

# Living by the Word

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] I extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning as we begin our service seeking to worship God.

And there's just one intimation to give that next Lord's Day morning the minister is doing a swap with Reverend Johnny Baxter, the APC minister.

So he will be here next Sunday morning for the service. Psalm 27 and sing Psalms, page 31 in the Psalm book.

Psalm 27 and we're going to sing verses 1 to 5. And so on.

Verses 1 to 5, Psalm 27. The Lord's my Saviour and my light. The Lord's voice, the Lord of my light.

[ 1 : 56 ] To make me this made. The Lord's voice, the Lord of my light.

If I will not be afraid. When He will not be afraid.

My adversary will not be afraid. My adversary will not be afraid. My adversary will not be afraid.

He will not be afraid. I will not be afraid. The Lord of my light. My lover of my light.

He will not be afraid. Although an army has me, my heart will feel no dread.

[ 3 : 12 ] Though water gets me, should I, I will lift up my head.

O speak, I am heavenly, O the Lord of His, I'll seek always.

I will come with him, O the Lord of His, and dwell in all my days.

But on the duty of the Lord, I constantly make it.

And in His house may see no direction in His way.

[ 4 : 42 ] O earth is dwelling, He will keep me safe and troubled in.

Within His tent, He'll shelter me, and on our own He reigns.

I'm just going to say a word to the young folk if they're going to come down. Now, we all live in a really wonderful world.

And sometimes when we look out, we're amazed. Because the world that we live in is so amazing. And part of what makes it so amazing is we have what are called five senses.

Our sight, our hearing, our smell, our taste, and our touch. When you think about it, our eyes are amazing.

[ 6 : 11 ] Because if you lifted a stone, sometimes you'll see a tiny, tiny wee insect. Just, it's so tiny. And then you lift, stand up and lift up your eyes.

And you'll see the hills over on the mainland. At night, you look up to the sky. You might have, first of all, seen a wee speck, wee tiny speck on the worktop.

And then you go out and you see the moon, which is about, it's nearly 250,000 miles away. But you can see it. And that shows how amazing our eyes are, that they can come really close and far away.

And the same without hearing. Somebody whispers. And you can hear a tiny little whisper. And yet you hear the roar of a jet when it's taking off.

Our taste is amazing. Imagine if everything tasted the same. It would be a very boring world, wouldn't it? But our taste, and that's why we have all the lovely tastes when you have, maybe, I don't know what your favorite, we all have our favorite things.

[ 7 : 19 ] But sometimes we say, oh, that is so good. All the different tastes that we have. And again, with our sense of smell.

Soon, people will be starting to cut the grass. You will know when a person's cut the grass, there's a smell from it. If you came into the kitchen and somebody had burnt the toast, you would know, even if you never saw it, because you could smell it.

It's the same when sometimes the farmers or the crofters are putting manure down on the croft and you get the smell. Oh, you're saying, that's not a very nice smell. So our smells are important because supposing there was a gas leak or something, you could smell it.

And then we can feel things. I don't know if you've ever played a game where you've been blindfolded and you've got to guess what it is somebody would put, and you've got to guess what it is you're touching.

But you know, all these things, our sight and our hearing and our taste, it's all to do also with our soul.

[ 8 : 31 ] Because the Bible tells us that when we come to trust Jesus, this word faith, faith helps us to see Jesus.

To bring us so that as we come to the Bible, we're able actually to see Jesus by faith, believing in him. The Bible also tells us that faith comes by hearing.

Our ears are really, really important when we come to church. The Bible says, I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk. He speaks peace.

So God's speaking to us. When you come to church, God is speaking to you. So we've got to listen. The Bible also says, taste and see that God is good.

And when we come to the word, the Bible tells us that the word of God is like food. And we've got to taste it and enjoy it. And again, we ask to feel the presence of God.

[ 9 : 35 ] There's a lady in the Bible, and she was bleeding terribly. And she couldn't get, the doctors couldn't help her. One day she said, I know who'll help me.

She'd been bleeding for 12 years, and she was so weak. She said, Jesus will help me. But there was a huge crowd around. But she really believed.

And do you know what she did? She pushed through the crowd, and she just put out her hand and touched Jesus. And when she did that, the bleeding stopped. And Jesus stopped and said, who touched me?

And she had hoped to do it so nobody would know. So she said, I did. And Jesus said to her, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace. So you remember, when you're looking out and you're seeing everything in this world, seeing and hearing and tasting and feeling all these things, that we also do that with Jesus as well.

[ 10 : 37 ] Lord, our God, we pray to bless us today. And we give thanks for our young people here. It's lovely to see them. And we pray that they will be able to see you in the Word, to be able to hear your Word, to be able to taste and see that you are God, that they will feel your presence with them.

Oh, Lord, watch over them and keep them and do them good. We give thanks for our Sunday schools. We give thanks for all the teaching that goes on, teaching young lives the way of Jesus.

Take away then from us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Let us pray.

Oh, Lord, as we bow before you today, we give thanks for another day. And a lovely day it is. And we pray that it will be a lovely day in our souls too. We pray that we might be conscious of your presence.

Your nearness, your power. Because if you're not with us, then words are meaningless. And we pray then that as we lift up our hearts to you in worship, that we will do so with a sense, a conscious sense of genuine praise within our heart, recognizing that you are the God worthy of all honor and praise and glory.

[ 12 : 15 ] We pray then that you will help us today. We need you at every step. And we pray that we might be conscious of your aid and your help as we go along in life.

Help us, Lord, not to be leaning on our own understanding. We're prone to do so. Because your word tells us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and to lean not on our own understanding.

In all our ways to acknowledge you, knowing that you will direct our paths. We pray then that you will help us. Help us as we come to your word. May your word feed our souls.

May your word be a light to our path. May your word be a rebuke, if that is what is necessary for us. May your word teach us, because we give thanks that your word is our word.

Lord, that shows us so much. And we pray that we might be willing to learn. We have to confess, Lord, that we're slow learners. And we repeat the same mistakes over and over and over and over again.

[ 13 : 18 ] And you display your patience with us. If other people acted towards us, the way that we act towards you, I think we'd have given up on them long ago.

But we give thanks, Lord, for your covenant love, for your great patience with us. And we pray then that we might have teachable spirits, that we might be willing to learn, to be taught of the Lord, and that we might seek to walk worthy of the high calling to which we have been called.

We pray to bless everybody here today. We come with all our own individual needs, our own personalities, our own characters. Help us as we journey through life and all its opportunities and challenges, with all the different things that we face day to day.

Help us in our relationships at home, in church, in the community, at work, at school, wherever we are. Lord, we pray that we may know your help and your blessing and your guidance and grace.

We pray, Lord, your blessing on this congregation. We pray that it will be a growing witness to the community here. We pray that more and more people will gather week by week, that more will come seeking the Lord, that your spirit will work in this community, and that many souls will be touched, many souls will be seeking after the Lord.

[ 14 : 46 ] Pray to bless your servant, Donald, be with him today at the communion. We ask your blessing upon him and his good lady. We ask that you will be with them and undertake for them and uphold them and bless them and make them a blessing in this community.

We give thanks, Lord, for news of members in different congregations at this time, and we pray that your people will be encouraged. We pray for those who are unwell.

We ask your healing hand to be upon them. We are so conscious of how fragile we are. We remember Kenna McLeod in the back congregation, who was so critically ill, but is making a wonderful recovery, and we believe your hand is for honour, for good.

And we pray for all who are in great need. We heard of Sina Gray, and Dr. Gray's wife, who took a massive stroke and is completely unresponsive.

We pray, Lord, that when prognosis is not good, although you can change things, we know that we need preparation for passing from time into eternity, and we pray that you will be with all such who may be going through death's dark veil.

[ 16 : 01 ] May they be conscious of the shepherds upholding and leading. Lord, we are aware that there are so many who are in need of you.

We pray for the old, for those who are no longer able to come out, whose hearts are here, whose prayers are here, and yet the body is such that it doesn't have the strength anymore.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Age catches up on us all. And so we pray, Lord, that you will be with them where they are, and that they will know an abundant portion of your presence with them.

Lord our God, we pray for us nationally and internationally. We live in a world that is so uncertain. It's never been more uncertain than it is today.

And we hear of war and rumors of war and atrocities like happened in Russia. There is so much cares and carnage and bloodshed. Lord, we long for peace.

[ 17 : 01 ] We long for peace to reign. But we're conscious, Lord, that this world is a world that is going in many ways more and more out of control, and yet it's not out of your control.

Because you do according to your will with the armies of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth and who can stay your hand. Pray your blessing upon every missionary endeavor throughout this world.

Lord, we give thanks for all who have been used in all the many different ways and using different gifts to witness and to shine for you in different areas of this world.

We give thanks that your word tells us that no labor in the Lord is in vain. Sometimes we feel that our labor is in vain. We see nothing. But yet, Lord, we're convinced from your word that that is not so.

And that one day we will see just what a word here and a word there produced and was all part of the great story that so often is used in bringing people to the Lord.

[ 18 : 07 ] We're conscious that it might be a wee word here as part of our person's journey. And so we ask that we might be faithful and that we might be zealous and that we might be passionate in seeking to live for Christ.

Grant us grace to live worthy of that every day. And so we ask that you'll be with us all, be with those who mourn, whose hearts are sore and sad.

Death is such that it always leaves behind sorrow and sadness. And it's not just days after or months, but years later, we can still be mourning.

Indeed, throughout as long as we live, we will miss those who have gone before us. Oh, Lord, our God, bless and uphold and be with every broken heart. Watch over our young people, we pray.

We give thanks for them. They're coming, they're living and growing up on a very challenging day. Protect them, keep them, support them, show them the right way, Lord, and give them the strength and the courage to walk in that way.

[ 19 : 11 ] Bless us then, we pray. Grant us your grace and take away our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. We're going to sing again from Psalm 34.

This is from the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 34 from the Scottish Psalter. And we sing verses 12 to 19.

Page 247 of the Psalm books. Psalm 34 at verse 12. What a man is he that life desires to see good would live long.

Thy lips refrain from speaking guile and from ill words thy tongue. depart from evil, depart from ill, do good, seek peace, pursue it earnestly.

God's eyes are on the just, his ears are open to their cry. The face of God is set against those that do wickedly, that he may quite out from the earth cut off their memory.

[ 20 : 15 ] The righteous cry unto the Lord, he unto them gives ear, and they out of their troubles all by him delivered are. The Lord is ever nigh to them that be of broken spirit.

To them his safety doth afford that are in heart contrite. The troubles that afflict the just in number many be, but yet at length out of them all the Lord doth set him free.

Verses 12 through to 19 from Psalm 34 in the Scottish Psalter. What a man is he that life desires. Christ Like you in the cross, ancient blood, LORD, thy tongue Defiled no longer distinctly.

And spirit, literally, let us see. What times have long been just this year that opened to their kind?

The face of God is set again, O the do wickedly, That he may find out from the earth, cut off their memory.

[ 22 : 35 ] The righteous cry unto the Lord, he unto them is here, And the end of their troubles, O by him he delivered us.

The Lord is here, my dear, that me, O broken spirit, To them he saved me, O thou for that I've been hearted, Contrides the troubles that afflict the just in number many be, And yet I cling, thou doth them all,

The Lord has set them free. Let's turn now to read God's word in the book of the Psalms, and in Psalm 119.

And we'll pick up reading at verse 153.

Psalm 119 and at verse 153. Look on my affliction and deliver me, For I do not forget your law.

[ 25 : 07 ] Plead my cause and redeem me. Give me life according to your promise. Salvation is far from the wicked, For they do not seek your statutes.

Great is your mercy, O Lord. Give me life according to your rules. Many are my persecutors and my adversaries, But I do not swerve from your testimonies.

I look at the faithless with disgust, Because they do not keep your commands. Consider how I love your precepts. Give me life according to your steadfast love.

The sum of your word is truth, And every one of your righteous rules endures forever. Princes persecute me without cause, And my heart stands in awe of your words.

I rejoice at your word, Like one who finds great spoil. I hate and abhor falsehood, But I love your law. Seven times a day I praise you, For your righteous rules.

[ 26 : 18 ] Great peace of those who love your law. Nothing can make them stumble. I hope for your salvation, O Lord, And I do your commandments.

My soul keeps your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. I keep your precepts and testimonies, For all my ways are before you.

Let my cry come before you, O Lord. Give me understanding according to your word. Let my plea come before you, Deliver me according to your word.

My lips will pour forth praise, For you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word, For all your commandments are right.

Let your hand be ready to help me, For I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O Lord, And your law is my delight.

[ 27 : 18 ] Let my soul live and praise you, And let your rules help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, For I do not forget your commandments.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. We are going to sing again from this psalm, Psalm 119 and sing psalms.

And it is at verse 129, Four stanzas. Psalm 129. Sorry, no, Psalm 119 at verse 129.

It is on page 165 in the psalm book. Psalm 129. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful, So I obey them from my heart. Your words, as they unfold, give light, And truth to simple minds impart.

With open mouth I pant and yearn To know the laws that you proclaim. Show me the mercy you extend To those who love and praise your name.

[ 28 : 23 ] Direct my footsteps in your word. Let sin not hold me in its sway. From man's oppression set me free, That your commands I may obey.

Upon your servant shine your face. Teach me the statutes you have made. My eyes shed streams of bitter tears, Because your law is not obeyed.

These verses are Psalm 119, Psalm 129 to 136. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful.

So I obey them from my heart. Your words, as they unfold, give light, And truth to simple minds impart. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful. How ■■■al ears, if I come forward, You may have given them 249, That your bullet as theirs being through That opened the night by the sea King, Truthful God Our hope and Show me the Lord, should you extend to us to love and praise your name?

Say, Lord, I will respect in your heart, let sin not hold me in this way.

[ 30 : 23 ] From Thou's old days, don't set me free, but your commands I may appear.

Upon your step, I'll shine your face, teach me the status you have made.

Why I share still a bitter tear, because your hope is on your name.

Let's turn back again for a little to this psalm that we read. Psalm 119, and it's the last section I want us to look at.

Psalm 119, the last section from 169 to the end. I won't read the whole section again, just a bit of it.

[ 31 : 50 ] 169, let my cry come before you, O Lord. Give me understanding according to your word. And then in verse 173, Psalm says, let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.

And in the last verse, he says, I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments. But this whole last section. Now, this is an amazing psalm, because the psalm actually is longer than some of the books in the Bible.

It's what's termed an acrostic psalm. It works its way through every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And each section is working through with that letter.

It's actually very, very clever, the way that it is done. But it is a psalm that is focusing upon the absolute importance of God's word for everyday life.

It is showing us that God's word is absolutely central to our life. All the precepts, the commandments, all the statutes, all that God says to us and requires of us in order that we may live in the right way.

[ 33 : 14 ] So, this psalm describes, as we say, just the importance of God's word. As we face it every day, we face, yes, there's often great opportunities, but we know that some days we face persecution, we face problems, we face temptations, we face trials and difficulties.

And God's word is essential for us, that it might be part and partial of our life. And, of course, we know that the word of God, as we said, it's critical to what we are and how we live.

Because the faith, as we were saying to the young folk, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. So, it's essential that we're listening to God's word.

But in this final section, these verses could be summed up in three ways. And that's the three verses that I read, because there are three things within it. And the first thing is the psalmist is saying, teach me.

That's basically what he's saying. Let my cry come before you, O Lord. Give me understanding according to your word. So, when we're asking for understanding, we're really saying, Lord, teach me.

[ 34 : 30 ] And the second thing is, in verse 173, is asking the Lord to help. Let your hand be ready to help me.

And then the third prayer we could really say is, seek me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant. And these three prayers, very simple prayers, teach me, help me, and seek me, should really be prayers that we make every day.

Part and partial should be of our prayer life. And so, the psalmist says, teach me. Give me understanding according to your word. Now, this is something that we all need.

We all need God's, to understand God's word. And to be able to apply God's word to our life in our everyday living.

Because the world that we live in is very, very powerful. And we often don't quite recognize how powerful it is. And it's very, very subtle. And bit by bit, as we're exposed, and we all are exposed to the influences, and the drawings, and the pool, and the culture of this world.

[ 35 : 47 ] Over a period of time, we find that we begin to tolerate, we begin to accept, we begin to, in fact, often make our decisions.

We can easily be governed, sidetracked, and governed by the way of the world, and the thought of the world, and the thought structure of the world, rather than God's word.

And that's why it's so important that God's word goes down deep within our own heart. Because if we're just left to our own thinking, and our own way, and just the way that life is, we will not walk the way that we should.

We need to have God's word. And that's why the psalmist is saying, Lord, give me understanding. I need that understanding in the day-to-day living. As I live out my life in all the different relationships, and all the different things that come my way, in all the decisions that I have to make, in all these things, Lord, give me understanding.

So that I will speak the right thing. That I will say the right thing. That I will do the right thing. That I will live in the right way. And that's a prayer that we should all be making.

[ 37 : 00 ] Because, you know, it is important how we live our lives before God. We're aware that we all have to give an account one day. And often we think back and we say, oh no.

Because of what we've been, what we've said, what we've done. But we know that it's only in Jesus Christ that we can find that forgiveness. But it's important that we have the right path.

Because God's word is a light to our paths. We never outgrow the need for this daily light. And that's why every single day it is vital that we read something of God's word.

I always think one of the best things, and it goes back to in the book of Joshua. Remember when Israel were going to cross over the Jordan. And they were at the banks of the Jordan.

And God said to them just before they crossed over. And I think these are words that are important for us all to digest. Because it's really a key to life.

[ 38 : 06 ] In chapter 1 of Joshua, the Lord says, verse 6, he says first to Joshua, Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause his people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

Verse 7. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.

Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Isn't that amazing? God is saying to them, look, the key to life, the key to prospering, the key to succeeding as you go forward in life is based upon my word.

Not just a quick flip over it. To meditate is to allow the word to kind of soak into your mind. They say that meditating is kind of muttering to yourself.

[ 39 : 29 ] And what that means simply is that you're kind of digesting the word. And that's what we should do every day. Not just to read it. Sometimes we can read chapters.

And sometimes you say, what did you read today? And you say, I don't know. Because we weren't really concentrating. It just flew by. But if we take a wee portion and say to the Lord, Lord, make this, help me to understand what this is saying.

Make this real and relevant to me today. May this be the true light to guide me. May, and the Lord is saying, if you live in that way, I will make your way prosperous and I will give you good success.

So that your life will be a success rather than a failure if you're living according to my word. So that's really what the psalmist is here praying for. And it's something that we should lay hold upon too.

And then as the psalmist goes on, we find that he's bursting into praise. We find that in verse 171 and 172. My lips will pour forth praise for you.

[ 40 : 35 ] Teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word. You know, the more you study God's word, the more wonderful God becomes.

We always find that. That the more we go into the word, the more amazing that we begin to discover who the Lord really is.

You know, you find that very often in the writings. For instance, the Apostle Paul. When he was writing, and you'd often find sometimes after great theological and doctrinal truths that he would write.

For instance, in Ephesians chapter 3, where he's writing there about the mystery of the gospel revealed and such like.

And then he moves on and he's able to say, It's like I see an apostle under the inspiration of the Spirit is writing.

[ 41 : 52 ] And the more that he's seeing the wonder and the glory of God, his heart is beginning just to burst up with praise. Same with the psalmist David.

Sometimes David's in the depth. And he starts in the depths. And no wonder sometimes David was barely escaping with his life. But then as he began to reflect upon God in the psalm, you find a change.

And he moves away from his lament. And he moves then into the pleading. And as he begins to focus more on God, he then bursts into praise.



See, this is what happens. The more we focus upon God, the more our lives will be lives lived with praise. Praise is the language of heaven. There will be eternal praise there.

Why? Because in the endless ages of eternity, we will be discovering, and we will never discover to the fullness, the majesty, the glory, the authority, the power, the dominion, the wisdom, the greatness of God.

[ 43 : 01 ] But we will be seeing and understanding who God is far more than ever we did here. The greatest insight we ever got here will be almost as nothing compared to what it will be there.

And it's inevitable, but we will have to praise. That's because praise is a spontaneous reaction that comes out of the heart, into the mouth, as we behold the glory and the majesty of God.

We find that all the way throughout scripture. And so the psalmist is saying there that as he studies God's law, and studies who God is, and the way he's made these laws, he has to burst into praise.

Oh, how we wish our own governments would fashion their law according to God's word. Because some of the things that come out, you just think, you shall, who on earth is behind this?

Now we know that laws have to be updated and all these sort of things. And not every law is a mistake. Some laws are good. But some things that are being passed today, and you say, how on earth, where?

[ 44 : 11 ] It's just opposite to what God's word really requires. And so, as the psalmist says elsewhere, God's law is perfect. But then, psalmist says in verse 173, help me.

Let your hand be ready to help me. Again, in verse 175, he says, let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me.

You see, that's one of the things throughout life, that we are always calling to the Lord, help me. Every day, I don't believe, if you're a believer here today, that you've ever gone through a day in your life where you've never said to the Lord, Lord, help me.

I don't know what to say here. Help me. Help me to say the right thing. Help me, Lord, to do the right thing. Help me, Lord.

Every day. Probably many times in the day. And that, this is part, that is one of the things, I remember when I was converted, one of the things that I just found so amazing, is that there was this constant dialogue with heaven.

[ 45 : 25 ] Didn't used to be like that. And it was just sometimes these little, Lord, Lord, help me here. Lord, forgive me. Lord, this, that.

Never used to be like that. And that's an evidence of a new life that is there, where you, you find yourself that you can't help, but you, you're just speaking to the Lord, every day in different situations.

I suppose three of the great cries, or three of the great things, that every day we're saying, Lord, forgive me. Lord, help me. And Lord, have mercy upon me.

I'm sure these are the three things, and the Lord does that for us every day. And then there's this cry, he cries for your salvation, O Lord.

And that's a cry that everybody should make. If you're here tonight, today, and you haven't come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I urge you to cry for this salvation, because nobody else can give you this salvation, but the Lord alone.

[ 46 : 29 ] It's his salvation to give, the saving of what is most precious to you. There is nothing that you possess that is more precious than your soul.

Jesus said, what will a man give in exchange for his soul? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

There are some people who, by wealth, and by power, and so on, they've gained immense amounts. It's nothing near the price of a soul.

Jesus tells us that. Your soul needs caring. Needs to be cared for. And you know, you and I aren't capable of caring of it ourselves.

We need Jesus. Jesus. And if today you say to yourself, I know that. But you know, the problem is that you're not willing for Jesus to save you.

[ 47 : 28 ] And I know what that's like. I don't believe that you're here saying, I never want to be a Christian, because I don't think you'd be here. You want to be a Christian one day, but maybe you're not ready just now.

The thing is, we don't, we live in such an uncertain world, we don't know our futures. We don't know our opportunities. Today is a day of opportunity. That's why the gospel is always presented in the present.

Now is the accepted time. Now is a day of salvation. So it's important that we cry to the Lord for this salvation.

But it's not just the unbeliever that calls out for salvation, but also the Christian. Because when we call out for this salvation, what we're calling for is to a greater understanding of the benefits of this salvation, so that we can understand more and more of the deliverance of what it has cost the Lord, and what it has, what has been provided for us in this salvation.

Because in this salvation, we have so many privileges and blessings, peace and joy and love. We, the list is almost endless.

[ 48 : 50 ] It's funny things the world crave, but they look anywhere else for it, but to Jesus. People look for freedom. Jesus promises freedom.

The world thinks that Jesus gives, ties us up in shackles. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a liberty in the gospel that you can't get anywhere else.

Peace. People give anything for peace. Well, Jesus tells us that he gives a peace that is beyond understanding, and so on. But you know, when we call for salvation, it also calls for the fullness.

We long for the full salvation. Because today as a believer, you haven't the full salvation. Yes, you're fully in Christ. You know, we will never know the fullness of all that the salvation is, until our resurrected body is united in glory with our soul.

It is then that our salvation is absolutely complete. Because Jesus, it's amazing, yes, he died to save our souls, but even our dust is connected to Christ.

[ 50 : 05 ] Remember how the Catechism puts it, souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, to immediately pass into glory, but their bodies, being still united to Christ, to rest in the grave to the resurrection, to be raised again, a body resembling his resurrected body in our nature, nature that Jesus took, he died in, he rose in, and he is in glory in today.

It's amazing. And we will resemble what he has as mediator, the glory that he has purchased for us.

So, there is always that longing in the heart of the believer, for the fullness of that salvation, which is still to come. But then, time is going, we see, the last request is, seek me.

And how we need the Lord to seek and search us out. Now, as the psalmist has worked his way through this massive psalm, extolling all the virtues of the precepts, and the commandments, and the statutes of the Lord, and he sees the holiness of God's law.

Although, this psalmist, is an incredible, when you read it, you say, man, I would love to meet this man. This is a real man of God. His understanding of the truth, his knowledge of the law of God, and the way that God's law works in people's lives, is really quite remarkable.

[ 51 : 43 ] Well, how do we find the psalmist really, at the end of it all? It's like he's falling down on his knees. It's kind of, I feel that he's kind of like the publican. Lord, remember how the publican, this psalmist couldn't stand with the Pharisee.

Remember the Pharisee, he was extolling all his own virtues, and telling God of how good he was, and what he did, and what he didn't do, and how good. Remember the publican, he couldn't do that.

He just fell down on his knees. I said, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner. Well, in a sense, this is where the psalmist is now. Having gone through all these 175 verses, the last verse, this is where we find him.

And this is where we find real humility as well. Here's a man who knows that God alone saves, that God's grace saves, and God's grace keeps.

Samuel Rutherford used to say, the true saint is always a humble passion. Well, the psalmist makes a heavy-hearted confession, and he says, I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

[ 52 : 50 ] Now, some people think, oh, the psalmist's not talking about himself here. This is in a kind of general way. He's talking like, how it says in Isaiah, I remember in Isaiah 53, all we like sheep have gone astray.

That's the kind of idea that he's talking about here. He's not talking about himself personally. Oh, yes, he is. And that's very clear from the language. Because he says here, very simply, I, he says, have gone astray like a lost sheep.

Seek your servant. You see, this man's a servant of the Lord. It's not the unbeliever that's talking about. This is a Christian, a committed Christian, the servant of the Lord.

And he's saying, I, I have gone astray. And it shows us that there's a very fine line between going forwards and going backwards in the Christian life.

And we are like sheep going astray. You and I know there's no animal more prone to wander than the sheep. I don't think the sheep deliberately is saying to yourself, well, you know what, I'm going to go astray today.

[ 54 : 06 ] The sheep, it's just, it's a natural thing within the sheep to wander off. And it's amazing at gatherings how often you find sheep from other, we had a, we lived in Kalanish, we had a neighbor there and one of his sheep turned up at a gathering in Harris.

The sheep was a jumper. You know, some sheep are jumpers. There's not a fence that'll keep the sheep in. Some, most, most fences keep most sheep in, but there are some, some sheep can jump a fence.

Well, that's, the sheep ended up in Harris. Sheep just like to wander and that's the way we are as well. And so the, the, the Christian is forever wandering.

And it's so easy to backslide. And you know, it's not, a Christian will never say to himself, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to have a wee shot of backsliding. I'm going to have a wee turn of backsliding just now.

No. Never starts like that. It usually starts very gradually and very subtly. And often there is, isn't even an awareness to begin with of how we have begun to drift.

[ 55 : 20 ] It's so gradual. And it can be just a wee bit lessening of our own private devotion. We're not aware of it. And we find ourselves moving a little further away and we're not aware of it.

And we go to church and all of a sudden as we're in church we've stopped really listening. We're still there, still going through the motions, but we've drifted.

And sometimes we find ourselves drifting further and further away. And that's why I say I don't think a person ever makes a conscious decision as a Christian to backslide.

But you know, sometimes when a Christian has backslid and has gone quite a bit away, they can then make a bit of a conscious decision sometimes to stay there.

And they say, I'm comfortable here. Well, I don't believe that they're ever comfortable. when they've gone away. Now, I'm not talking here of the sudden temptation that overtakes us. And you all know what it's like when all of a sudden you're off your guard.

[ 56 : 26 ] You succumb to temptation. It's happened quickly. And you know that you've sinned before the Lord. You then straight away, you are, oh Lord, have mercy.

Forgive me, Lord. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have said that. That's not, I wasn't a good witness there. These things happen all the time. That's not the kind of thing we're talking about here.

This is somebody who has really gone away. And you see, the thing is that the seed of every known sin lurks within our heart.

Don't ever say, I could never commit such and such a sin. because we don't know. There are sometimes the force of a temptation and all the opportunities and all the different things can come together where there's a perfect storm of temptation and opportunity.

We don't know what we may do. That's why we need the Lord's help and protection all the time. Because the seed of every known sin lurks within your heart and mine. Everyone.

[ 57 : 32 ] All the perverseness and twistedness and all the lust and pride and bitterness enmity, anger all these things they're all deep down in there.

And every so often the Lord by His Spirit will give us a wee insight of what we're really like. And in these moments they can be awful moments when we see something of what we're really like.

But the thing is that the believer if the believer strays there'll come a time when the believer will come back.

Now we do know from the parable of the sword that there are people who make an appearance that people it looks like they've been converted. And they straight away they come out really bright and they're shining and they're poor and everybody says it's great.

But then they fall away. And today they're as far away and as godless as possible. And Jesus I feel it's one of the saddest parts of the whole parable of the sword.

[ 58 : 37 ] And that's where those who fell the seed remember the seed didn't fall all the seed didn't fall on good ground some fell on stony ground. And straight away it sprung up but it very quickly withered away because there was no root it couldn't take root because of all the stones there.

Jesus said somewhere like that spring up but very quickly they've gone. But where there is root where a person has come to faith even if we wander even if we go off the Lord will take us back.

And that's what the psalmist is conscious of here. Jesus is a great search and rescue and he's saying to the Lord seek me I need to get back. And you know it's the Lord who gets us back the Lord has ways of getting us back.

You think in the Bible two of the classic examples of great men of God who fell badly look at Peter Peter with oaths and with curses the man who said to Jesus he was ready to die for him when the chips were down denied any knowledge of Jesus.

I don't know him. Remember how at the end Jesus turned and looked at Peter and he went out and he wept bitterly. It was at the end of Peter well you know Peter thought he had blown it because as we know he said to some of the others I go fishing in other words I'm going back to the fishing.

[ 60 : 10 ] He thought it was over for him. But what did Jesus do? Jesus met with him on the shores of Galilee. Jesus found looked Jesus did the search the seeking Peter out and restored him.

And Peter became a a leader in the church. Same with David a man after God's own heart. And we know how he sinned in the adultery with Bathsheba and then to cover his tracks he had Bathsheba's husband killed Uriah it's just it's horrendous.

And David what did David do? Well we know of Psalm 51 but before he penned Psalm 51 did God leave him? No. God sent the prophet Nathan because he was going to bring David back.

Remember how Nathan told the story about the the two the man who had had a huge herd a huge flock of sheep rich man and next door was poor man he had just the one sheep the visitor came the rich man what did he do?

Did he go to his own flock? No he nipped over the fence and took the poor man's lamb the only one he had killed for a meal when David heard that he was furious and Nathan said you are the man and it was at that moment the spirit of God went like a knife into David's heart and he saw the horror of what he had done now you know when you and I look at the story of David and we think of him killing Uriah which was the worst of the lot we've got to I mean that sort of thing we just couldn't conceive of today we've got to remember that David although he was a great man he was a ferocious warrior as well and killing was next to nothing to David his hands that's why he wasn't allowed to build the temple because his hands were so red with blood

[ 62 : 30 ] God said your vision your plan is good but you will have a son who will build the temple you are a man of blood so David although he was a good man was also a ruthless man but here it is went like a knife into his heart that's where he penned Psalm 51 against thee the only have I sinned in thy sight done this ill and that's what God does he goes after us and God will bring us back in his own way sometimes sometimes all he will do will give us all of a sudden a little sight of his love that breaks us and we say oh I need to get back I've gone so far away sometimes it's a convicting word with a spirit just going again narrow into our heart and like

David we're saying oh that's me sometimes it's with the correction rod but God will seek us out and God is the one who is in that business it's possible today though you're here you may have wondered a bit and you're saying will God take me back of course he will he wants you back more than you want to get back because that is a God whose heart is so full of love and grace towards us and if still you don't know Jesus remember he's present right now ask him right here right now that you will be made willing in your heart ask him that Lord make me willing that I might receive you as saviour let's pray Lord our God we thank you for your word today we pray that it might be a blessing to our soul help us to understand you more and more to understand your word help us to grow in the truth we pray that you'll be merciful to us take us all home safely we pray surround us with your protecting hand grant us your grace in everything that we're about not only today but all throughout this week be your sure portion for giving us our sin in

Jesus name amen we're going to conclude singing in psalm 80 in the Scottish Psalter psalm number 80 and we're going to sing the last three verses of the psalm psalm 80 in the Scottish Psalter from verse 17 to the end psalm 80 from the Scottish Psalter verse 17 to the end oh let thy hand be still upon oh let thy hand be still upon the mind of thy right hand the son of mar a

Some of us were then Also to the glory term Jesus!

My name was He? Our love's again, our power of hosts, and our asses.

[ 67 : 20 ] Our love's again, our power of hosts, and our asses.

Amen.