

God guides his people

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[0 : 00] In Psalm 48, the writer rejoices in the intimate relationship between God and his people. And he encourages us to think very carefully about this, to look at the details, walk about Jerusalem, look at her ramparts, so that we can be spiritually strong and also that we can tell this to the next generation.

And he closes the psalm with these words, kind of summarising thought where he says this, For this God is our God, forever and ever he will be our guide even to the end. What a great statement. How many of us can say that this morning? For this God is our God, he will be our guide even to the end.

And this is our subject this morning. God guides his people. It's a very precious and a wonderful truth. And if you're a Christian, this is for you.

It's possible that you've never realised that these words are written for you. Perhaps you've thought that the idea of God guiding is something that's only for a rather special group of people.

[1 : 19] The sort of people who have books written about them, which we have on the stall over there. And you think, wow, amazing that these people should have known God's guidance in their lives.

But you don't know much about this yourself. And this morning I'd like to introduce you to the privilege and the opportunity and responsibility that is the birthright of every Christian believer to know God's guidance in our everyday lives.

Whether we're a mum at home. Whether we're a mum at home, an IT consultant, a nurse or a traffic warden, or a new university student. You do need to know that God guides his people.

And we're going to explore and discover how that works in practice. I'm reading a very, very big book by a man called George Muller.

George Muller lived in the 19th century. And he has lots and lots and lots of stories about how God guided him. And every so often in this book he says this. Dear reader, please do not think that this is just what happens to me.

[2 : 29] I'm writing this for you. So that you too can know this same God. It's also possible that you're a Christian who once knew something about the guidance of God.

But you've lost touch with that God. And you don't expect it to happen now. Perhaps you're a bit cynical about people who say that God guided me to do this or that.

Or perhaps you've had an experience in which you really believe that God was guiding you. But it turned out badly. As you think. And you've lost confidence.

That God can actually guide people. So you've learned instead to get by with your own wisdom accumulated over many years. I'd like to suggest that this is not a good and a healthy place to be. So hopefully this message might be a challenge to you. And an encouragement to start again. Because it's never too late. Perhaps you have to say.

[3 : 45] I haven't known anything about the guidance of God for 10 years. I've just lived my life just like everybody else. I can remember a time. When God did show me something.

But that's so long ago. Absolutely confident that God wants to guide you. And he's not bothered about the fact that it's 10 or 50 years since you last heard his voice.

He wants to guide you again. That's exactly the right place for every one of his children to be. Or perhaps. Wonderfully.

You are experiencing God's guidance in your life. And are rather amazed by it. Well may you be encouraged this morning. To go on. To go deeper.

And not to be ashamed. And not to think it's somehow weird. And unusual. But actually to tell others about it. Both in the church. And outside. Because it was one of the wonderful hallmarks.

[4 : 49] Of the people of Israel. That they were able to say. This God is our God. He's a God who guides us. They weren't frightened of saying that to the heathen nations.

It was a wonderful thing. Why not tell your workmates. I believe in a God who guides me in my life. That's a bit weird.

But it's actually a fundamental truth. And what's weird. It's not to have a God who guides you. And there's also something important in this Bible.

Truth for us as a church. This verse in Psalm 48. Is primarily about the joint and plural experience of God's people. This God is our God. He will be our guide.

And the writer of the psalm is thinking of his fellow brothers and sisters. And he's thinking of the ways in which God deals with us as a body of people. It's a marvelous thing that God deals with us individually.

[5 : 54] But the church is even more marvelous. If I could put it that way. It's even more marvelous that God's special love is devoted to a group of his people.

Because we see the richness and diversity of God's saving power expressed in a body of his people. God guides individual Christians.

But he also guides the church. And how much we need this. Let me just suggest a few issues that we're facing that definitely need God's guidance at the moment.

We need guidance to know how to deal with growth. Because we are facing growth. And you think oh that's fine. That's wonderful. We need wisdom to know how to deal with growing numbers.

We also need to have wisdom and God's guidance to know how to deal with hindrances to growth.

We can be quite sure of this. That if there's any work of God going on.

[6 : 58] The devil will be extremely active to seek to destroy. To mar. To spoil. To disrupt. Any genuine work of God's Holy Spirit.

So we need spiritual antennae. We need to have God's guidance to deal with hindrances to growth. We need his guidance in the matter of calling and assistant pastor.

Which is a long term agenda for us. And it is not easy. It is not straightforward. And we need God's help.

We need to have God's guidance to give testimony to the Lord Jesus in his gospel in this city.

Whether facing indifference. Which is widespread.

Or hostility. Which is there and will become more so. But I also hope this will be of real interest to anybody here.

[7 : 56] Whether or not you're a Christian. You may be here because someone invited you. Or you have some interest in finding out about Christianity. Or perhaps you're going through a major crisis in your life.

And you just thought. Well I might find some help in that funny little church building in Viaduct Road. Whatever your reasons and motives. Here you are.

Well here you are today. And I hope that you will find God's help. Here's a starting point. There's a living God who guides people.

How remarkable. What an important subject this is for all of us. We all have lives to be lived. Young or old.

Single or in relationship. In work or out of it. Rich or poor. Facing a big issue now. Or about to face one in a month. None of us know what our situation will be tomorrow.

[8 : 57] Let alone in five years time. Life is fragile and uncertain. And additionally the possible choices that we face. In these days.

Are bewilderingly great. The sort of message that is to be preached now. With not the same sort of message as might have been preached a hundred years ago.

When the opportunities and possibilities. That were before anybody. Were extremely limited. For a start. This building is filled with ten or eleven nations.

Isn't that a remarkable thought? That would not be the case a hundred years ago. You've come from Hong Kong. And Taiwan. And Bolivia. And Italy. And Germany.

And Singapore. And Brazil. And Nigeria. You're here today. Through the marvels of communication. And modern travel. And the fact that you can study in this country now. In a way that you would not have been able to do a hundred years ago.

[9 : 59] What enormous choices and possibilities. Some of you might have been in Harvard today. Or in Buenos Aires. Or in Cape Town.

And you know how easy it is for any of us to. Just go on the internet. And book a flight. And we could be anywhere in the world. Within 24 hours. Which all seems marvelous. But actually it fills us with bewildering choices. And buried under all the sort of stuff of choice. Is this idea. That well. Does God. Want something of me. What does he want me to do. How does he want me to live. Where does he want me to live.

We all need guidance. And we all get guidance. In one way. Or another. How do we get our guidance.

[11:02] We get it through traditions. We get it through our habits. We get it through upbringing. We get it through our world view. We get it through family and friends. From culture. From experience.

That is the way that. My work colleagues around me. Where I work. That's how they get their guidance. And I find it amazing as well.

If you're in a workplace situation now. The possibilities. Are endless. I work for an international company. Next year. 17 graduates. Are going to get the opportunity.

To work in Bangalore. And 17 graduates in Bangalore. Will be working in the UK. There are opportunities. For people to go and build a big tower. Out in Jeddah. In Saudi Arabia. They can do it.

They can put their application in on Monday. But what do you do as a Christian? Now we know the way the world works.

[11:57] It says look at your CV. Have a fruitful CV. That's the world view. That's the way the world operates.

And it would be stupid to suggest. That there isn't some good to be found. In any or all of these methods. But the Bible has severe warnings. About the limitations.

Of trying to figure out life. In a world that is broken. In fact the wisdom of this world. Has proven to be desperately inadequate.

Even more so. It warns us against adopting. The thought patterns and mindset. Of a world which is essentially. In rebellion. Against God.

So. There are three verses. I'd like you to pick up your Bibles. Open them to the page numbers. If you're not familiar. With your way around the Bible. Those are the page numbers. In the church Bible.

[12:57] Romans 12. Verse 1. I would suggest. These are. The sorts of verses. That should be deeply planted.

In your heart. And should be. Memorised. Memorised. Because you're going to need. These. Passages of God's word. To stand against.

The tide of. Unbelief. Romans 12. Verses 1 and 2. I urge you brothers. In view of God's mercy. To offer your bodies. As living sacrifices.

Holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform. Any longer. To the pattern. Of this world. But.

Be transformed. By the renewing. Of your mind. Then. You will be able. To test. And approve. What.

[13:54] God's will is. His good. Pleasing. And perfect will. Do you see. There's a progression here. There's a progression.

There's something to be. Put off. Something to be put on. Do not. Conform. Any longer. To the pattern.

Of this world. God. That's a strong statement. Christian people. Don't. Go into the ways.

Of thinking. That the world has. But be transformed. By the renewing. Of your mind. A new mind. It's then. You will be able.

To test. And approve. What God's will is. And it's a good will. It's good. And pleasing. And perfect. Praise God. Our next passage.

[14:53] Is 2 Corinthians. Chapter 10. Verse 5. Paul is talking about.

His own ministry. The apostle Paul. Preacher of the gospel. Builder of churches. And he talks about the fact that. We're in a battle. We're in a spiritual battle.

He was very aware of it. The weapons we fight with. Are not the weapons of the world. Verse 4. On the contrary. They have divine power. To demolish. Strongholds.

We. Demolish. Arguments. And every pretension. That sets itself up. Against the knowledge of God. And we take captive.

Every thought. To make it obedient. To Christ. Christ. The world thinks about things. In a certain way. Christian people.

[15:53] We need to. Think about things. Through the lens. Through the. Through the sieve. Through the. Through the mesh. Of. The mind of Jesus Christ. Single minded.

Testing. Examining. Probing. Not just taking things. For granted. Everything that's spouted at us. No matter what. How credible the source. Might appear to be. Well people are the word. And the word gives us guidance. The word is there to change our minds.

And 2 Corinthians 5. 17. Therefore. Well let's go back to 16.

No one we regard. No one from a worldly point of view. We once regarded Christ in this way. We don't so any longer. If anyone is in Christ. He's a new creation. The old is gone.

[16:54] And the new. Has come. It's pretty comprehensive. We're a new people. We've got a new life to live.

And a new destiny. In front of us. A fundamental point in all this. Is that. God has taken an initiative. To be a Christian. Is to have received. A personal visitation. From God. He's invaded your life. It might have been quiet.

It might have been violent. And disturbing. But this is certainly true. God has come to you. And he's changing you. And he's taking you on a journey. With himself.

And with the family of fellow believers. Before you lived your life. On your own terms. Making your own decisions. And choices. In the rather ridiculous words.

[17:50] Of the poem. By William Ernest Henley. I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul. That's changed.

You're not alone. You're on God's journey. Under his terms and conditions. To fulfill his purposes. And to bring him glory. He's bought you with a price. You are not your own. The blood of God's son. Jesus Christ. Has been shed. So that you might become. One of God's children. And God says to you.

You are mine. This might sound restrictive. Or limiting. Or constraining. But it's actually the most wonderful thing. In the world. For any one of us.

[19:02] We've found our reason for living. We've been reconciled with our maker. We're on an eternal voyage. Which has started here. But will never end. And God is fitting us.

For the journey. And the enjoyment of it. There's a couple of. Really helpful verses.

We can refer to. Isaiah 63. Verse 14. Isaiah. 63. Verse 14.

Isaiah is recalling. What happened. Hundreds of years before.

When God. Led his people out of Egypt. Out of the land of slavery. The God who led them. Verse 13. Through the depths.

[20:00] Like a horse in open country. They didn't stumble. Like cattle that go down to the plain. They were given rest. By the spirit of the Lord. God. This is how you guided your people. To make for yourself.

A glorious name. Isn't that an interesting phrase? This is how you guided your people. Great. To make for yourself. A glorious name.

Do you know. Do you realize. That the guidance of God. In your life. Is for the purpose. That God. Should receive glory. That people should be able to say.

How wonderful. This God is. How great a God. Who rescues people. How wonderful a God. Who is so patient.

With us. How he provides. For his people. When they are in desperate need. This is God. God.

[21:03] And so. He leads his people. Through ways. That seem to us. As if they are. Tortuous. And uncertain. But in all this. It's for his glory.

He should be glorified. So that when we meet together. As a people of God. And you tell your story. We are able to say. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Because the glory is going to him. Him. Psalm 31, verse 3. Where David, who knew a thing or two about God, said this, Now that's a great prayer to pray.

That's a really safe prayer to pray. That's a good prayer to pray. You're not saying, lead me because I just need leading, which is true.

But lead me for the sake of your glory. Lead me so that God should be glorified through me. That's a prayer that God is very pleased to answer.

[22 : 36] Are you on this journey? Have you submitted yourself to Almighty God and his purposes? If you haven't done so yet, I invite you to do so now.

So when we talk of God guiding his people, we mean God taking us by the hand to be part of his purposes in time and eternity.

We must never separate the subject of God's guidance from God himself. From his ways and his purposes.

It's a part of our old nature and so a deep habit of thinking and practice to want God to be impersonally dispensing answers for the daily uncertainties of life, job, home, insurance, holidays, money.

And we may think that we are behaving in a good Christian way by asking God about all these things in prayer. But it's not enough. In fact, it does a great disservice to God.

[23 : 49] God says instead, come with me. And together, we'll see the answers. The perfect example of this is surely the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who in the days of his life on earth, as he faced the same troubles, perplexities and challenges that we face. And he did. Said this about the way he lived his life. I do always the things that please my father.

I do always the things that please my father. That was the guiding principle of the Lord Jesus life on earth.

Listening to the father's voice. John White says, deep in your heart, it is not guidance that you want so much as a guide.

The Bible is rich with so many illustrations of this truth.

[25 : 07] Each of them tells us something of the nature of God's guidance and gives us something to learn. And let's look at some of them now. Abraham.

Genesis 12, 1 to 5 is the reading. Genesis 12, 1 to 5. The Lord had said to Abraham, leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name greater. You'll be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And whoever curses you, I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Abraham. So Abraham left. As the Lord had told him, a lot went with him. Abraham was 75 years old when he set out from Haran.

He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran. And they set out for the land of Canaan. And they arrived there.

[26 : 24] And he had camels, not a car, but gives you the idea, doesn't it? This whole group of people setting off. It's a remarkable thought.

We don't know how God spoke to Abraham about this. But he did speak to Abraham. He spoke to him in such a way that he was convincing enough for the members of his family to say, we're going to make a journey.

But please look also at Hebrews chapter 11, verses 8 to 10. By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went.

Even though he did not know where he was going. That's a very telling point, isn't it? God said go.

But he gave him no great detail, no GPS coordinate to say this is where you're going to land up.

And by the way, when you get there, these are the features of the countryside you're going to be living in.

[27 : 31] And this is the sort of equipment you're going to need to be able to be a good farmer in that territory. And by the way, there are some troublesome neighbours. None of that. He just said go.

And this story of Abraham stands for all time as an outstanding example for all of us about a feature of the way God guides his people.

It is incredibly unusual for God to give us the end detail. We just have a little bit opened up to us for the way ahead.

Typically God guides us step by step without a clear picture of where we are heading.

There surely is a purpose in that. The truth is that God in his wisdom to make and keep us humble and to teach us to walk by faith has hidden from us almost everything that we should like to know

about the providential purposes which he is working out in the churches and in our own lives.
[28 : 57] C.S. Lewis says a glimpse of the next three feet of road is more important than a view of the horizon.

And how difficult a lesson this is for us. As we crave certainty, God only gives us the next three feet of the road to keep us humble and dependent upon him so that we might live by faith and not by sight.

So we can look back and see the way that God has led us and what a good God he is. But we cannot see beyond the next few steps.

So do not think it's strange if you are in precisely this place where all you can see is a step or two. This is a normal Christian life.

And therefore as a church, we cannot expect to have a clear picture as to what will happen next year or five years hence. We may have hints. We may be prompted in prayer. We may have God given longings.

[30 : 10] But the outlines are vague and fluid and God will give us just enough light to press on. And how uncomfortable that is to the flesh.

But how like the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that is. The God of the Bible. The God who we profess. And are we prepared to go the road of trust in God rather than the way of sight?

Are we prepared like Abraham to leave behind the old way of doing things? And to be trusting God for what lies ahead.

And so it was that the people of Israel on their 40 year journey in the desert. They met the guidance of God. God led them day by day and this was his method.

Exodus 40 verses 36 to 38. Exodus 40. 36 to 38.

[31 : 27] The end of the book of Exodus. It's like a summary of everything that happened over those 40 years. In all the travels of the Israelites. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle.

They would set out. But if the cloud did not lift. They did not set out until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day. And fire was in the cloud by night.

In the sight of all the house of Israel. During all their travels. He provided a pillar of cloud. It was a sign of his presence. Hovering over the tabernacle.

And when the cloud moved it was time for them to move. And when the cloud stopped it was time for them to stop. So they lived for 40 years. Not knowing from one day to the next what God had in mind for them.

But only this. That he would one day safely bring them to the destination of his choosing. And what a lot of waiting there must have been. What a lot of waiting there must have been.

[32 : 36] Like Abraham they had to learn to trust. But there are two further lessons about God's guidance. That we may learn from this particular story. And the first is. That God did not give up on them.

To go from Egypt to the promised land is a journey of just a few days. But they took 40 years. And the reason for that is that they were frequently disobedient and rebellious.

And so God had to teach them in the desert. And discipline them. Not allowing them to experience the promised land. Until they had learned lessons. And so there seemed to be endless and pointless wanderings.

But it had a purpose. And God was in it. And above all God did not give up on them. So Nehemiah chapter 9 verse 19 written.

Many hundreds of years later. It's very helpful for us on this point. Because the writer here. Had got a grip of what had been happening.

[33 : 46] Nehemiah 9 verse 19. Because of your great compassion. You did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path.

Nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good spirit to instruct them. Because of your great compassion.

You didn't abandon them. What a wonderful God we have. He does not abandon us. How many missteps we take in our lives. How rebellious we are often in the face of his guidance.

And yet he doesn't abandon us. And may this be encouraging for every one of us again today. To know that God does not abandon us. However we've strayed from his path.

There is a way back. God is happy to pick us up again. Take us forward. God is close to and goes with his people. Unlike any other God that they could possibly think of.

[34 : 51] He's not a God who shouts from on high with a megaphone. Or they might do that sometimes. Or stays well clear of mere mortals.

In case he got contaminated by them. Our God comes near to each of his people. Wherever they are. And the psalmist writes in Psalm 139.

Verses 9 and 10. If I rise on the wings of the dawn.

If I settle on the far side of the sea. Even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast. It's a wonderful and precious thing.

That if you're a child of God. There's no escaping. The God who chases you. He's minded to be looking after you. Wherever you are. Whatever situation you're facing.

[35 : 55] And we won't look at the other passage there. But it's there for you to note. Isaiah 58 verse 11. This was surely a picture that God gave to King David.

So that looking back on his life. He could write Psalm 23. He knows us. He cares for us. Every part of our individual lives. Is known to him.

And it's woven into the tapestry of his purposes. Even the darkest and the bleakest moments.

Psalm 23 verse 4. Well known to all of us.

Loved by all of us. Deeply encouraging. Important. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil. For you're with me.

Your rod and your staff. They comfort me. And many of you know that. There is a dark place. There are difficult places.

[36 : 52] And God is in those places as well. And it was David who knew by personal experience. That God's guidance was into paths of life change.

By coming to terms with righteousness. God's guidance. God's guidance. God's guidance. Is never. Just about. Experience. And circumstances.

But always about. Heart change. So that our lives might bring more glory to him. So David writes. And please note this. He restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness. For his name's sake. You see we're picking up on two themes there. For his name's sake. And they're paths of righteousness.

God is leading us into paths of righteousness. Because. He's not so much interested in your PhD and the rest. But he's very concerned about your character.

[37 : 56] Very concerned. That you become a righteous person. Very concerned. Because. Righteousness. Exalts the Lord. The writer of Psalm 119.

Surely. Had an insight. Into this. When he wrote. In verse 105. Of Psalm 119. Your word is a lamp to my feet. And a light to my path.

The Bible shines a light upon. Ourselves. So that we can properly understand. The kind of people we are. And where we are at this time. And gives us light.

For the next step. And that's why it's so healthy. For you to be in a church. On a Sunday morning. And hearing God's word. It's your necessary. Spiritual checkup.

A week in the world. Can leave us disorientated. Confused. Rudderless. So weak. And frail. We are. But we are washed. By the word. Our spiritual eyesight.

[39 : 02] Is restored. Our spiritual muscles. Are toned up. We're refreshed. And hence. The very good idea. Of a daily Bible reading.

And prayer. Do you do that? Do you read your Bible. Every day? Do you start the day. And end the day. With some portion.

Of God's word. To challenge. And cleanse you. But this is more than. A general pick me up. The word of God. Is sharp. Particular.

And timely. Searches us out. Someone. Well said this. About this subject. Of guidance. That the most. Of the problems. Of guidance. In our life. Are actually. Problems. Of obedience.

We know. What we ought to do. But we choose. Not to do it. Therefore. Up on the screen there.

[39 : 57] This is. Just a very brief. Selection. Of plenty. Of things. That the Bible. Has to say. About. The way. Our lives. Should be. Do not be anxious.

Cast all your cares. On God. Love one another. Flee. Temptation. Don't stop. Gathering together. Seek first.

The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. Children. Obey your parents. Don't store up. Riches on earth. Talk with your children. By the way.

Do not steal. Love your neighbor. As yourself. Do not commit adultery. If in our everyday life. We are committed. To obey God. According to his word. The multitudes.

Of vague. Indecisions. And uncertainties. That litter our lives. Are likely to be swept away. I think this is a very.

[40 : 56] Important point. Please do not expect. God to be guiding you. Or guiding us.

As a church. If we are failing. To be simply. And straightforwardly. Obedient. To what. His word. Says. Because this is.

The mind of God. God. If you are. Stealing time. From your employer. If you are. Cheating in a relationship.

If you really are. Storing up treasure. On earth. You cannot. You cannot. Genuinely. Expect. To be able. To hear. God's voice. When you come.

To some major decisions. In your life. You are in a fog. It's as if you are saying. Please God help me.

[41 : 54] And yet God has spoken to you already. And you are not being obedient to it. But to be in a place of obedience.

To God's word. Is to put ourselves. Into the very best place. To hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. How often. You have had a call.

Inside a restaurant. So on. So on. Maybe it's in a stadium. Or somewhere noisy. And you just say. Hold on. Hold. I need to take this call. In a quieter place. And it's true.

Isn't it? You need to get into a quieter place. A still place. To clearly hear. The clear voice of God. And that quieter place.

That still place. Is the place of obedience. Where your life is just aligned. With what God. Has already told you. In his word. It's simple.

[42 : 55] Profound. Extraordinarily challenging. But this is what happened. To the people. About whom the books are written. Which are on the table.

Over there. There are people. Who actually put this. To the test. They read their Bibles. They did what God said. In the Bible. Told them to do.

And then they found. Day by day by day. God speaking to them. Prompting. Nudging. Guiding. That's what he does.

Saying. As a little voice behind them. This is the way. Walk in it. Which brings us to our final example.

Which is in the book of Acts. Chapter 16. Verses. 6 to 10. And here. Good Christian people.

[44 : 00] Are seeking to. Be obedient. To God. To bring the gospel. Into places. Where it's not been before. And we read about. Paul and his companions.

Traveling throughout the region. Of Phrygia. And Galatia. In Turkey. Having been kept. By the Holy Spirit. From preaching the word. In the province of Asia. And they came to the border.

Of Mycenae. They tried to enter Bithynia. But the spirit of Jesus. Would not allow them to. So they passed by. Mycenae. And went down to Troas. During the night.

Paul had a vision. Of a man. Of Macedonia. Standing and begging him. Come over to Macedonia. And help us. After Paul had seen the vision. We got ready at once. To leave for Macedonia.

Concluding. That God had called us. To preach the gospel. To them. And so here are these. Group of. Godly Christian.

[44 : 56] People. Walking in obedience. To God's word. And sensitive. To the voice of the Holy Spirit. Praise God. May we be a church like that. May we be a church.

Church like that. May you be an individual. Like that. They use their. God changed minds. As they seek to bring.

The gospel. Into places. Where it seems. Best to do so. Strategically. Best to do so. But on these occasions. God intervenes. And prevents them. This is as much.

God's guidance. As the open door. They eventually find. The door is closed. Another door is closed. God blocks the path.

Were they disappointed? Possibly. Were they perplexed? Certainly. Didn't seem to be what they thought. God would want them to do.

[45 : 56] Was God in it? Yes. Yes. What if they tried to batter down. The doors that had been closed. That wouldn't have been good. Would it? The doors closed.

In order that. The right one. Should open. God had something. Better in mind. So he finally leads them. Via in this case. A dream. But it could be a text.

Or a tweet. Or an email. Or the still small voice. Of the Holy Spirit. God knows exactly the method. He'll choose. To speak to us. And they then have a discussion together. So they can come to a united conviction. That God was leading them to go to Macedonia.

And the beginnings of the gospel in Europe. To Britain. And to Brighton. And to us. And God is working his purpose out. So brothers and sisters.

[47 : 00] Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. And he will direct your paths. Shall we stand and we'll say this verse together.

Out loud. To one another. And to ourselves. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. And he will direct your paths. Do we say amen to that?

Amen.