise.

And I found myself choosing certain authors over against other authors. Some I preferred to others.

But when you read the scripture, when you read the Bible, although there are many books in the Bible, there is one author.

And that's what makes the Bible unique. It may seem strange to us that there is one author that we have. Because if you go to the Old Testament, there are many books there, and they bear the names of the people that you expect to have written in.

The prophecies of Isaiah, the prophecies of Jeremiah, the prophecies of Micah or Hosea. And without question, the accounts that we have there, some of the material, was produced by them.

[34 : 54] It's accounts given by them. And recorded by others. But at the heart of everything that is written, whether it is in the Old Testament or the New Testament, we are told that God is the author of what is written.

In a very supernatural way. The scripture, we are told, by the scripture, is God-breathed. It is God-breathed.

And it tells us that whatever we read in the scripture, in the Bible, in the books of the Old Testament, and the books of the New Testament, if you go back to the original source, you will always find God.

Whoever he has used to communicate the word that is written there, at the source, is always God.

And that may be mysterious to us, and that may be difficult for us to understand, but the more we look at God's word, and the more we read of it, the more it makes sense to us, when we find that the events that occur are occurrences that took place in the mind of God before they ever took place in the history of this world.

[36 : 37] Before they ever came to be written down on the pages of scripture, God knew all of these things. He is the God who is there from the beginning, even before there is a beginning as far as humankind can mark it out.

He is he is the God who is from everlasting to everlasting. Now when I say that, immediately we struggle to actually understand that as far as our experience is concerned, because all our experiences involve us at beginnings, at points at which events either occur and proceed from that beginning, or events that we propose to happen.

All of these things, they must conform to our scheme of understanding these events. And when it doesn't conform to that, we struggle.

and we wonder, well how can it possibly be that such a being exists that knew things in the detail that he supposedly knows things before they ever came to pass.

And there is only one answer to that. It is true because it is true of God and only God.

[38 : 18] And what Christ is saying here, he is speaking to a people and they are trying to reconcile their own understanding of events and what they are meant to make of these events and to fit them into a scheme that they have preconceived of how these events are going to work out to fruition, to completion, of what they expected them to achieve and they find themselves incapable of doing that.

And the event of which we are speaking is, of which they are speaking, is they are trying to think of this person who is the Lord Jesus Christ and they had a notion of him, they had an idea of him, they had an understanding of who he was and what he was going to do and that understanding was turned upside down because the events that are too cold of them and of him seemed to turn their world upside down and they struggled.

You have to remember it's Christians that we are talking about here, these people were believers, these people were disciples, these people knew Christ personally, were followers of Christ and yet when these events occurred their whole life was turned upside down because in turmoil.

Now why do I begin like that? Well, I begin like that because Jesus is speaking to them about the word of God and he is speaking to them about the word of God because he wants to emphasize to them the importance of the word of God to them as far as their whole existence is concerned especially as far as their faith is concerned and the believer whoever the believer is wherever the believer is whenever that believer appears on the scene of time is somebody who must believe the truth concerning God the God who is the author of the world that is before us here around which we are gathered under which we are being taught it is God's word to us and for a person to come to belief or faith they must believe this to be a word that comes with authority that has

God as its source and we must believe him to be God and we must believe his word to be his word to us at this time as one of the apostle says the believer must believe that he is that God is that there is none other but he who is God and it is part of the believer's experience not only to believe that he is but they must know what they believe concerning him and concerning what he is doing and what he is about and what he is yet to do and they cannot believe that without recourse to the word through which he speaks to this world in which we live it is part of their remit part of their belief system if you like to go to the touch stone of this word that God has given to us that he himself has spoken that he himself has given by which the truth is communicated concerning him concerning them concerning the world to come concerning the Christ who has everything to do with their place in that world to come

[42 : 41] God is the one who speaks to them through that and the believer must not only believe the God who is and the God whose word this is and they must believe what he has to say to us if we believe that it has relevance to our belief and relevance to how we live out our life of belief it is also important for us because part of our calling if we are believers is to speak to others concerning what we believe it is the believer's calling not only to be someone who is brought into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves but to be able to speak of that relationship in very specific detail you know one of the disciplines that we as students for the ministry have to submit to is the discipline of apologetics apologetics the name appears to suggest that you're going out to make excuses but that's not the meaning of it it is perhaps a key verse that we find in the scripture that helps you to understand what the discipline of apologetics involves is found in the words of the apostle

Peter where he says to the believer be ready always to give a reason for the hope or of the hope that is in you be ready to give an answer to anyone who comes to you with questions concerning your faith be ready to speak of your faith be ready to answer any question that any person may have concerning your faith in order for that to be possible for me to do it or find any other believer we must know what we believe we must know who we believe we must know why we believe we must know what we believe and we cannot do what we're expected to do without being informed without knowing what we believe now I emphasise all this in the beginning because it appears from the interaction that we have here between the

Lord Jesus Christ and these two men who were on the way to Emmaus that they are in a very challenging situation and they are not prepared for it they are not in the best position to handle the events that have taken place they're really thrown they're really perplexed about what has gone on so what does Jesus do when he deals with them well he says to them these are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me what does he do he's directing them directing them to the word of God to the scriptures to what the scriptures tell them about

God about what God was going to do about how God was going to do it about the events surrounding this great event that was going to centre for the salvation of sinners the crucifixion of Christ the resurrection of Christ the ascension of Christ all of these events they are recorded for us in the word of God they are either prophetically declared or they are announced by Christ when he is amongst them as a fulfilment of the gospel so when we read these words what do we make of them for ourselves how do we think of these words it's good for I mean this is a passage which I confess is a passage that I love because of the genuine confusion that these two portrays you know there's nothing hidden from these two these two they're walking on the road you can almost imagine walking around and their heads are down and hearts are down in their boots and they're trying to make sense of what happened and Jesus comes alongside them and he's so knowledgeable about our human frailties and he's so compassionate that he doesn't beat them with a stick because they're not bold and because they're not confident and how you would maybe you are not a

Christian maybe you think every Christian should be so self confident so so full of certainty whenever any of life's events come that are so difficult to deal with you think well a Christian should be able to deal with it because they're Christians they say they have faith in God and then they look as if they're they're down in the dumps and they've got no answer I don't have answers but they should they should be more more reconciled to what God is doing because they know that God is working but we forget that Christians are humans too and whatever knowledge they have of God some of them have met them they have a powerful retentive memory they read the scripture they retain the word of God it's as if it's written in a pen of iron on their conscience on their heart on their mind they don't forget anything there's one or two like that but even those of them who have such retentive memories still get confused still get overcome by events it's normal it's something that happens now a Christian when he reads the word of

[49 : 58] God they should remember they should be encouraged to remember that God from the beginning was confident of what he was yet to do in the world he gave us insights through the prophets he gave us segments of a future aspect that could not come from anyone but himself and through that word he sustained his people who looked to that but at times they were overwhelmed as I said by events such as this one but the word is consistent because the author is the one author and the word was never although the events affected people differently occasions came that undermined people's assurance in God's word or they lost sight of what

God's word was saying the word did not change does not change and you have a consistency such as this that speaks of what God is doing and what God was going to do in the prophecy of Isaiah just we could quote at length from Isaiah but the prophet Isaiah was looking forward with anticipation to what God was going to do and this is what he said say to those who are fearful hearted be strong do not fear behold your God will come with vengeance with the recompense of God he will come and save you then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped I think that's a gospel promise God was going to do this God was going to bring salvation God was going to stop the mouths of the enemies of his people and he was going to unstop the mouths of those who could not praise

God and would not praise God he was going to do a great work in their lives he was going to prove who he was and that he had not lost sight of them then the apostle Paul when he comes to preach the gospel and he speaks of his own gospel the gospel that God gave him to preach it wasn't very different from what the prophet Isaiah was given to say to people I now send you to open their eyes in order to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me it's not the same promise but it's substantially the same truth that is at its heart God through the prophets God through the apostles was declaring his purposes the salvation of sinners the means by which these purposes are to be fulfilled through the passion of the Lord

Jesus Christ scripture tells us the ultimate end of the ministry of the prophets the ultimate end of the ministry of the apostles to bring sinners to be acquainted with salvation to teach us that we have the need of saving to remind us of the thing that Christ came to do above all else when he came to the world Paul writes to the Romans he tells us what the end of the gospel is if we confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you will be saved for with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation now I think when you bring this passage here where we see

Christ refer to the scriptures and we bring these words into the context in which they found where we're seeing these two men or a woman maybe walking on the way to a maze and they're brought face to face with the unfolding of God's purposes that tells us of the vulnerability that exists in the heart and mind of so many people in the world that their eyes must be opened by God to interpret the events in a meaningful way in a purposeful way in a way where the events themselves do not cloud their eyes from seeing that God is doing what he is doing their eyes the eyes of their understanding must be opened we are told have you ever have you ever tried to deal with a person who's grieving and that passion has a grief that is so deep that you can sense the depth of that grief and as somebody who sometimes has to deal with a person in that situation

[55 : 51] I find myself unable to deal with that grief and I draw back from it because the grief is so deep and so dark but sometimes you find that the grief can be irrational because it refuses to recognize certain truths that should be at the forefront of the experience even of grief and there is the danger I hope you don't think that I'm saying that grieving is wrong but it certainly is right and it's proper and it is a necessary release for a person to grieve in a way in which their grief is an expression of loss which every person who has to endure it must go through for it to be beneficial to them but there are times when it goes beyond boundaries where that grieving is wrong where you're losing sight you're so centred on the grief itself that everything else makes no sense life makes no sense death makes no sense and the grieving then becomes a snare itself and becomes a danger to that person and if

Christ was going to deal with these people he had to bring them to a place where he said yes you're right to grieve Christ died and it's terrible that such a thing should ever have to happen that the son of the most high God should have to come into this world to die on the cross to experience the misery and the awfulness of the death of the cross it should never have been like this but it had to be and there was a reason for it and the reason is explained by God's word the reason is that he had to die because he was dealing with the sins not his own but the sins of his people and he could explain the reason for the death and the reason for the sorrow that they were feeling what we need to understand is that

Christ is here directing them to make sense of something that to them seems senseless and he's using God's word to bring that to their attention you know throughout the scripture well the gospels where you find Christ having to deal with men and women sometimes people think Christ was a softy Christ never had to say an angry word in his life which is wrong we know that he had to speak in anger righteous anger sometimes he had to rebuke his disciples because they were misbehaving because they were treating what was before them as if it was something that they did not understand and he corrected them and he rebuked them because of their error oh foolish people he would say to them you don't understand how often will I have to tell you to explain to you to inform you you clearly don't understand what I'm here for what I'm here to do you're concerned with the here and now you have no sense of the eternal you want to be kings with me you don't understand what it means for me to be king and for me to be elevated to the place of glory at the right hand of the majesty you have no concept of that you have to rebuke them and correct them but they should have known that's the thing they should have known they should have been familiar with

God's word they should have known the truth concerning Christ and what he was in the world to do but he didn't and Christ is here confronted with something he recognises genuine sorrow deep sadness and he has to say to them how are we going to resolve this we're going to resolve it by taking it to the world we're going to remind ourselves of what the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms say but he has to do more than that he opened their understanding he opened their understanding and that really is the second thing I want to emphasize that the word of God is there for us we need to believe it to be the word of God we need to appreciate it to be the word of God we need to understand that it's for our edification for our education advancement in the things of

God but we need his help in order for us to appreciate what he is saying and we need whoever we are whether we are Christians who are of mature years who have lived their days looking to the scripture reading the scripture perusing scripture pouring over scripture every single day of what is left of your life you still go to the word and you say Lord help me open the eyes of my understanding that I may see the marvels that your word has to contain there is no graduate from this university it is an ongoing education God's word is there to be to be learnt and relearned and read hard those of us who read the

[62 : 43] Catechism we are reminded of what God did in our lives and I think Christian I'm speaking to you just now don't ever forget how stupid you were how blind you were how ignorant you were how deaf you were how absolutely clueless you were until the moment God in his mercy opened the eyes of your understanding so that when you're dealing with others who may not have the miracle of grace that you've enjoyed that you remind yourself of how absolutely clueless you were until God gave you grace what is effectual calling it is the work of God's spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our will it hath persuaded and enabled us to embrace

Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel who is doing that it is the work of God's spirit to enlighten our minds not a believer could do what they have done with God's help without God's help if you're able to look at this passage in the gospel and say well these guys how blind were they how clueless were they surely they should have known that Christ was going to be crucified surely they should have understood that he was going to be put in a grave surely until the eyes of our understanding is opened not one of us will understand that and that's what you need as well if you don't understand today what the

Bible is saying and you're saying when you read the Bible I can't it's mystery mystery to me I don't understand it I can't go as far as that man I wouldn't put my soul in God's hand well that's what you're saying because you're insisting that I know that I'm dealing with people who are clever here much more clever than I am much more learned than I am and yet for all your learning for all your academic giftedness that will not take you to the place where you appreciate what God has done in Christ Jesus time is gone but there's a story I'm going to tell it anyway it was a lady a well off lady the countess of Huntington and she was a

Christian believer she had as her title suggests she was well off and she had land and she moved in very lofty circles but it was her burning desire to share the gospel with others and she was a great admirer of a preacher of the gospel by the name of George Whitefield or Whitfield so she invited her friends to come and listen to Whitfield preach and when Whitfield preached he preached as he often did a powerful service but in the service he said something and those who were in the congregation took exception to it because he said Christ is such a saviour that he can save the leavings of the devil

Christ is such a saviour that he can save the leavings of the devil and this struck home with these well to do ladies who were present in the congregation that's going too far that's going too far that's not what Christ came to do that's not why Christ came into the world he came into the world to take people like myself I'm not too bad but the leavings of the devil why would he do that so they were talking amongst themselves and the good lady heard their conversation she was a bit concerned that maybe the preacher had gone over the top but as they were speaking either in the church or outside the church a bedraggled woman came to the door asking to see the minister and she was a prostitute who had for 40 years according to herself never darkened the door of her church but that week her mistress who had earned her wage from her lifestyle had thrown her out because she was too old she was no longer financially viable so she threw her out on the street and she had nowhere to go so she went to church and what she heard in the church was this phrase that

[68 : 30] Christ is a saviour such a saviour that he can save the leavings of the devil and that's how she saw herself a woman of ill repute who had spent her life in prostitution thrown to the street no longer useful and she saw herself as the leavings of the devil but she saw the Christ as the saviour of such God through his word can speak to us he can open the eyes of our understanding imagine that you today are probably so well versed in scripture that you know much of it of by heart but if your knowledge of the scripture has not taken you to Christ there's lack there's need there's want last week if you were here

I gave you a prayer and I asked you to pray that prayer have you prayed it have you prayed it can you remember what it was Lord show me myself through the grace of God this woman saw herself as the leavings of the devil somebody cast out somebody of no use to anyone man or mankind but when God showed her that he showed her in his mercy Christ as the saviour of such that's what you need Christ is saying to these people you know you were my disciples you were in my company you heard me speak the word you heard me explain the word let me remind you again that you need the eyes of your understanding to be opened so that you can understand the scripture and if you have not yet understood the scripture that reminds you and reminds me that we need a saviour then you need to have the eyes of your understanding opened that you may see for yourself whatever every sinner needs to see that there is a saviour adequate to your needs in the person of the Lord

Jesus may bless these thoughts let us pray Lord God help us whatever situation we are in to understand that we need Christ to be our portion in life if we expect him to be our portion in death guide us in the truth that your truth may be magnified and the eyes of our understanding open continue with us we are giving sin in Jesus name amen we are going to conclude singing from Psalm 18 Psalm 18 and we are going to sing from verse 28 the Lord will light my candle so that it shall shine full bright the Lord my God will also make my darkness to be light by thee through troops of men I break and them discomfort all by my

God assisting I overleap a wall as for God perfect is his way the Lord his word is tried he is a buckler to all those who do in him confide who but the Lord is God but he who is a rock and stick it is God that girded my strength and perfect makes my way and so on the Lord will light my candle so that it the Lord will light my candle so that it shall shine for night the Lord my home will love so may my darkness to be light by the truth so may

I pray and then this come and on and by my God has to sing me I know the people come on as our God care is his way my Lord his word is thine he is the one and true Lord the good in heaven are thine the the

[74 : 32] Lord the Lord is the Lord the King through his heart and his heart is his heart that pure and he will stay his and he will have his heart his heart is my name and his heart and his heart is the heart is the heart is the heart is