

## PM Nehemiah 8:1-8

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Preacher: Mr Ben Fiddian

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, welcome once again to the service of worship here tonight at Dumfries Free Church.

The midweek prayer meeting and Bible study this week, for those who weren't here this morning, that will be a missionary prayer meeting and it will be led by Norman.

Next Lord's Day services are at 11am and 6pm and they will be led by the Reverend Douglas Cranston. A summary financial statement for the nine months leading to September 30th is available on top of the bookcase on your way out.

Again, for those who are not here this morning, my name is Ben Fiddian. I am a Welshman and have been living in Edinburgh for the last two years.

I've got the... my wife drew the short straw today. She's at home with three girls and a puppy and I'm sure her day has been far more stressful than mine.

[ 1 : 17 ] We bought the puppy from somewhere near Lockerbie on a farm. It's the only other time I've ever been to this area and it was pouring with rain and very grey.

So it was enjoyable this morning to drive through your beautiful countryside in the sunshine and actually enjoy the view. Thank you for the welcome today.

Even though we've not been able to share fellowship as we would like, it's been good to be with you. Okay. As we come to worship, some words from 1 Samuel.

Samuel went to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called me. Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the young man. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, Go lie down.

And if he calls you, you shall say, Speak, Lord, for your servant hears. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, stood calling as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.

[ 2 : 25 ] And Samuel said, Speak, for your servant hears. Let's pray. Almighty God, we turn to you tonight as the God who speaks.

We thank you for your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, the climactic word, your speech into our darkness.

Lord, as we come to bring you our prayers, to offer you our hearts, we say, Lord, speak to us. For we are listening.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. As we are not able to sing together, we'll have a recording. I'm just looking up the order of service.

If you'll give me a moment. Amen. Amen. Amen. The first psalm we'll listen to tonight is Psalm 12.

[ 3 : 29 ] Thank you. Help, Lord, because the godly men doth daily fade away.

And from among the sons of men the faithful do decay. Unto his neighbor everyone doth utter vanity.

They with a double heart to seek endless of flattery. God shall cut off all flattering lips tongues that speak proudly thus.

We'll with our tongue prevail our lips are ours whose Lord are us. For poor oppressed and for the size of needy rise will I.

Save God and him in safety set from such as him defy. The words of God are words most pure.

[ 4 : 59 ] They be like silver trine. He lived in fairness seven times that hath been purified.

Lord thou shalt end preserve and keep forever from this maze.

On each sidewalk the wicked men while men are high in place.

Let's seek God in prayer. Let's pray together.

Lord God almighty we thank you for the great privilege that it is to gather together to worship you tonight.

[ 6 : 03 ] Lord after many months of being restricted in our worship we are hungry and thirsty not just for each other's company but Lord for you to draw near to manifest your presence here that we

might know and feel that you have been among us that we have met with the living God.

We know that you are everywhere that you are not contained by space and you created time and space with a word. Lord we can never escape your presence and yet we know from your word that there are times where your spirit is so manifestly present that the sins and secrets of our hearts are laid bare before you as we become conscious of that holy presence as when Isaiah went to the temple and saw a vision of you high and lifted up the angels themselves covering themselves with their wings crying holy, holy, holy because of your fiery presence.

Lord if we were to see you as you are we would be undone as Isaiah Lord he knew the sins of his people he knew his own sin and yet you lifted him up and raised him up to preach your word and to make you known by proclaiming your messages.

We thank you Lord that though we are but dust you are gracious and merciful to us we do not know why you should take notice of us and yet of all your creations you have stooped to bless us in our sin by rescuing us from sin forgiving us our sins cleansing us not because of anything in us but through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we draw close to you tonight Father we have many sins to confess to you though we are Christian though we desire to walk in a way that is pure and holy and worthy of the gospel yet we daily fall in our thoughts and our words and our actions

Lord we live in a nation which is progressively turning its back on you a land which was known as the land of the book a land where the Bible was read and taught and preached and believed and obeyed yet today many in our land wish to get as far away from you as possible Lord we long that you would once more stretch out your powerful arm to save we know of days in history where people could not stay away from the churches such was your power to draw them we have heard of days where the preaching of your word penetrated so deep into their lives that you could not go away unchanged Lord we long for such days revive your work again we pray in the midst of the years we need a fresh breath from heaven we need you to open those showers of blessing to turn our barren lives our barren witness our barren ministry into fruitful fields

[10:18] Lord we pray for any here among us tonight who do not yet know the power of Jesus Christ to save and deliver from sin Lord we cannot give them a hunger and thirst for righteousness work that in them by your spirit Lord we cannot convict of sin that is your work to do also Lord we cannot grant faith or repentance that they might turn to Christ we pray work this in them as you have worked it in us Lord create here this evening a holy atmosphere in which your light and your life are seen clearly by all where your gospel message might be understood and not merely intellectually but through the illumination of our hearts by your spirit again Lord we pray for our government at these critical times that we pray for rulers and leaders who are themselves suffering from this this virus us and ask

Lord for lives to be preserved we ask that you would give wisdom to those making policy decisions we pray Lord that you would restrain evil and promote good Lord as we begin to worship more freely once more we pray that Lord the restrictions would not hinder us again but that Lord you would allow us to live quiet lives peaceably worshipping you preaching your gospel without these hindrances Lord set us free we pray to worship you we believe that you are a sovereign God and we look to you to act in mercy Lord many people are dying through the impact of this virus we are learning more and more of the secondary knock on effects for people's lives the devastating impact of loneliness and of other illnesses undiagnosed

Lord lives are being lost in different ways but Lord above and beyond that souls are being thrust into eternity without any knowledge that they will meet you as judge without any knowledge of Jesus Christ as savior we pray Lord then open doors for ministry at this time that your word would continue to go forth we thank you for internet ministry we pray that you would bless that we thank you for recordings and books and other things that we can do even praying over the phone with one another Lord wherever your people are seeking to make you known today please bless the preaching of your word with power that your kingdom might go forward that your will would be done that the devil would be sent packing and that sinners would go home rejoicing hear our prayers we pray because we bring them to you in Jesus name

Amen Before we read God's word we'll listen to Psalm 19 verse 7 through 11 in sing Psalms verse 9  
ugar it was a minute page that you ■ i terminale note and summarize in open in place in light  
Cross-brain and long-mast, shed light on what we see.

The fear of all is pure and lost eternally. The standards of the Lord express His perfect truth and righteousness.

[ 15 : 27 ] For our own world and gold and a pure open heart, and honey from the gold and honey's sweeter heart, they do you stand like the Lord, in keeping them His way warm.

Let's read from God's Word. We're going to read from the book of Nehemiah, chapter 8.

We're in the Old Testament, past the kings, past Samuel. But before you get to Job and Psalms, you find Nehemiah.

And we'll read the whole of, sorry, we'll read chapter 8, verses 1 through to 12. And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the water gate.

And they told Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.

[ 17 : 31 ] And he read from it, facing the square before the water gate, from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand.

And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose, and beside him stood Matithiah, Shema, Ammoniah, Uriah, Hilkiyah, and Masaiah, on his right hand, and Padaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashem, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshulam, on his left hand.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all, the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands.

And they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also, Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Aqab, Shabbatai, Hadaiah, Masaiah, Kalita, Azariah, Jozebub, Hanan, Paliah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places.

They read from the book, from the law of God, clearly, and they gave the meaning, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites, who taught the people, said to all the people, This day is holy to the Lord your God.

[ 19 : 28 ] Do not mourn or weep. For all the people wept as they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, Go on your way, eat the fat, and drink sweet wine, and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord.

And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, Be quiet, for this day is holy.

Do not be grieved. And all the people went on their way to eat and drink, and to send portions, and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words, that word declared to them.

This is God's holy word. And Nehemiah 8 verse 12, is the text that has caught my attention this evening.

There was great rejoicing, because they had understood the words, that word declared to them.

[ 20 : 41 ] The context of this passage, you may know, that the people of Israel had been unfaithful to the covenant relationship they had with God.

They had sinned against God, they had broken his commandments. But written into that covenant was a curse, that if the people disobeyed, God would exile them from the promised land.

This happened when the land was invaded, first by Assyria, and then by Babylon. Seventy years later, a small number of Israelites were able to return to Jerusalem, seeking to rebuild that which had been destroyed.

They faced all kinds of opposition. You can read of some of that in the first seven chapters of Nehemiah. And it was an enormous task.

Several years later, under the ministry of Haggai, you can read his prophecy. It's recorded at the end of the Old Testament.

[ 21 : 54 ] The temple, several years later, had still not been rebuilt. They were back in the promised lands, but they were not experiencing the fullness of promised blessing.

They were not experiencing fruitful harvests. Much was still withheld by God's sovereign hand. Now at this point that we have come to in Nehemiah chapter 8, the wall is complete around Jerusalem.

We're told that in chapter 6 and verse 15, the wall was finished on the 25th day of the month, Elul, in 52 days.

So they made good progress on building the wall. However, the city is still largely uninhabited. Chapter 7, verse 4, the city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

The people, chapter 7, verse 73, tells us the people were living in all the towns around about, but Jerusalem itself was still largely empty.

[ 23 : 14 ] So there's still much to rebuild physically, but there was also a lot to rebuild spiritually. You see, during the exile period, that 70 years, the prophetic word, the preached word of God, was largely absent.

Ezekiel is the one standout prophet from that period. There was no king on David's throne. There was no temple, and there was no active priesthood around the temple.

We see in the images presented by Daniel, that the best young men had been given pagan education, and they were given duties in the courts of the pagan kings.

There were times of direct persecution. What we can conclude is that there were very few people, if any, who had easy access to the scriptures, or the freedom, the time to give themselves to study and teaching the word of God.

And to recognize this context highlights the significance of what's going on here in chapter 8. In chapters 1 through 7, there's a lot of politics.

[ 24 : 40 ] There's a lot of physical rebuilding. We hear a little bit about Nehemiah's personal piety, but there is no mention of God's word being taught.

And to emphasize the point, this man Ezra is not mentioned at all in the first seven chapters of Nehemiah.

And he is suddenly compelled out of obscurity, anonymous darkness, as suddenly Ezra is thrown out onto a public platform.

to preach God's words. It illustrates the darkness that had been there for so long. God is breaking in at this point.

His word is being preached again. In all the chaos that's all around them, God is now speaking clearly once more.

[ 25 : 40 ] And that is encapsulated in this man Ezra. God is suddenly thrust out into the limelight. Perhaps that has an emotional or psychological resonance for us.

Maybe even a spiritual resonance for us. For months now, there have been restrictions on our worship. We are grateful, we are grateful, of course, for the limited ministry we've been able to enjoy through the internet and other means.

But we are commanded by God to meet together in the name of Jesus, to attend to his ordinances as we gather in his way at times and places where he has promised to bless us with his spirit.

Small steps have been made. It's good to be back together in one room in the same location under the sound of God's word.

But we're unable to sing. We're unable to have close, face-to-face fellowship. There's still so many limitations.

[ 26 : 59 ] The building blocks are in place, but there's still so much more to do. We are reorganizing as churches, but we also need spiritual rebuilding.

And this is true locally, but it is magnified when we look at the national scene, where for many years whole communities have been without a church, without a true Christian witness, without ministers of the gospel to proclaim the word of God.

Scotland, many parts of Scotland are knowing a famine of the word of God. And of true religion.

Now in verse 9, we read that as the people began to hear and to understand, they started to weep.

Verse 9, all the people wept as they heard the words of the law. Why were they weeping? Why were they weeping as they heard God's law being read?

Surely this is a good thing. But as they hear God's law, they must have begun to realize something of God's holy standards. Remember, 70 years have passed with very little teaching at all.

[ 28 : 23 ] They don't know the basics of their own religion. All this devastation around them, they realize was caused by the sins of their forefathers.

There's the realization of all that had been thrown away. They were the most privileged people on earth. They had the blessing of God.

They had the temple, the symbol of God's presence among mankind. The focal point of true religious worship. They realized what they should have been, what they could have been as the people of God.

And that they had fallen short of this standard. They realized that their ancestors had thrown this away quite deliberately. They realized that they themselves are largely ignorant of God's law. They don't even know the sins that they are committing. And it is enough to make them weep. Can we not say that the eye of faith today in our own generation recognizes the Lord's discipline on our own situation, on the nations of the world, our own nation, the church, people who have lived for so long thinking only of economics, of the things of this world, suddenly face to face with eternity.

[ 29 : 57 ] Because a simple little piece of protein and DNA can take over their bodies and usher them out of this world and into another. Even if we put aside the gross scandals that have sometimes stained our witness as Christian churches, that we've not valued the ordinances of God, we've taken them for granted, we've not delighted in the Lord's day, we've not prayed as we should or preached as we should, we've not believed as we should, we've not repented as we should, and suddenly we find that these things are taken away from us, and we realize just how much we took fellowship for granted, and just how much we took preaching for granted.

We've been weak and lax in our evangelism. Some churches have sacrificed truth in the name of love. Other churches sacrificed love in the name of truth.

Do we not also have cause to weep at our sins, at the sins of our churches, and the sins of our nation without drawing undue attention to things that are gross and unworthy?

Are we indifferent to the fact that God is dishonoured and that His word is disobeyed? Are people around us march ignorantly to hell as though they're in a hurry to get there?

And we are doing what we can often. True Christians working hard and yet thinking, is this the full blessing which God has promised His church?

[ 31 : 52 ] There is a time for weeping. But there is also a time to rejoice. And the united stance of the leadership in Nehemiah's day was that this was an occasion for celebration and not just for weeping.

Verse 9 tells us that Nehemiah, the governor, the political leader, the Ezra, the priest and the scribe and the Levites, those are the spiritual leaders, they were one, united in the view that this was a day which was holy to the Lord your God and not a day for weeping and mourning.

All this devastation around them and yet the leadership said this is a day for celebration and generosity.

Those who have plenty to share with those who have nothing ready. Why? Why? When there was so much reason to cry how could this ever be a day of joy and of celebration?

Well, three, four answers. Whatever else was going on, whatever shortcomings there were, whatever failures, the people here had a heart to hear the word of God.

[ 33 : 30 ] Chapter 7 verse 73 we see that they're scattered, they're living in districts all around Jerusalem and yet in verse 1 of chapter 8 they all come together as one.

There's a unity of heart and purpose. People have made the journey, they are hungry to hear God's word. This is not just ones and twos.

This is a movement. All the people come in together. It's the kind of thing we hear of if you read of revival. At times where people were compelled to come to church almost drawn by a magnet.

They had to be there to hear what God has to say. And there are stories of that nature within the history of the Free Church of Scotland as well as other denominations.

And not only are they drawn to worship, drawn to hear, sorry, to drawn to hear God's word, they're also drawn in an attitude of worship. Verse 6, Ezra does not just stand up and read as though this is Shakespeare, as though this is a comic book.

[ 34 : 47 ] Ezra stands up and blesses the Lord, the great God. this is an act of worship and the people are in unison with him saying, Amen, Amen, may God be blessed, let it be so.

And they bowed their heads and worshipped their Lord with their faces to the ground. There is a humility here. They are coming to hear the word read and in doing so they are before the living God. reminded of the text in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13 where Paul commends the believers for receiving the word of God as what it really is, the word of God.

Not receiving it as some religious text or some philosophical text or some moral text but this being the very speech of God.

The Bible does not become God's word when we feel it warm our hearts. The Bible is God speaking objectively.

[ 36 : 03 ] Every time it is read God is speaking and the people realize this. It is a day of solemn worship.

They are before the living and holy God. God's voice spoke chaos into order. God's voice spoke nothing into everything.

At the new creation God's voice spoke Christ into our world to bring light into our barren darkness.

God's voice is a powerful voice. A voice that can create and bring order in the midst of all the destruction that is round about.

The people came with a heart to worship God in listening to his word but they also came intentionally and prepared. There are hints of this.

[ 37 : 11 ] Verse 1 they are gathered together they tell Ezra they commission him you're the man for this job we've thought it through you're gifted you're able to teach.

Their heart to hear God's word prompted them to take actions to make it happen. They built a platform for Ezra to stand on they thought this through.

There's a story in Wales from a time when there were only a handful of Bibles printed in the Welsh language a minister in the town of Bala in North Wales a remote little town a lovely beautiful place there's an evangelical church there now with a godly minister but we're going back a couple of hundred years very few Welsh language Bibles at all and a young girl the age of 12 saved up all her money and walked over the hills 25 miles I believe to get to the minister to ask have I got enough money can you give me a Bible no one in my family has one the people were intentional and prepared how much are we willing to do to hear God's word and to make it heard so in a day when they could have been weeping when the law of

God had struck their hearts yet there was cause to rejoice because the people had a heart to hear God's word but why else could they rejoice or whatever else was going on whatever failures and shortcomings the word of God was being preached indiscriminately to all for so long the light had been hidden and now it's out on a lampstand for everyone to see and it's not just for a select few it is for all who would listen all who have ears to hear let them hear Jesus said well in chapter 8 and verse 2 of Nehemiah we learn that the assembly the group that came together was both men and women and all who could understand boys and girls who had sufficient attention span up to the oldest men and women they were all there what's more they gathered the water gate they didn't gather in the temple square the holy place they gathered in the place of open access it was easy to come and go it was the place where people went for their business their normal life it was easy to get there again

Jesus in the parable talks of sending his people out to the highways and hedges to compel all to come in verse 4 and 5 of Nehemiah 8 we learn that there was a wooden platform for a purpose so that Ezra would be lifted up not on a pedestal but so that everyone could hear so that he could project his voice so that they could see what was going on in verse 7 and 8 we also learn that Ezra had his assistants there were a group of men a plurality of men each with gifts of teaching and leadership working together perhaps Ezra was the first among equals here but he had his team around him perhaps some were working with the children and some with the men and some with the women I don't know perhaps they were gathered in family groups and each one had a Levite to help them and to answer their questions but what we see here is

[ 41 : 25 ] God's servants working together so that everyone would hear and have a chance to understand we see the same model with Jesus taking his apostles alongside him so that the gospel would be heard by more and more people we see it in the pattern of a plurality of elders within the church multiple workers being sent out to the harvest let's make sure that many many people can hear this message there's reason to rejoice because not only was the word read it was also explained those who could not read could hear as this was read out loud those with minds perhaps too weak to grasp the meaning on their own had teachers come in alongside them to spell it out in terms they could understand to explain it so that the people not only heard they also understand and isn't it wonderful when God so works that the heart of the people is to come and hear the word and the heart of the preachers is to take the word and make it clear

I think of Bible societies formed to translate scripture into languages that have never heard God speak in their own tongue I think of a man like George Whitefield finding the church doors shut to

him so he preached where the people were in the fields and in the streets I think of the early free church of Scotland ministers who ignored the parish boundaries in order to preach in areas that had no gospel witness think of missionary endeavors David Braynard and John Payton and W.C. Burns and men who were so convinced that people must hear and hear clearly that they went to the ends of the world to make God's word known in normal times churches are creative not with the content of our message it is always God's word but creative in the ways that we make that message known whether it be through toddler groups or youth groups women's meetings men's meetings and so on our goal is that everyone should hear as many as possible there's reason to rejoice when God's word is being preached indiscriminately to all why else could they rejoice a third reason whatever else was going on whatever failures and shortcomings they were granted understanding and not just knowledge chapter 8 verse 8 so that the people understood chapter 8 verse 12 they had understood the words the word was read to their ears and it was explained to their minds and they understood it in such a way that it gripped their hearts we see them weeping over sin and we see them rejoicing as they realise

God's goodness to them that's the mark of true preaching takes the truth of God's word to your mind in such a way that it touches your heart and sets you on fire for God many of our Lord's hearers only heard the parables they only heard the stories and they went away without ever understanding and yet his true disciples come to him and ask for an explanation in Matthew 13 verse 23 the fruitful soil is those people who receive the word of God and understand it what a terrible thing it is for God's word to only touch our ears only touch our minds without giving that life changing impact that understanding which grips the heart and produces lasting fruit the Lord has spoken then through his inspired word as Ezra read it but he's also given understanding as these men explain it the spirit gives this illuminated understanding wisdom and no matter how bad things were around and about the living

God was speaking through his living word and this may be true for us too there is a sense in which no matter what is going on no matter how small our church no matter what political struggles and controversies and scandals are all around us if the Lord is still speaking what more do we need how many people live comfortable lives in which their ease is never troubled never unsettled by the voice of the living God now all of this was true as Ezra read and explained the law that God had drawn people together with a hunger for the word in a worshipful attitude they'd come intentionally they'd planned their approach the word was being preached indiscriminately

[ 47 : 33 ] God was giving understanding and not just mere knowledge what cause then to celebrate the voice of God is heard again after so many decades God is speaking we hear the voice of the shepherd what greater cause could there be to celebrate this was indeed to be a day of rejoicing of receiving God's word with gladness and in doing that they would experience strength we are told the joy of the Lord will be your strength as you celebrate that God is speaking as you celebrate that you're hearing his voice so the joy that he gives you will strengthen you to believe and to obey for it is God who works in us to will and to do his good pleasure they were to respond then to

God's generosity to them by sharing what they had with others live and read the old testament scriptures probably the first five books the books of Moses I don't know whether he would have read any of the prophets too but he read those passages of scripture where God's law is spelled out in detail God's awe-inspiring law that law that was given on a mountain with thunder and lightning and fire and smoke so holy, so dangerous that not even the animals were allowed to draw near the people must have heard God's law with fear and with trembling the mercy of God is there in the Old Testament but in many ways the story of salvation is shrouded it's hidden it's there only partly visible behind a veil in shadow form this message was preached indiscriminately to the men and women and children of Israel but they were just one ethnic group in one small corner of the world and yet there was cause to rejoice how much more reason for us to rejoice that it is not just the law that is preached but the gospel is being preached and explained in the New Testament we discover in technicolor glory with the veil removed the substance of God's message for mankind he loves sinners with such a devotion that he sent his own son into the world a pure and holy being who all eternity had only ever known

God's love and holiness had never touched sin the very son of God equally divine with the Father for all eternity sent into this dark murky sinful sordid world put in human flesh crying as a baby needing to be fed and wiped by a mother a poor family cast out of the land as refugees living a hard work once life without ever sinning because he loves people his goal was not to build a righteous

life for himself he didn't need it he was already perfect he lived that righteous life of people like you and me people who have failed in so many ways he took that righteous life and he offered it on a cross dying shedding his blood in doing so he offers us his perfection whilst taking to himself our depravity and he says

I've paid it all it is finished and to prove the point he rose from the dead three days later ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in Christians and to dwell in the church to saturate our lives with his grace and to give us faith to trust him and repentance that we might turn from our sin this message is now preached not just the law that convicts but the grace which saves what cause do we have for joy tonight not only is this full gospel message preached and explained it is preached far and wide and indiscriminately as we heard this morning Jesus said all who labour and are heavy laden come to me all and that message is now preached on every continent on earth in multiple languages we ourselves a testimony to that we are Gentiles we have no ethnic claim on God's promises but Jesus has sent this message to be taken to all the world to people of all social classes all ethnicities the rich the poor the religious the irreligious the respectable the outright immoral the broken the weak the blind this gospel is being preached throughout the world tonight and God is saving people have we not got cause to rejoice not only is this message preached far and wide but Jesus continues to send his spirit to empower people and enable people to take this message to move us to serve him whether that be with our colleagues or from a pulpit or in some other form of ministry

Jesus has sent his Holy Spirit as the divine choreographer to arrange the gospel advance to reach the whole world he sends his spirit to illuminate not just the law which came through Moses but to shine into our hearts the grace that comes through Jesus Christ so that sinners will be saved and delivered and forgiven and transformed and sanctified and one day glorified have you heard the word of God have you heard the word of God have you been moved to come and listen to scripture to hear God's voice have you been given to understand the word of God has the Holy Spirit brought it home to your heart with clarity so that you see the implications

[ 55 : 39 ] I am a sinner Jesus is a saviour and I turn to him has the word of God touched your heart to make you grieve for sin and look to Christ if so then go your way eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready for this day is holy to our Lord and do not be grieved for the joy of the Lord is your strength Amen may God give us the grace to respond to him in faith tonight as we close we will listen to a recording of Psalm 12 verse 1 through 8 in the Scottish Psalter thank you you statues

Lord are wonderful so I obey and from my heart your words as they unfold hope give light and truth to simple minds in heart with open love I band and yearn to know the laws that you proclaim show me show me the powers in you extend to those who love and praise your name direct my footsteps in your word heart and sin not hold me in his sway from that oh wretch

God set me free that pure commands I may obey take away away upon your servant shine your face teach me the statutes you have made my heart share my eyes share streets of bitter tears because your love is not obey now may the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace in Jesus name Amen