

The Covenant Promises Of God! PART I

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- [0 : 0 0] On Tuesday, it was the Presbytery meeting, Presbytery of Ross. It was a meeting to submit to the final Presbytery mission plan, Church Scotland.
- Things are changing, buildings are closing, that's it in a nutshell, it's happening. It was a three-hour meeting, it was quite emotionally charged at points. We're going from 16 churches down to 10 in our region.
- It's not as drastic a plan here in Ross, Presbytery, as it is in other areas like Glasgow and Ayrshire and Edinburgh. There it's been a lot worse.
- But some of the rural charges in our area have been affected and will be closing. Every church has been affected across the country in the Church Scotland to one degree or another.
- However, and I must say the moderator of Presbytery, Heidi Harkis, she led the meeting really well. She was really excellent. And she began the meeting reading from Joshua chapter 1 where we find these words, Have I not commanded you?
- [1 : 0 7] Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. And she encouraged that as Christians we do not give up, not to lose hope, not to despair, and especially now in this very hour that we find ourselves in.
- Rather we should keep close to Jesus, keep him central in all that we do. Heidi also said that we would need a dose of well-needed realism in the Church.
- We are where we are. And I think just reflecting upon Nehemiah and his prayers and his message and the book as a whole is a timely reminder that the Church really is a lot of rubble around us.
- But that's, God remains faithful to us. And he'll never leave us nor will he forsake us. His coven promises remain the same. I did meet up, sorry, have a Zoom call with one of my fellow ministers.
- She's a couple of years younger than me. He's a minister in Glasgow. We both came through Mark's Memorial Church as teenagers in Stornoway. And he's the interim moderator of another church and it's not a great situation.
- [2 : 1 7] And he was at a presbytery meeting in Glasgow. And a prayer was read out at the beginning of the meeting. And here's how it started. It said, Lord, you have called us to be missional communities and to help us through our decline.
- That was the beginning of the prayer. Lord, help us through our decline. It's the kind of prayer we've never seen in the Bible because it's so unbiblical. You know, the Church, we have to admit that we don't do well when it comes to change.
- And it might grieve our hearts that it won't go, the Church won't go back to the way it was. People are not going to automatically come back out to church nowadays. It's not that that day is well gone.

It's finished. People are not just going to off their own back and say, I'm going to come to church today because it's the done thing. That day is gone. We're not good at looking forward so much as we are at looking back.

Even at the Presbytery, there was a sense of, do you remember 20 years ago when, do you remember the people who've been there for 40 years? We were looking back and there was no sense of looking forward.

[3 : 26] And what Nehemiah does, what I love what he does in this prayer today in the passage is that he looks back to what God has done in history. And he says, God, do it again.

You can do it again because you're God. He looks forward as well. He sees the big picture because he's got a high view of God. And in light of our current situation as a church, as the Church of Scotland and as a local church here, what might we be asking God?

We've been reflecting this. God, what is it we need to do to reach out to the next generation? But might we also be thinking questions along the line of what will the future of the church in Scotland look like?

Fred Drummond said there's about 6% to 7% evangelical Christians in the United Kingdom, about 4% or even less in Scotland. Scotland, Scripture Union, was heavily hit by the pandemic.

And now they're only just bit by bit getting into schools. And they've got a curriculum, a resource for young people, the 5%, basically. If you're a Christian in school nowadays, you're in the 5% because 95% have no connection to church whatsoever.

[4 : 32] That's what we're looking at. But often we can say, well, back in the day people came to church. And they feel so. But that day has passed. But there's a day for new opportunities. That day is on the horizon.

A day where people are more open to the things of God than ever before. Once again, to quote Pete Gregg, he said that during the pandemic there was a resource from Tier Fund, the Christian charity.

And what came about was that more people searched for how to pray during the pandemic than ever before. There was millions of Google searches about prayer and how we could pray to God and asking God.

And Fred also carefully reminded us that there was no real secularist response during the pandemic. Nothing of note. That's because atheism has nothing to offer us. Nothing except a good old argument. But whilst some doors might be shutting and church doors literally shutting, what is God saying to us in this era?

I think God is shaking us out of our comfort zones. Shaking us out of our pews, did I say, literally in our case in the months to come. But God is shaking us. There's a humbling taking place.

[5 : 38] And it's a good thing that we need to humble ourselves before the mighty God that we serve. That we're not to be content where we are. Because if we stay there, if we're content to stay there, the rubble that's around us and what Nehemiah was called to, that will become all the more apparent.

Rather, we're called to be a people that bring hope. And again, Fred said that there's a hope deficit in Scotland today. And we're called to be hope bringers, hope carriers, because the gospel is good news.

Good news of hope and great joy. That's what we celebrate at Christmas. We bring you good news of great joy. The gospel is good news that Jesus came. He was born of a virgin.

He came to live among us. He came to fully empathize with us. He lived in full submission to his heavenly father. And if Jesus needed to hear his father's voice and needed to follow it, then how much more for us as his followers?

And Jesus was fully man, fully God. And so I wonder if we're in this day not to be simply content with a slight improvement here and there. A little bit here and there.

[6 : 41] But actually, we want the whole and full newness of God's life, of the unexpected life of Jesus flowing in our midst. That every place of uphill challenge is a pathway into God's presence.

Every place of uphill challenge is a pathway into God's presence. But it is a challenge. It's a challenge for us to hear. A challenge for us to take on. But it's a reality check, as we thought about it four nights ago.

A reality check of where the church is at. But also a humbling of our hearts before God. And say, God, what is it you need to do in us? What do we need to do as your church?

How do we respond? What is the church going to look like? We might look around our own church here. What's this church going to look like in not even ten years' time, but five years' time? What's it going to look like?

Can we imagine? Are we prepared for this? And so this is what Nehemiah, the situation that he finds himself in. And to be honest, we'll see how far we get this morning.

[7 : 40] I'm going to probably break this prayer up into two messages. So Nehemiah, he's a descendant of the exile. He's a Jew. And his longing of his heart is still for that place which he knows so well.

That place, Judah and Jerusalem. And he receives rather unsettling news. The walls of Jerusalem have broken down. Its gates have been burned with fire. There's rubble all around.

God's people are a small remnant. They're no longer a big nation. And Nehemiah is a thousand miles away when he hears this news. He's in a palace serving King Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes, he's the cupbearer to the king, which basically means he's the prime minister.

He's the commander-in-chief. Or at least he carries as much authority as a commander-in-chief. That's the sense of prestige that goes with his position. And so what he's going to do is he's going to go to the king and he's going to ask the king to change his mind about Jerusalem's wall-building program.

He's asking the king to be part of God's plans, this pagan king. And we want to think about the context of where Nehemiah is at. So the ancient Eastern monarchs, they were viewed as almost like semi-divine beings.

[8 : 51] And so there was a huge responsibility upon Nehemiah's shoulders. This would be a huge undertaking. And the gap of time between Nehemiah 1 and chapter 2 is four months.

So we've got that P, pause, in essence, where Nehemiah is this preparation of prayer. But what he does in the first instance is pray to God. But the people of God are at a crossroads and they would desperately need God's intervention.

And Nehemiah, what he's doing is he's praying to God to change the heart of Artaxerxes, the king. And it's not a prayer he would pray lightly. But Nehemiah wants God to remove any sort of impediment, anything that might distract from God's mission and God's people.

Because Nehemiah knew that by looking back at what God had done, that way he would be able to look forward. He would say, well, you did this with Moses. You did this with God's people.

You did this before God. And by recognizing that, by having God at a high view of God, Nehemiah would be able to look forward and lead God's people in that. Not simply look back and say, these are the good old days.

[10 : 00] Can we not go back there? But say, no, these are the days that you've done. These are days of old, God, which you've revived your people. And God, it's a new day now for a new thing. Would you do it again in a new way?

And so even though God's people are small in number, even though they're weak, they're frail, God's plan would be, as we read in Jeremiah 29 and 11, not to harm, but to give hope, future, and a purpose.

So where do we begin then? Where does Nehemiah begin? In verse 4, he says, So what we've got there is our pee.

We were looking at it in the same manner as the kids talk there. Pee, pause. There's a pause of four months, as I said. And Nehemiah begins by breaking down. He's homesick. His heart longs for his people, the Jews.

He longs for them to flourish, as they ought to do, as God's people. They're the distinctive people of God. God loves the Jews. And he still loves the Jews. And they disobeyed God's commands, though.

[11 : 10] And, well, we read that they're in great trouble. They're disgraced. Their gates have been breached. They've spent too long in the past. And they fail to see the big picture of what God's plan is.

And so Nehemiah, he's first responder. He's got his first aid kit, his prayer box. And he's deeply affected by their troubles and their disgrace.

He's crying because he identifies with it. Even though he's a thousand miles away, he's crying. He's weeping. The word wet here means that he wails.

Think of the wailing walls in Jerusalem. He's wailing. He's wailing out to God. It's a sustained period of mourning or pausing to be still in God's presence. The answer to Nehemiah's prayers, they would come or begin to come in four months.

But here, it's the month of Nisan, which is, sorry, that would be the month of Nisan, where the first fruits of the barley crop and the falling of the springs arrive. But Nehemiah's not praying in the month of Nisan.

[12 : 13] He's praying in the winter season. He's praying in the winter months where there's rubble and ruins and not snow, but we might want to think of it as snow and cold and just want to turn the heating on and stay snug and keep in our house.

Nehemiah's praying in these winter months because he recognized that as well as there being a time for feasting in God's kingdom, there's also a time for mourning and fasting, which can be the preparation for the greater increase of God's kingdom.

And it must be said that God, above all, understands our weeping and sorrow. Jesus, he was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. And as Nehemiah further identifies with his people, as we'll find in later verses, we know that, as we read at the beginning, Jesus was fully able to empathize with our weaknesses, just as we are.

He was fully human, as well as being fully with God, but he did not sin. He didn't have a sinful nature because Jesus is perfect, but he fully empathized with every respect. Every way we've been tempted, every struggle we may ever have, Jesus fully empathizes with us.

Not just from a distancing, oh, poor wee soul, poor wee baloch, poor wee girl. He says, no, I come as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. And so we know that when we pray, whatever our prayer might be, however weak and frail we might think it is, whether we think it doesn't even reach the high ceiling here, or even the ceiling of our house, however high that might be, God hears each of our prayers.

[13 : 46] We have been thinking in the prayer course of how our prayers, our answers to prayers, can either be like a traffic light, red, sorry, green, yes, amber, weight, persevere where you're at, and then red for no.

But it is important that God, to know that God hears every prayer. In Revelation 5, 8, this is what we read. The 24 elders were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.

God holds and treasures every prayer. And then in Revelation 8, continuing on there, this is what God does with these prayers. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.

Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, hurled it on the earth, and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. And this is a God who is interested not just in our dear Father.

Amen. But in all the words in between, all the emotions, if we were to read through the Psalms, there are sometimes pretty uncomfortable words. David or whoever was writing a particular Psalm, God, would you crush my enemies?

[15 : 05] Would you throw stones at them? God, I cry out to you. I'm so weak. God, would you, I wish I wasn't even born. That's the sort of emotion we find in the prayers.

And Nehemiah, he's invoking that same sort of spirit where he's weeping and he's mourning, and he's saying, God, do something. And he recognizes that God is a God of action who treasures and who collects every one of our prayers.

But what Nehemiah could not have fully foreseen, because we live on the other side of the cross and the resurrection of what Jesus has done, is that one day, and this would have been as long as hope, we again read in Revelation 21, that God will wipe every tear from our eyes.

There'll be no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. The old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne, Jesus, says, I'm making everything new. And he said, write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

What do we see about Nehemiah and the book of Ezra as well? There's a return to not only prayer, but also the word of God. We live in a day, again, Fred said last week, where people don't even know what the Easter message is.

[16 : 20] People don't even know what Easter is. I think it's about Easter Bunny. You know that Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins. That is Christianity. Jesus died as a penalty for our sins. That is Christianity.

In a nutshell, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, and whoever believes in him shall not perish, shall not be sent to hell.

Sorry, that's the reality of hell. We don't hear it a lot these days, but that is the gospel message. But we'll have, on the other hand, eternal life, everlasting life. We'll live in that mansion.

We'll know no more tears or mourning or crying or pain. The old order has passed away. God's kingdom will be fully now here with us. But we're not there yet.

We're in the messy middle of God's kingdom now, and not fully yet. Jesus says, I'm making everything new, and he's in the process of that right now, where we're at.

[17 : 22] He's in the process because his kingdom is an ever-increasing kingdom. It's an ever-advancing kingdom. And Nehemiah's experience is that he rightly mourns and weeps. He fasts and he prays. I would love to touch on fasting, but we're not going to do that this morning.

But he prays just to get our hearts before him. And he says, I pray before the God of heaven. And so we've got this four months of pausing.

He prays before the God of heaven. This is part of Nehemiah's great calling, to see the new come to be, that there was a behind the scenes.

I pray to the God of heaven. Big God, big view of God. God, I love how, when we meet on Thursday for our prayer meeting, and we each pray uniquely, in our own style, in our own way, our wee humble prayer meeting.

I don't know what you think, if you've not been to the prayer meeting, what it looks like, but you think it's a holy huddle and it's not for you. But in reality, it's just our wee humble prayer meeting where we come, we sing a couple of songs, we read from the Bible, have a wee reflection, and we pray together.

[18 : 29] And no one's forced to pray. And we've been going through, the last couple of weeks, the P-R-A-Y, and it's been a great encouragement, well, at least to me anyway, maybe some of those folks will answer their own way.

But I do love how, at a prayer meeting, everyone brings their own flavour. So, I'm going to embarrass a few folks. I love how Jean comes, and she remembers all these names, of people from different countries and different parts of the world, as well as their own people.

I think that's a wonderful gift to have. I love how Hilary brings a specific pastoral situation. Someone in her congregation, she remembers, and it's just, that's her pastoral heart coming through.

I love how Sid prays, and thanks God for his marriage. I just think that's so beautiful, and just reflects the heart of God, that we're part of the bigger picture here. I love when Cam reminds us that God is our Abba Father.

I think he says that every week, and I love it. God, you are our Abba Father. We need that reminder that God is Abba, and we come to him as his children. I wonder what prayer, what prayer is going to look like, as well as what the church is going to look like.

[19 : 39] What's prayer going to look like in our hearts, in our church here, in our humble wee church in Invergordon? What's it going to look like in the days, and weeks, and months, and years, but forward? Maybe you don't feel you can come to a prayer meeting on Thursday evening.

That's okay. That's okay, I say that. We would encourage you to come, of course. But what if prayer groups were to start up across our congregation in houses, meeting, people praying, and asking God to move?

Isn't this the time that we're to cry out to God? Isn't this the hour for that? The great work of prayer. We know it can be tough. If we're honest, sometimes it can be boring.

If we're really honest. If I'm really honest, I fall asleep sometimes when I pray. You know, has anyone ever done that? Yeah? Thanks. What I'm praying, and sometimes I've sat there, and I fell asleep.

God gives to his beloved rest as well. But you know, prayer can bring pain, but it can also bring the breakthrough. As we know, there's not a lot of hope going around.

[20 : 43] In our country, in our church, there ain't a lot of hope. There ain't a lot of hope in the Church of Scotland. People have written it off. To say that it's a dead denomination, that's a dreadful thing.

There is a hope deficit in Scotland. And, if we're honest, I saw that in the presbytery on Tuesday night.

I looked around, and myself and Phil Gunn, and I'm not trying to be ageist here, but myself and Phil Gunn, maybe bar one other person, we were the youngest there by by 30 odd years.

30 odd years, that's scary, isn't it? This is where we're at as a church. That's a missing generation. At least one missing generation. Man, it's a frightening place to be, but that's where we're at.

And that's the place we pray from. God, do something. Just imagine if this church could be a beacon of hope. God can use any of us. It doesn't matter how young or how old we are.

[21 : 46] Maybe we think, oh, done a bit. Thank you. And then when we're time, I notice God. I'll just enjoy the last few years in a pew here. The Lewis revival start. There's two ladies in their 80s, blind, crippled with arthritis.

They knew the Lord their God. They knew the God of heaven. One writer, Tyler Statham, says this, the new creation that God brings is seeded by the prayers of God's people and watered by their tears.

Both are key ingredients in the remaking of the world. I think we're at a crossroads as a church here and nationally.

Comfort or weeping? Comfort. We stay where we are. We stay as a holy huddle. We don't reach out. We don't invite folk in. And we lie out and that's it.

We finish our weeping. We get right with God and we say, God, you've got to do something here. Lord God of heaven. I wonder if God is looking to birth something in us even this day.

[22 : 59] God sees our struggles. He knows our tears. He comes close to the brokenhearted. The psalmist says that. Whatever our level of faith might be to have God do something, maybe God simply wants to ask of us today for that greater expectation of what he can do.

I'm realizing that my time is going and we've not really even began the prayer properly. But this is what Nehemiah says. Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God.

What does he do? It's the ark. Rejoice. He rejoices in God's character. He casts himself upon the God who would uphold him in the task ahead.

He understands the weight of the situation where things are at but he also recognizes the supremacy of God in light of the situation they're in. Maybe the words of Isaiah 40 are in his heart.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God. The creator of the ends of the earth. You won't grow tired or weary. Youths, they all stumble and grow weary. Even youths, but God won't.

[24 : 06] And those who hope in the Lord. It doesn't just say those who hope in the Lord and who are aged like 40 and under will be. It says, those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They'll soar in wings like eagles. They'll run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God. That's when Nehemiah begins his prayer.

These are astounding words. Big prayer, big view of God. This is what we've known in our nation. This is why Scotland in days gone by has been called the land of many revivals.

There have been more revivals and awakenings of God and moves of God than this country, than any other country on the face of the earth. God has moved powerfully in our nation. I don't know if there's been a move of God in Invergordon, but he's moved in this area for sure for many times.

New, Edmonton, all mess. He's moved time and time again. We've known this. We need to recover this big view of God.

[25 : 12] Nehemiah knew he was directing these words to the one true God, the one, that the God of Israel could and would intervene, this great and awesome God, even though the days were dark, he would rejoice in this Lord God of heaven, great and awesome God.

That was his perspective. I remember reading a story from Mary Pitches, who was the wife of the late Anglican Vicar. He passed away last year actually, David Pitches.

The story was that her husband went to a meeting once and it was a renewal meeting and God was moving there by his spirit. He went to see what was happening and if he would be refreshed by God's spirit himself.

And in one of the meetings he was praying to God, he was seeking God and a man at the back of the room at the meeting was shouting in a loud voice, Beg God! Beg God! And as an Anglican, David was, someone tell that guy to shut up please.

You know, thinking in his head, oh, this guy might, I don't know if he's meeting with God in a profound way, whatever it is, he's just so distracting. He hoped someone would go tell him to quiet him down.

[26 : 20] But the noise continued, this guy kept shouting out, Beg God! Beg God! And David realized, David pitches that it was God who was trying to catch his attention, saying, David, I am a big God.

I am a big God. And his wife, Mary, shared her own reflection about this. She said, sometimes God has to shock us out of our complacency. Then we should make sure that we have cleared the depths and that there is nothing left to prevent us from receiving whatever God has for us.

is that sense of correct perspective. Sometimes we might be well offended by the manner in which it comes to us, the manner in which God chooses to reveal himself.

Our God, the great God of heaven, is an awesome God. This is the God who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him, those who fear him, those who keep his commands.

And because of this, this is where we come empty-handed into the presence of God, to allow him to fill us with his life. And it's in light of Israel's troubles and what Nehemiah would be preparing for to go to the king that there was nothing else he could do to come empty-handed into God's hand and that God was holding him.

[27 : 39] Those who love God and keep his commandments, God will answer. You'll hear their prayers. You'll hear their cries. As Jesus would say in John 15, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. Well, again, we have it there. We've got the model.

Jesus remained in the Father's love. Jesus encouraging his disciples. Jesus is the guy who says, well, if I needed to remain in my Father's love, then you guys, you disciples, you followers of Jesus, then you need to do that.

It's a covenant promise. The covenant promise of God to remain in his love, to abide with him. This is the great challenge for us this morning, to recognize the state of where we're at as a church, but to come humbly to our Father, to pray in the name of Jesus, who is the name above all names, and say, Jesus, you can do what you want.

Help us get through our decline. Help us to get through. That's not a prayer that we'll do in a day such as today. That's a hope deficit prayer.

[28 : 55] I'm not going to put down one of the prayers for the reason, but that's a horrible prayer. It just will not do. It's useless. Nehemiah begins with such a high focus of God, high view of God, because it expands into his own heart, and the more we see God and the greatest of who he is, the smaller our problems will become.

We believe that God can move. You know, right now in America, in Asbury University, there's a revival actually taking place over the last 72 hours in a university. Young people praying, crying out to God.

Many people, lives change. They're at the front. They're on their knees, and it's going on Twitter. I was just seeing it over the weekend. God is moving there. You might think America's in a mess, just like we are in the UK.

America, kind of Christianity, people are, you know, they've been through a lot, and we don't need to name what's happening, but we know Scotland's in a mess too. God can move.

Do we believe that God can use us? Do we believe God can use us still? And let me tell you, as I have before, I wouldn't be here if God hadn't called me to come here.

[30 : 06] No. I was quite happy in Martins. It's quite a nice place to be. A lot of buzz. A lot of things happening. A lot of young people. I could play the drums.

Great things. I loved it there. I'm called here. This isn't a hip and happening place. You know, it's not cool. But we're asking the question, God, use us.

God, use us. It doesn't need to be a hip and happening place. It needs to be a place where God's presence is welcome. Where people are welcomed. Where we open our hearts to people.

We say, God, we want to see lives changed. We want it to see it again in our hearts. In our hearts, God. Help us through our decline. No, no. Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before his glorious presence without fault, with great joy.

To the only God, our saviour, be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ, our Lord, before all ages now and forevermore. That's the God we worship.

[31 : 17] That's the type of prayer that Paul prays. There's a power in praying these prayers. And let me close with this, and I do close with this now.

As Highlanders, when we pray, and I know this to be true of myself, because I've prayed these prayers for many years and it's been a struggle. Sometimes, although we have had a high view of God and his sovereignty, you know, we're a Calvinist, you know, I am a Calvinist and I'm a part of a Calvinist area, you know, times gone by.

But as Highland Christians, so often we find it hard to get past the bit of the prayer. Oh God, you're so great. And what we add to that is, and we are so small. You're so great, we're so small, and you'll never use us.

Keep us humble, keep us humble, God. Amen. There's nothing wrong with humility, but is that humility? That's the kind of prayer that I used to pray because it excused me from getting out of my comfort zone.

That kind of prayer excused me from partaking in the sometimes and quite often uncomfortable work of God. It excused me from hearing from him through his word and expecting great things of him.

[32 : 33] The world doesn't need an inherited, generational, false Highland humility kind of prayer. It needs real people, a real God, who can meet real needs. We need to get beyond the false Highland humility.

I knew it in Lewis so well. Oh, yeah, I could tell you. Oh, don't need 15 minute prayers that say, Lord, we're not worthy. Yeah, we know that God's so gracious that he'll use us.

Lord, in Lewis, he puts it this way. If we're to undertake a great work and we need great power, great goodness, and great mercy of a great God. That's it. With all of him, we need that healthy humility, healthy fear of a holy God and that is seen in the light of his willingness to work with us.

God sees our sin for what it is. Yet at the same time while we were sinners, he sent Christ to die for us. That's the hope of the Christian message. And going forward as a church, he didn't regard me.

We need this fresh vision and fresh power from heaven. It's the only way forward. Stop grumbling about the small things. Start being thankful and rejoicing in the great God we serve.

[33 : 43] We want church to be a comfortable place where we're in a bubble and that's no vision other than existing to please ourselves. But if we see God in his greatness, if we humble ourselves before his might, if we submit to his will, if we love his church which is his bride in all its works and faults and failings and flaws.

I love the Church of Scotland. I call to the Church of Scotland. I'm here in the Church of Scotland. I'm remaining in the Church of Scotland. And we pray for the Church of Scotland. If we love his church then, we want to see lives transformed, communities rebuilt.

We're living in these days where we need to recover the big view of God, the hope of the Gospel, the transformative power of the cross, the hope and the victory of the resurrection. And as we ask for this, we yield.

Why? Yes. Why? Yes to God. We yield ourselves to his plan, his will, the leading of his Holy Spirit for his sake and his glory.

Let's pause for a moment in prayer. Lord, we thank you that you are the God of heaven, the great and awesome God.

[35 : 10] And you've moved in years going by. You've moved and generations gone by. We thank you for that, Lord. We thank you that Scotland has been a land of many revivals.

God, you're a merciful God. And Lord, we want to recognize and reflect upon the situation we're in. That we're no longer this.

That there is rubble and ruin around us. That the odds are stacked against us. that even as a church we're saying, it's too late. God, we repent of this.

And we ask that you do more in us than we can ever hope and ever think and ever dream is imaginable. you are the God who will present us blameless before your glory because we won't long to give our yes to you now for your glory.

That Jesus would be the name lifted high in our hearts and our lives. And that going forward that we will be a people of your presence welcoming you, God.

[36 : 17] and allowing you to be God to come, we ask, by your spirit. Thank you, God.

We honor your name. Thank you, God.

Lord, let us weep for what we see the situation to be. Teach us to weep.

Teach us. Is why Uh, I'll call us. Thank you For