

Who does God say you are?

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Preacher: Rev. Iain Thomson

[0 : 00] Well, good morning and welcome to our morning service. We give a warm welcome to any who may be joining us through the live link. We're going to begin our worship this morning by singing to God's praise in Psalm 25, although we're not going to be singing, but we're going to be listening to singing in Psalm 25 in the Scottish Psalter on page 231.

Page 231 from the beginning of the Psalm. To thee I lift my soul, O Lord, I trust in thee. My God, let me not be ashamed, nor force triumph over me.

Let none that wait on thee be put to shame at all, but those that without cause transgress, let shame upon them fall. We're going to listen to singing to the end of verse 7.

Psalm 25 from the beginning. To thee I lift my soul, O Lord, I trust in thee. O Lord, I trust in thee. My God, let me not be ashamed, nor force triumph over me.

[1 : 33] Let none that wait on thee be put to shame at all, but those that with the force transgress, let shame upon them fall.

Show me thy ways, O Lord, my path, so teach thou me.

And to thee I lift my soul, O Lord, my path, so teach thou me. And to thee I lift my soul, O Lord, my path, so teach thou me. Be me in thy truth, O Lord, my path, so teach thou me. In thy truth, O Lord, my path, so teach thou me. For thou art God that dost to me salvation send.

For thou art God that dost to me salvation send. For thou art God that dost to me salvation send.

For thou art God that dost to me salvation send. For thou art God that dost to me salvation send.

And thy salvation send. And thy upon thee all the day. And thy upon thee all the day.

[3 : 02] Expecting to attend.

Thy tender mercies, O Lord, my tender mercies, O Lord, I pray thee to remember.

And thy loving kindness send. For thee I'll be no full forever.

My sins and faults of you. Do thou, O Lord, forget.

After thy mercy, O Lord, my tender mercies.

[4 : 26] Let's join together in prayer. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, as we come before you this morning, help us that we might come as empty vessels.

Empty vessels that are desiring to be filled. Because part of the reason that we gather together to worship you is so that you might fill us with the blessings which you alone can fill with.

And we're asking, O Lord, that you would bless us with the power of your own Holy Spirit. Because it's only as your Spirit enables us that we will be able to give you a worship that is glorifying in your own presence.

And we'll be of benefit to our presence. So we're asking, O Lord, that you would be upon us and within us to lead us and to guide us.

That you would enable us to come in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Because we know that this is the only way of access into your presence.

[5 : 44] And it's only as we come dependent upon him that we're going to enter into your presence. Not that you are not present.

You are ever present everywhere. But we might not be aware of that. And although you are close to us, we might feel at a great distance from you.

So we're praying, O Lord, that you would draw us. Because as the prophet of old said, if you draw us, we will run after you. So we're asking that you would exercise your power over us, over all our faculties, our minds, our affections and our wills.

That you would exercise your power over our souls. So that we would indeed be brought into subjection to yourself.

Brought to the place where you would be able to bless us. Because if we leave this place without having received your blessing, it won't be as a result of your inability to bless us.

[6 : 54] It won't be as a result of your unwillingness to bless us. Because the unwillingness is never on your part. The unwillingness is always on our part.

And if we haven't received that blessing, it's because we have refused to come to the place where we can receive it. Humbling ourselves at your food store.

Because that's where you're going to bless your people. As they come and acknowledge you as God. And as they seek to worship you with their whole hearts.

And as we were reminded in the words that we began the service with, unto you, we lift up our souls. But that's virtually impossible for us to do, Lord, unless you help us.

So we're asking for your help. That we might lift up our souls to you. That we might come with open hearts. That you would help us to come with no hypocrisy.

[8 : 00] In seeking to clothe ourselves with our own righteousness. And seeking to present a worship that will earn your favor.

Regardless of how good it might appear from the outside. We know that nothing that we present is going to impress you. It's coming far short of what you deserve.

So it's only as we come by faith in Jesus Christ that we're going to be able to glorify you. And it's only as we come reliant and depending upon him.

That we ourselves will recognize our need of him. Because he is our Savior. And it was for sinners that he came into this world.

So we come, Lord, as sinners. So help us, O Lord, to come. Knowing that that's the state that our hearts are by nature.

[8 : 59] That our hearts are sinful and desperately wicked. Above all things, who can know it? But thankfully you know it.

And you have made provision to meet with the needs of it. So that regardless of how depraved we may be. We are not out with the bounds of the possibility of you meeting with us.

And you helping us to restore our souls. So we pray, Lord, for that restoration. Which only you can bring about in our experience.

And we're thankful for the evidences that you're still giving to us. That you are at work in our midst. That you're the God who has not forsaken us.

Regardless of the fact that we may have forsaken you. You are the God who remains faithful over and against the faithlessness of your people.

[9 : 59] So we're thankful that we come to a God who remains steadfast. A God who is the same today as you were yesterday. And as you will be forever.

We're thankful that there is something constant in our lives. And that you're the one who is that constant source in our lives.

You're the rock on which we can build. You're the rock that we can depend on. You're the rock to which we look for the blessings that we need. So we come to you.

Thankful, O Lord, that you are such a glorious God. Thankful that you do not deal with us according to our deservedness.

But that you deal with us in mercy. That you're a loving kind. That you're a God who is full of loving kindnesses. And that you are a merciful God.

[10 : 58] So we look to you, O God. And we ask that your blessing would be upon all of the people that have been able to gather here today.

On all the people who are unable to gather with us. Who would like to be with us. On all your people wherever they worship. In our island, in our nation, and in all the nations of the world.

As they gather together on this your day. To give you the glory and the honor that is due unto your name. Lord, unite us in one spirit.

Unite us, O Lord, at your throne. And help us to experience the blessing that belongs to those that come united together.

Because that's where you're going to command the blessing. The life that shall never end. And this is what we desire as we come into your presence this morning.

[11 : 55] We desire to know you. Because as Jesus revealed to us, this is life eternal. To know you, the living and the true God.

And Jesus Christ whom you sent forth. And forth. So this is our desire. That we might know you. So that the life that flows from you.

Might flow into our souls. And that we might come to experience the joy. And the peace that that life brings into the experience of your people.

And we can have a foretaste of it here. Because it's the life that begins here. And you have given us a down payment of that life.

You have given us to experience heaven on earth. As you reveal yourself to your people. So we pray, Lord, that that would be our experience.

[12 : 52] That that would be the experience of all of your worshipping people today. And we pray, Lord, for those who are not your people.

We ask that you would bless your people so that they might be a witness to them. That they might be the salt of the earth for them. And that they would impress upon them the beauty and the glory that belongs to the God that they belong to.

And that they would desire that glory and beauty for themselves. Because this is the promise for your people. That you will make them to be like you.

That the image that has been marred will be restored. So that we will again bear that image. And we're asking, O Lord, that others would come to desire to be restored in the image in which they find themselves.

So that they might again bear the image of God. Lord, we ask that you would be with your people wherever they might be. And we pray, O Lord, for those that are in authority over us.

[14 : 07] We give you thanks for the speech that our Prime Minister made last Sunday. Who acknowledged you as the God who alone is the way, the truth and the life.

We give you thanks for the courage that you gave to him to make that speech. And we pray, Lord, that that speech would go forth to all the ends of our nation.

Because we believe that many people are unaware that he made such a speech. And we give thanks, O Lord, that he was willing to do that.

And we give thanks for all of our politicians who are willing to make a stand for you. And who are not ashamed to profess you. So we're asking, O Lord, that you would encourage them.

And that you would be with them as they deliberate the policies that they have to put in place. And the way that they're going to govern the nation. We ask that you would give them guidance.

[15 : 12] That you would impress upon them the need that they have of looking to yourself for that guidance. And we ask that more of them would come to know you as their own personal saviour.

We ask, O Lord, that you would be with our queen today as she grieves over the loss of Philip, her beloved husband. And again, we give thanks for the witness that he made.

And he was truly a man, as we gathered over the last few days, a man who did not let the left hand know what the right hand was doing.

And as we hear of the great things that he has done down through the years, we're impressed by the work that he was doing that nobody seems to have been aware of.

But more particularly, we're impressed with the faith that he displayed. And was not ashamed to profess that he had that faith in you. Lord, we pray that you would be with the royal family as they grieve over the loss of Philip.

[16 : 24] That you would be with the queen's children and grandchildren. We commit them to your care and we pray that you would help them to desire the faith of their parents and grandparents.

And that they would go on to be shining lights to this nation. And that this nation would continue to be a nation amongst all the nations of the world that is recognized and respected.

Because as your word reminds us, it is righteousness that exalts a nation. And we know that that was the reason that this nation was blessed with the many blessings that we've received down through the centuries.

As a result of the laws being fashioned after your law. And the principles that governed the people of our nation being taken from your word.

And we ask, Lord, that that word would again find a place in the life of our society. And that we would again be a shining light to all the nations of the world.

[17 : 35] Lord, we commit all that are in positions of authority to your care. Asking that you would help them to fulfill their responsibilities.

And that they might minister to the people. Lord, we ask that you would be with us now. As we wait upon you. Help us, O Lord, that we would wait upon you with expectancy.

That you would be pleased to bless us. And that you would have mercy upon us for our sins and shortcomings. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, just before I address the children. Can I just remind you that we hope to have a family service here next week at half past ten.

And I would encourage parents and indeed grandparents who used to bring their grandchildren to try and attend this service. And it will be similar to an ordinary service.

[18 : 44] Although it won't be as long as an ordinary service. And maybe more simplified than an ordinary service. So that the children might understand it.

So if you haven't already applied for that. Then please consider doing so. And just to make you aware. For those of you who might have younger children.

There's going to be a creche available for them. So if you do have younger children. There'll be a creche available. To look after them whilst you sit with the older children.

We're going to. No, before I read. We're. I'm going to. Address the children now.

I'm going to ask you a question. And although you're not present to answer it. Try and answer it in your minds before I give you the answer to the question.

[19 : 46] Your mums and dants who might be working. Will receive something at the end of the week.

Or sometimes at the end of the month. What is it that they receive if they're working? Well, I'm sure you all probably know that they receive a wage.

Or if they receive it at the end of the month. It's called a salary. Well, it would be very funny if people didn't get paid with money when they work.

If your parents would get paid with eggs or bread or pizzas or things of that kind.

It would be very strange if that's the way that they were given their payment. But that's how it used to be.

[20 : 52] Very long ago, people didn't get paid with money. They got paid with goods. And one of the most precious things that people very often got paid with.

Is something that we eat probably every day of our lives. I wonder if any of you can guess what that might have been.

We might sprinkle it on our food. Or even if we don't sprinkle it on our food. You're more or less guaranteed that it's in the food that you eat. Because there's very few foods that we eat that don't contain this thing.

Well, I'm sure you've all guessed now what it is. It's salt. And salt nowadays is very cheap. And it's plenteous.

We can get as much of it as we want. But once upon a time, it was very expensive. And it was in scarce supply.

[22 : 04] And it was very precious. And people very often got paid in salt. And that's where the word salary came from.

Salt. Because that's what people were paid. Now, when we say about a person, he's not worth his salt.

It simply means he's not worth the wage that he receives. He's not worth his salt. Now, in Jesus' day, salt was very precious.

And that's why he said to his people, you are the salt of the earth. Because to Jesus, you're very precious.

And you're very useful. And you're much needed. Jesus looks upon his people as being more precious than salt was when that was what they used to receive in payment.

[23 : 25] I wonder if he says about us, you are the salt of the earth.

Well, may God help us to answer that question for ourselves. Let's just bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father in heaven, you've revealed to us that we're precious in your sight, even if we're not your people.

Because you set your love upon this world. And this world were not your people.

This world sinned against you. But it was the people of this world that you loved. And you loved them so much that you were willing to sacrifice your own son for them.

Help us, O Lord, that we would come to appreciate just how precious the life that you've given to us is in your sight. And help us that we might give this life back to you.

[24 : 41] So that you might be able to say of each and every one of us, you are the salt of the earth. Because we will have become very precious in your sight if we receive Jesus as our Savior.

Lord, lead us to receive the one who is precious to you. So that we also might become precious to you. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We're going to read from God's word in the book of Judges, chapter 6. Judges, chapter 6.

Judges, chapter 6. And we're going to read from the beginning of the chapter.

The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel.

[25 : 56] And because of Midian, the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east would come up against them.

They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land as far as Gaza. And leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents.

They would come like locusts in number. Both they and their camels could not be counted. So that they laid waste the land as they came in. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian.

And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord. And when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites, the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel.

And he said to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel. I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you.

[27 : 08] And drove them out before you and gave you their land. And I said to you, I am the Lord your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.

But you have not obeyed my voice. Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abersarite.

While his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.

And Gideon said to him, Please, sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?

And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?

But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian. And the Lord turned to him and said, Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian.

[28 : 14] Do not I send you? And he said to him, Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

And the Lord said to him, But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. And he said to him, If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speaks with me.

Please do not depart from here until I come to you, and bring out my present and set it before you.

And he said, I will stay till you return. So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour.

The meat he put in a basket and the broth he put in a pot and brought them to him under the terebunth and presented them. And the angel of God said to him, Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and put them on this rock and pour the broth over them.

And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of his staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.

[29 : 33] And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. And Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God, for now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.

But the Lord said to him, Peace be to you. Do not fear. You shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord is peace.

To this day it stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abyssalites. Amen. And may God bless to us that reading from his own holy word.

Amen. I wonder if any of you ever feel unimportant. That you haven't got any gifts or talents. And that God will never use you. Well, that's exactly how Gideon felt. But as we'll see over the next few weeks, the Lord was pleased to use Gideon.

[30 : 49] Now, you're all probably familiar with the name Gideon. Because you'll be aware that the Gideon's Bible Society has been putting Bibles into hotels and hospitals and prisons for many, many years all over the world.

And these Bibles have been used effectively by God to bring many people to himself. When I worked as a prison chaplain, I know that very often, especially if they were regular prisoners, that one of the first things that they would ask for when they came into prison was a Gideon Bible.

Now, some of them read them. Others just took them as a good luck charm. They felt safe if they had a Bible in their room.

But God has been pleased to use that organization to bless his own word to people that find themselves away from home, living in hotels, in hospital when they're up against it and maybe fearing that this might be the end.

[32 : 14] Or prisoners who have been taken away from home, living in hotels, in hospital when they're up against it and maybe they're up against it. Or prisoners who have been taken away from society, who find themselves locked up.

God can use these extreme circumstances at times to draw people to look to his own word. And through looking at God's word, find himself. Well, that's where the Gideon's Bible Society have taken their name from.

From this man Gideon that we want to consider today and for the next few weeks. But before we start looking at his encounter with the angel, maybe if you're not familiar with the Old Testament, it'll be beneficial to give the historical background to Gideon's situation.

Hundreds of years ago, before Gideon was even born, God had promised Abraham that he was going to give his descendants the land of Canaan, Palestine.

[33 : 35] But before that promise was fulfilled, they were going to spend 400 years in Egypt. Now they went down to Egypt as refugees at a time of famine.

But after a while, they became the slaves of the Egyptians. And the Egyptians treated them harshly. And they began to cry out to God. And God sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt. And we're all probably familiar with Moses as the person who led the children of Israel out of Egypt and led them for 40 years through the wilderness.

Before they entered into the promised land. But Moses himself didn't lead them into the promised land. It was Joshua who became their leader that would lead them into the land of Canaan.

The promised land. Now to a fairly large degree, the people of Israel served the Lord for all of Joshua's lifetime.

[35 : 02] Without deviating too much from the ways of God. But after Joshua died, God ruled his people through judges.

Until the first king of Israel was appointed. And these leaders, these judges that God raised up, we know that in that period that the children of Israel weren't obedient to God.

They became disobedient. And we see as we read through the book of Judges, a repeated cycle of God blessing them.

And then becoming spiritually complacent and sinning against God. And then suffering at the hands of the surrounding nations that would overcome them.

And then there would be another cry of help to God. And God raising up another judge to deliver them from the oppression that they would experience from the nations round about them.

[36 : 26] Now Gideon is one of these such judges that God raised up to deliver his people from the Midianites.

Now the problem had been leading up to the time that Gideon was raised up was that the people had turned away from God.

They were worshipping false gods. And as a result, God had given them over into the hands of the Midianites.

Now the Midianites were giving Israel a hard time. The children of Israel had been for several years putting up with the Midianites stealing their crops and stealing their livestock.

And they were unable to do anything about it. Because they were outnumbered by the Midianites.

[37 : 36] Then it dawned on them the reason why their enemies were able to do this to them. It took them seven years to realize that it was as a result of them moving away from God.

Being disobedient to God and sinning against God and worshipping false gods. Now in these seven years I am quite sure that Satan furnished them with all kinds of excuses to justify their behaviour. Before they came to their senses. Before they came to their senses. People blame the government. They blame their bosses. They blame their spouses.

They blame their children. They blame their economic circumstances. They blame everything but themselves. When they are experiencing hard times.

And when things aren't going the way that they would like them to go. But very often the problem is a spiritual one.

[38 : 57] And it might take people a long time before they apply the problem to themselves. And realize this is happening because of me.

Because I have moved away from God. Because I am not living in obedience to God. I am denying Him what is His right. And the reason that I am not experiencing God's blessing. Isn't because God has changed. It is because I have changed. God remains the same. But we don't. And when things change and we are not experiencing God's blessings. It is not because God is unable to bless us.

[39 : 56] It is not because God is unwilling to bless us. It is because we are unwilling to be obedient to Him.

We have started doing things our way. Rather than do them His way. And God can only bless us as we come into obedience to Himself.

We deny Him the opportunity to bless us when we sin against Him. And sometimes it takes us a very long time to realize that.

People might live their whole lifetimes and never realize that. And then they will have to experience the consequences.

But thankfully God sends us warnings. He sends us prophets as He did in the Old Testament times.

[41 : 05] He sends us people that will proclaim His word faithfully to highlight the fact that the reason that we are not experiencing God's blessings is because we are not reconciled to God.

We are unwilling to come to the place where God is able to bless us. We are unwilling to humble ourselves and fall down at His footstool and acknowledge we need you.

We need your help. Now the people of Israel at this stage had come to that point after seven years. Where they began to cry out to God. And ask God to help them. And we want to consider Gideon's encounter with the angel.

We read there in verse 12 that the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.

[42 : 18] Now that didn't make sense to Gideon. And he immediately questions what the angel said. He said to him, Please, sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?

And where are all His wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.

Two questions were on Gideon's mind. Is the Lord present with us?

And secondly, if the Lord is present with us, where are all the wonders that He did for previous generations?

Let's look at this first question. Is the Lord with us? The angel reminded him, The Lord is with you.

[43 : 35] And that's one of the fundamentals of our faith. The Lord is with you. This is one of the things that made Israel different from all the other nations that were in the world.

Because the Lord dwelt amongst His people. The gods that were worshipped by the other nations didn't make that claim.

But Israel could because God was with them. God revealed that He would be with them. That was what was depicted by the tabernacle. I will dwell with you.

I will journey with you. Where you go, I go. I will be with you all along. I will dwell in the midst of my people. The tent was in the midst of the camp.

Because that's what made Israel different from everybody else. God lived in their midst.

[44 : 41] And that's one of the things that they were always to remind themselves of. God is with us. God is in our midst.

Regardless of whatever happened in their experience, they should always remind themselves that God was with them.

No, the problem was that they were now beginning to look to their circumstances rather than look to what God had promised.

And when we begin to look at the Bible through our own circumstances, Very often what we think we believe concerning God begins to alter.

Because we're trying to fit God into our circumstances. And we're trying to get to know God according to our own experiences.

[45 : 52] And that's the danger when we come to rely on our own feelings and our own experiences. That we will try and make God fit into them.

But God doesn't change. Our experiences change. God never changes. And we should never try and make Him change so that He'll fit into our experience.

And this was what was happening with Gideon. He was trying to make God fit into his experience. God said He would be with His people. Gideon's questioning, he's doubting. Is God with us? Why was He doubting? Why was He doubting? Because of the experience that they were experiencing. But He should have, regardless of what circumstances He was experiencing, He should have laid hold of the fundamental fact, God does not change.

[47 : 01] God is always with His people. Because He cannot change. Because He cannot change. And regardless of how difficult and how discouraging our circumstances may become, one thing that we can never do is change our theology.

God remains the same. The same today as He was thousands of years ago, when He performed all the miracles that we read of in the Bible.

He is still the same God. God is with you. God is with you. And that's what the angel reminded Gideon of.

Because Gideon had forgotten that. And his answer to the angel tells us that he had forgotten that. Because he was doubting whether God was with them.

Is the Lord with us? And one of the reasons that he was doubting it, which brings us to the second doubt that he had was, if he was with us, would we be experiencing these adverse circumstances?

[48 : 22] Where are the wonders that he's done in the past? And Gideon could have gone on to recount the stories that he would have been aware of growing up, how God had taken His people out of Egypt.

And the great displays of God's power that He had given to deliver His people, how He demonstrated to Pharaoh through the plagues that He was God, that He would deliver His people. How He had demonstrated to His people that nothing would prevent them from reaching the Promised Land, even when they were surrounded by enemies.

When they were being pursued by the Egyptians, He opened up the Red Sea. He is always giving a way of escape to His people. He will never try us more than what we're able to bear.

He demonstrated that. And Gideon's questioning, if this is true concerning God, why are we suffering like we are? Why are we going through these adverse circumstances?

[49 : 41] Now some people get excited about miracles and healings and so forth. But it's not just when God performs miracles that He's present with His people.

When you come to read your Bible, you'll only find three main clusters of miracles. When He delivered His people out of Egypt at the time of Elijah and Elisha, and at the time of Jesus and the apostles.

But the ordinarily course that God deals with His people isn't through miracles. That doesn't mean to say He's not with His people.

He's working through ordinary means. And He's blessing His people through very ordinary things. Now the question, why isn't God doing miracles today, isn't proof that God doesn't exist and that He's with His people.

[50 : 56] It's proof of your unbelief, if that's what you're looking at.

Because God is working through ordinary events. Consider the many things that could go wrong in your life every day that you get up.

Just take for example the measure of health that you have. Whatever that measure might be. There are many things that could make it a lot worse than it is.

If God wasn't present to prevent these things that could make it worse. There are many things that could make your health a lot worse than it actually is.

But God intervenes through ordinary means to ensure that you're sustained in the measure that you're enjoying.

[52 : 10] Are you aware of that? Are you aware of that? Well, it's because God is present that we enjoy His mercies, which are new unto us every morning, in every aspect of our lives.

But very often we're unaware that God is at work. And we don't give Him the credit and the glory and the thanksgiving that He declares to receive.

It's easier for us to look at the things that He doesn't give us. Rather than the multitude of the things that He does give us.

We don't need miracles to prove that God exists. The very fact that we're drawing breath is proof that God exists.

But if we allow ourselves to question it, then we enter into despair and despondency.

[53 : 16] And that's the language that Gideon is using. The language of despair and despondency. He's questioning if God is with them. And if He is, why isn't He doing more wonderful things that we've heard of in the past?

Now, we're all probably guilty of this. Of thinking to the good old days. Thinking back to the experiences that our fathers had.

And thinking, we're not experiencing that. Well, the question that we should ask ourselves is, why not?

Is it because God has changed? God hasn't changed. Well, the answer to our question must be, we've changed.

Because we're not giving God the obedience that our fathers did. If they were experiencing such great blessings.

[54 : 25] Rather than focus on our adverse circumstances.

And focus on what we think we are ourselves and how poor we are. We should focus on what God says we are.

And that's the final thing I want to consider. The Lord calls Gideon a mighty man of valor.

In other words, a mighty warrior. Now, in his community, Gideon was a nobody. His family were the weakest of the tribe.

And he says he's the least in his family. In verse 15. In verse 15. He said to him, please, Lord, how can I say this? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh.

[55 : 31] And I'm the least in my father's house. Gideon saying to himself in response to the angel. I think you've got the wrong guy.

You've made a mistake. I'm not the person you think I am. I'm just a poor farmer. Do you ever feel like Gideon?

Do you ever feel that you're a nobody? Do you ever feel that everybody else seems to have all the gifts and talents, but you don't have any of them?

Do you ever feel that you're trying your hardest, but nothing seems to be going right for you? You're barely able to survive.

Now, notice where Gideon was. He's in the winepress. Now, a winepress in ancient Israel was usually a place carved out of rock.

[56 : 44] It would be a small area which wouldn't be ideal for threshing wheat. Typically, wheat would be threshed out in the open.

It would be beaten or trampled to separate the wheat from the straw and would it, thrown up into the air on a windy day so that the wind would carry the straw and the chaff away and the wheat would drop to the ground.

Now, a winepress is far from ideal to thrash the wheat. He's afraid. But he's afraid. That's why he's in the winepress.

He's afraid. What's he afraid of? He's afraid of the Midianites. He's afraid that the Midianites will steal what he has.

He's afraid that they would kill him. Now, maybe you feel that you're in the winepress.

[57 : 53] Not only might you feel that you're a nobody, worthless, without any talents, but that you're also in the winepress trying to make a living for yourself, trying to do the best for yourself and your family so that you might survive.

And you think you're a nobody. Well, we'll have to stop focusing on what we think we are. And we'll have to start looking at what God says we are. Because you see, not only does God know who you are, but most importantly, he knows who he is.

And if he's your God, he knows what he's able to do for you and for me. So it's not who we are that's important. It's who he is.

And it's what he says we are that's important, not what we or anybody else says about us that's important. It's how God sees us.

[59 : 08] If you've trusted in Jesus as your Savior, God says you're his child. To as many as received him.

To them he gave the authority. To them he gave the right to be called the children of God. Jesus taught his disciples that they were precious to God.

And he gave them the example of the effort that God goes to, to look after the birds of the air. To ensure that they're well fed.

And he says, do you think the birds of the air are more important than you are? If he goes to that much effort to look after them, how much more effort will he go to, to look after you?

If you think that you aren't arrayed with a glorious apparel, consider the flowers of the field.

[60 : 17] Consider how glorious they're clothed. Could any man produce anything more glorious? Solomon and all his glory didn't have the glory of these flowers.

Do you think if God has clothed the flowers with that glory, that he's not going to clothe you with greater glory? He's given you the righteousness of his Son.

How much more glorious can you be? You are as righteous as Jesus is in the presence of God.

Can he give you any more?

Can he make you anything more than what he claims that you are? You are not a nobody. You are a somebody in God's eyes. You are a precious thing in God's eyes.

So don't think that you are a nobody because you might appear to be a nobody in your community. And even in your own eyes.

[61 : 23] That you are useless and that God will never use you. Because that's exactly the kind of people that God does use. Nobody's.

Nobody's. Nobody's. Nobody's. People like you and me. People who might not be important in the eyes of our society.

But we're important to God. Because we're his children. And if he didn't spare his own son. In order to purchase you and me as his children.

Do you think he's going to withhold anything from you? He will not withhold anything from you. And he will give you everything that will make you a somebody.

In this world and in his eyes. Because of God's great love and mercy. He can make and enable ordinary people like you and me.

[62 : 37] To do extraordinary things for him. That's what he was going to do for Gideon. Listen to what Paul says. Right into the Corinthians.

In chapter 1. Consider your calling brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful.

Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world. Even things that are not to bring to nothing that are. God chose what is low and despised in the world to shame the Lord. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus. Whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written. Therefore, as it is written.

[63 : 40] Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. Gideon can't boast. But he can boast in the Lord.

And boast in the Lord. Because God is with him. And God has done wonderful things for Gideon. And he is going to do wonderful things through Gideon. And he can do that for every one of his children.

Let's not change our theology by looking to our own circumstances. Let's look to what God says rather than what we think or what society says.

Amen. When he does bless us. We will not boast in ourselves. But we will be able to boast in our God.

[64 : 46] May God grant that he will give us all that boast. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven. We give you thanks.

Thanks. That it wasn't the important people of this world that you came to save. That it wasn't even the religious people of this world that had clothed themselves with their own righteousness that you came to save.

But that you came to save nobodies. People that were of little worth in their own eyes and maybe in the eyes of others. People that you bestowed your love and your mercy on.

Because they came to recognize their own little worth. That they were sinners. Sinners that had rebelled against you. And sinners that were undeserving of the least of your mercies.

But sinners who came to appreciate that mercy and laid hold of you. We ask, O Lord, that you would help us. That you would help us to put our lives at your disposal.

[66 : 02] And that it's not what we think that we would look to, but what you say. And if you say you are with us, then you are with us.

If you say that you will never leave us nor forsake us. Then you will never leave us nor forsake us. If you say that we are mighty men of valor.

Then you will give us the victory. You will make us mighty men of war against the forces of darkness. That we find within ourselves and around us.

And you will give us the victory over them. Not because of our abilities. And not because we deserve it. But because of your great love and mercy which you have bestowed upon us.

Help us to look to your covenant of grace rather than your covenant of works. And help us to glory in our God. That this was the covenant that you went forth to establish on our behalf.

[67 : 11] And have mercy upon us for our sins. For we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 113.

On page 151. Psalm 113. And we're going to hear the whole of the psalm being sung.

O praise you servants of the Lord. Sing praises to his holy name. O blessed be the name of God. His praise forevermore proclaim.

From east to west the praise of God. Each day is to be spread abroad. The whole of the psalm. O praise you servants of the Lord.

Sing praises to his holy name. O blessed be the name of God. His praise forevermore proclaim. O praise you servants of the Lord. Sing praises to his holy name. O praise you servants of the Lord. Sing praises to his holy name.

[68 : 15] Sing praises to his holy name. O blessed be the name of God. His praise forevermore proclaim. O blessed be the name of God. His praise forevermore proclaim. O blessed be the name of God.

His praise forevermore proclaim. The name of God. His praise forevermore proclaim. From east to west the praise of God. His praise forevermore proclaim. From east to west the praise of God. Each day is to be spread abroad. His praise forevermore proclaim.

The Lord is high above the earth. His praise forevermore proclaim. His praise forevermore proclaim. From east to west the praise of God. The praise of God. Each day is to be spread abroad. The Lord is high above the earth.

His praise forevermore proclaim. His praise forevermore proclaim. The Lord is high above the earth. His glory far above the sky. Who else is like? The Lord our God. The Lord our God. The Lord our God. The Lord our God.

The Lord our God. The Lord our God. The Lord our God. His glory far above the sky.

[69 : 16] Who else is like? The Lord our God. The Lord our God.

The Lord our God. He is the one who stoops and bow to look on heaven and earth below. He raises out as from the dust and from the ash he lifts the poor.

Exalting them to dignity, with noble men to sin is secure.

The childless woman, he'll reward with hope and children.

[70 : 42] Praise the Lord. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.