

# Oh my Dove

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Date: 31 December 2023

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're to worship the Lord together. The same announcements as the morning, but just to remind ourselves, Sophie and Tomations, God willing, tomorrow at 12 noon, of course, here in the church we'll hope to have our New Year's Day service, the 12 noon tomorrow New Year's Day service.

Next Lord's Day in the evening, I plan is to do a swap with Reverend Myrtle Campbell and Barvis, so please do pray for Myrtle and pray for myself as we passage over on the moor next Lord's Day evening.

Now, the week after that from Monday to Thursday inclusive, I'm away in service training. I'm obliged to go for my first year of ministry, but it looks to be a good schedule.

Sessions on discipleship, sessions on evangelism and sessions on revitalisation and if you're here on Thursday, that was our main three points so we hope it'll be a beneficial time and I'll bring back anything I've hopefully managed to learn to the congregation.

Again, news to follow God willing, next Lord's Day as to the plan for the Bible study and the plan for monthly fellowships in the year ahead. But just to say, these things are well underway in terms of planning and it's putting a schedule to things, but please do keep all these things in prayer.

[ 1 : 1 8 ] As Ed said in the morning, we remembered Badenoch, we keep them in prayer and also Dumasani in South Africa, that theological college which has produced some amazing minds and some great men and women of God over the many years that's been running and Badenoch Free Church for all the good work the Lord is doing in that place. We're here to worship the Lord again this evening. Let's sing to God's praise.

First of all, singing from Sing Psalms and Psalm 55. Sing Psalms, Psalm 55. That's on page 71. Sing Psalms, Psalm 55 on page 71.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 8 of the psalm. Psalm 55 on page 71. O God, please listen to my prayer. Do not ignore my plea.

My anxious thoughts make me distraught. O hear and answer me. I'm troubled by the voice of foes, by their malicious stare, for they bring suffering to me. Their hatred I must bear.

Psalm 55, verses 1 to 8. To God's praise. Amen. O God, please listen As I was Tongvary to Mark, do not echo my plea.

[ 2 : 4 6 ] I am posted onai. It is also to hear and me distraught. O dear, now answer me.

f e s o e e hath already in peace that will ride above him and without Trading my heart Aenda I'm not here, I stand the world out and the heart, I'm overwhelmed by fear.

O blight, I might not know how it is, and I will fly now with.

And with God has our freedom yet, and in the desert's end.

Then, O blight, I might not know how it is, and I will fly now with.

[ 5 : 1 7 ] Far from the kitchen of the storm, and from the terrible sky.

Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord of God, as we find ourselves gathered again together this evening, we thank you for the day that you have given us.

This day we spent this morning together in worship. This day we've taken each end of the day to you. Help us to understand that it's a privilege we have that we can sit here this evening and join together as a family this evening.

Help us not to be here this week or any week out of just pure repetition. Help us to be here and attend the means of grace out of the pure joy you have given us of a chance to worship together.

We understand this is truly a means of grace. This is a method whereby you give your grace to your people, where you encourage your people, where you build up your people.

[ 6 : 33 ] Help us then to take seriously our times of worship. But also to understand that these times of worship, they are for our benefit. As we come together to glorify you.

As we join together in our hearts, we do so understanding we are joined together with worship of brothers and sisters. As we come together this evening, we are aware that we are together as brothers and sisters.

We are together with one voice, worshipping our one Saviour. Each one of us with such different stories to tell. Each one of us with a different, as it were, road to finding Jesus.

Or as reality is, a different road to being found by Jesus. We come this evening with one voice. Different ages. Different ages in this world.

Lots of different ages and different stages in our walk before you. But we come knowing. But as your people this evening. As your beloved people.

[ 7 : 30 ] We are truly known by you. We are truly precious to you. Help us then to understand that. And to come before you with that reverence.

With that awe. But also as your people this evening, we come before you with openness. An openness not from ourselves. But an openness that has been purchased for us. By the finished work of Jesus.

But we can stand before you this evening. And yes, confess your sovereign power. Yes, confess your glory. But also, whilst acknowledging these realities.

We come this evening. And we come as a child before a father. And crying out to you, our Father in heaven.

And we know that we cry out. You hear our words. Not because of our eloquence. Not because of how loud our shouts may be. But you hear our words.

[ 8 : 25 ] Spoken and unspoken. Because you are the perfect Father. Who loves his children so dearly. We heard that this morning. That you loved us so much. That you sent his Son.

To secure for us that hope of eternal life. As we've spent time this morning looking forward. Through the images you've given us. Of what it is to spend eternity with you.

Help us to often find ourselves setting our mind to eternity. Not as a means to escape this world. But setting our minds to eternity as a means to glorify you. You're a God who gives us all the good gifts of this world.

And who promises us that what lies ahead of us. Is an even greater gift. Is an even greater reality for your people. Until we reach that reality. Help us to serve you well.

And to serve you faithfully. In this place. We're praying just now for every home represented here. Every family dynamic. Every person who is here. We're bringing just now before you.

[ 9 : 24 ] Those who are heavy on our minds. Those who are not here. Those who we long to see here. Friends and family members. But who as of yet have no understanding.

And no concern for their souls. We bring them before you. Parents. Siblings. Children. Loved ones.

Friends and neighbours. Those we have spent our lives with. Or grew up beside. We bring these many names before you just now. We're also mindful for those missing from our number this evening.

Who we know would like to be here. Even more than that. Those missing from our number this evening. Who would love to be here. But through age. Through illness.

Through various reasons. Cannot gather with us. Often or as often as they'd wish to. We ask you bless them this evening. And be with them. And remind them that despite their perhaps physical absence from our number.

[ 10 : 22 ] They are no less precious to us. And they're certainly no less precious to you. The God who saved them. Who loves them. Who sustains them.

Who promised to take them home one day. To be with yourself. As you do with all of us here. Who know and who love Jesus. Pray once more for our gathering. Pray just now. Especially for those here this evening.

Who as of yet have not come to know Jesus for themselves. As we spend time this evening. Thinking about where the church is just now. We ask that they would understand. That this is a place that is for them.

That the church is a place that they can join. Not even talking about the formal joining of a church membership. But this is a place they can join. And be counted as one of yours.

Where they can say that they know Jesus. They can say that they love Jesus. They can say that despite a small faith. Despite a small knowledge. They can know one thing.

[ 11 : 19 ] That he is theirs. That they are his. We ask that we have a case for this evening. For everyone in this place. Give you praise for our friends. Who have gathered here. And indeed have gathered here.

Week after week. Year after year. Decade after decade. And who find in this place. The great gospel message. Going out week after week. We thank you Lord for generations of ministry.

Live with your will. We pray for generations to follow of ministry in this place. We do pray for the blessing of your word in North Tulsa. We pray Lord for a wider gospel blessing in this place.

As we think just for our own neighbours. Of those who we meet day by day in this village. Of the many who have no understanding of even the basics of the gospel.

Of the understanding as to the danger they are in. Of the understanding as to the glory. And the beauty that they are missing out on. Lord we ask you bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself.

[ 12 : 15 ] Give us a burden we ask this new year. Your people here. Give us a burden for this village. Help us to find every means possible. Every way you give us. To reach out to the gospel.

Help us we heard this morning. Not to be ashamed of declaring our love for our saviour. Help us Lord give us wisdom. To lay hold on every single opportunity. To proclaim the risen saviour.

To show in words and in practice the love of that saviour towards us. Help us as a congregation to be known in this community. As a people who are set aside loving and serving and worshipping their saviour.

As a good people. As a trustworthy people. As a people whose lives show that we are different. Forgive us once more for the times where our lives do not show that.

Forgive us for the times where as individuals and together as a church. We have been bad examples. Bad examples of our glorious saviour.

[ 13 : 13 ] In our words and actions. We have not carried out. We have not shown to be those who are loved and known by an eternal saviour.

Forgive us our sins Lord we ask. We come this evening bringing many sins before you. Many shortcomings. Many ways we have backslid against you. Many ways we have gone against you.

Many ways in our thoughts and our actions. In our very words that we have called evil out against you. Lord forgive us for these things we ask. We ask forgiveness in Christ's name.

For his sake it's him alone who sustains us this evening. It's him alone who perseveres. And allows us to persevere. Because he eternally is at your right hand. We can have a full hope.

There are places with him for all eternity. For we trust in him. We pray once more for the ill. The sick.

[ 14 : 09 ] The mourning. The sad. Those who feel lonely. Those who feel lost. Especially at this time of year. So many mixed emotions. Lord we bring all these things before you.

We can't even begin to list off the various needs we find even in this community. But you know the needs. We ask for days of refreshing. Days of renewal.

Days of revival. We ask for this year by year where our gospel grows in North Tulsa. Help us until we see the evidence of that fruit. To be faithful, diligent farmers.

Help us, each one of us. To daily sow that seed. To daily engage in the great and glorious gospel work. And yes, at times we go home as it were in tears after a hard day of work.

A hard day of gospel graft. Lord, we give you praise that you build your church. That we may plant and that we may water. That you alone give the increase.

[ 15 : 10 ] You alone bring the dead to life. Until these days of prosperity come. These days of blessing. These days of revival. Help us to serve you faithfully with what you have given us.

Help us to be diligent with the small things. And await the larger portion. Until these days of blessing. Help us to rely on Jesus and him alone. Our glorious saviour.

As we at times feel as if we're clinging on to him. We're reminded that he holds eternally on to us. In his name. For his precious name's sake.

We ask for his many things. Amen. We can read in God's word. Turning to the gospel of John chapter 16. John 16.

Then later on of course we'll turn back to Song of Solomon. But for a reading just now. John chapter 16. It's on page 849.

[ 16 : 06 ] John 16. Page 849. We can read from verse 16 of the chapter. John chapter 16. At verse 16.

This is of course Jesus talking to the disciples. Let's again hear the word of God. A little while and you will see me no longer.

And again a little while and you will see me again. So some of his disciples said to one another. What is this that he says to us? A little while and you will see me no longer.

Not see me. And again a little while and you will see me. And because I am going to the father. So they were saying. What does he mean by a little while?

We do not know what he is talking about. Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him. So he said to them. Is this what you are asking yourselves? What I meant by saying a little while and you will not see me.

[ 17 : 05 ] And again a little while and you will see me. Truly, truly I say to you. You will weep and lament. But the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful.

But your sorrow will turn to joy. When a woman is giving birth. She has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby. She no longer remembers the anguish.

For joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now. But I will see you again. And your hearts will rejoice. And no one will take your joy from you.

In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly I say to you. Whatever you ask of the Father in my name. He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing of my name.

Ask and you will receive. That your joy may be full. I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I no longer speak to you in figures of speech.

[ 18 : 04 ] But will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name. And I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. For the Father himself loves you.

Because you have loved me. I have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father. And I have come into the world. And now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.

His disciples said, Ah, now you are speaking plainly. And not using figurative speech. Now we know that you know all things. And do not need anyone to question you.

This is why we believe that you came from God. Jesus answered them. Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming. Indeed it has come.

And you will be scattered. Each to his own home. And will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone. For the Father is with me. I have said these things to you.

[ 19 : 02 ] But in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart. I have overcome the world. Amen. We go praise to God for his perfect and his glorious gospel truth.

Let's sing once more this time from the Scottish Psalter. And Psalm 74. The Scottish Psalter. Psalm 74. Verses 19.

Down to verse 23. The Scottish Psalter. Psalm 74. It's pretty obvious.

Our theme this evening. We sang in Psalm 55. About the dove. And here again we sing. About the dove. The turtle dove. And to the multitude do not thy turtle soul deliver.

The congregation of thy poor do not forget forever. And to thy covenant have respect. For e'er stark places be. Full of the habitations of horrid cruelty.

[ 20 : 05 ] Psalm 74. Verses 19 to 23. To God's praise. Beloved rejoice.

In the glist tatsächlich. It so passes. It so tomar Him.

It soheads. I do not forget it forever. But to mythird pied-sh trabajo restign, Forever I place in your sights.

for all the Corrections of all eternity.

O let not those that we o'er, Return not here with sin, Then those that we o'er, Get me some children by me, To them, O Lord, That my sound be, The rose that is thy Lord, In your hand,

[ 22 : 24 ] That our free rose, Still high that poor is mine, To not from the end, The voice of those, And thy enemies, Of those that you are never those, That our dear are against me, O God.

Let's turn back to the chapter we had in the morning, The Song of Solomon in chapter 2. The Song of Solomon chapter 2, On page 5 to 6.

The Song of Solomon chapter 2, On page 5 to 6, Looking at verse 14 together. O my dove, In the clefts of a rock, In the crannies of a cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely.

Just a very brief reminder, In case you're missing in the morning. We have been looking today, At verses 8 down to verse 14. We did verses 8 to 13, Of course, in the morning, And we saw these verses, They talk about Jesus and the church, And they told us, And they show us, Beautifully, What the Christian has to look forward to.

Verses 8 down to verse 13, Show us the Christian's future. The future. I said this evening, We'll see verse 14, Just briefly, As we see where we are now.

[ 24 : 31 ] And you see that, Don't you? You see the change in language. Verse 18, Verse 8, sorry, Down to verse 13, It's very much bold language, Very much outbears language, Outward language.

It's very much language that causes you to picture something somewhere else. The fig trees, The rain's gone, The winter's passed, There's singing out there, There's beauty out there.

And back to verse 14, We see, Jesus once more speaking to his church. Now what's even more glorious, It doesn't really impact us tonight, But just for us to note the beauty of it.

Remember this verse, This section as verse 8 shows us, This is the bride, This is the church, Thinking to ourselves, What Jesus has said to us.

And verses 8 down to verse 13, Is us as Christians, Thinking through our future, Looking forward to what lies ahead of us. And verse 14, Is once more Jesus speaking to us, It's us in our minds, Closing our eyes and thinking, What do they say to me?

[ 25 : 41 ] What words of love do they say to me? In verse 14, We hear these love, These words of love, Our saviour spoke to us, To those of us here who know him, Who love him.

These are the words of encouragement from Jesus, To those of us who know him, Who love him, Until we see the glory of verses 8, Down to verse 13. In other words, As long as we're still here on earth, As long as we're still on earth, Before we get to glory, Verse 14 speaks to us now.

Oh my dove, In the clefts of a rock, In the crannies of a cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely.

Just taking the verse as we have it, Just phrase by phrase, Or section by section. Oh my dove. Dove. This is how Jesus, Addresses his church.

Christian, This is how Jesus addresses you. Now the glorious thing is, When we use the word church, What are we saying? What is the church? Is the church colours and suits, And buildings?

[ 26 : 54 ] Of course it's not. What's the church? The church is the gathering, Of God's people. More specifically, The gathering of saints. But individually, We are Christians, Together we create and make up, God's church, God's kingdom.

So when Christ, Gives these instructions, And gives these encouragements, To the church, He's speaking to us as a whole, But also speaking, Individually to every single Christian, Here this evening.

Dear brother, Dear sister, All today's sermons, Are for you individually, But also for us together. That's the glory of the church. We said this before, But when you see the New Testament, All the promises, That Christ gives, His people.

All the promises, They're all in the plural. Why? Because they apply, To every single Christian, But also they apply, At the same time, To every Christian together, As the church.

So all that to say, Verse 14 applies to you, Brother, Dear sister, Myself, But applies to all of us together. Oh my dove. This is how Jesus describes you, Dear Christian.

[ 28 : 00 ] This is what He calls you. And we said this morning, That it's very much a modern thing, That we get a bit uncomfortable, Using romantic language, Using this beautiful, Deeply beautiful poetic language.

That again, We said this morning, That came into the church, From the early to mid-Victorian age onwards. So, Pre that, The Puritans, The reformers, The early church, They had no problem, In their own books, Their own sermons even, Speaking very, Very carefully, Very poetically, Very beautifully, About Christ, And their love for Him.

And Jesus has no shame, In using for His church, The most beautiful of words. This is, A very, Poetic, Very beautiful way, To describe us.

Oh my dove. Now we know, From other writings at the time, This was a commonly used, Poetic way of describing, Someone you love. This is a love poem, We said that this morning.

There's no shame in that, There's no embarrassment in that. That's why, And how Christ addresses His church. He loves us. So much, He says to us, Oh my dove.

[ 29 : 16 ] My dove. We are singularly precious, To Him. Jesus, Who made, And sustains, The whole of creation.

All things made through Him. All things made for Him. The whole of time, And space, And eternity. It is His. Galaxies, And planets, And things, We have no understanding about, And never will.

All His. But yet, It's to us, His people, That He gives, His love. Oh my dove.

The preciousness. How personal, How close an address that is. Dear Christian, Whatever you feel this evening, However far or close you feel, However far or close you felt to the Lord, This year gone by.

Now, This evening be reminded from God's word. When your saviour talks to you, And thinks about you, And brings you to the throne of grace, This is the language He is using.

[ 30 : 21 ] He loves you this much. Oh my dove. It's personal, It's close. Why though are we being called a dove? Well, We see in scripture, Of course there's various, Many connotations of that word dove.

The two most obvious examples. Well, First of all, We perhaps think of a dove, As a symbol of hope. A symbol of peace, I guess for us. But scripturally, It's a symbol of hope.

We think of Noah, And his dove, As a symbol of that, That new life is beginning. It's a symbol that, That the flood has passed. It's a symbol that, A symbol that God has kept His promises.

It's a good thing. But more often than not, In scripture, The dove is there, As a symbol, Not of hope, But at times of hopelessness.

A symbol of escape, Of mourning. Quite simply, It's because of the sound it makes. I don't know how, You love doves, Or how much you don't like doves.

[ 31 : 24 ] But it has to be said, The sound they make, If you listen to it certainly, It's certain I guess, It does sound, Quite mournful. And often, And we've had two examples this evening, And plenty more examples to choose from.

But we sang two examples this evening, Which showed us, That for this imagery, The dove, It's not a good image. It's there to remind us, Of where we truly are.

We sang just now in Psalm 74, I read it in the ESV, Do not deliver the soul of your dove, To the wild beasts. Do not forget the life, Of your poor forever.

Here we see the dove, As describing the people of God. The dove as vulnerable, The dove as terrified, The dove as facing the wild beasts, The small poor creature, Who is facing up against the evil, And the pain of this world.

We also sang Psalm 55, Where the psalmist, Says and declares, In the middle of his own misery, Oh, But it had the wings like a dove.

[ 32 : 27 ] I would fly away, And be at rest. I would wander away, Lodge in the wilderness. The dove, The image here, Needing to escape, Needing to find a place of rest, Away from the wind, And chaos, And turmoil of this world.

A creature in the wilderness, And the very rock of hiding. When Christ calls us his dove, He does so, Because like the dove, The image of a dove, The church, Yes, it's a symbol of hope, It's a symbol of peace, But also, The dove, And the church as a dove, It's a symbol of suffering, And of terror, Against the pain, And destruction of sin, In this world.

As we come this evening, We are here, Not in this building, But we're here as a church gathering, A church family, Brothers and sisters, Sons and daughters, Saints together.

And in one very real sense, We are here this evening, And around us, Is hopelessness. And around us, Is death.

For everyone who doesn't know the Lord this evening, And we include of course our brothers and sisters next door, And those who go to other churches. But taking in the whole of North Tulsa, All the people who live here, Everyone here in North Tulsa, Who knows and who loves the Lord.

[ 33 : 52 ] We are here together as one church in North Tulsa, Different congregations and dominations, But one church. And we're here as that dove, Against the world. The world doesn't understand it, The world doesn't grasp it, But here we are, As a symbol of hope and of peace, But also a symbol, Of sadness, Of pain, Of mourning, As we face the reality of this world.

So where are we? Where does Jesus find us? As this dove, Battered and bruised, Well, we're in the clefts of the rock, In the crannies of the cliff. The image here is pretty clear, isn't it?

We ourselves know this, When you walk around and you see, It's where doves live, The dove's nest. They're there on the cliff side, They're there in the wee nooks and crannies, They find a hole, And they make themselves a home in the rock.

Perhaps we're more familiar with seabirds, I'm very aware that, My congregation, Half this community is half Nishoch, They're perhaps more aware of the seabirds, Finding their home in the cliff faces.

You've got a port of nests, You can see them, You get a pair of binoculars, I have to, I'm getting so blind, The pair of binoculars, You can see them in their wee nooks and crannies, And you look long enough, And a bird pops out, A chick pops out, And you see them, So cosy looking, But you step back, Put down the binoculars, And you see, What they're against.

[ 35 : 24 ] A port of nests are there, There's a wind and storm, And a massive waves, Hitting against the rock face, And they're these wee birds, Just living, At the very edge of disaster, But that's where we find their home, In the chaos, In the sound, In the noise.



Is that not the perfect image of the church? We live every single day as Christians, And we see the chaos of this world, We see the sin in ourselves, And the sin in the world, We see the chaos, We see the destruction, We see the death, We see the misery, We see the decline, And we feel perhaps like, The dove on the rock, It's chaos outside, The wind and the rain, Battering against us, And we're there in the crannies, We're there in the nook of the rock, And we're hidden away, And it feels as if we can't leave, Because if we go outside, It's just chaos, And the glorious image here is, That's where the Lord finds us, Why? Because He is the rock, We aren't putting our hope, Or our trust in ourselves, Not in the free church, That one day will go, Not in this congregation, One day this congregation will be gone, We hope not for hundreds of years,

But maybe then even, One day our nation, May well be crumbled to the dust, Our hope is not in these things, Our hope is in the very rock, Of our salvation, Where the Christian, Where the dove, Where we find our hope, We find our security, The truth is friends, Even brothers and sisters in the faith, We will let each other down, As your minister, Although it pains me to say it, I will let you down, There is no one in this world, You will find, You can find your security in, Do not place your hope, Or your security in any man, Any group, Any person, It's in Jesus and Him alone, We find our hope as Christians, He is the unmovable, Unchanging rock, The dove finds her home in, And here we are, Against the waves and chaos of this world, He finds us in the rock,

And what does our Saviour say to us, Dear Christians this evening? O my dove, And the clefts of the rock, And the crannies of the cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, Quite simply, Jesus desires to see the beauty of His people, You think, I don't feel particularly beautiful this year, I don't feel like my face, Can be really seen by Jesus this year, I have made perhaps, A mess of things, My own walk before in this year, Has been bumpy, It's been a disaster at times, You might say, You might say, I've spent months, Weeks in darkness, Perhaps you might say, You might say, I've been such a poor example for Him, I've seen Him give me opportunities to share my faith,

And I ignored them, You might say, I've fallen behind in my public worship, I've fallen behind in my private devotion, I'm not given enough time, I don't care about Him enough, I don't love Him enough, What kind of beauty do I have, But He wants to look at me?

[ 39 : 02 ] All these things might be true, You might have had your brother, Your sister, An awful year, You might have served the Lord, In the worst way possible this year, The demand, The command, And it is a command here, Is unchanged, Christ says to you dear Christian, Let me see your face, Again, It's a command, Grammatically, It's a command, It's said in love, Yes, But it's still a command, Let me see, Your face, He desires to see the face, Of his precious, Bride, Why?

As we heard the last few weeks, And the last week itself, Because He loves you dear Christian, He actually, Truly, Loves you, It's not mechanical, It's not forced, It's not some process, He must go through, No, He, Out of His free, Sovereign, Eternal, Love, And grace, He chooses, To love, You, Dear brother, Dear sister, This evening, You can know, Despite how, Dirty you might think, Your face feels before Him, He loves you, I desire to see, Your face, More than that, He desires to hear, Your voice, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, For your voice is sweet, And we think, Well, I don't praise Him well, Not talking about our musical ability,

That's not important, In one sense of this evening, But I don't praise Him well, I don't pray as I ought, I don't witness about Him as I ought, There's nothing lovely about me, There's nothing sweet about me, And yet we go back to the verse, And Jesus says to us once more, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, Your voice is sweet, Your face is lovely, Friends, Brothers and sisters, Let Him see your face, Appear before Him in prayer, Day by day, Appear before Him in worship, Publicly, Week by week, Appear before Him as you go about your daily business, Bring yourself before Him, And declare that you are there, That you love Him, Let Him hear your voice, Let Him hear your voice, Despite how low you might feel, How far away you might feel, Be in worship, Privately and publicly, Be in worship, Worship the one who says,

Your voice is lovely, Your face is lovely, Your voice is sweet, I should say, You might think, Perhaps this year you thought, He's had enough of me, Or worse than that perhaps, You might think, Well He's heard enough from me, I've been praying for the same things, For ten years, Twenty years, Thirty, Forty plus years, I've been falling into the same sins, And asking for the same forgiveness, For ten years, Twenty years, Thirty years, Forty years plus, My face has the same stains on it, The same dirt on it, As it's had done for the last X amount of years, As we come to the end of this year, Once more we come back to the verse, And there's no caveats, There's no wee numbers down the bottom of the page, That says something different, Quite simply we hear, And we read together, That Jesus says to his glorious,

Precious dove, In the clefts of the rock, In the crannies of the cliff, He says to you, And to me dear brother, dear sister, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, For your voice is sweet, And your face, Is lovely, He is, The one who knows us, And who sees us, And yes we make a mess of things, And yes we're a disaster at times as Christians, But he loves us, And the truth is, That we are beautiful, We are beautiful, This is not just some airy out there thing, We are beautiful, Why?

[ 43 : 38 ] Because we're covered with what? With his righteousness, We're covered by him, If we know him, If we love him, We've been covered by him, Bought that precious price, We sing often in Psalm 45, Where it describes the queen arrayed in the gold, That is us, That is us, That is you, You are arrayed in gold, You can't buy it, You can't afford it, It's not yours, He gives it to you, He has made you beautiful, And because you're covered in his righteousness, When he says you are beautiful, We have to believe him, If he says, You're beautiful to me dear church, We say, I'm not, Then we're saying he's not beautiful, Because we're covered in his glory, You see, There's no escape for us here, He says you are beautiful, I love your face, I love your voice, It is lovely to me, It is sweet to me, And he means it,

As we come to our final time, This year of looking up to Jesus, Of, Of reminding ourselves of the glory and wonder of Jesus, This is our final reminder, That we worship our Saviour, Who truly, And who precisely, Loves, Us, Not in that, Soft, Useless way, But in a real, Solid, Eternal way, He loves us, And he's loved you dear Christian, From before time itself, You know that, We've covered this before, Ephesians 1, Ephesians 2, He's loved you from before time itself, Before creation, Before the universe, Sparked in the light, Before he commanded its creation, By the words of his mouth, He has set his love on you dear Christian, He knew you before then,

He saw you before then, And the fullness of time, He knew, He would call you out of this world to himself, Out of darkness to light, From death to life, Because he loves you.

Leave this new year behind, This old year behind, As you say, Leave this old year far behind, Of all the ways you have perhaps made a mess of your walk, All the times you have added dirt to your faces, As it were, All the times your voice was used for many things other than praising him, And this new year remind yourself, The words of the Saviour here, As he commands us to see our face, As he commands us to raise our voices and worship to him, Because to Jesus, The voice of his people is sweet, And to Jesus, Our face is lovely.

Until he comes to collect us, Until, As we've heard this morning from verses 8 down to verse 13, Until he calls us out of this world, Here is where we are.

[ 46 : 50 ] We're under rock, as it were, Facing all the variety of storm and attack from this world, But we're safe and secure in him, Being looked upon by one who calls us beautiful, Who loves us.

That is the Christians hope at the end of this past year, That is the Christians hope a few hours away from this new year. Until he calls us home, Until the day of singing as it were begins, Until we can say the winter has passed, And the rain is over and gone, Until that day, Here we are, In the rock, Singing our praises to our Lord, Seeking to live a life that glorifies him, Seeking to sow these gospel seeds in Tolstah, In our homes and our places of work, Until he calls us home to himself, Until that day comes, We're in the rock, And we're there, Singing his praises, We're there reflecting back of ourselves, His beauty.

That is the glorious saviour we worship, That is the one who says to us, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice, For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely.

When's all end? How's all end? Let's read the last two verses. My beloved is mine, And I am his, He grazes among the lilies, Until the day breathes, And the shadows flee, Turn my beloved like a gazelle, A young stag on the cleft mountains, Until the day breathes, And the shadows flee, Until the day breaks, And the shadows flee away, Until the day of darkness is over, Until we see the glorious morning light, Of the new heavens and new earth, We keep on serving him, We keep on worshipping him, Knowing that he has gone before us, He won't leave us, Nor forsake us, This new year, The next 10 years, 20 years ahead of us, However long he gives us, Because he loves us, He thinks we are beautiful, Because he himself, Has saved us, And called us, And purchased us, For his own precious people, His own precious gift,

Let's bow our heads now, A word of prayer, Well we thank you for the, Once more of it, The glorious gift of your word, Lord, As we read these things, Things which we, Perhaps affirm, And understand of our hearts, Which are so hard for us, To truly apply to ourselves, We give you praise, That your word assures us, That every word that you say, Is true and right, As we come to the end, Of this year, A year perhaps, Where we feel less than lovely, Where we feel less than glorious, Help us to understand, That we find our full hope, Our full glory, Our full beauty, In the risen Lord Jesus, And who he is, And what he has done for us, We can know for certain, At the end of this year, Beginning this next new year, We can know for certain, That he loves us, That he calls us precious, He calls us precious, He calls us his own precious dove, And he calls out to us, As we heard this morning, That the day is coming, And it's been approaching, Where all this will pass away,

[ 50 : 09 ] And we'll hear the day of singing in the land, Until that day comes, Help us then to serve you faithfully, And to serve you well, Pray Lord, To be in the end, To this new year, It will be one where, Some here, Come to know, And come to serve, And come to love Jesus, For themselves, Help us, We close this evening, To go home in safety, And to go home in peace, And to know, That you are near, To all who cry out to you, Ask all these things, In and through, And for Jesus, For his precious name's sake, Amen.

We'll bring our time of worship, To a conclusion, We're going to sing to God's praise, From the Psalter, And Psalm 126, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 126, And it's a psalm, We've sung many times, The past few months, But it's one which speaks, Of course, Of God's church, Which speaks of our reality, As Christians, As we go forth into the world, We often do so in tears, And in mourning, But we trust that he, Will build his church, In North Tolstair.

Psalm 126, When Zion's bondage, God turned back, As men that dreamed were we, Then thought of laughter, Was our mouth, Our tongue of melody, Among the heathens, Said the Lord, Great things for them have wrought, And the Lord have done great things for us, When joy to us is brought.

Psalm 126, The whole psalm, To God's praise. God's praise. When Zion's bondage, God turned back, As men that dreamed were we, Then felled with laughter, From ■■■■■■, Again, From ■■■■■■, Ber spot.

venom ■■■■■■ Thanks for them, Iv■har qualms the whhrowych. Until Welt debates. Heard home from His former altar. Isma'n de ceiling, If- Give things fun and power The mark hath done Give things fun and power And joy to our dear God And we love what e Ling' Cher Adequent Are what..." as Lod minutes And five times Give things fun and joy

[ 53 : 07 ] Sing along with joy Give things fun and love joy and joy, is Provine from Andi.

The mapping of earth rush as me ded o in Zmod Give us the very blackest sheets Rejoice in our freedom With the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Both you now and forevermore Amen Amen