

# The Two Ways

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Date: 14 July 2024

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

- [ 0 : 00 ] Well, good evening, brothers, sisters and friends. Just to go over some of the announcements that we didn't do this morning. Again, there's some sheets still at the backdoor announcement sheets.
- Again, just to give thanks to God for what we were able to be part of this morning, of course, with the baptism of baby Finn, a strong boy and a beautiful wee boy.
- We have praise to God for the covenant blessing we're all part of this morning. Just a reminder that the 27th and 28th we, God willing, hope to have in-house communions.
- Just Saturday night and the Lord's Day itself. That'll be our week, human weekend. Just ourselves. It won't be advertised publicly, at least.
- People are invited to come along, friends and family, if you wish, but it won't be advertised publicly. Just ourselves, a time of communion as a church family. It'll be good for us to do that together.
- [ 0 : 59 ] Also, just looking forward to the next men's breakfast, the very early intimation, but after a successful breakfast last week, the next one is now planned for Saturday, the 4th of August.
- Saturday, 4th of August. Same again as last time, half nine. Again, every man in the congregation is very welcome to join with us. Good time of discussion last time.
- And yeah, it was good just to chat together over some food. So that the half nine on Saturday, the 4th of August, just some very early intimation there.
- And again, the reminder that today we're praying, especially for the King Craig kids, a free church camp, with our own Hannah McKenzie. That's one of the leaders there.
- We're here to worship God. We can do so, first of all, in Sing Psalms, and the very first Psalm, Psalm 1. Sing Psalms and Psalm 1.
- [ 2 : 00 ] This will be our text later on too. Sing Psalms, Psalm 1a. Sing Psalms, Psalm 1a.
- Blessed is the one who turns away from wear of a wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners' paths or sit with those who mock. Instead, he finds God's holy law, his joy and great delight.
- He makes the precepts of the Lord, his study, day and night. Psalm 1a, the whole Psalm, to God's praise. Sing Psalms. grief as a mixed  $\pi$  fermions.
- This is a heavenly one who turns away on hand, and thus Ooga min Volkswagen, the grand planetary view.
- We are worship-spot not■■■■ Gu reminder Lord Jesus keeps dressing feels like this here■ indeed, The Lord with Quians Hwaved, His joy and beauty are.
- [ 3 : 27 ] He gives the peace of love. His joy and beauty are.
- He prospered in the life of you. That's grounded by our spirit.
- And in this peace of peace. His spirit that always came.
- Not so that we give thee our prayers.

That shall but flow away. It will not shine when judgment comes.

[ 4 : 50 ] What will the righteous stay? It is the Lord.

This is the Lord. The will of our church.

Let's join together in a word of prayer.

Let's join together in a word of prayer.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you once more for the great privilege we have of this time of worship. Lord, thank you for the gathering we have this evening. And together as brothers and sisters and as friends joining us, we have a chance once more to bring praises to you.

[ 5 : 58 ] Thank you just now for the sung praise. That together we can lift up our voices and sing your praises. And know that the words we sing because they are from your word, they are worthy and they are through and they are honouring to you.

And you receive these words as worship. Thank you, Lord, for those who lead the worship week after week, month and year after year, for their willingness to engage in public worship like this, to lead the sung worship.

It is no small thing to lead the worship to a holy God. It is no small thing to lead worship before an audience, before a crowd, before a congregation. We give you praise, Lord, for these willing presenters who over the years, over the many years of this congregation, both our own and those who have visited with us, for willingness to conduct that aspect of public worship.

As we sing praises, we sing words that we pray that we mean with our hearts. Not just paying lip service, but meaning the words we sing and applying them to ourselves.

As we sung even from your psalm just now, we apply these words to ourselves. We desire that every one of us would walk in your way and not in the way that leads to death. We find ourselves walking in a way that leads to life.

[ 7 : 16 ] Not just looking the part, not just sounding the part or dressing the part or acting the part, but truly in our heart of hearts, to have a heart that is given over to our Saviour.

A heart that is His and His alone. A heart that seeks after His glory. We come this evening confessing that in many ways, many times, every single one of us, our lives are not what we should be.

In our conduct, in our words, our very thoughts, we are going against you almost, it seems, day by day. Forgive us, Lord, for that. Forgive us for these times of waywardness, these times of sin, when we come against a holy God and we decide to do our way rather than your way.

Lord, we ask that for those of us perhaps engaged in sin just now, those of us who are your people, but who are engaged in sin, public or private, Lord, redeem us and bring us back to yourself.

For those of us here this evening with a small faith, who feel far away from you, Lord, strengthen our faith and bring us back to you. For those of us here this evening who are feeling strong just now in our faith, who are feeling powerful in the power of the Lord, strengthen us even more and encourage us more this week to find our strength in our Saviour.

[ 8 : 32 ] We pray just now once more for our wider community. As we prayed this morning for our brothers and sisters next door, we pray just now earnestly more for ourselves. We thank you for every gospel sharing and gospel engaging opportunity.

Help us, we ask, to lay hold on every single chance to be salt and light in this village. Help us as your people, help us as a family to keep on growing together and after growing together to keep on then growing up together, closer to our knowledge of you.

Help us never just to learn for the sake of learning, but help all our theology to become doxology. That everything we learn about you will be turned then into praising you.

That we leave this place this evening. Every time we gather together around your word, we would leave that place of worship. Understanding more about our Saviour. Caring more about who he is.

Understanding more of your plan of salvation. Understanding more about who you are. And turning all that then into worship and all that into praise. We thank you, Lord, once more for this gathering.

[ 9 : 44 ] We are understanding that there are some missing from our number. Some we would long to see here. Some perhaps who haven't joined with us in many years. Some in much longer.

Lord, whatever reason, perhaps keep them away from places or times of worship. We ask you bring them back to yourself. We remember again, especially those who are not keeping themselves away, but those who are being kept away because of illness and age and other various reasons.

That if they had their own way, they would be here every single week. Lord, we pray for them especially. We pray just now for the men in our village who perhaps are wondering if they can come here.

The men in our village who perhaps would like to come along and who are nervous as to what's going on in this place. Give us, Lord, we ask the opportunity to speak with them, to meet with them, our friends and our neighbours.

Of a simple invite to ask them to come along and to see for themselves that they are welcome here to come and listen to the word as it's shared and the word as it's sung.

[ 10 : 49 ] We ask, Lord, again, something that is beyond our ability. We ask for revival in North Tulsa. We ask, first of all, for revival of our own hearts.

Lord, bring us back to where we should be. We confess that often we are poor witnesses. Often our conduct as a church, our conduct as members of a church, historically and presently at times, it is not what it should be.

And perhaps there are many in our village and many in our community who have a wrong view of us, a wrong view that is because of our conduct. Lord, forgive us for that. Help us, Lord, as we are to clean that slate and to start again.

Help us, Lord, to pray understanding that you are able. You are able to bring salvation to every single home in North Tulsa. From the Glen to Gary, it is not beyond your power.

Help us, Lord. Help us, then, to pray faithfully. To pray with power, understanding that a prayer that is said in power. A prayer that is said in reliance on you. It's a true prayer.

[ 11 : 51 ] Thank you, Lord, once more for what we have a chance to see this morning. That you are building your church in various ways. Pray for ourselves. We are a member of a worldwide church. We pray just now especially for the church as it gathers across the world.

Lord, we are a member of a church this evening in, well, Central Asia. You know the exact nature of the area and of the country. We are mindful that often there are other ears listening in.

We pray, Lord, for the church situation in that country. And that one situation of that one congregation where they are facing much persecution. Lord, we ask you to be with them and encourage their pastor and their elders and the families and members of that church.

Lord, you are able and you are capable of bringing gospel, truth and salvation to every single corner of this world. We bring, therefore, to you places of our own nation and places of this wider world where the gospel is almost unknown.

You are able to save your people in these places. We ask, Lord, you would raise up for yourself then mission workers to bring the gospel around the world. We ask locally you bring up and raise up men who would enter into the pastoral ministry, even of our own denomination.

[ 13 : 10 ] We thank you as we hear the news of growth and of churches being planted and other churches being revitalized, of being given new life. We do pray, understanding there are still vacancies.

We pray just now for new men who would hear the call, who would feel the call, who would be unable to escape the call. And you bring them to understand they are being called to a service.

A service that will humble them. A service that will leave them reliant on you for all things. A service that will lead them to give up, as it were, of their time and their lives, but to do it for the sake of their King.

Lord, we ask you to look after them and encourage them. We pray just now for the students in college. We pray just now for the students in their own press release. Lord, we thank you for him. We pray for Scott just now especially. We pray for him and his wife and his children as he begins the next phase of his training.

We'll be with him in his placement congregation as he spends now a year or two with them. I ask you to encourage him and encourage the congregation that he is with. Thank you, Lord, for recent news of licensing as we licensed as a presbytery.

[ 14 : 18 ] The now Reverend Phil Pickett. I pray that you bless him and his waiting for a call and encourage him and his family and his wife and his child as they wait and see what providence is for them.

I give you praise, Lord, for church is yours. It does not belong to anyone, minister or any elders, any group, any gathering. The church is yours alone.

And together we are equal members. Brothers and sisters. Yes, different roles. But together we come under you. One single church body. One single gathering of equal brothers and sisters, sons and daughters.

Every one of us have the same desire to see our Saviour glorified and magnified in our own lives, in our homes, in our families and in this district.

Lord, that you would glorify your word. Magnify it. You would empower it. It would not return to you void. And we pray once more for the many in North Tulsa who at this very evening, at this very moment are heading to a lost eternity.

[ 15 : 28 ] Give us, Lord, we ask, open eyes and open understanding. Help us to carefully but dutifully and passionately and lovingly and gently give the gospel invite.

Encourage them to come to know Jesus. Ask them the hard questions, the awkward questions. And to do so as friends, as neighbours and to do so in love.

We ask, Lord, we would see this building filling up and the building next door filling up. For your namesake. For your glory. And not for the glory of this ministry or for our congregation, indeed our denomination.

We give you praise. You're not bound by these man-made things. There is for various reasons why we are separate. But the reality is there is no separation in the gospel work.

In this world we may be separate until the end. But in the kingdom work we are one body, one family doing one work. Worshipping our one Saviour.

[ 16 : 29 ] Help us then to have that mindset. We are just a small part of, not just a worldwide church, but a small part of an eternal church. Stretching back and forward into glory.

Joining with the saints of old and the saints to come. Worshipping with those who are worshipping in glory just now. Lifting up our voices together to praise. You are God.

Help us, Lord, then to have this view. We pray for our nation in recent days. We, of course, pray for the new government that is seeking to lead us. We pray, Lord, for the upcoming changes and situation both locally and in Scotland.

We pray, Lord, for Holyrood and for Westminster and for the council in Stornoway. Lord, that you be magnified in these places. You be glorified. We thank you, Lord, for a peaceful time.

We do pray for continued peace and prosperity for our nation. But first and foremost, for our council leaders, Holyrood, Westminster. For our first minister, for our prime minister and for our king.

[ 17 : 31 ] We pray, first and foremost, as a matter of urgency. That every one of them would come to know and come to serve Jesus as Lord and King.

Help us, then, Lord, to pray meaningfully for that. As your word tells us to do so. We pray for those in leadership and those in government. Pray for the kings and lords and leaders you have placed over us in civil matters.

As we pray for that, Lord, we pray, Lord, for safety for your church. As we see the civil courts at times seeking to encroach on our freedoms as a church body.

We acknowledge that the church is yours. Help us, Lord, then, to be faithful in times of plenty and in times of famine. In times of spiritual gladness and spiritual struggle.

To be a faithful gathering of your people, whatever may come. Forgive us, Lord, our sins. We ask this once more. Confessing that we are weak, but you are strong. Confessing at times we find ourselves clinging on to you.

[ 18 : 30 ] But you hold eternally on to your people. Let's call these things in and through and for Jesus. His precious name's sake. Amen.

We've got two short readings. Two short readings. First of all, Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7.

Then we can read together again Psalm 1. Matthew chapter 7. Let's again hear God's word. Judge not that you be not judged.

For for judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when there's a log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

[ 19 : 48 ] Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Ask, and it will be given to you.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and the one who knocks it will be opened.

Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts, good things, to those who ask him?

So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them. For this is the law and the prophets. Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter it are many.

For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

[ 20 : 56 ] You will recognize them by their fruits, are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles. So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, they will not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name.

And I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because they have been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

[ 22 : 13 ] And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

Again reading in the psalm, we just sung Psalm 1, the book of Psalms, and Psalm 1 is on page 418 in our Bibles. Psalm 1, on page 418.

Let's again hear God's word. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

And all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

[ 23 : 24 ] For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of wicked will perish. America, praise to God for his holy and perfect word.

Let's again sing to God's praise. This time from Psalm 78. Scottish Psalter Psalm 78.

And we can sing verses 1 down to verse 4, double marked verse 4 of that psalm. Scottish Psalter Psalm 78. Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear.

The words that from my mouth proceed attentively do hear. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and as our fathers told.

Psalm 78 verses 1-4 to God's praise. To God's praise. To God's praise. I change my people to my law, let you give thou my healer.

[ 24 : 43 ] The words that from my mouth proceed. The words that from my mouth proceed. How can you give me you?

My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love.

For we all are supposed to be tonight. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and just love our God.

We are so well and not possible from their foster care Then to the generations to come deeply will be The praises of the Lord have come And his soul must be saved The wondrous works that he hath done

We will show for the name I'm going to turn back to the book of Psalms and Psalm 1 The book of Psalms and Psalm 1 The plan is for this evening and next evening Psalm 1 this evening Would you believe it? Psalm 2 next evening We'll see in a second that's not just because they follow one another We'll see why we're doing that In looking at Psalm 1 this evening He's taking the Psalm as we have it For the sake of our text We take the very first verse of the Psalm Blessed is a man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked Nor stands in the way of sinners Nor sits in the seat of scoffers If you have a church Bible you'll note beside the word man There's a wee number one At the bottom of the page that lets us know What is true that the word man there It's used representatively To describe the whole of mankind It's kind of quite clear from the context

[ 27 : 40 ] As it means but just to help us When it says man here This is speaking to how every single one of us Man, woman and child How we can live or how we should indeed live our lives Again Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 Indeed most of the Psalms We're not just plonked together, pieced together randomly If you go right back Not just our own translations Before the KJV Before the other translations Before the very first English translations Go back to the very first Greek translations of the Hebrew Go back to the Hebrew itself And the order of the Psalms Some bits have changed But Psalm 1 and 2 are always together Indeed in many of the Hebrew translations Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 Are taken as one Psalm in two sections One Psalm in two sections Again there's a reason for that It's not too far to say that Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 taken together

Are almost like a contents page for us For the rest of the book of Psalms So in Psalm 1 What we'll see this evening Psalm 1 tells us all the Psalms Are going to say to us Is a summarised version Of all the Psalms will teach us About how we live a life That is pleasing to God Every time Every way The Psalms The book of Psalms Mentions how to live a life That glorifies God We find that condensed For us And explained to us In Psalm 1 In Psalm 1 When Psalm 2 Is a condensed version A simplified version Of who it is We're to live this holy life This good life for So in other words Psalm 1 teaches us How we're to live our lives And Psalm 2 teaches us The one we live our lives for The Messianic King Who of course is Jesus

So in Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 together We see explained to us Or given to us The blueprint The contents page Of the rest of the book of Psalms So quite shortly And quite simply this evening Looking at Psalm 1 together The question is What is this Psalm telling us?

Well you see This Psalm gives two clear roots The Psalm explains two quite simple paths As we go through this Psalm I want us to have in the back of our minds The text we read There in Matthew The image Jesus uses Of the two builders The one who listens to his words Who believes in Jesus And who listens to Jesus And who enacts Who puts into action What Jesus says The man who builds his house On strong foundations And the other man The other person Who doesn't believe Who doesn't listen Who doesn't put into action What Jesus says And he's like one who builds his house On pretty shaky foundations On sand Have that in the back of our minds As we go through this Psalm We'll take it down into three Roughly three different headings The first heading for us then Is verse one And verse two

Where we see the believers lifestyle What does it look like for us as Christians To live a Christian life? Before we start this We've heard this before perhaps Just to remind ourselves And those who may listen in the future To the recordings The recordings The Christian life The Christian life Is not about looking like a Christian The Christian life Is not even about acting like a Christian It's not about saying the good Christian things It's not about even attending church Don't worry, bear with me here It's not about reading our Bibles These things are all good things We must attend We're told to worship together We do so We must read and study God's word We can do that Pray We're told to do that But doing these things Does not make us Christians It helps us to learn how to become Christians But doing these things alone

[ 32 : 06 ] Acting good And sounding good And thinking we're good It doesn't make us Christians Indeed makes us the opposite It makes us hypocrites The Christian life is not about acting a certain way To look good To sound good To think good It's about real transformation And from that real transformation in our hearts Then flows a genuine changed life Some will think Well if I start acting better If I stop drinking so much If I stop acting out so much If I stop swearing as much If I stop doing X, Y, Z first Then I can come and become a Christian in time Once I sort myself out I'll make myself better for God Then I'll come to God That might feel good It might sound good But you'll find that nowhere in Scripture Nowhere The Gospel is the opposite We'll see it later on The Gospel says to us There is nothing you or I can do

To make ourselves somehow more appealing to God So He'll take us in The Gospel says There's nothing you can do You come to God how? Exactly how you are Exactly where you are And exactly who you are Right now So there's not a checklist Of how to live a good life So God will be impressed by you This is a checklist for us as Christians For those here this evening Who know and who love Jesus To remind us of what it is To be and serve and live as a believer As a Christian So first of all then The believer's lifestyle The believer's lifestyle Verses 1 and verse 2 Just taking the verses as they come Blessed is the one Or blessed is the one Who walks not in the council of the wicked Nor stands in the way of sinners Nor sits in the seat of scoffers Wicked sinners and scoffers

They are three descriptions Which tell us three different things We'll see in a second But in reality they're three descriptors Of one person Or one type of person Those who the Bible here The psalm here The psalm here calls The wicked The wicked Those who do not know Jesus Nor love Jesus Who have no care for the Lord And the very first part Talks about how we as Christians Should live our lives There's blessing in not doing three things There's blessing for us as Christians And first of all what?

Well in not walking in the council of the wicked In not walking in the council of this world We could say Of those who do not know Jesus Nor love Jesus Nor care for him Nor worship him What does it mean then Not to live in the council of the wicked?



Well don't live a life That follows the way of thinking the world gives us And that has shown in many ways As Christians we have to be tempted Into doing this in many ways We live in a world that is purely materialistic In many ways it is still so materialistic It says all that is It's what you can sense And see And touch And measure Somehow And it's wrong to say that's a scientific method Because those who created the scientific method Were themselves all strong Christians That's a lecture for a different day The world says all that is, is this What you can see, what you experience And it's all about this world right now There's nothing else There's nothing else We live in a world that was just Brought into existence by a

[ 36 : 16 ] What could only be called a cosmic accident A few billion years ago A fourteen odd billion years ago Something happened, we don't know what, something happened Something went, and the world appeared Fourteen billion years later And in essence We are just Lumps of slime That have somehow organised ourselves To be as evolved as we are today But at the very base of it We're just here because we're here because we're here In other words, there's no point to it all There's no meaning to it all Live, eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die What's the point?

We're living in a cold, careless, heartless, uncaring planet Hurdling through an uncaring universe But one day just implode back in itself And start again, the next big bang Then crack on Life is ultimately meaningless And pointless And really worthless That's a bit grim, isn't it?

But if you dig it right back down That is what we're being taught That is what the world says Why are we here? Because we're here What's the point in it? Ultimately there's nothing Make the best of your time Because at the end It doesn't matter anyway We go back to the ground Go back to the ground And that's it Dust to dust And then it ends And also there's no meaning There's no purpose We just happen to be here At this time Now that we say Well, if that's the way of the world's thinking If that's the counsel of the world The advice of the world As Christians, of course We don't believe that But I wonder, has it tainted our view?

Has it tainted our view? Are we as materialistic as the world around us? And you see this in Christians That many Christians Who mean well And who love the Lord Can't perceive Of a spiritual world They forget that we are existing In spiritual warfare And they think Well, if I can't see it I can't feel it I can't measure it Then it's not really there And in our minds We believe in the devil And his armies In our minds We believe in the angels We believe in it all We believe that we are spiritual Creatures We believe we have souls In our bodies We believe we are both physical and spiritual We believe all that But in reality We live as if we're not We live as functional materialists We live in our daily actions As if there's nothing more Than what there is here We don't believe that But we live that way We're walking therefore On the counsel of the wicked In the way of the thinking of this world That says

There's just this There's nothing else To live in a way against that Is to say no We live every single day In a physical yes But also at the same time In a spiritual landscape There's an ongoing spiritual battle At this very moment Within these walls Outside these walls Within ourselves We reject the materialism We reject the fact The world says There's just what you can see and touch We say no The Lord tells us There's much more than that We also see The counsel of the wicked The way of the world Being seen In our individualism The world tells us That the ultimate purpose of our life Is that we are happy The ultimate purpose of life Is to make sure we are happy That we are achieving That we are doing well for ourselves As long as we are going up in the world And getting better in the world As long as we have got what we want To make ourselves happy

[ 40 : 08 ] Then that's all that matters And the scripture says again and again We keep saying Every promise in scripture There is not a single promise to God's people That is to an individual person There's a few very very special circumstances But every one of the promises to God's people In the New Testament It is always in the plural Why?

Because God speaks to his people as a family There is no such thing as a Christian on their own We are Christians together as a church family And the world says no It's all about you It's all about you It's all about you on your own Doing your dreams And your goals And the word says yes You are important We heard this morning About baby Finn Yes God says you are eternally important to me But also you are important as part of a wider family He has given us You see this just now as Christians We think they have no need of a church Now at times to our shame We are to blame for that in many ways The church at times perhaps has treated Christians not well Or not fairly We have treated our brothers and sisters wrongly perhaps But nine times out of ten Christians will say they don't need the church It's because they have this individualistic world view Where it's just me and my own Against the world Well no, that is not what God says That's the two examples of many

Of how we are to carefully not walk in the counsel Walk in the wisdom of the world of the wicked We are also told not to stand in the way of sinners Don't stand as it were And follow behind them As they do their thing Don't assume the world is right When the world challenges you Don't assume that all they say to you is correct Don't follow their understanding Don't follow their path Don't sit in the seat of scoffers Don't sit in the seat of scoffers Don't sit in the seat of scoffers In other words, don't join them in their sin Don't enjoy the sin that they enjoy In other words, we must be different to the world around us Now, it doesn't mean we have to be strange In a literal sense We can still engage our neighbours and our friends and our family

Every one of us, myself included We have many non-Christian, non-saved Close family members and friends and neighbours And we love them and we are part of their groups And we can go and do things in the world And be involved in clubs and things Crack on, whatever you want to do Whatever your interests are, go and do it But don't follow the wickedness Don't follow the sin Don't enjoy what the world enjoys Perhaps in the past we took that too far And we made everything a worldly, sinful thing Where scripture does not speak on it We added words to scripture perhaps And that's a different chat for a different day The scripture is also clear If the world is engaging in sin We do not participate alongside them We don't sit, as it were, in the same seat We don't enjoy the fellowship and company of those Who are engaging in sin, as they engage in sin Easy to preach At times harder to enact Think of a workplace scenario You're having your coffee break

You're having your chat around the table at lunchtime And your colleagues Or either a good old gossip About one of the people you work with Or a good old chat about the weekend And they include you in it And they want to ask you What you think about so and so And aren't they just the worst person And aren't they just so annoying And blah blah blah And as a Christian then, what do you do?

[ 44 : 08 ] Well don't sit in the seat of scoffers Be polite, be kind, be engaged But don't justify sin Don't justify sin Again, don't go too far away Don't ignore them, don't sit your own somewhere in a corner Engage with your friends, engage with your colleagues Engage with your family But whilst engaging, also don't sit in the seat of scoffers Be careful what you say, what you do Be careful of your witness This is how to watch our lifestyle Don't walk in their counsel Don't stand in the way with them And don't sit with them Don't join in with their sin Well how then does our lifestyle What should the believers lifestyle look like?

Verse 2 But his delight Is in the law of the Lord His delight is in the law of the Lord On his law he meditates day and night In other words, the things of God The things of the Lord Are to be our delight The question we have to ask ourselves tonight is What is our delight?

What is our greatest joy? Yes, we can be happy And we should indeed be delighted with Our family and those we love and care for And our jobs perhaps Our homes, our lifestyles Whatever else we are happy with We praise God for all the good gifts he gives us But is God our top delight?

Do we delight in him first and foremost And then after him, everything else All the good gifts he gives us If God is not our top, our greatest delight If God and the things of God Are not what we spend most of our time thinking about Then perhaps as brothers and sisters of Christians We are to re-evaluate our thinking And re-evaluate our priorities The famous John Piper quote Is what underpins most of John Piper's ministry Where he tells us, he reminds us And he quotes some Puritans before him God is most glorified God is most glorified in us When we are most satisfied in him God is most glorified in us When we are most satisfied in him Now at the time he got some flack For using that quote Those who gave him flack didn't realise He was re-quoting a quote from Puritans But that's a different discussion

What John Piper is reminding us Is that God Uses us the best And will use us to his glory the best When we find ourselves fully As we were on fire for him Fully saturated with who he is And what he has done Fully in his word Fully meditating on his word It's not about memorising Huge chunks of scripture Every one of us is different Some here, myself included At times have shocking memories And can't memorise one word for another Others of us, amazing memories You memorise whole passages Then do that to God's glory It's not about memorising or having things It's just about spending time In God's word And time in prayer And time in fellowship With other brothers and sisters Making the things of God Our priority That's the believer's lifestyle And in verse 3 We see the believer's life itself

[ 47 : 50 ] What is the life Or what should the life What's the ideal of a believer's life This famous image we have He's like a tree Planted by streams of water That yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither And all that he does He prospers The believer's life Brothers and sisters This is true for every single one of us This is true for every believer here Everyone here who knows Jesus Who serves Jesus Who loves Jesus However smaller faith might feel at times Or be at times Verse 3 is true for us We are like a tree planted by a river Why?

Because we in our saviour Have a constant access to life We believe in the one who is the water of life Therefore every time we come close to him Every time we pray Every time we talk to him Every time we read his word Or think about him Or engage with his people We are giving ourselves that access once more To living water We're being refreshed again and again By the water of life As we spend more time with our saviour As we spend more time around the water of life Being planted as we are by that stream of living water What happens?

Well we find strength We find growth As the tree sits there As the tree is rooted there Planted by this living stream of water Fruit appears And the leaf doesn't wither This is a strong tree A healthy tree A growing tree But it's strength In living a life close to our saviour And brothers and sisters We know this ourselves Every one of us I'm sure Times of spiritual weakness You realise Perhaps Far too late And you're ashamed of how late How long it takes you You realise eventually You ask Why do I feel so sluggish in my faith?

Why does the Lord feel so far away? And you realise You have not spent any time with him You have not spent any time with his word Not really You're perhaps taking off the box You're doing a daily reading Even doing family worship But you aren't engaging with it Not truly You aren't praying truly And you find yourself then realising That you are not like a tree planted by water But you're a tree that is finding itself So far removed from living water To be a prospering believer We have our roots as it were at all times Touching this water That gives us strength That results in fruit in our life Now we have to be careful here Brothers and sisters With such a low view of their own faith And such struggles with smallness of faith And the problem is When I say this Brothers and sisters who have small faith Who struggle with their small faith

Who struggle with that lack of assurance You will worry I'm talking about you And I know that Because when I read this and say this I worry about myself I struggle as I shared before together With the lack of assurance at times And we've discussed this in our sermons The mark of a Christian is not small fruit The mark of a Christian is not young fruit The mark of a Christian Sorry, the mark of not being a Christian Is not small fruit The mark of not being a Christian is not small or young fruit The mark of a Christian is just fruit at all Fruit at all The mark of not being a Christian is zero fruit Zero, none If there's no fruit in your life We've discussed this before Then take time to pray Take time to come to God Take time to ask the hard questions of Am I yours? And are you mine?

[ 51 : 59 ] And look to your own heart and say Do you know him? Do you love him? If there's no fruit I'm not talking about small fruit Or young fruit I'm talking about no fruit Not a single bit of evidence that you know him or love him The Christian As we spend time with our Saviour There is fruit and more fruit and more fruit And often you see this with older believers The strongest believers don't think Or don't realise they are strong believers Think ourselves, think yourself of the strongest believer right now In the Lord The one you think Well that person Is the I want to say the best That person is the best example of a Christian That person knows their Lord And loves their Lord That person lives a lifestyle Both privately and publicly That person in their conduct personally Looks and act and sounds like a Christian I can almost guarantee that person you're thinking about

Themselves will more than likely think That they are a struggling poor example of a Christian Not about feelings It's about scriptural reality The believer's life is one We prosper Why?

Because we're planted by the living waters Of our Saviour But very briefly The second journey then kicks in The second path kicks in This is now the unbeliever's reality In verse 4 And we see this marked That phrase being used This solid phrase The wicked are not so The wicked are not so Before goodness and peace and growth and living waters and flourishing trees Beauty And now All that None of it Not a single part of all he said Applies to who he are called The wicked It's a harsh term perhaps for many of us to hear It's a very harsh term It's not one perhaps we would use ourselves Dealing with our non-Christian friends or family The truth is The truth is No matter how we take it or change it or angle it

Again scripture is honest Because God is honest Because God is the truth And in scripture there are no three or four categories Scripture presents two simple categories Two simple categories There is no sitting on the fence You've heard this, we all know it There are those who know and love the Lord And those who do not know him and do not love him Simple as that But Sam It helps us in that Now in that category There are those who are Christians who know and who love him Who are poor examples and who are struggling and who are weak Yes, but they know him and they love him And the other side there are those who are not Christians at all Who have no salvation But who are questioning and who are seeking And who are getting closer and closer to the line Yes, that is true Until they cross the line There is that side and that side As the psalm makes painfully but honestly clear to us And unlike the tree

Unlike the one who knows and who loves the Lord The one who does not know the Lord What are they like? There is no tree here There is no water here There is no fruit here There is no greenery here There is no health or vitality here What is there?

[ 55 : 38 ] Just dust Just wind and dust The wicked are not so But are like chaff that the wind drives away That is the dust isn't it?

You get around the casings of seeds when you fresh them Just dust Dust and dust and dust And you see it when freshing is done Have you ever seen the freshing be done?

I've seen it once in my life I wasn't here, it was in Eastern Europe And I was amazed The kayak was freshing whatever grain it was I was amazed that she was doing it And the wind would and did quite literally of course Pick up the chaff, pick up the dust and the nonsense And carry it over to this bit And the seeds and the grains fell through her thing onto the ground below The clear separation Solid, healthy grain Life is there gathered together In the wind With no purpose and no aim And no good end Is the chaff It just wafts away Blows away And the vivid truth here is Without a solid root in the Lord There is no basis for anything There is no basis for anything Hard to preach Hard to hear, I know

That's what scripture says to us Unlike the tree The unbeliever has no solid place in life No solid source of life No solid flowing water No solid source of vitality And instead Yes, for a while we are hanging on But one day We will be set adrift Set adrift No hope No prosperity And no life And the psalm continues, doesn't it?

Verse 5 and verse 6 We see the end The end is given to us Therefore the wicked will not stand in judgment Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous For the Lord knows the way of the righteous But the way of the wicked will perish As we said This psalm is a summary for us The rest of the book of Psalms Of how the psalm talks about those who know the Lord And those who do not yet know the Lord And the whole book of Psalms Every single psalm is mentioned The whole book of Psalms is clear It is clear It is clear that No matter how good a life They may be living now No matter how prosperous a life They may be living now The eventual end of those who do not know the Lord It is not good It is not great In fact, it is awful The wicked

[ 58 : 42 ] The wicked will not stand In the day of judgment The image there is just Being blown away They have no root They have no foundation They are on their own And when they face that holy Just, perfect God There is nothing they can say Or do And we see Even more vividly There is no place for them On that day The Lord comes back There is no place for them In the congregation of the righteous Amongst God's people They will not be found there They will not be found there As well as they try to please God In this world Unless they leave this world Knowing Him And loving Him In the next world In the world to come They will not be found With the Lord's people They will not stand in judgment Nor sinners in the congregation Of the righteous

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous For the way of the wicked Will perish The Lord knows the way of the righteous Of the righteous Real beauty there We have been covering this in our prayer meeting Haven't we?

Looking at God's plans And how God's plans are enacted for us Throughout Providence And all the days of our life And we see that God Knows as it were the end From the beginning The beginning from the end He knows what the life of His people Will look like No matter how hard Or confusing Or dark the days may be God will plan it And has planned it That all His people Will one day be with Him Forever God knows the way of the righteous That's beautiful But the horror is found With the last section here The last verse The last half of verse The way of the wicked Will perish Now It's very easy in many senses To stop there and say Well amen And let's sing our last psalm But actually It's quite open ended The truth isn't open ended The truth is The truth is very clear What God says You either know Him And love Him And worship Him And be with Him Or you don't

And you'll never be with Him The truth is closed The truth is simple The truth is clear But what's open ended is This is the start of the book of Psalms And it says very clearly for us This is what you might call A diagnostic tool this evening It diagnoses for us What our situation is I am bad I go into the doctors The few times I do go The doctor goes through A list of symptoms Even the way I don't want the symptoms To say one thing If the doctor ticks off the list That these things are true for my health situation But how much I don't want them to be true They are true It's a diagnostic tool It's not pleasant It's not easy It may end in a horrible situation for me Health wise But what is true is what's true And this Psalm is also a diagnostic tool for us It diagnoses where we are

It honestly places us in these two groups If you can say your yes and amen No matter how small And how weak You can give your yes and amen To the way of a righteous man If you desire to know the Lord and love him If you seek to keep on serving him And walk in his way Then you're his Yes, that's your diagnostic finding But the opposite is also true If you can say honestly Well, actually I don't know him And I haven't yet begun to serve him at all Even in a small way at all When you see, as we said Where you end up in this Psalm It places you on the other side of things And the glorious hope is This is a first Psalm And all the way through the book of Psalms We see one thing through We'll see this next week, God willing One thing is through Yes, God is just

[ 63 : 03 ] Yes, God is a righteous anger Yes, God will punish the wicked But at the same time God has given a way of salvation As we find in Psalm 2 He is the king He is the one sent from God So that anyone and everyone Anyone and everyone Whatever your situation is in life In your mental health Your physical health Your spiritual health Whatever your understanding is like Whatever a full theological grasp Or a hard any grasp at all Whatever your situation is In your family or yourself As broad as I can make it Anyone and everyone everywhere Who comes to Jesus Who puts our trust in Jesus Who puts our trust in Jesus Who comes to him as Lord and Saviour You find yourself then immediately No longer in the way of the wicked No longer being blown away But instead you find yourself then Worshipping the one who has come To seek and to save sinners

And that's every single one of us this evening Yes, right now you may place yourself correctly In the way of the wicked As the psalm says But there is no reason other than your own self-righteousness And your own not wanting to come to Jesus But as keeping you there Come to him Pray to him this evening Come to him and say Come to him and say I have been wandering far away from you I have heard the gospel many years But this evening Is the evening I come and say to you I am here I believe it all to be true And I hope and I trust That you can save me Pray that in your own words Take these things to the Lord In your own words And see what the Lord will do for you They are hard words They are words of hope, aren't they?

Because every single one of us here this evening Who are now with the Lord Who are now with the Lord's people Who are now part of the way of the believer We were once, were we not?

We were once on the other side Walking away from him Heading towards a lost eternity Heading towards hell We knew that And we now know that And we are here Every one of us As living witnesses The Lord can change us Therefore my friends The Lord can take you too There is hope As long as there is breath As long as there is life There is hope And we will see next week How that hope is shown to us In the sending And the coming Of Jesus To bow our heads in that A word of prayer We thank you Lord For the goodness of your word We thank you also for the challenge Of your word That there are Honest truths That your word deals with Which leaves us To face the unavoidable questions Of where are we in terms of our walk Where are we in terms of our faith Where are we in terms of you Help us Lord We pray to you this evening For your people Those in weak faith

To be strengthened As they recognise They are yours Those of strong faith To be strengthened even more We pray to you now especially this evening For those who have recognised once more Perhaps recognised the first time That they are not who they are And they are not indeed where they are We ask Lord You bring them to that saving knowledge of yourself Who would come to realise The work has been done The price has been paid The way has been made clear The mountains levelled And the valleys have been risen up All so that we would come to know what it is To have faith and salvation And hope and life in Jesus The one who is able And eternally able Eternally capable To save all And any who come to him Let's call these things Trusting it to your power And trusting all things to your plan In and through and for Jesus His precious name's sake Amen

[ 67 : 16 ] Let's bring our time to a conclusion In Psalm 84 Scottish Psalter Psalm 84 Scottish Psalter Psalm 84 Verses 1 Down to the end of the double verse 3 Psalm 84 Verses 1 Down to the double verse 3 How lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me The tabernacles of thy grace How pleasant Lord they be My first his soul Longs vehemently Yea fainth thy courts to see My very heart and flesh cry out O living God O living God for thee Psalm 84 Verses 1 to 3 To God's praise O living God for thee Psalm 84 Verses 1 to 3 To God's praise Who lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me The tabernacles of the grace That blessed God may be My first his soul My first his soul Of heaven's life O Lord of hosts to me My first his soul Of heaven's life Yet thanks my courts to see My very heart and flesh I am O living God for me Behold the fire of my death Behold the fire of my death And how strength to rest The fire of my death And how strength to rest The swath of all So far as hell A purchase in thy name In thy own altar Precious name In thy own altar Precious name I am once forgiven For thou art almighty Are of hosts

Who are our hosts Who are our hosts For thou art For thou art For thou art For Phoen pi O God of almighty Our estado O Lord of hosts Who are my God And thee In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Both of you now And for evermore Amen