

As the Holy Ghost Says -----Harden Not Your Heart

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[0 : 00] very well welcome to our service this morning i shall welcome to any who are visiting with us we come before god in worship and we look to him to bless his word to us above all else we can begin our service by singing from psalm 51 psalm 51 we're singing from verse 7 psalm 51 verse 7 do thou with hyssop sprinkle me i shall be cleansed so 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 blocked out thy face hide from my sin create a clean heart lord renew a right spirit me within cast me not from thy side nor take thy holy spirit away restore me thy salvation's joy with thy free spirit me stay and so on going to sing four stanzas from verse 7 do thou with hyssop sprinkle me i shall be cleanse so be fre prepared i

I shall be blessed so. In what love me and I shall be white and red so.

Of gladness and of joyfulness.

Make me to hear the voice. God's soul is the people.

Which thou hast broken in your eyes.

[2 : 54] All my liquid is brought out.

Thy days hide from my sin. The achy heart, Lord, renew.

Father, I spread me within. Cast me not from thy side, your way.

Thy heart is dead away. Restore me thy salvation.

Join with thy Christ. Let us join together in prayer.

[4 : 16] Let us pray. Lord, O God, as we gather in your name and in your presence, help us to acknowledge that we are looking to you, O God, to bless our meeting in your name.

May you reveal your blessing by speaking not just to our mind, our heart, our intellect, but to the deepest soul felt, innermost being of each one of us.

So that we know that God who alone is able to provide spiritual blessing is so doing. There are experiences that every one of us go through in this world.

Sometimes we experience joy, happiness, elation.

We are lifted up even to the point of euphoria. At other times we experience sorrows and sadnesses and griefs.

[5 : 46] And we descend into the depths. So much so that we imagine ourselves incapable of ever recovering.

That is our human condition. That is our human condition. And we acknowledge in your presence the danger that we are in whenever we experience the heights and the depths.

And yet they are part of our experience. And under your hand, you are able to speak to us through them. But for all the use that there may be in these things, in our human experience, you have created us in your image.

And that image is in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, dominion over the creatures, as your word declares it to us.

But you have made us spiritual beings capable of receiving from your hands that which is of spiritual worth.

[6 : 59] So that the needs of our soul are met through the world. And that is what we crave above all else. So that we are able to speak to each of us, without exception.

So that we are knowledgeably aware of his ministration in particular, as we worship. Bless us according to need.

So that when we read your word, when we sing from your word, that we understand something of what it says. But not only understand it, but are able to apply it meaningfully to our present experience.

Even giving life to past experience. And hope for the future, as we understand that all of us are under your hand. Remember every person here today.

Whoever they are, whatever their stage in life they may be on. We acknowledge that there are young people here, children of immature years, and yet they may have an elevated awareness of God in the way that you work in their lives.

[8 : 29] And we give thanks for that. Do not allow us to despise the way in which youth are able to deal with truth in a way that experience of life in this world has cauterized our spirituality.

So that we cannot appreciate what you are doing in our lives as we ought to. We give thanks for your word. That reminds us of the way the Lord Jesus dealt with young people when they sought him out.

Those who thought they knew what they needed, debarred them from the Lord's presence. But we read in your word that you told them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

And we bless you and thank you that you receive all as little children, whoever we may be. Even those of mature years, they must reach out hands that are no stronger than the hand of an infant.

And we, by these hands, are able to lay hold of Christ. Help us to understand that. We are taught much by our young people, even infants who are so trusting and so willing to lay hold of our hands when they may be fearful or alarmed.

[10 : 14] Help us to understand that we should lay hold of our God in that way. Remember individuals, remember families, remember our communities.

Each part of it is fragile in many ways because we live in this world and the world is full of uncertainties. Death is round the corner and you taught us and teach us daily how that is.

You remind us in taking from the scene of time in the twinkling. Some of mature years, some of mature years, some whose age is not the reason for their being taken from the scene of time.

Lord, help us to understand that whoever we may be, we are but a short breath from leaving this world.

Help us to be ready. Be ready. Your word tells us how the Lord taught his own servants. To be ready.

[11 : 22] Be ye also ready. For in such an hour as you know not, the Son of Man will come. That was in regard to the coming, Lord.

But you sometimes come to take us to yourself, a people prepared for it by your own hand, others who are unprepared. And yet, as your word teaches, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ there to receive what we have done in the body, whether it is good or evil.

Remember the grieving and the sorrowful. Visit them in mercy and bind up their wounds. Heal their hurts. Remember those who are concerned over their own well-being.

Some who are being cared for by others. Some who are caring for such. Concerned for such. Some in hospitals. Some being cared for in homes for the elderly.

We pray for all the need that is in this world that you would reveal yourself to be a caring God. Blessing far above our asking.

[12 : 38] Remember the world in which we live with all its sickness, with all its uncertainty. We remember in your presence the parts of the world that are torn apart by war.

We pray for the Ukraine and the constant difficulty that assails them as a nation.

We remember those nations that are less spoken of who are also suffering because of countless years of civil war and wars between neighbours.

We pray for your mercy to those affected by it. Frail, elderly and fragile youths. We see that they are the ones who suffer most.

We pray for our own nation. Which enjoys relative peace. But at the cost of a shallow appreciation of the privileges that we enjoy.

[13 : 40] At the cost of a failure to comprehend the God of heaven who brings every good and perfect gift is yet forgotten.

Lord, hear our prayers and be merciful to us in pouring out your spirit upon us. As you have done in times past. In our ignorance we think that the reason for such outpouring was entirely down to man.

But the truth is that it is all of grace. Your mercy has been shown in the face of indifference and carelessness and lack of spiritual depth in the lives of those who are living.

We cannot but bring your woes to your attention by way of prayer. So remember us each one. Pour out your spirit upon us we pray.

In the Redeemer's name we would ask it. Forgiveness of sin in him. Amen. The boys and girls before you go out to Sunday school.

[14 : 56] I'm sure many of you may have heard the thunder last evening before the rain came. Some of you may have seen the lightning.

I'm pretty clueless when it comes to science. I don't really understand how lightning forms what is the cause of it.

I think it's something to do with static electricity and whatever it is that comes about as a result of it.

I think it's something to do with positive charges and negative charges. Sometimes I heard something of that in school but I'm afraid my ability to retain knowledge of it is limited.

I know that when there is lightning it's accompanied with thunder. And thunder makes us afraid far more than the lightning.

[15 : 58] Well that's the way it is for me anyway. You hear the thunder and you see the lightning. But you hear the thunder after the lightning has actually struck or after it's been formed.

So the thunder won't really harm you. But the lightning can. It can strike, come down to the ground and it's capable of damaging property and at times even lives have been lost by it.

Lightning is something that we all see. I think I read somewhere about thunder that you can only hear it up to 12 miles from the point from which it originated.

Which isn't very helpful because you don't know where in the 12 mile space that you're sitting at the time. But science again is a wonderful thing if you understand it.

It may make sense to you. But Jesus spoke about lightning. And his word sometimes refers to it.

[17 : 17] And it tells us about how when he will come again that it will be like lightning. Now we read what he says about his coming again and you wonder well what exactly does he mean by it?

And some people say when he speaks like that he is speaking about his coming. When the lightning flashes across the sky all eyes will see it.

Every eye sees a flash of lightning. Is that not right? But we have sheath lightning and we have fork lightning and two different kinds.

But when there's a flash of lightning everybody in the vicinity sees it. And I think that's what Jesus means. That his coming will be something that will be seen by everybody.

Although everybody does not believe that will possibly happen. But it also tells us something about his suddenness and the suddenness of his coming.

[18 : 30] And when the Lord was speaking to people. They didn't believe that he was going to leave. In the first place.

And they didn't believe that because he was going to leave. That he would come back in the same way. It couldn't possibly be the case. Jesus wanted them to understand that.

But most especially the suddenness of his coming again. And sometimes the Bible tells us things about things that happen suddenly.

And catches us unaware. And it's a bit like lightning. It just comes with a frightful and a sudden effect.

Frightening. Because of its suddenness. And sometimes how we react to that. Tell us a lot about ourselves.

[19 : 28] What we believe. And what we understand. I think you today are going to be talking about somebody in the Bible called Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary.

And we are told that before Joseph and Mary were married. That Mary told Joseph that she was expecting the baby Jesus.

And you can understand how Joseph reacted to that. It was a sudden unexpected news to him. And it probably had the same effect as lightning something.

It was something that shocked him. And made him alarmed. But he loved Mary very much. And because of his love for Mary. The decision that he took with regard to her.

Was all important. He decided that he would save her. The embarrassment of sending her away from him. As would happen in those days.

[20 : 34] But because Joseph trusted God. God spoke to Joseph. And told him that the baby that Mary was expecting.

God's provision for the world. And that the prophesied birth of Jesus.

Was quite different to any other birth. That God intended it to be this way. And because Joseph trusted in God.

He was able to accept what God was doing. In a way without faith. He could not otherwise have done. So despite the suddenness of the news.

Despite the terrible. Fearful impact of that news upon his heart. Because he trusted in God. He was able to understand.

[21 : 37] What God by way of the Holy Spirit. Made known to him. And I think that's what's true. About anything that God. Introduces into our experience.

In this world. Sometimes. Events. Happen in our lives. That come. Suddenly. Unexpectedly.

And. Terribly. Terribly. Fearfully. And they affect us. Instantly. And if we have God. As someone to go to.

And he's always someone we can go to. But if we know that. And if we trust that. Then he is the one. Who is able to make even the most. Terrible.

News. Or the most fearful. Events. Make some kind of sense to us. Kind of sense to us. And for Joseph. It was all important. That he believed.

[22 : 35] God's messenger. Just that came to him. And I hope that you. Be able to understand. God's word. As it teaches us. The mysteries. Of his own word.

We're going to sing. As you go out. To Sunday school. From Psalm 19. We're going to sing. From verse 7. God's law is perfect. And converts the soul.

In sin that lies. God's testimony. Is most sure. And makes the sinful wise. The statutes of the Lord. Are right. And do rejoice the heart.

The Lord's command. Is pure. And doth light. To the eyes of God. God's law. We're going to sing. From verse 7. To verse 13. God's law is perfect.

And converts the soul. In sin that lies. God's law is perfect. And converts the soul.

[23 : 32] In sin that lies. God's testimony. God's testimony. Is most fair. And gives. The sinful wise. God's testimony. Is most fair. And gives. The sinful wise.

Christ, I to draw the Lord and I, and you rejoice the Lord.

The Lord, O man, is pure and dry, I to the eyes impart.

And for it is the fear of God, and good in you forever.

[24 : 50] The judgments of the Lord are true and right, is all to him.

The Lord and God, dear child, to be desired.

The Lord and God, dear child, to be desired.

The Lord and God, dear child, to be desired.

I give the Lord, provide the death for them.

[26 : 09] I give the shame. Who can this ever understand?

O cleanse our mere within. From his efforts, I say, I give the hope.

I give the hope. I'm going to hear the scripture of the New Testament, from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and reading chapter 3.

Hebrews chapter 3. We can read the whole chapter. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him.

As also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. Inasmuch as he who hath built the house hath more honour than the house.

[27 : 41] For every house is built by some man. But he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant.

For a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ as a son over his own house. Whose house are we?

If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope for him unto the end. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says, Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, In the day of temptation in the wilderness.

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation.

And said, they do always err in their heart. And they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.

[28 : 50] Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, In departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. While it is said today, if you will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts as in the provocation.

For some, when they had heard, did provoke. How be it not all that came out of Egypt by Moses? But with whom was he grieved forty years?

Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest?

But to them that believed not. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Amen.

[30 : 02] May the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise. We can sing now some verses from Psalm 95.

Psalm 95. And we are going to sing from verse 6 down to verse 11, down to the end of the psalm.

O come, and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all, and on our knees before the Lord our Maker let us fall. For he is our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep.

Today if ye his voice will hear. Then harden not your hearts as in the provocation, as in the desert on the day of the temptation, When me your fathers tempted and proved.

And did my working see, even for the space of forty years this race hath grieved me. I said, this people, ears in heart, my ways they did not know.

[31 : 10] To whom I swear in wrath that to my rest we should not go. Psalm 95, from verse 6 to the end of the psalm. And let us worship him.

O come, and let us worship him.

Let us bow down with all, and on our knees before the Lord our Lord our Lord our Lord our Lord our Lord.

We make your way in the song. For he is our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep.

And of his hand the sheep. If ye his voice will hear. Then harden not your hearts as in the provocation.

[32 : 48] As in the desert on the day of the occasion.

When me, your father, said, and grew.

And yet my working is deemed. But my earnestness of all tears.

This rest I'll be with me. I said to speak a letter in heart.

My wisdom do not know. To whom I sway.

[34 : 03] I'll not know. My earnestness should not know.

I'd like us now to turn to the scripture that we read together in the New Testament.

The epistle to the Hebrews chapter 3. And we can read at verse 7. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says today, if ye will hear his voice, pardon not your heart.

As in the provocation. In the day of temptation. In the wilderness. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, they do always err in their heart. And they have not known my ways.

[35 : 08] So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says today, if ye will hear his voice.

Former preacher in the free church continuing, David Murray.

Now a professor teaching in the United States. A number of years ago, wrote a book. I think I've mentioned it before. A book by the name, or with the name, Jesus on Every Page.

And the main thesis of the book was that looking at the Old Testament scriptures, you will find it resplendent with the mention of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Maybe not by name. Sometimes indeed his name is mentioned, or one of his names that speak of him. But you will find that the scriptures speak of him.

[36 : 31] Often. And at one point in the book, he highlights the words spoken by Jesus himself. I suppose this establishes good grounds for his main argument.

And he points us to the time when the Lord Jesus, following on from his resurrection, was walking on the road to Emmaus.

And he joined two disciples of the Lord, people who obviously knew who the Lord was and were believers in the Lord, but who were distraught as a result of the crucifixion of Christ.

And they were trying to make sense of it. And we join them as they walk together. And we are allowed to listen to part of their conversation.

And the words that David Murray quotes, that are relevant to what we have to say today, are found in Luke 24 and verse 27.

[37 : 49] And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. When you look at what the various commentators have to say about that, they've all got this notion.

Would it not be wonderful if we were able to hear what Jesus said to them? You know, that's a very, it's a broad statement.

There's much in it. There's much in it.

Or as some call it, the sermon. That he preached to them on the road to a maze. All we are given is this outline of what he said to them.

[39 : 21] And the rest is left up to your imagination. And some people allow their imagination complete liberty. And they would say, oh, I'm sure he said this.

And I'm sure he said that. And I'm sure he spoke about the words of Isaiah 53. And I'm sure he took them to Zechariah 3 or Zechariah 12. Or he took them to the book of Genesis.

And talked about Abraham and Isaac. And all of these passages in the scripture that would possibly direct you to something relevant to say about the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're not told. That's the bottom line. And what it does say to us, nevertheless, and something that we should not overlook.

For all the curiosity that is stimulated within our heart about what he did say or what he didn't say. One thing that Jesus does say is that the word of God is all important.

[40 : 32] He allows us to understand that the scripture, as it is, is authoritative.

That the scripture is the place to go to. If you want to find out about Jesus. And that God's word is sufficient to satisfy any longing you have to find out more about him.

You know, Jesus doesn't say, you know, over and above what you understand already. This is something you can put alongside it. Over and above your own personal experience.

This is what you can put alongside it. No, this is something that has preeminence in his own thinking and in his own teaching.

That he wants people to absorb and imbibe and act upon in their lives. The theologian, in his own thinking and if I say that he is being jested intends for this world.

[42 : 07] It tells us about his intentions in creation. It tells us about his intentions in salvation. It tells us about his intentions as to the eternal destiny of those who have spent their life in the world.

Those who will go to eternal enjoyment of his presence or those who will be cut off from it for all eternity. Now to focus more on the passage before us what we understand is this that the prophet is elevating Christ before the reader.

He's lifting Christ up so that they understand that when they are pointed to the scripture the scripture is being brought to their attention because it speaks to them about Christ.

Whoever it is that we want to look at within the scripture and there are individuals who are important in their own sphere of influence there are characters that are highlighted and brought to our attention and their actions, their activities, their words all of these things are important in their own place but they have a reference to Christ.

They have something to say to us about Christ whether it is typically or whether it is preparatory or whether it is in some way highlighting to us the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[43 : 46] Now here at this point in the apostles writing he is saying Christ is greater than Moses. And when he is saying that he is not belittling Moses he is not saying Moses forget him no he is saying to them Moses is the very pinnacle of God's means of communication to the earth.

He is the one through whom God spoke when he brought the Ten Commandments when he brought the law to their attention by his words and by the activities that he was at the heart of.

Yes, Moses is important and some couldn't get past that. Some couldn't get over that. The import of Moses was something that they thought well this is the one that we follow and this is the one that we listen to and this is one whose word is diligently adhered to and applied across the whole area of our life.

But what Jesus is shown to be is someone that Moses spoke of and that Moses gave preeminence to and Moses anticipated coming and fulfilling works that he could not.

Well I want us to look at these words of the text in particular narrowing our focus but reminding ourselves of this I suppose key teaching that we find here the importance of scripture.

[45 : 36] The importance of the word of God and we see that the apostle says as the Holy Ghost says.

Now you might read that and say well what's the significance of that well at least surely it is telling us what he is referring to is God speaking.

He is saying this is what God said God the Holy Ghost has said this. The second thing that we need to understand is from what he says because of who he is identifying as the source of what he said what he has said needs to be listened to.

It's not a minister it's not Moses it's not any one of the prophets it's not any one of the apostles but God speaking through them and when they speak their words they are from God and because of the fact that they are from God they must be listened to.

They are not meant to be forgotten or ignored or bypassed or included along with others that you might think are important they are given this greater significance.

[47 : 08] The third thing that we can notice is that we receive at this point an example taken from God's word of failure miserable abject failure on the part of a people who bear God's name because they did not believe the word they did not recognise the word as God's word they did not hear God in his word and that's the condemnation that is spoken of here and the fourth thing the consequences of that simple blunt but consequences nonetheless we meet every Lord's day and we worship

God we sing we pray we read the Bible and with God's help we endeavour to expound what the Bible has for us most importantly in all of these things what we want is to hear God speak to us through his word we give a place to the word of God because it is his word it is his word relevant to us today just as truly as it was relevant to our forbearers and just as surely as it will be relevant to our descendants because it is God's word when I was thinking about this I was thinking well there are many books in the world

I mean if you want to come to the months I've got a good library and there are many books in it not all of them are good books good in the sense that they're theological books most of them are most of them I would say are commentaries on the Bible and some of them are books that I carried with me from from university books literature that is different to scripture they're important books some of them most of you will have heard of William Shakespeare I think I had a few books that have been sort of shunted maybe to gather more dust than some of the others

William Shakespeare is probably the most famous playwright that the world has ever known I don't know how many plays or sonnets or poems he composed he still remembered although there's over 400 years since he died his works are studied to this day they're recited they're learned by hearts they are important in their own place they have something to say but their importance I would argue is nothing like the importance of God's word for all its enduring quality the words of William Shakespeare may sometime in the future disappear from sight the relevance will probably disappear

I'm not a student of Shakespeare but it's interesting that there are many of Shakespeare's sayings that I remember today are very firmly rooted in the scriptures some of his pithiest and wisest sayings are actually derived from the Bible or an understanding of what the Bible is saying just quite remarkable but that is true but we have words written by politicians whether it's Karl Marx or former president of the United States Barack Obama some people say that these people had thoughts and wisdom that was noted and remembered and will influence generations perhaps in years to come but the Bible has been around for longer and the

[52 : 26] Bible is the most quoted word some people quoting it even without realising that they are quoting the Bible it is a holy book and the Christian believer understands it to be holy because of its content and because most of all they understand that the content of it is God's provision for them God has given us his word for a reason and the people of God have discovered for themselves without exception that the difference between this word and any other word which they might put somewhere in the same vicinity of it this word is a living word this word brings life when no other word can bring that life spiritual life and Christians treat it differently to the way they treat any other word perhaps they don't treat it as much a word that is life giving in the sense that

Christ spoke of it but he clearly understands God's word to be a word that he referenced that he quoted that he saw himself in that he understood God was giving us insights into God's purposes and allowing us access into the mysteries of the God by way of a truth that could not possibly have emerged from any other source but a divine one as far as Jesus was concerned it was all the last word on all matters of faith he considered the words of the Bible as authoritative and of divine origin why do I emphasize that because here at this point in the epistle the psalmist is quoted the word of

God is quoted by the apostle as a word that must be applied because the source of it is God himself the source of it is God himself while the human author is not identified and there are plenty opinions as to who composed psalm 95 and many other psalms that don't have an author name attached to it sometimes you see David's name attached to a psalm sometimes not I don't think this psalm is identified as coming from any particular individual but it is identified as the words of the Holy Ghost psalm and stranger still it is the psalmist quoting the words of the

Old Testament Pentateuch where Moses has spoken where the activities of the children of Israel are mentioned the same Holy Ghost the same God giving us this word and the word in the hands of that God again being introduced into the experience of God's people throughout the generations so that when God is speaking to you today through his word his word is a living word and it's speaking to you as his word so he is speaking to you through his word you remember the words of Paul when he is writing to Timothy and encouraging Timothy in his preaching activities and reminding Timothy despite the fact that he's of youth youthful years and that there are people there who will have grey hair and they will treat him with disdain and despise him because of his youth what he wants them to do is come to them with

God's word and he reminds Timothy of that he says to him from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus one one one of us how we live our life and conduct ourselves in this world is governed by the word that

[58 : 50] God has given to us that reminds us that he has an interest in what we do what we say where we go who we go there with now because of what the Bible is saying the apostle is wanting every reader to take note of it so that not one syllable is unimportant I know that there are parts of it you could argue that are of greater significance and I think I have to say this guardedly because there are parts of the Bible which have to do with my conduct as an individual within society how I behave with regard to others what does it mean for me to be a good neighbor what does it mean for me to be a good husband or a good wife what does it mean for me to be a good father or a good mother what does it mean for me to be somebody who's behaving as the art within the workplace the

Bible has got something to say on all of these things believe it or not but it also has something to say about our relationship with God it has something to say to us about how we behave with regard God their finger for

During Him shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another. Brethren, he that speaketh evil of his brother and judges his brother speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law.

But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgeth that other? Go to now ye that say, today or tomorrow we'll go to such a city and continue there and here and buy and sell and get gain.

Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, then vanishes away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that. But now you rejoice in your boastings.

[63 : 24] All such rejoicing is evil. Now if you take time, think about these words. You will remind yourselves that much of what he is referring to there are lessons that you learn from the Bible, the Old Testament and the New.

Things that you ought to be doing or not doing. Behaviour that should be acceptable to all men, women and children.

And behaviour that should be unacceptable to all men, women and children. Practical application of God's word.

And he concludes these words with this, Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is a sin.

Very strange conclusion if you like. And some people when I was looking at that, some are of the opinion that is an appendage, that is unnecessary.

[64 : 26] It's irrelevant. It doesn't really mean anything when it appears in the passage. But that's not the case. What the Apostle James is referring to are the teachings of Scripture in a broad spectrum.

The fact that every one of us is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit through his word. And it is our duty when these words are brought to our attention to apply them to all areas of our life.

and if our excuses I don't know which areas these verses belong to. Then what do we do? We go on our knees prayerfully and we learn from God the meaning of them.

And if we're serious about our Christianity or serious about our interest in the things of God it is on our knees we will learn from it. I don't know who I was reading but they were saying where is the best place to read the Bible?

Where is the best place to read the Bible? And you're thinking the answer to that question is maybe in a room by yourself maybe somewhere private.

[65 : 36] No, the best place is on your knees before God. Maybe not physically but with the idea that as you read the word of God you remember you know I remember when I was in university I studied Gaelic and we were given what was a privilege I suppose to have a visiting lecturer come to the university to the department of Celtic studies and it was Ian Crichton Smith the poet and to hear from himself what his poetry meant was going to be helpful but unfortunately most of these poets refused to talk about their own poems at least they did on that occasion we had Donald Macaulay another famous Gaelic poet never talked about his own poetry you often wondered what he meant by what he said but but when you are on your knees before God what you are doing is asking God if you are interested in what I have to say this is where you discover it for yourself so that you can apply it to the areas of your life that are of concern to you and you pray for your family and you want wisdom for how to be a good father or a good mother or a good brother or a good sister and so on now the specifics here refer us back not just to the psalm but to the psalm's original reference point it takes us back to the book of Exodus in chapter 17 when Israel found themselves in the wilderness and no water to drink so what did they do when they had no water to drink they turned on Moses and they turned on God and they condemned

God for taking him away from the privileged position they had as slaves in Egypt remember that God had something to say to them just as surely as they had something to say to God the people thirsted there for water and the people murmured against Moses and said wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle later on he says he called the name of the place Massa and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord saying is the Lord among us or not you're familiar with the story I'm sure then again another occasion perhaps reference to in the psalm where we find

Joshua and Caleb returning from the promised land with a good report while the other spies brought a bad report on the people thought while God is not faithful to his promise the problem that every one of us has is a problem of poor memory a flawed memory when we're taken up with events that are less than promising it's so easy to forget that there was ever a point in our life as believers if we are believers that God was not faithful to his promises that God was not providing for us far more than we ever deserved from his hands we forget these things so easily and then we turn on God and say you did this neglect neglect to remember what God has done neglect to remember what God has promised to do yet the Puritan

John Owen makes this point there is a sinful hardening of the heart with an obstinate cleaving of the affection unto sensual and carnal objects practically preferring them above the motive to obedience these men had a way of putting their finger on exactly what was at work in their lives they made a choice they preferred the very things that God forbade they preferred the very things that God condemned because they wanted to enjoy the thing that gave them sensual pleasure they chose to ignore the truth of God that said to them these things are temporary these things will not last these things will not go on but they chose they chose the short term satisfaction that they gave to them now what

God is saying to them here is when you choose deliberately to go against God why should it be a surprise to you if God deliberately chooses to act against you if you choose to resist God do you think that God is incapable of resisting you is it a fair fight the all powerful sovereign God who is able to produce out of nothing the world that you live and breathe and have your life in you are going to resist him you are going to say to him I will have my way regardless of what you are saying Paul in his letter to the

[72 : 39] Romans says this but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness the righteous judgment of God you know people people say I can be right you know it's like the lightning we were talking about with the children that comes without without expectation that comes without any preparation that comes without any warning not so the warnings of God are writ large across the whole of his testimony he tells the righteous that good will await them he tells the unrighteous that evil will befall them if a person lives impenitently if a person lives in resistance to God's revelation that reminds us of our need of

Christ then don't expect anything less than God to say well if you get your just deserts don't think that it's something that you didn't know about because through the word my word through the Holy Spirit who said his word even into your mouth some of you you can't you can't delete what God has indelibly imprinted into your psyche you know many of you like myself were taught in Sunday school many of the verses of Psalms many of the scripture passages many of the shorter catechisms we learned at our mother's knee when we were sitting in Sunday school taught by faithful men and women who wanted us to absorb God's word these words are retained by us we can't forget them we can't unlearn them we can't pretend they're not there they speak the truth into our consciences and our consciences will not absolve us of guilt when it comes to say what did you do with these words what did you do most importantly with the

Christ of which these words speaks that was the concern of the apostle what do you do with this Christ if you don't believe him if you don't believe in him if you don't trust him if you don't follow him if you're not saved by him what do you do with him the final verse of the chapter so we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief consequences we've all discovered consequences of what we've done sometimes we understood that there were consequences sometimes there are consequences we didn't know but I think when it comes to the word of God he's not going to surprise you in the sense that you didn't know because the truth of the matter is whoever shallow your knowledge is there is something there that tells you that to go against

God will not serve you well may God remind us as he does in his word the word of the Holy Ghost his own word that as Israel learned to their cost as the New Testament era learned to their cost so the generation we live in much of which has lived in ignorance of the word they will discover that even though they knowingly turned their back upon God's word will be a condemnation to them let us pray oh Lord oh God we look to you to bless your word to us we are confident in asserting that it will not return unto you void it will accomplish that which you have purposed for it do not allow us to believe anything other than that we are accountable to you as the

God who is willing to receive all who would come to you by way of Christ cleanse us from the many sins even the sins of unbelief and enable us to believe even as one before us prayed Lord I believe help thou my unbelief forgive us in Jesus name amen closing psalm 86 psalm 86 and from verse 9 to verse 12 all nations whom thou mayst shall come and worship reverently before thy face and they oh lord thy name shall glorify because thou art exceeding great and works by thee are done which are to be admired and thou art God thyself alone teach me thy way and in thy truth oh lord then walk will I unite my heart that I thy name may fear continually o lord o lord my god with all my heart to thee

[78 : 54] I will give praise and I the glory will ascribe unto thy name always these verses verse 9 to verse 12 of psalm 86 all nations whom thou mayst shall come all nations whom thou mayst shall come and worship and reign before my like is the glory time because the and and Yes, she declared Onward, shine thee again Which are to thee Admirred among Our God, thyself Alone Teach me thy will And if I will O Lord, shine O good will I You know in my heart Let me lie in

May pure congenially O Lord, my God With all my heart To thee I will give praise And I have Julie With us Heumer Peace, O God, the Father, the Son of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with you all, never and always. Amen.