

Our Dream Home

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Preacher: Rev Thomas Davis

[0 : 0 0] Good evening and a very warm welcome to our service this evening. It's lovely to see you here as we gather in the name of our risen saviour Jesus Christ. And it's lovely for me to come and be with you this evening. I'm very grateful to Donald for the opportunity to swap with him.

And it's just a real blessing to see you all and to get the chance to share together around God's word. And I do want to say that, you know, just for the rest of us on the island, the last couple of years have just, it's been so encouraging to hear of all the great things that the Lord is doing here in the congregation and in the community.

And so North Tolstice is just very cool. So it's very good to be with you. And it's very encouraging to hear about the Lord's work in your midst. So we bring you our warmest greetings from Carloway. And we're very thankful to be partnering together in the work of the gospel.

And all of that is because of God's amazing grace and kindness towards us. So we're here to worship our wonderful God together. And we're going to begin with Psalm 67 in the Sing Psalms version.

Psalm 67 on page 84. God be merciful and bless us. Shine upon us with your face that the earth may know your actions and all the lands your saving grace.

[1 : 2 7] And these are wonderful words for us to sing and wonderful words for us to pray as we open our service. So the whole of Psalm 67 to God's praise. God be merciful and bless us. Shine upon us with your face.

That the earth may know your actions and all lands your saving grace.

O God may the peoples bless you. May all peoples sing your praise.

For you judge the nations justly. Ruling over every race.

May they sing with joy and gladness. May they all rejoice as one.

[2 : 4 2] May God may the peoples praise you. As they all unite in song.

Then the land will yield its harvest. God will pour his gifts abroad.

God our God. God our God will surely bless us. All the earth will fear our God.

Let's pray together. Dear God our Father. We are so thankful that you have brought us here together this evening.

We thank you that we can come to worship you. And we thank you for every reason that we have to give you our praise and our thanksgiving and our worship.

[3 : 4 4] You are our creator and we look to you with thanksgiving for all the good things that we have in our lives. Our very life and all the blessings that we enjoy is a gift from you.

And so we recognize that we owe you everything. It's all from you. And we thank you for the amazing provision and blessing that you've shown towards us in every aspect of our lives.

So we come bowing before you as our creator and thanking you for your amazing goodness to us. But we also come to worship and praise you as our savior.

Because though you have given us so much we are so conscious that we've turned away from you. We've sinned against you. And we are so, so far from being worthy of coming before you.

And yet you call us to you in mercy and love and grace. And you have sent your son our savior to come and to die in our place to rise again and conquer death.

[4 : 44] And you have poured out your spirit to give us life and to cleanse us and heal us and renew us and transform us. To bring amazing restoration in our lives now and amazing promises for all eternity.

So we rejoice in you our savior. And we thank you for everything that you've done for us. And so we are so conscious that we're here in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your son, our savior and king. And we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for everything that you've done for us through him. And we pray that as we meet together tonight in his name. That we would just know you more closely and understand more of everything that you've done for us.

And we pray that your spirit would be working in our midst. We thank you that as we come together we don't come to a God who's distant. But you have promised to be with us. You've come to dwell within us.

And you are working among us. And we pray that even as we gather here tonight we would just know and sense your spirit working within us and among us.

[5 : 50] We pray that your word would be pressed deep into our hearts. Both to expose us and challenge us where we are going wrong in our lives.

And where things are not the way that they should be. But also may your word be pressed into our hearts to heal us and restore us. To give us the love and the guidance and the strength and encouragement and the comfort that we so desperately need.

And we come to you thirsty and weak and hungry. And we thank you that your promise is to quench our thirst. To satisfy our hunger.

To strengthen us in our weakness. And may that be just the experience for us all tonight as we gather here together. Father thank you so much that we can come here. Thank you for everybody who's joining with us.

And we pray Father that you would bless us all. And for all of us as we come here tonight. Whether we are coming feeling refreshed and encouraged. Or coming feeling exhausted and weak.

[6 : 47] Whether we're coming feeling full of joy for what you've done for us. Or whether we're coming here full of doubts. Or uncertainty or regret or guilt. We just pray that the gospel would just meet us all at our point of need.

And we pray that you would just draw us all closer to you. And that you'd give us the answers and the guidance and the strength that we all so desperately need. So we want to thank you so much for your goodness and love towards us.

And as we gather here to worship you tonight. We do so so conscious that without you we can do nothing. We need your help and strength. But we pray that you would bless us just as you have promised to do so.

And we pray that your name would be glorified. And as we gather here we pray for all who gather to meet in your name. Nearby here on the island. All those who are gathering to meet.

And we pray too for those who gather much further away from us. Across the nation and indeed to the ends of the earth. As your people come together in the name of your son.

We pray that you would bless your church and build up your people. That your kingdom would come and that more and more people would come to faith in Jesus. And that we would be a powerful and beautiful witness to the world around us.

And so may your hand be upon us and upon all your people as we gather tonight. And may the name of Jesus be lifted up and honoured. Here in our gathering this evening and to the ends of the earth.

And we ask it all in his name that it might be to your glory. Amen. We're going to sing again this time from Psalm 89 in the Scottish Psalter.

And from verse 13. That's on page 345. Psalm 89 at verse 13.

Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. And these verses just go through many of the attributes of God.

Speaking of his mercy and his justice. And then speaks of all the ways in which God uses those attributes to protect and help his people.

He's our defender. He's our almighty king. And so in singing these words we are both praising God for his goodness. But we're also reminding ourselves of all that he is for us.

So Psalm 89, 13 to 18 to God's praise. The first hand and last full of power.

Thy hand is great in might. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

Justice and judgment of thy throne. O God. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

Mercy accompanied with truth shall go before thy face.

O God. Greatly blessed the people are the joyful sick that know.

In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go.

In thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly.

And in thy righteousness shall be exalted be on high.

Because the glory of thy strength doth only stand in thee.

And in thy favor shall our heart and our exalted be.

For God is our defense and he to us a safety bring.

The Holy One of Israel is our almighty King.

[illegible]

[12 : 59] These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord had not caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground. Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah where there is gold and the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, you shall surely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. For in the day you eat of it you shall surely die. Amen. This is God's word. Let's pray together again. Father we thank you so much for the opportunity to come before you this evening and we thank you that as we do so we can just bring before you all our prayers and concerns. We thank you that you've told us to cast our care upon you because you care for us. And as we come together this evening we have many many things that we want to bring before you. When we think of the world around us we see so much conflict and so much that concerns us. And we pray Father for peace especially in the Middle East and in Ukraine and in other areas we see conflicts seeming to escalate. We pray Father for peace. We pray for people who are affected by conflict. We pray Father that you would just be so so near to all those who are suffering and we just do pray for a pathway to peace, for a resolution and for an end to hatred and violence and conflict.

We also pray for people suffering in other parts of the world. We think of all the people affected by the awful plane crash in India. We think of all those Lord who grieve and others unknown to us but who are suffering greatly. We pray for them and we remember those suffering all across the world.

In our own nation we think of those who are in need. We think of those living in poverty and we pray that you would be with them. We pray for those struggling with addiction. We pray for those who have just been led down the wrong path or who've made bad choices in their lives. Those who are feeling empty and who are seeking you but in many ways don't know where to turn. We pray Father that they would find you. We pray that the work of the church across our nation would reach people with the good news of Jesus. For our own island and our own community here we pray for those Lord who are in need. We pray for those in the middle of difficult days just now.

That you'd help those who are unwell, those who grieve, those who are burdened or anxious at the moment. We pray for them. For any who are going through difficult times just now we commit them to you. And for the congregation here and for everyone here tonight we just pray that you would be with us all and be with any who are going through difficult times just now. And especially for any who maybe feel as though outwardly they might be looking fine but inwardly they're really struggling.

[17 : 22] And you know Lord and you know our deepest needs. And we pray for any here who may be seeking you and who feel they've not yet come to know you or who aren't sure. May they just hear your voice calling them tonight. And for any here Lord who are struggling in their faith, who feel like they're doubting or who feel full of regret or who feel frustrated with themselves or feel like they've let you down too much. May you just pour your love into their hearts and may they be reassured and comforted. And as we come to you conscious of the mistakes that we've made, conscious of our sin and as we confess our sin before you we thank you that the gospel cleanses us from sin, that the blood of Jesus is so powerful and that in him our sins are washed away, that as far as east is from the west, so far have you removed in your love our sins. We thank you for that and pray that we would just understand and know these truths of the gospel more and more. And as we go into a new week we pray that you would help us as we seek to serve you. Help us in work and school and in our responsibilities at home and in the community and in whatever stage we're at in life, whatever lies ahead for us this week. We pray that you would guide us and help us and we pray that the gospel would shape everything that we do in our lives this week. Whether that's public things or whether it's private things or whether it's things that are only even known to ourselves, we pray Father that the gospel would shape everything. And now as we turn to your word in a moment we pray that you would prepare our hearts and we pray that your word would speak very powerfully to us and that we would be guided and directed by your word. And we pray that you would press the great truths of the gospel deeply into our hearts and that you would lead us by your spirit and shape us and mold us into the people that you want us to be. Bless us as we gather here tonight. We remember Donald as he preaches in

Carloway. Thank you for him and for all that he does for you and may he know your blessing as he opens your word this evening and in all his ongoing ministry here. May your hand be upon him and upon all the work that's done here in North Tolstair. May the coming months be a season of great blessing and encouragement for all and may your name be honoured and glorified. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We're going to sing again from Psalm 119 and the Sing Psalms version from verse 33. That's on page 159.

Psalm 119 from verse 33. Teach me to follow your decrees then I will keep them to the end. Give insight and I'll keep your law with all my heart to it attend. Psalm 119 is a brilliant psalm to sing just before the sermon because again and again and again in this psalm is there's a prayer for God to teach us from his word to lead us according to his commandments to guide us and direct us and so as we sing these words we're praying in preparation for hearing God's word that we will be guided and directed by him. So Psalm 119 1333 to 40 to God's praise.

Teach me to follow your decrees then I will lead them to the end. Give insight and I'll prepare all with all my heart do it attend leave me in your commandments path for there oh Lord delight I find incline incline my heart to towards your loss from selfish gift deserve my mind

[21 : 45] O turn my eyes from worthless things give life according according to your word to me your servant keep your pledge so that you may be feared O Lord bring it from me the shame I dread your loss excel in uprightness O how I long for your decrease your loss excel in uprightness O how I long for your decrease preserve me in your righteousness O how I long for your decrease preserve me in your righteousness your righteousness well for a wee while tonight I'd like us to turn back to Genesis chapter 2 and I'd like us to read again at verse 8

Genesis 2 verse 8 and the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east and there he put the man whom he had formed!

I want to start by asking you the question what does your dream home look like? so just when I say that word what do you think of when I think imagine your dream home what would that be like?

and maybe the answers would be very very different some of you might think well I would love just a cosy wee cottage somewhere small just a beautiful little house or maybe you're thinking no I would like something huge a big mansion swimming pool loads and loads of space maybe you think oh I want to live somewhere like this like on the island I want to live near the sea I want to live somewhere where it's nice and peaceful and quiet maybe maybe you're the opposite though maybe you think oh actually I would love somewhere in the middle of a city I'd love to be somewhere where there was people and buzz and all sorts of things happening maybe you think oh I want my dream home to have you know a really cosy fireplace that can just sit beside it and I'm all tucked up or maybe you think no I would I want my dream home to have all the latest technology and I would just love for it to be full of everything full of all the latest latest tech that you can get maybe you'd love a great view maybe you dream of a spacious garden and you want somewhere that's that's safe and warm and comfortable whatever it is that you want

I think we can all imagine what our dream home is like maybe that's the home you live in right now maybe you think well actually where I live is just everything that I wanted or maybe maybe you think well one day I would love something different but maybe what makes a dream home a dream most of all is that it's yours it's your home it's the place where you belong and there's something just unique and important about our home that is maybe different to everything else and I think one of the things that demonstrates that is that we can all I think understand the preciousness of home when we experience the agony of homesickness I don't know I don't know if any of you have experienced homesickness in any way some of you might have had to have worked away for a spell maybe you've gone away to study or maybe you've even gone away just on a school trip or something when you were younger and I remember doing that

[25 : 53] I remember when I was in P7 we went to Valtos before Scaladale there was Valtos anyone under the age of 40 is not going to know this but there was Valtos that was where we went and it was this ancient centre that you stayed in and we were all so excited to go and we went along we were going to the beach we were doing all sorts of fun exciting things and I was so excited about being there and then about nine o'clock at night I was just hit by this wave of agonising homesickness and I was only away for two nights but I just couldn't bear it I longed for home and I'd have done anything to be there and you know we don't get school sick or work sick or shop sick in the way that we get homesick and that's because our home is something so special and precious for many many reasons our home is a dream and for many people that's what drives them in life the dream home is the thing that we want most of all and we're working so hard either to get it or to maintain it because a dream home is so important to us that's what I want us to think about tonight

I want us to think about the dream of a home and as we think about it I want us to just unpack three key headings when we think about the dream of a home I want us to see that that dream is a good dream but that dream is also a broken dream and most importantly of all the gospel offers you something even better so as we dream about the dream of a home we're saying it's a good dream it's a broken dream the gospel offers you something even better one of the reasons why we can say that the dream of a home is a good dream is because from the very beginning of the Bible God created us to have a home when you come to Genesis 1 and 2 and you read the magnificent narrative of how God created the heavens and the earth what's God making?

well there's lots of things lots of ways in which we could answer that question you know he's making the universe and he's making animals and he's making birds and fish he's making sky and sea he's making sun, moon and stars but what's he actually making?

what he's making is a home he's making a home for us in fact he's making even more than that in the sense that he's making a home for us for us to dwell in with him and in that sense the Garden of Eden is actually because it's the place where God and humanity can dwell together when God made the Garden of Eden he was making a home for us this creation is made by God to be our homeland and the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 emphasizes that very much and one of the ways in which it emphasizes that is by placing humanity in a category of its own when you read about the creation of humanity at the end of chapter 1 one of the wonderful emphases is that up, up, throughout all of Genesis 1 it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good but if you look at Genesis 1, 31 you can see that once humanity has been made to dwell in this homeland what God sees it is only once humanity is created that the good world becomes a very good home and in that description of Eden that we read in Genesis 2 you just read about how amazing this home is it's such a it's such a place of beauty you get the description of the rivers and the plants and the gold and the which is like a resin which smells really nice the onyx stone it's a place of security where humanity can dwell as both Adam and Eve are together and God is dwelling there with them it's a place of comfort a place of provision it's a place of belonging and all of these things that we see in Genesis here are the same things that we long for in our dream home we want a place where you feel safe a place where we can enjoy one another's company a place where we are secure a place where we have provision and most of all a place where we feel the dream of a home that you have for either the place where you live a place where you hope to live one day is a good dream because it's echoing the Garden of Eden in fact it finds its origin and explanation in the Garden of Eden the reason we dream of a home is because of that because of how God created us to be as humans we don't just we don't just dream of a shelter or a den that just keeps the rain out we dream of something so much more and it all echoes we were made we were made to have a place a place where we can thrive a place where we're safe and that longing has been in humanity since the very beginning that longing for a home and that's why you can look at the world around and look at the community around us here whether people have any interest in the gospel whether people believe in God everybody wants a home and all around us people are chasing that dream and so maybe you're doing the same maybe you're thinking about the home that you would love to build maybe you've got the location maybe you've got a craft where you think maybe you look around another house that's been built oh I want one that looks like that but I'm going to just add this little extra bit to make it my own maybe you're just thinking and planning you know if I go if I save up

if I'm earning enough if I can get a grant or whatever if I can get a mortgage that's the home I'm going to build maybe you're planning it maybe you're building it right now I don't know if any of you are but maybe you are or maybe people that you know are in the middle of that and building a house those of you who've done it will know that it's a long and hard journey but it's worth it and people do it why?

[33 : 06] because we dream of a home and maybe many of you today have that home maybe you've lived in it for years and you are so thankful and you'll go home after the service tonight and you'll close your door and you're like I'm home and no other house in the village will give you that feeling apart from your one because it's yours it's your home and that's a beautiful thing it's a good dream enjoy it treasure it and of course the good dream of a home tells us and explains to us why to be homeless is such a desperately difficult situation to be in and for many people that is the reality and again it's so interesting we live in a time now where there are there are not many people in Britain today who have that much interest in the Bible and very few people who are shaped by the gospel but everybody agrees that for people to be homeless is wrong people need a home whether it's those who are in poverty those who are in addiction those whose lives have broken down through bad choices that they've made or whether it's people who are displaced because of disaster or conflict everybody knows that to be left homeless is awful and that's because everybody dreams of having a home a dream home is a good dream but that dream of a home is also a broken dream and by that what I mean is that that the home that we long for is actually never perfect it's never everything that we hoped it would be and sometimes it's actually a long, long way from what we hoped it would be so maybe your dream home will fill you with joy but maybe it will also come at great cost and so maybe right now you're feeling maybe you feel the pressure of debt maybe you're worried about how to balance income and expenditure maybe you're looking at interest rates

I don't know if any of you are but thousands of people in Britain are because they're stretched and they're pressured they've got their dream home but it's come at great cost maybe your dream home brings a lot of burdens with it so maybe you've got a lovely, lovely garden that is a whole lot of hard work and yes, it's lovely but oh, you've got to work so hard at it and maybe you've got a lovely home and yet there's repairs that you didn't expect that you'd have to make to it maybe you've got a lovely view and you're worried that one day someone's going to build a house in front of you and spoil it maybe your dream home hasn't happened yet and you're anxious that that you may not actually get it maybe you have got it and it's actually an anti-climax and it hasn't made you as happy as you thought it would make you and maybe you thought if I just get this house then I'll be happy and now you've got it and you're not as happy as you thought you would be and maybe maybe your dream home has actually been a place of pain so maybe it's been the scene of arguments and tension maybe it's the place where you've anxiously waited for children to come home maybe it's the place where you've seen people drink too much far too often and for every single one of us even if we do have our dream home or even if one day you get it one day you get it it's only ever temporary it is only ever a temporary dream and maybe some of you now have got an empty seat in your dream home maybe now you're seeing your dream home looking tired and worn out and even you know even if you're still chasing the dream home and haven't got it yet when you do get it you're only going to have it for a while and the key point I'm trying to highlight in all of this is that you know our dream at home is a dream it's a brilliant dream but but like every single other part of our lives that dream has been marred by sin and you read Genesis 2 it's amazing the garden is beautiful the food's amazing the setting is idyllic and one chapter later it's ruined because sin has come into the world and sin has affected every single part of life and that's why the dream of a home is a broken dream because sin has broken everything sin brings tension hostility decay and an inescapable temporariness to all of our dreams even our dream home if you walk around Lewis if you go for a walk on the coast or if you go out into the Moor or if you go around

Carlway in particular or indeed if you go into Scotland on the mainland you'll often find ruins so you'll find you know sometimes you'll see you know maybe four walls you find sometimes you'll see maybe a roof that's just falling to bits sometimes it'll be oh that was a black house other times you can think you know well that was a cottage if you go to the mainland you can see a building well that was a castle do you know what many of these ruins once were?

they were once dream homes dream homes and now they've slipped away and so as we cherish that good dream of a dream home we cannot escape the fact that that dream is not going to last forever your time in your dream home is precious but part of the reason it's precious is because it's frighteningly short that dream that we're chasing is all at the same time so we've got these two tensions that the dream home it's like it's such a good dream it's such a great thing to work for and to long for and to invest in and it's something that will bring so much joy to you and to your family dream home amazing and when you know

I think when we live on an island like this we know what this is like more than anybody else because when you're away in the mainland you feel that sense of distance and separation just that little bit more and when you finally get home it's the best feeling to be home because our home is so special it's a dream it's a good dream but it's a broken dream because it's slipping away and many people don't ever get it or it doesn't turn out as good as they thought it would be and for some people their home is a place of of great sorrow and pain our home our home can be the place where we have our best memories and our worst memories and the reason I want to highlight all of this is because because I want you all to see that the gospel promises you something even better as you think about your dream home and as we recognize the brokenness of that dream

[42 : 13] I want you to see that the gospel promises you something even better and the big thing that I want you to recognize is that if you if you were to ask the question what does God want to give you in the gospel I don't know how you would answer that question I don't know how people around us would answer that question what's God trying to do what's God trying to accomplish in the gospel well I guess there's lots of ways that you could answer that question but one of the most important ways to answer that question what does God want to give you he wants to give you a home because that's what he did at the very beginning when he made us and when he created this world in the beautiful garden of Eden he was making our home and that home has been ruined by sin but God has not given up his dream to give you a home and at the heart of the gospel is the fact that God wants to give you a home that is better than your dream home and it's one that will not fade away it is a home that is permanent and certain and unlosable home is such an important part of the gospel and it's actually a massive theme running through the gospel if you go through the whole of the Bible you will see that the theme of home comes up again and again and again and again and one of the ways in which that is emphasized is that in the Bible and especially in the Old Testament there is a lot of wondering there's a lot of wondering that in the Bible so Abraham is called out of his homeland in Ur of the Chaldees

Jacob and his grandson Jacob Abraham's grandson he has to leave his home and he wanders and then Jacob's sons they end up in Egypt because of famine far from home after 400 years the people come out of Egypt they've grown into a massive nation and what do they do?

they wander they wander in the wilderness eventually they find the home promised to Abraham the promised land they entered it but that dream home turns out to be a broken dream and the family nation falls apart they lose their home they end up in exile the Bible is full of wandering all through the Old Testament and that wandering by the provision of a home and every home that was reached in the Old Testament is a shadow of one of the great purposes of the Gospel everything in the Old Testament everything in the Old Testament is a shadow of God's ultimate plan that's so important to remember what you read in the Old is a shadow of what is going to be fulfilled in the New so all the wandering and homecomings in the Old Testament are a shadow of one of the great purposes of the Gospel the fact that God wants to give us a home because that was his purpose from the very beginning but when we sinned we lost our home and spiritually we have been wandering ever since and that's why all around us there are people who feel lost and they feel disorientated they feel unsettled and confused and this is why we dream of a home because we think it's going to fix all that that if we just get the home that we long for it'll fix everything but the big claim of the Gospel is that ultimately only Jesus can fix this it's only Jesus that can come and give us the dream home that is going to be certain and permanent and perfect and that's because one of the key things that Jesus has come to do is that he's come to give us a home and he's come to take us home he's come to give us a home and take us home and that's captured so beautifully in his words at the start of John 14 let me read them out he said let not your hearts be troubled believe in God believe also in me in my Father's house are many rooms if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you

I will come again and take you to myself that where I am you may be also now I'm going to read verse 3 again because in it Jesus is doing two things he says I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and take you to myself what's the two things that Jesus is doing in verse 3 he's preparing a home and he's taking you home he's preparing a home and he's taking you home and the home that Jesus is preparing is amazing and you know I said a wee moment ago that everything in the Old Testament is a shadow even the Garden of Eden and so you read about the Garden of Eden and it's just spectacular and it's in abundance and in its security it's idyllic paradise it's a shadow it's a shadow of the new creation the amazing paradise that Jesus is preparing for you and for all who put their trust in him it's a place of stunning beauty everything around us here is a glimpse who was outside yesterday in the sun incredible just a shadow a shadow of the beauty of the heavenly home that Jesus is preparing it's a place of total security so nothing can threaten nothing can threaten that home think of all the things that threaten your home and my home and my home if you're in a whole pile of debt will I be able to pay it all if your home is getting old will I be able to repair it if your home is in a nice spot that might get built all around then you might lose something of what you love there's all sorts of threats to our home nothing can threaten the home that Jesus is preparing it's a place of total security it's a place of companionship because it's a home where God's people will dwell in other words it's a place where we'll be together sharing precious moments of joy and laughter and friendship where we can talk and learn and love and never ever ever be apart it's a place of comfort where all the pain and suffering and sorrow of this life is gone where every tear gets wiped off your face at the doorway and we have peace and joy and it's a place of amazing provision where the fullness of God's goodness is poured into his children and do you know the most amazing thing of all that that home that Jesus is preparing if you become a Christian that home that Jesus is preparing is the place where you belong it's the place where you belong it's the place where you belong you will never be an outsider there you will never be on the fringes but you will utterly belong because Jesus is preparing it for you and you think

well how can I know that I belong and that's probably the thing that you doubt most of all it's like well you think of heaven well I don't doubt that it's amazing I don't doubt that it's beautiful I don't doubt that it's secure I don't doubt that there's abundance of comfort and provision I just doubt that I belong there because I can think of a million people who deserve to be there more than me but you do belong there you belong there and the reason that you belong there is because Jesus has come to take you there because that's what he's doing and he's taking you home and this is where the gospel is just amazing because the dream home of the gospel is not Jesus saying I'm making this incredible dream home see if you can make it there try and get it if you can see if you can get there on time see if you can make it that is not the gospel the gospel is saying

[52 : 24] I am preparing your home and I'm taking you home in other words or if you become one in terms of the dream eternal home of the new creation Jesus is the guarantee he's the guarantee and he's the guarantee for everyone who trusts in Jesus this is the home that is better than anything you've dreamed of and it's permanent it's certain it's forever but it gets even more amazing because the astonishing thing about the gospel is that in order for Jesus to prepare your home and in order for Jesus to take you home he left his home and when we say that Jesus left his home you know we say we left home and I went away to the mainland to work for a wee while or I went away to study or I had to leave home for a wee while when we say that Jesus left his home what we mean is that Jesus went as far as it is possible to go from his home he went as far from home as it was possible for him to go and that took him to the cross and on the cross what we have to remember is that the cross was a whole ton of awful things but the cross wasn't just the deepest pain that we've ever seen it wasn't just the most awful sorrow that we can ever see it wasn't just the most desperate agony that anyone has ever experienced it was also the worst homesickness that has ever been known and if you have felt homesick you will know a glimpse of that because Jesus on the cross cried out my God, my God, why have you forsaken me that's many things that statement but it's the most profound homesickness that has ever been uttered

Jesus experienced that agony of longing for home and he couldn't go, he couldn't be there he was as far from home as it was possible for him to be it was the deepest, most agonising homesickness ever experienced and he did it all he did it all so that he could take you home and that's why we rest we set our trust in him because he does everything and we depend on him for everything and all of this means that when we bring our dream of a home or dream of a home or whatever it is when we bring that dream under the light of the gospel then it will do two things it will do two things at the same time it will kiss you goodnight and it will kick you out of bed the gospel will kiss you goodnight now what do I mean by that?

well the gospel will kiss you goodnight in the sense that everything you dream about in your dream home is a foretaste of heaven and so imagine lying in bed at night and you feel safe you're secure you're comfortable you're protected and you just feel and you remember all the great things and you look forward to many many wonderful moments that you will enjoy in your home all of that is a glimpse of heaven it's all a glimpse of heaven the only difference is that everything that's good now is going to be even better then and so as you dream of that the gospel is kissing you goodnight with such beauty and tenderness there's a lot to enjoy now there is even more to enjoy then so the gospel is kissing you goodnight the gospel is kicking you out of bed in other words if you are here tonight and you're not yet trusting in Jesus and if you're kind of pushing him to one side every week when you hear the gospel and instead if you're putting your dreams into your home or into your job or into whatever else it might be and if you are putting all your energy into that and not giving any thought to eternity and you need to wake up and see that the best that the best that we dream of in this life is a broken temporary and no matter how much of it you get it's only ever slipping away and Jesus is saying to you trust in me and you can exchange that dream for a far better one and if you're not yet a Christian or if you're not sure if you're a Christian or if you're kind of in that sort of bolt of lightning or something to happen to make you feel sure please, please

I want you to recognise that Jesus is asking you to exchange the inferior and the temporary for the better and the permanent he's saying and the temporary for the better and the permanent there's so much that we can pour our energy into in our homes and that's good but it's not it's not even remotely close to being as good as what Jesus promises you and whatever you have and whatever you cherish in your home just now but it's slipping away what Jesus offers you what Jesus offers you what Jesus offers you is forever and so I want you all to think about the dream of a home and I want you to enjoy your homes and all of us should go home tonight and as we step through the door we should think

Lord thank you for the blessings that I have in this home but you won't have to think for long or look too far that there's brokenness in that home just as there's brokenness in our own hearts!

[59 : 49] and as you see that brokenness I want you to remember that Jesus is offering you a better certainty than even the best dream home that you could imagine Jesus left his home came alongside us went to the depths of the cross and he did it all he did it all so that you could have a home with him forever and there's one thing that you have absolutely got to know about heaven there's a whole ton of things that I can't describe about the new creation you know you go to and you have like you know all the imagery of streets of gold and and

I can't describe it all there's so much about that I cannot describe that I cannot describe to you but there is one thing that I can tell you with absolute certainty that you need to know about the new creation absolutely have to know there's room for you there there's a place for you there it's where you belong and you're not yet a Christian Jesus is saying to you tonight come home let's pray Lord Jesus thank you so so much for everything that you've done for us and we think of the agony of homesickness that you experienced on the cross and we marvel that all of that was so that we could have a home with you forever we thank you for the precious beautiful happy homes that many of us have we pray for those for whom home is a difficult place but we pray most of all would look to you and hear your voice calling us home and Lord Jesus we look forward to that day when you will take us home to the place that you've prepared for us help us all to know and understand all that your word is teaching us

Amen I'm going to be very very cruel to our presenter but I hope he won't mind I had told him to sing Psalm 130 but I think I'd really like to actually sing Psalm 23 if that's okay but I'm sure he knows that one so if we can turn to Psalm 23 in the Scottish Psalter that would be just I should have really chosen this psalm because it is the psalm that speaks so powerfully of home so that's on page 229 Psalm 23 the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want he makes me down to lie in pasture green he leadeth me the quiet waters by and you come down to verse 6 goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in God's house my dwelling place shall be

Lord's praise Lord my shepherd I'll not want he makes me turn to lie in pasture green he leadeth me the quiet waters by my soul he doth restore again and me too walk doth make within the paths of righteousness in forest all limbs sick yea though I walk in death's dark veil yet will I fear none ill for thou art with me and thy rod and staff me comfort still my table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes

I hallowed us with oil anoint and my cup overflows goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all