

The Compassion of Christ

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Preacher: Alistair Begg

[0 : 00] I invite you to turn once again to Luke and chapter 7 as that is the focus of our study this morning. As you're turning there may I say thank you for the kind and generous welcome here.

And to be in this pulpit is a privilege that I don't take for granted and to be in your company is a blessing. I bring you the greetings of the congregation that I serve.

I live quite a distance away from here in Ohio and I know that they have turned their hearts and minds in this direction or will be doing at least when they wake into this new day.

Before we look at the Bible together I'd like to pray briefly just once again using an old Anglican prayer. Gracious God what we know not teach us what we have not give us what we are not make us for your son's sake.

Amen. Well I was taught in school and I'm glad the Sunday school has come in on the front rows here. I was taught in school that the Bible is a book about Jesus.

[1 : 20] When you take your eyes off Jesus you can very quickly lose your way around the Bible. And they taught me at Sunday school in Glasgow that in the Old Testament Jesus is predicted.

In the Gospels he's revealed. In the Acts he's preached. In the Epistles he's explained. And in the book of Revelation he's expected.

And when the Gospel writers put pen to paper and set out to give to us the record of the life of Christ. They were not simply writing history although the facts were historical.

Nor were they actually writing inspirational biography. Although there is much that fits within that category. But what they were actually doing was writing down this good news.

The story of who Jesus is. The incarnate son of God. And why he's come to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins. And just as we would anticipate as they go through the record of the life of Jesus.

[2 : 24] There are various points of emphasis. Various aspects of his character and his ministry. That come out at various places along the way. And this morning here in chapter 7.

Between verses 1 and 17. We're given an insight into the power and the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ. We finished at verse 17.

But if your Bible is open. I want you to notice verse 18. Because there we're told that the things that we read in the first 17 verses. Had got back to John the Baptist.

John the Baptist had been put in jail. And he upon hearing what was going on. John had sent out some of his disciples to go interestingly.

And inquire of the Lord Jesus. Whether he was. You will notice in verse 19. Whether he is the one who was to come. Or shall we look for another.

[3 : 22] And I leave you to read that for yourselves later on. It's not our purpose this morning. But you ought to be struck by it. And the reason that John was asking the question. Was simply because the ministry of John.

Had been a ministry of announcing the fact. That when the Messiah came. Then it would be a day of wrath. And of destruction. And of fire.

And of judgment. And several of his sermons. Were absolutely profound in their implications. And he told the people that were listening. You better do something about what I'm telling you.

Because the axe is already at the root of the tree. It's going to be cut down. And the fire has already been kindled. Now the word gets back to him. In the jail.

That apparently the axe is not at the root of the tree. And the fire doesn't seem to be getting kindled at all. And so his understanding of his role. As the forerunner to the Messiah.

[4 : 22] And the execution of righteous judgment. On the part of the Messiah. The two things don't seem to be connecting. And what the reply is.

Is for Jesus to send back word. To say. Tell John the Baptist to relax. Because in actual fact. The blind receive their sight.

The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed. And the deaf hear. And the dead are raised up. And the poor have good news. Preach to them. And this of course is in keeping.

With what we have already seen. In chapter 4 of Luke. When Jesus has gone into the synagogue. In Nazareth. And he has read from the prophecy of Isaiah.

And from Isaiah chapter 61. And interestingly. He stopped short. Of the day of vengeance. Which comes in Isaiah 61.

[5 : 18] So for example. He says that the. I've been sent to proclaim liberty to the captives. The recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

And then he stops there. And the very next phrase. Concerns the vengeance of God. And so John the Baptist. Because he knew his Bible. Was concerned.

About this very issue. And of course the answer is. That the vengeance is coming. But it isn't coming right now. Right now the ministry of Jesus.

As we see it in these two instances. Is a ministry. In which the compassion. And the mercy. And the kindness of God. Is manifested.

Later on you will remember. That Paul when he. Writes of this in Romans chapter 2. He says. Would you show contempt. For the kindness of God. Not realizing.

[6 : 13] That it would be his kindness. That leads you. Towards repentance. That all by way of context. We're going to look. At these two separate incidents.

Which make clear to us. This aspect of the character of Jesus. A compassion incidentally. Which extends beyond. The barriers.

That had already been erected. At this time. Barriers of race. And respectability. Barriers of geography. And so on. It's not just in our generation.

That people distinguish. Between themselves. On the basis of race. And respectability. And school tie. And social acceptance. And so on. And Jesus comes.

In his ministry. To tackle these very things. Now what we have. Are two sad households. Two sad households. The first of these.

[7 : 10] Is introduced to us. In verse 1. After Jesus had finished. All his sayings. In the hearing of the people. He entered Capernaum. And then we're introduced. To this man. A centurion.

And the centurion. Had a servant. That's not surprising. Who was sick. That's not surprising either. When you read your Bible. You should always look. For what's surprising. The reason.

That many of you. Don't find anything surprising. In the Bible. Is because you never expect to. And there are surprises. Everywhere you look. If you look carefully. There was a centurion. He had a servant.

No surprise. The servant wasn't well. That's no surprise. Because people get sick. Where's the surprise? In the final phrase. Who was highly valued.

By him. Who was highly valued. By him. In Roman law. The master of the house. In this case. The centurion. Could do whatever he liked.

[8 : 05] With his servants. He could actually. Kill them. If he chose. And a Roman historian. On estate management. Writes concerning. The role of a farmer. He says.

The farmer should examine. His implements. Every year. And throw out those. Which are old. And broken. And should do the same. With his servants. So that's the context.

That's what makes it striking. In this framework. So what if he had a servant. Who wasn't well. He could just get another one. He could send him on his way. But no.

The centurion had a servant. Who was sick. And he highly valued him. Now we don't know. From whom he learned. About Jesus. We're not told that.

Perhaps this is a situation. In the New Testament. Akin to that of Naaman. In the Old Testament. You remember. Naaman found out. About the prophet of God. Not as a result. Of a large evangelistic campaign.

[9 : 01] In the area. But as a result. Of a servant girl. In the house. Doing what she should do. Telling her. Master. And his wife. About the prophet of God.

And it was as a result. Of her word. Of course. That Naaman himself. Was cleansed. It may be something similar. We don't know. And it's not particularly important. But somebody. Had told this

centurion.

About the person of Jesus. And about his ability. To heal. And so. He decided. That he would dispatch somebody. To go and meet Jesus.

And he sent to him. Elders. Of the Jews. Now this probably. Gives us an indication. Of the stature. And influence. Of the man. That he could go. To those.

Who were outwith the realm. Of his own authority. And yet. Say to them. I would like you to go. And speak to Jesus. On my behalf. Perhaps the thought is. You're a religious group. And perhaps.

[9 : 58] Jesus will respond to you. Because you come. On that basis. And look. Records for us. In verse 4. That when they came to Jesus. They pleaded with him.

Earnestly. There's nothing casual. About this. They were earnest. In their approach. But you will notice. The basis. Of their pleading. First of all. He is worthy.

To have you do this. For him. He's worthy. Of this. They said. In other words. They exercise. Their approach. On the basis. Of patronage. And indeed.

They detail it. Two reasons. Why he's worthy. They said. Number one. He loves our nation. And number two. He's the one. Who built our. Synagogue for us.

Now interestingly. Jesus doesn't tackle this. Luke records for us. At the beginning. Of verse 6. That Jesus. Went. With them. And as he goes.

[10 : 54] There's another delegation. Comes. And when I read this again. Even just this morning. I said. I wonder. Why the second delegation. Was dispatched. We already had the first group.

Perhaps the word. Had got back. To the centurion's house. Not a long distance. That the Jews. Had already approached Jesus. And the word. Had got back. As to how they'd approached him.

They said to him. You know. We want you. To do this. For this man. Because he's so significant. Because he's so worthy. And he has done. All these good things. For the nation. And actually.

He built. Our synagogue. Perhaps the man said. Well. That wasn't what I had in mind. I didn't. Expect him to say that. We don't know. But nevertheless.

A second delegation comes. This time. The centurion. Sent his friends. I do think. There's a possibility. That he said. I think I sent. The wrong group. The first time. I shouldn't have sent. Those fellows.

[11 : 49] Why don't you go down. And say this to Jesus. And if your Bible is open. You will see it there. Lord. Do not trouble yourself. This is a very different approach. Isn't it? For I am not worthy.

To have yourself. Come. Under. My roof. Therefore. I do not. Presume. To come to you. First group.

Come. On the basis. Of presumption. On the basis. Of the. Worthwhile nature. Of. The standing. And status. Of this individual. It's not.

Unlike. People in. Contemporary. Scotland. If they are going to come to God. If there is a God. To whom they come. Then they could come. And tell him. How wonderful they are. They could come. And tell him. All the good things. They've already achieved. They could tell him. That they're an upstanding member. Of the society. And they've done a number of things. That are worthy of his note.

[12 : 45] But of course. That's no basis. For anyone to come. Either in Jesus day. Or in our own day. And the friends. Now bring the message. From the centurion. Himself. Don't trouble yourself.

I don't deserve this. I don't consider myself. Worthy. To come to you. It's interesting. He says. I'm not worthy. To have you come under my roof. Come under my roof. The first group.

Were very concerned. About the fact. That he'd built a wonderful roof. Presumably. The synagogue. Would have had a roof. And they went to Jesus. To let him know. That he built a wonderful roof.

And the man says.

The fact is. I'm not worthy. To have you. Come under my roof. I don't presume. To come to you. If you would just say the word. And let my servant. Be healed.

It's a remarkable statement. Isn't it? If you'll just. Go ahead Jesus. And speak the word. Then. We can be done with this business. And my servant. Will be back. Fit.

[13 : 38] And working again. And then he explains. Why he believes this. To be the case. He says in verse 8. For I myself. Am a man. Set. Under. Authority.

It's interesting. He doesn't say. For I am a man of authority. He says. I am a man under authority. I'm not the man. Who has the power. To do everything. I am the man.

Who fits in the framework. Of. The life of a soldier. I do have people. To whom I can say. Go and they go. And come and they come. But I'm also part of that.

And the word that he spoke. Was a word that. Called for the obedience. Of the individual. And that's exactly. What he anticipates. From Jesus. Your word.

Will be sufficient authority. Lord Jesus. In order to deal. With my servant. And verse 9. Tells us. When Jesus heard these things. He marveled at him. He marveled at him.

[14:36] Or he was amazed at him. There's only two times. I've found in the gospels. Where Jesus is amazed. And this is one of them. The other one is in Mark chapter 6.

In this case. He is amazed. At the faith. In Mark chapter 6. He's amazed. At the unbelief. It's an interesting thought. The incarnate God. Being amazed.

And he turned to the crowd. And followed him. And he said. I haven't found. Even in the whole of Israel. I have never found. Such faith. And then.

Those who had been sent. Returned to the house. And they found. The servant. Well. The power was in the word. That was spoken. He didn't need to see things.

Before he trusted Jesus. He trusted Jesus. And then he went. And saw things. Now. Let me make a couple of observations. On the strength of this.

[15:33] For you have this story. In front of you. As do I. You can go home. And read it for yourselves. As I hope you will. This afternoon. What are we learning in this? Well. One of the things we're learning. Is this.

That the prophecy. Of Simeon. Is actually being fulfilled. You say. Well. Do I remember the prophecy of Simeon? I hope you do. It's in Luke chapter 2.

And you remember. When Jesus. Was taken by Mary and Joseph. Into the temple courts. That there. He met. Simeon.

And Simeon. Took Jesus in his arms. And he blessed God. And he said. Let your servant. Depart in peace. According to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation. That you have prepared. In the presence of all peoples.

A light for revelation. To the Gentiles. And for glory. To your people Israel. And the people. On that occasion. That heard his words. Must have marveled. What would this mean? How could it possibly be.

[16:28] That the Gentiles. And in what context. Would the Gentiles. Come to embrace. The Messiah. And here we have. An illustration of it. In the centurion's.

Home and servant. Secondly. We realize here. That Jesus doesn't draw. Distinctions. Of who's on the inside. And who's on the outside.

Even when he's. Faced with potential defilement. As in being invited. Into the home. Of a Gentile. For the Jew. Did not go into the home. Of the Gentile. Jesus didn't.

It doesn't say. That when they came. And made their appeal. Which was not a good appeal. It was on the basis. Of patronage. It doesn't say. And Jesus said. Number one. You're approaching me. On the wrong basis.

And number two. It would be wrong for me. As a Jew. To come into a Gentile house. No. He doesn't. He doesn't draw. Those insider. Outsider distinctions. Remember.

[17:21] Jesus is the one. Who told the story. Of the. Good Samaritan. As we refer to it. Doesn't he? And he's asking the people. Who is. Who is my neighbor? Who is my neighbor?

Who was the neighbor. In that incident? The one who crossed. The boundaries. Some of us are very keen. On our boundaries. Jesus breaks. These boundaries.

Thirdly. It is a reminder. To us. Of the two essential. Requirements. That are throughout. The whole Bible. For receiving. The blessing of Jesus. That is. A deep seated. Humility. And to. A steadfast faith. In his word. A deep seated. Humility. And a steadfast faith. In his word. And the reason.

That some of us. Have never trusted Christ. Is because we're proud. We're proud. Or. That we're unprepared. To cast ourselves. Entirely.

[18:15] On his word. You say the word. Lord Jesus. And we will do. As you say. You speak the word. Lord Jesus. And we will rest. In the benefits.

Of it. Now we don't know. What kind of faith. Was exercised. By this centurion. There are so many. Little missing pieces. Aren't there. In terms of our. Desire to know. All the details.

Was this man. Did he have enough faith. To believe. That Jesus could heal. His servant. Or did this bring him. To personal. Resolute faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're not told. In the passage. We hope for the latter. But we don't know. From there. We go. To Nain. A wee bit.

Further down the road. Six miles. Southeast of Nazareth. A day's journey. From Capernaum. So if he was in Capernaum. In verse two. And following. He's. He's gone.

[19 : 09] A day's journey. And now we find him. In this place. Of Nain. Another sad hole. Another sad hole. Early in the morning. The dirge.

Would have begun. There would have been. Flutes. Played. Outside the door. Plaintively. Symbols. Would have been. Clanging. Reminding the widow. As she awakened.

To a new day. Of what awaited her. When her eyes. Awoke. To the dawn. Of that day. And she. Heard the sounds. Outside. She would be reminded.

Of the fact. That this was the day. When the funeral procession. For her only son. Would proceed. To the grave. I found it quite interesting.

To discover. That archaeologists. Have found tombs. In the rocks. All the way. Along the road. In this region. Leading to Capernaum. And particularly. Around the eastern gate.

[20 : 03] Of this little village. Tying in. With what we. Find in the biblical record. Here. And. What I find interesting.

And I wonder. Do you too. Is that the focus here. Is not so much. On the raising of this boy. From the dead. As it is. The compassion.

Of Jesus. For his mother. Actually. The focus. In the first incident. Is not so much. On the healing. Of the boy. As it is.

On the faith. Of the centurion. And what we know. Of this mother. Is fairly straightforward. First of all. She is a widow. And now. Not only. Is she minus a husband.

But she's minus a son. And you will notice. From verse 12. That this was. Her only son. So she is actually. The epitome.

[20 : 58] Of the poor. She's the epitome. Of the poor. And what did we learn. From Luke chapter 4. The spirit of the Lord. Is upon me. Because he has anointed me. To proclaim.

Good news to the poor. Those who are poor. In spirit. Those who are physically poor. The epitome. Of poverty. Is found. In this lady. She is now. Faced with the prospect.

Of life. Without protection. Or without provision. She has no man. In the context. Of her day. She has no basis. For earning a living. Her home.

Is marked by sadness. Her home. Is marked by loneliness. And now. She's confronted. By the end. Of the family line. Her predicament.

Is clearly. Well understood. By her neighbors. And our friends. Because verse 12. Tells us. That a considerable crowd. From the town. Was with her. Whether this speaks.

[21 : 52] To her personality. Her friendship. Her engagement. With the community. Or what we don't know. But it certainly speaks. To the fact. That people understood. This is a sad lady.

And this is a sad day. And they gathered. As an expression. Presumably. Of their own compassion. And solidarity. With her. Again.

We're looking for. What is surprising. What's surprising in this. Well one of the things. That's surprising. Is that nobody makes. A request. In the first incident.

There is request. The centurion. Knows that his. Servant has a problem. He dispatches a group. The group go. Another group. Is dispatched. And so on. There's a lot of dialogue. But in this incident.

Nobody's asking for anything. No one's asking. Jesus to do anything. It simply says. In verse 13. And when the Lord. Saw her. He had.

[22 : 47] Compassion on her. And he spoke to her. Oh Lord. You have searched me. And you know me. You know when I sit down.

And when I arise. You know the words of my mouth. Before I even speak them. Such knowledge is high. Who could attain to it?

The hymn writer puts it. Standing somewhere in the shadows. You'll find Jesus. He's the only one. Who cares. And understands. And standing somewhere in the shadows. You will find him. And you'll know him. By the nail prints.

In his hands. Of one thing. We may be certain this morning. That the God who made us. Gave us our DNA. Fashioned us.

[23 : 47] Has showered upon our lives. Unnumbered comforts. From our infancy. Comforts. The source of which.

We may never have fully contemplated. Recognized. Or adored. That. Christ. Is the one who looks. And sees.

And knows. And cares. And this lady. Was to discover this. In a remarkable way. He saw her. He. He heard her cry. And his heart. Went out to her. And when the Lord saw her. He had compassion on her. And he said to her. Hey lady. Don't weep.

You know. That's interesting too. Isn't it? I mean. If there's one place. You're allowed to weep. It's at funerals. If there's one place.

[24 : 44] That we're allowed to cry. It's in the face. Of such sadness. Why say this? Well. Because of what he's about to do. He's basically saying to her.

You can stop crying now. She probably found that interesting. Maybe even alarming. And then verse 14. He came up. And touched. The beard.

Or he came up. And touched the coffin. Now we look at that. And say. Well that's interesting. He touched the coffin. But no. It's far more than interesting. Because it was contamination. To touch the coffin.

No ceremonially pure. Jewish man. Is ever going to touch a coffin. Because it is a defilement. He is immediately defiled. He immediately has to go from there.

To the temple. To the synagogue. And make sure. That he makes the necessary sacrifices. And ablutions. To set him free from that. So that he can go on. And about the business of his day.

[25 : 39] But no. He turned around. And he broke through the barriers. Of ceremonial purity. The barriers of ceremonial purity. Were secondary to the issue.

Of this woman's predicament. In the same way that Jesus had to teach. The Pharisees of his day. You're so concerned about the cup. And making sure it's washed on the outside.

You're so concerned about whether my servants. My disciples are washing their hands. Before they have a meal. You folks have got it completely upside down. The real issue.

The real issue. Is what's going on in their hearts. That's what's happening with their hands right now. They didn't like that. Religious formalism never does. And the formalists on this occasion. Would have looked on and immediately said. This person couldn't possibly be the one he claims to be. Because if he was. Then he would be committed to ceremonial purity. He would not be touching coffins.

[26 : 37] But touching the coffin was small. Compared to what he was about to do. He touched the coffin. And it says interestingly. And the bearers stood still. Of course they stood still.

It was dramatic. The pallbearers were not used to having people come up. And touch the coffin. So it stopped the whole procession. If you like.

Jesus halts the tragic progression to the grave. That's what he does in this incident. He stops them in their tracks. Jesus my friends.

Is the only one who can stop the tragic progression to the grave. Buddha can't. Buddha is dead. Muhammad can't. He's dead. Krishna can't.

He's dead. The only person who can stand up to death. Is the one who said. I am the resurrection and the life. And he who believes in me. Even though he dies.

[27 : 34] Yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me. Will never die. And then he asked the question. Do you believe this? Do you believe this? You see. The people stood and watched and wondered.

He stops the progression. And then. He speaks. To the young man. He speaks to the young man. How weird is this?

Who speaks to dead bodies? Do you expect a response? Yes. Now over 35 years of pastoral ministry.

I have been in the company of many dead bodies. I've been stuck in funeral homes all over the place. From the west of Scotland and beyond. And sometimes I'm in there with four or five at a time. All behind the curtains. I've never spoken to one of them once. I never found it worthwhile. Nor have I ever heard any of them whistling. Or calling out to each other.

[28 : 35] No. Indeed if I was found to be walking around talking to them. The people said the minister has lost his senses. He's now talking to dead bodies. But this is Jesus.

Jesus. And he spoke. To the young man. And I said. And he said. I say to you. Arise. I say to you. Arise. And the young man. Sat up. And began to speak. What a day that must have been. People would have. For all of their lives. Whatever dramatic thing has happened in Nock. In the last 50 years. That everybody talks about. Whatever else it is. It pales in comparison. To this. There wouldn't have been a person. That lived in the vicinity of Nain. Who wouldn't have said. If you asked them. What's the most amazing thing. That's happened to you. In your lifetime. They said. Well there was an occasion. Where we had a widow here.

[29 : 33] And her boy was laid out. And they were heading for the. For the cemetery. And Jesus of Nazareth came. And put him. Back up on his feet again. Well there is something here.

Isn't there. That is. Emblematic. Of what Jesus has come to do. Do. He's come. To speak life into the dead. To speak life into the dead.

By nature. We are as dead. As the young man. On the buyer. We are as incapable. Of. Raising ourselves to life. As was the young man. On the buyer. But the same Christ. Who raised this boy. And restored him to his mom.

Is the same Christ. Who can resurrect you. And restore you. To your mom. I wouldn't be at all surprised.

[30 : 33] If there aren't one or two. Under my hearing. Right now. Whose mothers. Have preceded you. In death. They have prayed for you.

All of their lives. They have now been gathered. Into the presence. Of the risen Christ. And you still. Do not believe. Only Christ. Will be able to restore you. To your mother. That's not the motive. But that's a byproduct. And one of the great. Post humus joys of heaven. One of the great joys of heaven. I have no doubt. Is going to be.

When parents. And grandparents. See. Across the portals. Those for whom. They lived. And died. Praying.

[31 : 32] That you. Might turn. In humility. And in childlike trust. And in believing. Faith. To Jesus Christ. The one.

Who raises us. From the dead. We are not just. Misguided. And up a side street. Intellectually. We are dead. In our trespasses.

And in our sins. And only Christ. Is the one. Who may set us. To rights again. And you will notice. That it.

That the emphasis. Here is upon him. Giving him. Back. To his mother. And the dead man. Sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him.

Back. To his mother. He cared. He cared. He cared. That's how it started. Wasn't he? He looked. He had compassion on her.

[32 : 28] He entered into her circumstances. He raised her boy. And he gave him back. Now some people want to talk about how all of this works.

The theology of it. How this would be. But Jesus is the Lord of life and death. He. Possesses power over the invisible world.

Whatever the invisible realm. To which the deceased youth had departed. The young man's spirit is raised. And joined again to his body. In obedience to the Lord's command.

And the prophet. The prophet. Has arisen among us. Said the people. Because they were looking for that day. When the prophet who would come. God has visited his people.

They said. And the report about him. Spread through the whole Judea. And the surrounding country. Let me end by making just a couple of observations. On this as well. Unlike other people.

[33 : 26] Unlike other religious leaders. Throughout history. Jesus doesn't simply comment. On the great enemies of mankind. Sickness.

And sin. And death. Jesus actually overcomes them. The Lord Jesus. Is the one who hears. The cry. Of the sorrowful.

And he hears your cry. It may not be verbal. It may be the silent cry of your heart. It may be a cry that is unknown to your spouse. Or unknown to your son.

Or unknown to your parents. Christ. Is the one who sees and hears. Thirdly. He is. The great comforter.

The great comforter. He's the victor over death. He's the reuniter of the separated. He's the one. Who brings harmony. And healing.

[34 : 23] And hope. And what Jesus did. Here. In this little incident. One day. He's going to do. For all the faithful. In a final.

And in a perfect form. He's going to wipe away. Every tear. From our eyes. Revelation 21. And I heard a loud voice.

From the throne saying. Behold. The dwelling place of God. Is with man. And he will dwell with them. And they will be his people. And God himself. Will be with them. As their God. And he will wipe away.

Every tear. From their eyes. And death. Shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning. Nor crying. Nor pain anymore. For the former things. Have passed. Away. And on that day.

He will bring. All of the comfort. That's needed. Raising all of his people. Reuniting us. With our loved ones. Bringing us. The joy. That is promised to us.

[35 : 23] In Psalm 16. In your presence. There is fullness of joy. And at your right hand. There is pleasure. Forevermore. Remember Jesus said.

Unless you have faith. Like a little child. You will never enter. The kingdom of heaven. And these boys and girls. That are here this morning. Are childlike.

They may. Occasions be childish. But the call. Is not to childishness. It's to childlikeness. And let me remind you.

A congregation. That is well taught. That is. Guarded. And guided. Sustained. By the ministry of the word. Sunday by Sunday.

Let me say this to you. As honestly. And as graciously. As I can. All your knowledge. Of this. Will mean absolutely.

[36 : 21] Nothing to you. So long as you remain. Outside of Christ. That is Calvin. Actually. In book four. Of the institutes. All that Christ.

Has done for us. Is of no value to us. So long as we remain. Outside of Christ. The same. Compassionate God. Sounds out from his word. On this morning. In this place. In the year of our Lord. 2010.

2010. Today. If you hear his voice. Do not. Harden. Your hearts. Father.

Thank you. That you are a God. Of compassion. And of grace. Thank you. That. History records. These incidents. In order that we might.

[37 : 18] Get an inkling. Of. What it means for you. To be the. Express. Image. Of God. The firstborn. Of all creation.

Risen from the dead. And we pray today. That you will come to. The sadness. And the loneliness. And the emptiness. Of life. And show us your compassion.

And grant that your kindness. Might lead us daily. To repentance. For we pray. In your gracious. And holy name. Amen.