

# Good News for All

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Word of prayer. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Lord God, we thank you once more for this time gathered together.

We understand that we are here only because you have drawn us here today. Yes, humanly speaking, we are here because of our weekly patterns.

Perhaps humanly speaking, we're here because it's what we've always done, that this is part of our history, part of our family history. But we are here at this exact moment because in your perfect plan, planned in eternity past, you made sure we would be here today, gathered around your word, singing your praises.

We thank you for that hope we've heard of the boys and girls just now, Lord. That hope that we belong in life and in death. We belong wholly to you.

That for all the pain of this life and all the sadness and all the trials of this life, for all the fear of death and all the fear of physical death, and for those who know and who love Jesus, that for all these things we know we are safe and secure in you.

[ 1 : 1 6 ] Help us, Lord, then to live lives that reflect that. Help us today as your people to come before you now in confidence. We come before you not timidly. We come before you not as slaves anymore, but as servants.

We come before you as those who are called sons and daughters. We come before you with a boldness, not our own, but a boldness purchased for us by Jesus. Help us then, Lord, with hearts full of joy and thanksgiving, to recognize that we come today to worship a living God, a living Savior, who is not dead, who did not remain in the grave, but who was raised up, who then ascended to your right hand, who is there making constant intercession for your people.

Lord, help us to fully understand that today we are not here as hopeless and helpless. We have not been left, as it were, as orphans. But you have promised that for all who come to you, you will know them and keep them and in no wise cast them away.

We thank you, Lord, for the comfort and safety we have just now to worship so freely. We thank you for this building. We thank you for the facilities that you have given us.

As we remember our comfort and safety, we bring our minds to brothers and sisters who do not gather in such ease. Brothers and sisters who at this moment are meeting quite simply and meeting quite secretly.

[ 2 : 4 3 ] Brothers and sisters who are praising you in prison cells. Lord, you know their situations and circumstances. We bring before you, especially today, brothers and sisters in Central Asia.

We bring before you especially some of the stand-ending countries there. Lord, you know the details. You know the specifics. You know the government situation.

As we pray, Lord, for these certain stand countries, we recognize that you have your people there. Places where the government, where the state, where the so-called religion of the state has so much power and seeks to destroy and torture and decimate your people.

You are building your church there. And that church is growing in numbers. As we remember these brothers and sisters across the world, we give you praise for our freedom. Give us the sense, give us the wisdom to make the most of our freedom whilst we still have it.

We recognize, Lord, that even our own country, the situation is rapidly changing. I pray just now for the recent policy ideas going forward to our own Scottish government.

[ 3 : 59 ] policy changes which may result in parts of your word being nearly outlawed. Parts of your word and parts of the work of the gospel being considered illegal.

It feels almost unnatural to pray this. It feels almost strange for us to believe it. But we see it in writing and we've read it. We've consulted it.

We've heard it debated. Lord, we ask that your will be done. Whatever the outcome of these policy decisions will be, you'd help us to be faithful as your people. Help us to be gentle and careful and loving as we give the gospel.

But at the same time, help us not to compromise in the sharing of that gospel. That truth cannot be changed, for it is truth. Give us wisdom, we ask, in our own families, our own homes, as we share the good news with those who often it's the hardest to share it with.

Those who we love so closely and it's often so difficult to show them and to tell them and to lovingly warn them as to the danger of our souls that are in.

[ 5 : 10 ] Lord, we feel it and we know it. But we ask you give us opportunities to share the good news with those who we love. We bring their names before you just now. Parents and children and siblings and close family members, close friends, who as of yet have no gospel interest or perhaps who as of yet have not come to know Jesus as their saviour.

Lord, we ask that you work in their lives even this day and bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. We pray for the wider gospel cause in North Tulsa. We thank you for placing us here.

Those who are born to generations of your people in this place, Lord, we thank you for them. For those of us who have since moved in, we are all missionaries together in this part of this mission field.

Help us, Lord, then to adopt a missionary mindset, to understand we are here as salt and light, bringing the gospel, the good news, to North Tulsa. We pray for every darkened home in this village, every home where the gospel is not known in any way whatsoever.

Lord, we ask that today, as your word goes out, it would impact even these darkest of homes. Give us, Lord, we ask, gospel opportunities. As we pray for the spread of the gospel, as we pray for dark souls and hard hearts to be made hearts of flesh, from Gary all the way to the Glen.

[ 6 : 34 ] Lord, we pray for our area here. We know that we try and we strive to plant and we seek to water. And we must do these duties. We must plant, we must water, we must do the hard gospel work.

But ultimately, it is you who brings the increase. Help us, Lord, then to be faithful in our service, but also to be patient. And our faithfulness not to lose heart. And our patience not to become lazy.

Help us to strive to serve you, laying hold and have the opportunity to share the good news. We pray just now for those of our number who are not with us today. Those of our number who would often be here, but through illness just now and through other various reasons and other commitments where they cannot be with us as often as they wish to be.

those engaged in works of necessity, those who are going through times of distress, both mentally and physically. Lord, we ask you to be with them and encourage them that they would know that you're with them and they would know that we are praying for them.

Pray just now for any of our number here today who have had a hard week. Any of our number here who have had a long week and perhaps are still going through that time of struggle and who this, for this coming week, the week looks just as long and just as difficult.

[ 8 : 00 ] Lord, we ask you to be with them. You would show them and remind them that you are God who cares for the intricacies of our life, who cares for the small things, who cares for who we are and what we do, who cares for the things which bring us down, which distress us so much.

We pray mindful following on from our midweek services. We are mindful just now that as we meet together around your word that we are on the front lines of the battle.

Therefore, Lord, we then pray that the enemy would be kept at a distance today, the enemy who seeks to come in their midst and distract us and distress us and divide us.

We give you praise for the unity that we have. We know that unity is a gift from you and we must strive for that unity. Laying aside the burdens and stresses and family problems we may have as church family with brother and sister together and strive together to the goal of serving and knowing the Lord Jesus.

Oh, we thank you, Lord, that you have protection over your people. We ask for that protection today as the evil one tries to find his way in. You would help us in our minds and our hearts to be focused on you and your word.

[ 9 : 16 ] Lord, he would find no ground in this place. Praise the word goes out today. It would have impact, lasting impact, on the hearts and souls of some here today.

We have that promise in your word that wherever your word goes out, read or preached or spoken about, that your word will have its desired effect and that much we can be sure about.

Bring just now before you the wider gospel cause in this village and our island. We pray just now once more for our brothers and sisters next door as they worship you just now. We pray for them in their time of vacancy, in their prolonged time of vacancy.

We pray for their own unity as a congregation. It's never easy, never easy, any length of vacancy, but the longer the vacancy stretches, the harder it becomes.

Lord, give them strength, we ask, and although it does seem so difficult to see how, Lord, for us humanly, but we give you praise that you're God. We ask that you would provide for them an under-shepherd who lead them and guide them.

[ 10 : 23 ] Pray for the wider gospel cause in North Tolstice for all your people here, ourselves and our brothers and sisters next door and those who worship in our places across the island, brothers and sisters together, as we pray together for the good of North Tolstice.

Pray for the wider gospel cause in our island, across our nation. Pray for every congregation today that worship you in spirit and in truth across our own denomination, but across all the denominations.

There are many across all the denominations who love you and who worship you. Lord, we give you praise that you're not bound to one denomination, but you're across all these things, across this whole of your creation, all the cultures and languages and ideas all meeting together, worshipping you.

Help us, Lord, then to understand that we are part of a global church, we are part of a multicultural church, but more than that, we are part of a church which stretches from glory down to creation.

At this moment, we join in with the worship of brothers and sisters in glory, as we heard last week, who at this moment are worshipping you in anticipation of that final day and they'll receive the resurrected eternal bodies.

[ 11 : 42 ] Until these days of glory come, help us to strive to serve you faithfully and diligently in this day of small things, asking all these things, clinging on to our Saviour, who holds eternally on to us.

In his name and for his sake we ask these many things. Amen. Let's turn to God's word, a passage we read before, almost a year ago actually, Isaiah 55, Isaiah 55, that's on page 576 of the church Bibles, Isaiah 55, page 576, let's read together the word of God.

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

[ 13 : 16 ] Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know and a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth making it bring forth and sprout giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace.

[ 14 : 34 ] The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle and it shall make a name for the Lord an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

I may give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's again sing this time from Sing Psalms and Psalm 42.

Sing Psalms Psalm 42 Sing verses 1 down to verse 5 of the psalm. Sing Psalms Psalm 42 verses 1 to 5 on page 53.

As pants the deer for flowing streams so longs my soul O God for you I thirst for God the living God when can I meet with God anew.

Psalm 42 verses 1 down to verse 5 to God's princetons and slow the ■■■ of God the psalm of a tribal and may be with God the dead of a terrible phrase and the man about it while Robert and mahdoll the birds go and meet and Blue and other andieran those out there and it in a When can I be with all I knew?

[ 16 : 18 ] My tears shall be thy constant truth. O tender night and winter day, While all the love in this candy, When is this all of your sin?

As I pour out my soul and tea, These things I knew, They meant that still, How will the world be to die when?

Up to your stars on Zion hill, In their obsession by glory, As we are brought with cheerful song, And shows of joy and darkness, Rejoicing with the threshold.

Why are you down? As you're my soul, Why are you so?

It's coming me, That storm of dry, Will grace and death, My Saviour come, My God is He.

[ 18 : 34 ] Let's turn back to the chapter we had, Isaiah 55. Last week we ended two series, A morning series and an evening series at the same time.

And before we begin a new series, God willing, next Lord's Day, It's good for us to pause for a while. Isaiah 55, This is a text we have covered before, But we're covering it today in a, A much more broad way.

Last time we dug down right into the verses. Today I want us to take in the whole chapter, If possible. We take verse one for our text, But it's taken in the whole chapter, But verse one, Really the framework of our sermon.

Come everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters, And he who has no money, Come buy and eat, Come buy wine and milk, Without money, And without price.

A simple look today, At this chapter. Now there's much we did last time, In the historical context of the chapter, And as always, We always must do that.

[ 19 : 53 ] But aware of that time is often short. And just for today, I want us to see the, The three offers, Of this chapter. Because in summary, Quite simply, This chapter is a chapter where God, Is giving us, A gift.

Ultimately there's one gift, But there's, It's offered in several different ways. We saw the last, Month or so, Last two months, Really, Since the start of the year, And at the end of last year, We saw that in Jesus, We receive so many benefits.

At the same time, We can't have any of these benefits, Unless we first come to Jesus. We all want eternal life, We all want heaven, We all want peace in our souls, We all want to see our loved ones again, We all want to see all these things, And know all these things, But we can't have any of these things, Outside of Jesus.

We've covered that before, At length. And today, It's the other side. This is quite simply the gift, That the Lord is offering us.

So this chapter, And the three, Very simple headings. First of all, Come and receive, Verses one, Down to verse two, And then come and return, Verses six, Down to verse nine, And come and rest, Verses ten, Down to verse thirteen.

[ 21 : 26 ] First of all then, Come and receive, Verses one, Down to verse two. This is a text, This is a verse, Most of us, If not all of us, Have heard, From very young.

Perhaps you're more familiar with it, In the King James Version, That begins, Not with a come, But with that exclamation of ho, And really, That exclamation in the KJV, And the word come, Now these words are actually there, In the Hebrew.

Now they've not been added, They're not additional, We're not man-made words, But they're for our sake, In English, To understand it. Because in the Hebrew, The very sentence here, It's a cry.

There's almost exclamation marks, After every word. That's how we can imagine it. And to help us understand that in English, We've added ho in the KJV, Or come.

Quite simply, It's a call. It's a marketplace shout. It is the crofter, It's the feed bucket. It's the rattling noise of that feed bucket.

[ 22 : 37 ] That is what's being told to us here. Verse one is supposed to grab our attention. And for those who read this, In the time of Isaiah, They've been very aware that Isaiah is taking on the role of a marketplace seller.

It's a busy marketplace. And Isaiah is there. And his stall. And he is shouting out, Listen. We said this last time, But it's still correct.

Quite simply for us, It's high. You think, well, high is a bit rude. It's high. In the Hebrew, It's high. It's, It's, It's, It's, Stop and listen.

It's, It's, It's thumping the pulpit. It's, It's the most eye-catching, Ear-rendering noise. It's, Stop. Please stop. Isaiah is saying, Please stop and listen.

What's he wanting us to listen to? Well, this is the call. Listen to this call. Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters. No money.

[ 23 : 47 ] Fine. Come, Buy and eat. Come, Buy wine and milk. Without money. Without price. Who's the call for then?

Come, Everyone who thirsts. There's no qualifier here, is there? There's no wee number from everyone down the bottom of the page, Explaining what everyone actually means.

No. Everyone. In the Hebrew, the word is as simple as the English. It's a broad word that takes in everyone. Everyone. Quite literally, come all people.

All types of people. All people groups. All colors. All creeds. All levels of society. Come. Everyone. People.

All these days. All these days. All these days. All these days. to those of us who are bad and those of us who think we are bad.

[ 24 : 46 ] This calls also to those of us who think we're good. And the truth is, and the Christians here know this, and those of us who know the Lord know this, often giving and sharing the gospel to people who know they are bad is quite easy.

But sharing the gospel to those who think they are good, that is difficult. That is very difficult. Because naturally we all think we're good. We all think this gospel call, it doesn't apply to us.

It's for those out there. Not us. I go to church. I read my Bible sometimes. I read it perhaps regularly. I've prayed perhaps at times.

My parents and grandparents are godly people. I am involved in church life. All good things. All glorious things. All good gifts given from God for us to enjoy and depart in.

But without actually knowing Jesus, these things are good things, but they won't save us. They won't save us. The gospel call is for everyone.

[ 25 : 56 ] Come everyone who thirsts. Not just to those who are lacking, but also those who think they aren't lacking. It's not to those who are so sinful.

And often, if you're honest, when you hear a gospel message, you think, well, if only so-and-so was here to hear it. If only my neighbor could hear this, it might do him or her good.

If only so-and-so was still alive to hear this, it might have changed them. As the gospel call goes out, as the call goes out saying, everyone who thirsts, this gospel call, this offer is for everyone, this gift is for everyone, you think, well, that's good for them.

But actually, friends, it's for you. Not a person behind you or beside you or in front of you. It's for you. It's for all of us. The gospel call is for everyone.

What then is the offer? What's the call asking us or giving to us? Come everyone who thirsts. Come to the waters. Quite simply, the gospel call it's a call for food and for drink for our souls.

[ 27 : 19 ] Food and drink for our souls. We see that in verse 2 where Isaiah asks or the Lord through Isaiah asks a hard question and a question that we should really pause at at least in our own minds and answer for ourselves.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? If we are saying this is the marketplace of life, then what is money?

Well, it's time, isn't it? I mean, our money is our time. You give time to a company, you give time to a service, you give time to a trade, and we receive money in return. So therefore, it goes the other way.

If this is the marketplace of life, then this spending of money, it's the wasting, the spending of time. And God questions today and he questions you and I and he says to you and to I, why are you spending your time?

Why are you wasting your time? Literally, why are you spending it away, your money, for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy?

[ 28 : 35 ] Why are you trying to do anything and everything you can to be right with God apart from the one thing he has told us to do to be right with him?

You waste your money on your own goodness. You waste your money on your own good works and you work hard and my friend, I know you work hard and I know you try and be a good member of your family, a good member of this community.

I said before, Emma and I, we love being part of this community. There's a lovely community here in North Tulsa. It's a lovely community feel here in North Tulsa. It's a very helpful community.

It's a warm and welcoming community we've found. And you know that you try your best to be a good part of this community. Try and be a good husband, a good wife, a good father, a good daughter, a good son, a good mother.

Whatever connection you have to a community, you try your best to be part of it. Your family, your friends. And it's a good thing you're doing, but that doesn't get you into heaven.

[ 29 : 43 ] Perhaps you try and be right with God. You try and live a life that you know God wants you to live. Try and do good things. Act in an appropriate way. Be a calm person, a gentle person, and so on.

You think, well, this, hopefully, at the end of the days, this gets me across the line into heaven. Surely this will get me into, just past the gates. That's all I want. And sadly, we see that all these good works, all these efforts, trying to make yourself good.

It's not food. I will sustain you or feed you. Quite simply, it's junk food. It's junk food.

It fills you for a while. And because you do good things and act in a good way, it makes you feel good for a while. It fills you up for a while, but like junk food. And we all know this.

If you've ever had anything, for most of us have, some form of McDonald's or Burger King or whatever your choice of quite little poison is, it's tasty. It's made to be tasty.

[ 30 : 54 ] You perhaps look forward to going to the mainland and getting some of it. I mean, on Thursday, I've already planned wherever close to McDonald's is to a hotel. I'll be going getting some on Thursday when I go away. Chances are.

But it's junk food. I'll have that. I'll be hungry, starving later on, an hour later. It doesn't satisfy you, not truly. It makes you feel good for a while and then it just goes to nothing.

Our good works are trying to be right with God in any other way apart from Jesus. It feels good. It looks good. But it's not real food.

As God says here, it's a waste of time, a waste of labour. So a hard question to ask yourselves is, why or what?

In verse 2, why do you spend your money? Why do you waste your time for that which is not bread? For that which is not real food. In Jesus, you have the water of life.

- [ 31 : 56 ] In Jesus, you have the bread of life. And anything other than what he is, what he gives, is not real food. It won't satisfy you. But see what God offers.
- God asks a hard question. But he isn't a cruel, distant God. After asking the hard question, he then gives us the most beautiful and simple of answers.
- Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.
- Incline your ear and come to me here that your soul may live. The image here is quite sad.
- We're back to the marketplace and there's a stall here in the marketplace and it's full of all the best of food. Fresh meat, beautiful breads and pastries.
- [ 32 : 58 ] It's all there, handmade, designed to sustain you eternally. There. And you're in a corner far away, the other side of the marketplace.
- You're back turned to that and you're there just with a bit of dry bread. You're there with some junk food. You're there with nothing in your hands. An empty bowl and an empty cup.
- And at the same time the offer is there free, eternal, life-giving food and you say no, I don't want it. I've got, I'm happy myself.
- You know, I've got a bit of bread here, I've got some water here, that will last me forever. Free, eternal food, life-giving food. Free, forever.
- Paid for you by a saviour. All you have to do, friends, is go to him and take it. There's no catch, there's no extra steps, there's no secret handshakes, there's no sacred knowledge to learn.
- [ 34 : 05 ] It's there. Free, simple, clear, take and eat that your soul may live. Come and listen and believe the gospel that your soul may live.
- and your guaranteed satisfaction and fullness in this life and in the next.
- Christ. All without money and without price. Without money and without price.
- There's a strange thing here, though, you know, it's in the phrasing of verse 1. It's come without money, without price. It's also come buy and eat. This food, this life, it has a cost.
- Eternal life has a cost. Your freedom from wrath has a cost. But, friends, it is free to you. It costs our saviour everything.
- [ 35 : 12 ] But it is free for you. Free. that right this moment, you can go home just now.
- This afternoon. 10, 50 minutes time, you can be home or heading home and you can know if you accept the free offer of this marketplace stall, if you accept the free offer of Jesus for free, for free, you can know freedom from wrath.
- No longer do you have to worry about the wrath of God hanging over you. You are cleared. The debt is paid. No longer do you have to worry about where you might end up one day.
- Your future is guaranteed. For free, you can know Jesus as a king, as a saviour, but also as a friend. For free, you can know that one day you will close your eyes in this reality and open them in eternity.
- For free, you can have peace with God. For free, you can know all your sins are forgiven. It cost Jesus, but it's free for us.
- [ 36 : 37 ] And you know the gospel. You've heard this so many times. And there's no new teaching today. There's no new theology. But a reminder there for us.
- The gospel is simple. There's much theology to learn. I know we've been digging deep into theology in the last few months perhaps. But there's, the gospel is simple. There's a debt against us we cannot pay ourselves.



And we go to the grave with that debt if nothing changes. But in Jesus we find freedom. Who takes that debt onto himself.

Who pays that debt. Who removes that burden from us. And we go free. Free into glory. Salvation and forgiveness for all your life.

That is the free offer of the gospel. gospel. We also see that the call to return. Verse 6. In verse 6 we see just a compounding and adding on of what we've heard before.

[ 37 : 44 ] As the marketplace caller as Isaiah calls out to the crowd he says and he begs seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake its way and righteous man as thoughts let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

Seek him. The Lord is not far away to all or for all who call out to him.

He's not some capricious cold uncaring distant God you have to somehow work out how to get to him. No. He is close to all who call on his name.

We have added layers perhaps and complications and it is sin and it is shame we've done that and it is a disaster we've done that. The gospel is simple. Seek him while he may be found.

[ 38 : 53 ] And when you call on him he is near. My friends attending the means of grace coming to services it is good.

It is good. You hear the word read again and again and we give God praise for that. I want to ask are you here today to seek the Lord?

I feel very bold on these questions today but I've been here for a year and I hope you know that I love you. I'm called here to love you but I don't love you because I'm called to love you.

I love you because my heart is each day more and more in North Tulsa and for lucky to say that with my close family here it's one thing but I mean that.

I do love you and this is said not out of duty. It's said not out of just doing my job but instead of love do you attend these places the means of grace? Do you attend church services?

[ 39 : 54 ] Do you come to the service because of verse 6? Because you are seeking the Lord? Or are you perhaps here instead for the sake of your history, your family history?

For the sake of ours perhaps? Are you here because of tradition? Because it's what you've always done and your grandparents before you since 1948 whenever this building was built.

You've always sat here and you've always done this. Why are you here? Our prayer is you're here because you're seeking the Lord while he may be found.

Again, the Lord is not distant. He is not unknowable. If the Lord says we can seek him, that means we can certainly find him. And the question is, do you want to actually find him?

Do you want to know him? And you perhaps are you worried, well, if I become a Christian, it's going to disrupt things. If I become a Christian, it's going to disrupt my life and disrupt family situations, disrupt my own goals and ideas and achievements.

[ 41 : 03 ] Truth is, every day you live your life not following Jesus, you are going against the very purpose you were made for. every day is a disruption of the plan, of the very purpose of your creation.

We were made to know and to love and to serve God. And the second you turn back to him, and all Christians here will agree, the second you seek the Lord and find him, the second you come to him and say, I want to be saved, the simple prayer of Lord save me, you will know for yourself in that moment perhaps, in that time perhaps, that finally you are home and finally you understand this is what you have been made to do.

He promises, he promises he will not cast away any who come to him. Perhaps you have not yet come because you worry he won't take you.

Perhaps you worry that he will reject you. perhaps you worry that he can say to you, no, I don't want you.

Look at the end of verse seven. What's the promise of the Lord to all who come back to him, all who come to seek him out? let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

[ 42 : 42 ] And you think, how? How can God just forgive me like that? How can God just pardon me like that? it doesn't make sense. How can it all be free? How can Jesus, how is it all that easy?

Surely it's not just come and be saved. Surely there's more than that. What God says to us, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, declares the Lord.

If it's up to us to engineer salvation, like all the world's religions, we'd have a program only, make your life good first, live the best life you can, then come to God, then see if you're good enough for God to accept you.

If you think that's Christianity, that's Islam, that's a whole different faith system I've described there. That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches you can do nothing but come.

Don't try and make your life better, don't try and look better, just come and trust that he is able. But more than that trust, as verse seven tells us that he is eternally willing to have compassion and mercy and show you pardon.

[ 43 : 57 ] Come and no pardon, come and no forgiveness, my friends, come and no life. And if you think you can't do it, it can't be that simple, it doesn't make any sense, read again yourselves, verses eight and verse nine.

his ways are higher than our ways. And the gospel is that simple, it just is. And finally, briefly, the call to come and rest.

Verses ten down to verse thirteen, we see this imagery here, this is the image of the future, this is the image of peace that you can know by coming to the Lord.

verses ten and verse eleven, first of all, it's really for the Christians here to do, this is to encourage us, isn't it? We've been covering our length now, and this year going forward, we're looking at discipleship and evangelism, we're looking at our line, our vision perhaps of sharing the gospel from the Glen to Gary, and we're seeing all that and think, well, all that's good and well, but how?

It feels so impossible, it feels so difficult. And brothers and sisters, just speaking to the Christians for a second, brothers and sisters, I assure you, it does feel difficult from up here too, and it's hard on the ground, and you speak to people I won't speak to perhaps, and people speak to you in a way, they'll never speak to me, they see me coming out of the way, I can be my shorts, my t-shirt, my hoodies, and they see a minister and the conversation changes like that, and they talk to me strange, and it happens all the time, it's still happening, they talk to you in a way that they'll never talk to me, at least not for years yet.

[ 45 : 46 ] You've got a mission field that I have no access to at times, in workplaces and at home. but from pulpit and your own witnessing, we're saying it's so difficult, and verse 10 tells us as the word goes out, for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, the watering of the earth from heaven, as it brings up growth, so is the word of God that goes out.

It's not through eloquence, it's not through preaching eloquence that anyone is saved, it's not through a preaching ability that anyone is saved, no one is as it were preached into heaven by the preaching, it's not by our own witnessing that anyone is saved, it's not by your fumbled attempt to share the gospel and get the wrong verses and start panicking and as you share the gospel and you start stressing about what you're going to say next and what you said about wrong and all the stresses that come from evangelising and sharing the good news, the Lord uses these things, why?

Because the Lord, as this verse tells us, reminds us, he uses his word. If individually as a congregation and preaching, if we go out of the word faithfully seeking his name to be praised, he will use the word to glorify himself and bring forward his purposes.

God but it's not, as far as I've seen so far, my short time in ministry, there is not a single one of my friends and colleagues who on a Monday doesn't think, Sunday night, think, what am I doing?

What did I say? Why did I say it that way? Why didn't I say that instead? And from all the greatest of our ministers, across the denominations I've spoken to, down to myself, every minister, every one to a man so far, has the same thought of what am I doing?

[ 47 : 48 ] What? I should have said that or I missaid that. Every minister, our hope is in these verses. Brothers and sisters, every Christian, our hope is in these verses. As we share the good news to us, as we see and as we seek to see the gospel revived and renewed and known for every single home from that end to that end of our village, we go out with the hope and the promise.

That he will use his word. It will never return to him void. It will always accomplish the purpose with which he has set it to accomplish.

We simply share the word and he uses it. Friends, as we come to an end, we come to the end of verse 12 and verse 13. And this is the glorious imagery, this is the promise, the future hope of all who come to Jesus.

Quite simply, verses 12 to verse 13 can be summarized that you can go from sadness to singing. Yes, there's plenty of sadness in the Christian's life. The same amount of sadness there is in a non-Christian's life.

We all lose those we love. We all go through difficult health situations, mental and physical life situations, family situations, financial situations and so on and so on. That doesn't change.

[ 49 : 10 ] But the Christian knows that we have a saviour. So we go from sadness to singing in verse 12. We see we go from hard treks, uphill struggles, to the mountains and hills before us breaking forth into singing.

We go from thorns in verse 13 to growth. to cypress trees growing green, glorious, luscious leaves.

We go from pain to beauty. And we go eternally.

The last verse there. It shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Those whom the Lord saves, and those who come to the Lord for salvation, as you say, and those whom the Lord saves, he will never abandon, never leave, never forget.

He will sustain us through all our sins and ups and downs and waywardness and times are backsliding. Yes, as Christians we fail him and if you come to Christ today you will fail him, but don't let that stop you.

[ 50 : 30 ] He knows and yet he tells you to the very end he will be with you. Come everyone who thirsts, come to the water. He who has no money, come buy and eat.

Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.

That's our prayer today. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. We thank you for this time together. We ask for you to bless your word to us as we just reaffirm just now and just heard again just now that as your word goes out it never returns to you void.

It will accomplish exactly that which you have planned for it to accomplish from before time itself. I pray once more for our friends here who have heard the word, heard the good news of the gospel so many times, who have heard it once more again today.

We ask that this day you would speak to them, bring them to a saving place, a peaceful place, a place where they know finally that their sins have been forgiven, not for their effort, not for their good works, but for the finished eternal work of our Saviour who does all the work for us.

[ 51 : 50 ] In his name and for his sake we ask these things we give you praise just now for our time of worship. We praise you once more for those who lead the worship, the sung worship, as we sing your words to you.

We know we sing words that are perfect and words that are glorious. Help us then to sing these words with hearts and minds and voices full of understanding and full of joy, knowing that you accept our worship in and through Jesus.

It's called these things in his precious name and for his sake. Amen. We can conclude our time once more from Sing Psalms, this time from Psalm 130.

Sing Psalms, Psalm 130. Sing Psalms, Psalm 130, page 173.

Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry. Lord, in your presence who can stand if you our sins record?

[ 52 : 59 ] And this is our hope. But yet forgiveness is with you that we may fear you, Lord. Psalm 130, the whole psalm to God's praise. Amen. Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me come on high and give attention to my voice.

when I for mercy cry. Lord, in your presence to can stand if you have sins before but death my here messes with you that we may till you are.

I wait, my soul waits forever might about her who ■■■ ere car besond a That our always have put your own in love For mercy is well and And full redemption from the sins

Is deeper here waiting In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Both you now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.