

Good news of great comfort

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Preacher: Philip Wells and David Skull

[0 : 00] Well hello to everybody for Sunday the 5th of April 2020. I'm obviously recording this ahead of time on Saturday due to the corona lockdown.

! First of all a few thanks. I'm Chris Fry for his weekly elders letter on behalf of all the elders. Thanks to Ben and David last Sunday for their ministry of the word.

And thanks to Maccheh, if you are able to see this it's down to his expertise and advice. And thanks to Steve Ellicott because if you can hear this, this is down to his work uploading to sermon.net. Also thanks to all who participated in the Wednesday prayer time. We had a good time I'm sure. We've come to terms with it and it's good for us this morning to seek the Lord and to rest ourselves in him and his promises. And that's what we're going to do this morning. I'm going to lead us for a few minutes.

[1 : 48] And we also have a YouTube video from David Skull. Now many of you know David, but just to say he's a minister in Guildford at Grace Church in Guildford.

And he is being sent to Brighton as a missionary. And at the moment he's scoping out what that might mean and how he can best serve the Lord for the purposes of mission and people coming to know Jesus Christ in Brighton.

We'd love everybody to get to know David. He was to have been our speaker at the weekend away, but as we know, that's not going to happen. God's plans are not our plans. But we thank God for him and look forward to hearing what he has to say this morning and this evening.

And trust and pray that God will make it a blessing for us. God's plans. These are the words that I read the other day at our members meeting.

But now this is what the Lord says. He who created you, O Jacob. He who formed you, O Israel.

[3 : 06] Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

And when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. The flames will not set you ablaze.

For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. Let's say a prayer together.

As we come in worship, we bow before you, Sovereign Lord. Your ways are higher than our ways, and your thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

We worship you today. We acknowledge your right to determine events of the nations and the events of individuals.

[4 : 15] We are in your hands, and we are glad to be there. We give you the glory and the honour and the praise. As we come at this time, we humble ourselves, confessing our sins.

We confess our sins as the human race, our self-centeredness, which pushes you out of the way, our constant tendency to make idols instead of you.

We confess our sins as a nation that has turned away from you, as have so many nations. We confess our sins as individuals, the things that we have done we should not have done, and the things we have omitted to do which we ought to have done.

And as we approach you, we seek the forgiveness which comes only through the blood of Jesus Christ, our precious Lord and Saviour.

We come and we pray. We pray for one another. We pray that you will lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil.

[5 : 29] We pray that you will keep our physical health, but even more, we pray that you will keep our spiritual health and even enable us to become more spiritually healthy.

We pray for our neighbours. We think of those who are running businesses or who are self-employed. Think of those who are vulnerable through age or infirmity.

We think of those with families, little children. We particularly think of those working for the NHS and ask you to show kindness and faithfulness and mercy.

We pray, Lord, that you would use this time to enlarge your kingdom. And today, as it is the day in which we remember your resurrection, we seek not to forget your name, but that we might remember you and that you might draw near to us.

And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Let me read from Isaiah 44 and then we have a song.

[6 : 42] I'm going to read from Isaiah 44 verses 6 to 9. This is what the Lord says, Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty.

I am the first and the last. Apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.

Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people and what is yet to come.

Let him foretell what will come. Do not tremble. Do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?

You are my witnesses. Is there any God beside me? No, there is no other rock. I know not one. All who make idols are nothing.

[7 : 42] The things they treasure are worthless. And those who would speak up for them are blind. They are ignorant to their own shame.

God says, I am the first and the last. Apart from me there is no God. And the song is Who Has Held the Oceans in His Hand. There's a soundtrack for this.

And the words will come up. If the soundtrack is not to your taste, feel free just to turn it down. But here we are.

Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are. Here we are.

Who has held the oceans in His hands. Who has numbered every grain of sand.

[8 : 49] Kings and nations tremble at His voice. All creation rises to rejoice.

Behold our God. Behold our God, see to the mistrust, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can complain, come let us adore Him.

Who has given counsel to the Lord? Who can question any of His words?

Who can teach the One who knows all things? Who can fathom all His wondrous seeds?

[9 : 55] Behold our God, see to the mistrust, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can complain, come let us adore Him.

Who has felt the mistrust upon His blood? Bearing all the guilt of sinful men?

Hold it tight, I'll hold on to the grave. Jesus, take your wisdom now to reign.

Behold our King, nothing can complain, come let us adore Him.

[11 : 01] Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

I'm going to read Isaiah chapter 40. And that's the passage that David's going to speak from. Isaiah chapter 40.

[12 : 11] Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling, In the desert prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low. The rough ground shall become level, and the rugged places are plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

A voice says, Cry out! And I said, What shall I cry? All flesh, all men are like grass, and their glory, or their steadfast love, their loyalty, is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers, the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.

[13 : 34] You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout. Lift it up, do not be afraid.

Say to the towns of Judah, Behold your God. See, the sovereign Lord comes with power. His arm rules for him.

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them close to his heart.

He gently leads those that have young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, and weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counsellor?

[14 : 39] Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, or who taught him the right way? Who was it who taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

Behold, surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket. They are regarded as dust on the scales.

Behold, he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

Lebanon is not sufficient for altar-fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are as nothing. They are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

To whom, then, will you compare God? What idol, sorry, what image will you compare him to? As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and fashions silver chains for it.

A man too pauper to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot, and he looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple. Do you not know?

[15 : 48] Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood? Since the earth was founded, he sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, and he blows on them and they wither. And a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens.

Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

[16 : 59] So why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is disregarded by my God?

Do you not know? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary. Young men stumble and fall.

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not be faint. And we thank God for his wonderful word. I've chosen this song to sing because it contains the thought, Can a woman's tender care cease toward the child she bear?

[18 : 11] Yes, she may forgetful be, yet will I remember thee. It's by William Cooper. It's in poetic old English. So thou and thee is the old equivalent of you, and thy is the equivalent of your.

So I hope that won't spoil it for you. But it's a lovely song, a rather tender song about the love the Lord has for his people, and how we ourselves ought to love him.

So again, I've got the music. And I hope you can join in with this. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song.

Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song.

Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. My soul, it is the Lord, is my Saviour in His Word.

[19 : 13] Jesus speaks and speaks to Thee, same or sinner, loves Thou me.

I deliver Thee when bound, and when wounded healed Thy wound.

So the wandering set Thee right, turn Thy darkness into light.

And a woman's tender care, Sees to haunt the child she bare.

Yet she may forgetfully, And will I remember Thee.

[20 : 15] Mine is an unchanging love, Higher than the nights above.

Deeper than the death's denies, Free and faithful, strong as death.
Thou shalt see Thy glory soon, When the work of grace is done.
My partner of my throne shall be, Say, poor sinner, loves Thou me.
My soul, it is my teeth on plain, That my love is bold and faint.

[21 : 19] Yet I love Thee and adore, All for grace to love Thee more.

Thank you, Jamie.

Please do turn in your Bibles this evening to the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah chapter 40. And we're going to read together Isaiah chapter 40, verses 27 down to the end of the chapter. Isaiah 40, 27 down to the end of the chapter. Isaiah 40, verse 27.

Why do you complain, O Jacob? Why do you say, O Israel, that my way is hidden from the Lord, and my cause is disregarded by my God?

[22 : 29] Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. I'd like us to focus on verse 27 for a few minutes this evening and see how it's expanded in the rest of the chapter of Isaiah 40.

Verse 27. Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God. I wonder if you've ever had the experience of being forgotten. Maybe you're feeling that now in your isolation. Some of you might know the story of what happened a few years ago. About 8.30 p.m. one Tuesday evening during term time, the doorbell rang at our home.

[23 : 41] I came down in my PJs. We just had a baby. We were tired. Or maybe it was my loungewear. I can't remember. But there, to my surprise, on the doorstep was a crowd of activators, the younger teenagers in our church, all standing there asking for their main course.

They were, of course, on a safari supper around the homes of church members. Sadly, there was no main course for them, and you should have seen the look in their eyes, because we had completely forgotten that they were coming.

I can still remember, as a young boy, the day my parents forgot me. Now, they're probably listening to this. I'm sure they can't even remember this themselves, but I do.

Every Friday, Mum worked in the bank in the local Suffolk town, and it was our job as a family to get in the car and drive and collect Mum from work. And one of the exciting things about that trip was that we would get the opportunity to go to the newsagents on the high street and buy a comic. Like, I always bought the Disney comic. And on this particular day, after we had collected Mum, my brother and I were allowed to go to the newsagents on our own.

[24 : 49] Now, my parents obviously had something important to do, because this didn't normally happen. Well, the instruction was given to me and my brother, go to the newsagents, get your comics, then wait around the corner, and we will come and get you.

Do not wander off. That's what we did. We went to the newsagents, we went around the corner, and we waited. And we waited. And we waited.

They didn't come. I still remember that growing sense of fear and weakness and panic as a young lad. Maybe you've had a similar experience.

My brother wasn't any good. I didn't want him. I wanted my dad and mum. Well, after what seemed like a lifetime, and in reality, it was probably only about half an hour, my parents came charging around the corner, to which my mum said, I told you they'd be here.

They'd forgotten where we were. That's not normal for my parents, by the way. Well, look at verse 27. In some sense, that's what Israel were thinking about God's relationship with them.

[25 : 53] They were saying, verse 27, my way is hidden from the Lord. God, my cause, my right is disregarded by my God. God, our God, has forgotten us.

Now, Isaiah is writing, looking to the day ahead, when Israel, God's Old Testament people, would find themselves in exile in Babylon. And Isaiah knew that this is how they would be tempted to feel. It wasn't kind of God to deal with how they would feel in the future. They would feel weak and weary, and they would wonder where their God was, and why he was forgetting them.

My way is hidden from the Lord. It's easy to feel forgotten by God, even at this time, as the people of God. What's going on? I just don't understand. Here I am, suddenly self-isolating. Hidden from others. Am I hidden from God? Well, Isaiah tells us to question that kind of thinking. Look at verse 27 again, because Isaiah 40, verse 27, is really a question from the Lord to bring them hope.

[26 : 58] Why do you say, O Jacob? Why do you complain, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord? My cause is disregarded by my God. God has not forgotten you, says Isaiah.

Even in exile, his love for you is bigger than you know. Now, as we look back on the previous verses in Isaiah 40, briefly tonight, we'll see that there are really two big reasons in this chapter why they and we, as God's new covenant people, should question that kind of thinking.

God has not forgotten us. Instead, we will know great comfort tonight, which is what we need as the people of God at this time. Isaiah speaks of two great things that bring us comfort.

First of all, he says, remember that we can hear God speaking his gospel promises to us. We hear God speaking his gospel promises to us, and they comfort us, friends.

And secondly, he says, know that God's gospel promises are combined with God's unrivaled power. So God is totally able to keep his gospel promises to you, even though you might be in a situation where you feel forgotten.

[28 : 10] And then at the end, of course, comes those famous verses that we read. Comes the implication, the encouragement for the people of God, that we should at this time trust in the Lord for strength. Look to him primarily at this time.

Let's just work it through together. We know that God has not forgotten us, because firstly, verses 1 to 11, because we hear God speaking his precious gospel promises to us.

That's why we have the Bible read to us. We believe this full of wonderful truth about God's love for us in Jesus. In chapter 39, Isaiah explains to Hezekiah that exile was coming to Israel because of their sin.

And God then calls Isaiah in chapter 40 to make these great, comforting gospel promises to His people. He's already covered things for the future.

Look at chapter 40, verse 1 with me. Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Speak to their hearts. And proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed.

[29 : 16] The exile is over. That her sin has been paid for. That she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. What a thing to look forward to when you're in the middle of isolation and exile.

Now, despite our present circumstances that we're in, friends, this is a great comfort for us. And the gospel brings us great comfort. Our ultimate comfort. And we must trust in the gospel as God speaks it to us through His word.

Now, it's important to understand here that in these verses, verses 1 to 2, it's not Israel who has paid the Lord back for all she has done wrong. That doesn't get her out of exile. That's not the gospel.

No, the gospel is the fact that the Lord has stepped in to pay for Israel's sin and takes her from exile. These things have come from the Lord's hand. The idea of receiving double from the Lord's hand is a picture of an exact match for something.

And the Lord has covered it to bring you out of exile. And so we see in these verses the promises of God's love, His grace, His forgiveness, as well as His justice.

[30 : 21] And of course, for us, as we work that through to the New Testament and to us today, these things are fulfilled and remind us that God's great gospel promises for us are all about Jesus.

All about Jesus and the cross. And there, my friends, is our comfort at this time in God's gospel promises about Jesus and the cross. So in these verses, just very briefly, we've got three messages or voices commissioned by God to announce this gospel, this good news of comfort to God's people.

The first messenger, verses 3 to 5, prepares the way for the Lord, announces the coming of the Lord. Of course, this was fulfilled by John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Lord Jesus. We know that in Mark chapter 1.

The second message, voice of comfort, verses 6 to 8, explains that this great comforting message, the Lord is coming, is something certain and secure. Boy, look at verses 6 to 8.

These are important for us to take on board at this time, aren't they? Isaiah contrasts the frailty, the impermanence of humanity to the permanence of God's gospel promises, which comfort us.

[31 : 31] Verse 6, a voice cries out, says, cry out. And I said, well, what shall I cry? All men are like grass. All their glory is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers and the flowers fall because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but here's the comfort.

But the word of our God stands forever. Friends, such is the difference between mankind, between humanity and God's gospel promises that comfort us.

Everything else is frail and insecure. But God's promises given to us in Jesus are certain. And in this we can take comfort. The third comforting voice, verses 9 to 11, is the message saying to design itself to Jerusalem, to herald this good news of comfort to others.

And what's the message of verse 10? The message is that the Lord himself is coming. He's coming in mighty power. He's coming as the good shepherd to tend and care for his flock.

[32 : 40] You're not alone. The Lord is coming. Of course, these things are fulfilled firstly in Jesus, who said in John 10, I am the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

And these things, of course, are fulfilled as the church, the news iron, the true Israel, proclaim this message today.

Friends, we have a task to do, to bring the comfort of good news to others. We will bring physical comfort and care and love, but we also bring something the world doesn't have.

And that's the comfort of the Lord's coming of Jesus himself. So friends, has God forgotten us? No. Because firstly, we have God speaking his gospel promises, even tonight from the book of Isaiah for you in isolation.

These things are all about Jesus Christ and his finished work at the cross. So friends, if you're listening tonight and you don't know the comforting joy at this time, that your sins have all been paid for, through Jesus's death in your place at the cross, he is your good shepherd who laid down his life for you.

[33 : 49] Then with all my heart, I say to you at this time of uncertainty, turn to God today. Listen to these gospel promises. And as you hear this comforting great news, put your hope and trust in Jesus.

Don't put your hope and trust in the frail plans of man. Mankind is like dust and grass. But here is eternal comfort for you and for me at this time.

So that's the first reason that we know God has not forgotten us, because we have heard and we hear God's gospel promises. Friends, keep connecting with God's words. Keep connecting with your church as much as you can.

Keep listening to these broadcasts to Grace Church Guildford, because we need to keep hearing this for comfort. But secondly, and here's the wonderful thing in verses 12 to 26, we don't just have the message of comfort fulfilled in Jesus, but we know that that is true, because we have the power of God backing up that comfort.

The power of God guarantees his gospel promises to us. And so we have hope. Friends, I can make great promises, and I struggle to live up to them, even with my family.

[34 : 59] Someone might say we will defeat this virus in 12 weeks, and we really hope that we will. But promises need to be combined with power in order to have any effect and to be kept.

And when it comes to God's gospel promises about Jesus and the cross that bring us comfort, we know that God has power to keep them to us. Isaiah, in these verses, points to God's unrivaled power and wisdom as our creator.

And surely it is a time like this, when our nation and our world is humbled, that we need to remember again that we are creatures in the hands of a powerful God who has created us.

We are in his hands. Just look at verses 12 to 14. Notice firstly in those verses the power and the wisdom of God our creator. Verse 12, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hands? Or with the breath of his hand marked out the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket? Or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

[36 : 07] And in cooking, in our isolation, we'll be doing a lot of cooking. Well, we store our sugar in bowls and weigh our flour on scales. When in creating, God puts the dust of the earth in the bowl and weighs the mountains in scales.

I've got to be honest with you, I can't even make a flat plaque Ikea package without reading the instructions. I'm rubbish.

But God created the world with no other need of instructions or no other need of help. He used his own wisdom. Look at verse 13, Who has understood the mind of the Lord or instructed him as his counselor?

Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him? Or who taught him the right way? Who is it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? God knows everything. He's in charge. And because he is the all-powerful creator, there is no one or nothing on a par with him. Look at verse 18, To whom will you compare God? God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 12] What image will you compare to him? An idol? How ridiculous. There's only one God. Kings and nations of the earth with all their pomp and power and ideas and plans. Verse 15, Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket.

They are regarded as dust on the scales. And before him, the Lord, all the nations are as nothing. They are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. There is not the solution.

Verse 22, The Lord sits above the circle of the earth and its people, you and me, are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown. No sooner do they take root in the ground than he blows on them and they wither.

And a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. Friends, where is the Babylonian empire today? Where is Alexander the Great? Where is the Roman empire?

[38 : 14] Where is the British empire? Where will we end up in decades and centuries to come? There's only one God. There's only one throne. And there is none like him.

Verse 26 tells us to lift our eyes away from the microbes and to lift our eyes and to look at the heavens at this time. Go outside and see the stars. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name because of the power of his great might and mighty strength.

Not one of those stars is missing. Friends, what an amazing description of God our creator. But what is Isaiah's message to us through this? What is God's message to his weak and weary people who are tempted to think that God has forgotten them?

My friends, if the first part of this chapter is the gospel of God's promises in Jesus at the cross and these things bring us great comfort, then that must be combined with the utter, complete power of God to bring about and keep those plans and purposes for us in Jesus at the cross.

Look at the insects. Look at the grasshoppers. That's all we are. Look at the stars in the sky and see the power and the greatness of God. And then know that God's gospel promises are always combined with his unrivaled power.

[39 : 37] So has God forgotten you tonight? Has he forgotten our church? His people? In Jesus? No. And finally, verses 27 to 31 encourages us in the light of these truths, God's promises and his power now to put our trust in him for strength for the future in our weakness.

We can't look to ourselves. We can't even look to our church structures. We can't look to the plans of man. We must trust in God. So in verses 27 to 31, Isaiah sums all this up and reminds us what this means for us when we feel weak and weary as the people of God.

Why do you say, verse 27, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God. Do you not know?

Have you not heard, people of God? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary. His understanding no one can fathom.

Friends, this is true. And if it's true, what must we do? Turn from our self-reliance and seek to place ourselves in the hands of our loving creator who's promised us much in Jesus.

[40 : 56] Verse 29, He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall. But those who hope for the Lord, those who wait for him, those who trust him and his gospel promises will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Friends, as we learn to trust in God's comforting gospel promises through Jesus, in the midst of our weakness and at times our weariness at the moment, we can find that God, our God, loves to

strengthen his new covenant people as we learn to trust and hope in him.

Friends, we are not forgotten. Amen. We're going to close this time in prayer together. I'm trying to seal these things, the things we've heard this morning, into our hearts.

Pray that the Lord will bless us in the week ahead. Let's bow our heads and pray. Lord, we do confess before you that we do feel weak, that we do feel in our isolation, apart from each other, confused.

And at times we must confess, we do think, what are you doing? But Lord, please help us, as Isaiah has said, to question that feeling.

[42 : 38] And please help us to look away from ourselves at this time to your great comforting promises to us in Jesus. Lord, we're sorry that at times we have bigged ourselves up and forgotten that we are just like grass that withers away.

We're like grasshoppers, dust in the scales. Lord, please forgive us for these things, but Lord, please help us to remember that in comparison to our impermanence, your promises in Jesus are permanent and real and solid and backed up by your power.

And so we humble ourselves as a church tonight and we take comfort and hope in the strength that you will give us. Please strengthen each member of our church and others listening in tonight with the truth of the gospel.

Give us the strength that we need to persevere at this time and even to hold out the message of comfort and hope to others, we pray. Bless us. We commit this evening to you and the week ahead into your hands.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Sorry, I lost the sound there.

[44 : 06] Great if you could watch the video. You might be able to pause this and come back to it, but if not, just run on to the end. These are my closing thoughts and a closing song and prayer.

This is from Deuteronomy 31, verse 6. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them.

For the Lord your God goes with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. It's a wonderful promise, one that we need to count on. He will not leave us nor forsake us.

So the closing song is what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Do have a friend in the Lord Jesus and that's a very real thing for us at the moment.

[45 : 08] So I'll just wind the music back and again, I hope you find you can join in with this. What a privilege Having Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear.

Oh, because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged, taken to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful? Who will our hearts all rush in?

[46 : 54] Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Oh, we we can carry laden. Burn and burn and love of care.

Jesus is our mighty Saviour. He will listen to our prayer. Do your friends despise, forsake you. Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Give these until they can shield you. Find your strength and comfort there.

Amen. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified.

For the Lord your God goes with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. We pray. We thank you for your great promises. We thank you that you are a rock for us.

[48 : 31] We thank you for your almighty, incomparable God. And before the mountains were born, we found our home in you, O God.

May this be a real thing for each of us in these strange and difficult days. Now may grace and mercy and peace be with each one of us.

From God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for evermore. Amen. Amen. Hope to see you soon. Bye bye now.

See you soon. Bye bye now.

Who has held the oceans in his heart?