

A Mountain Made Low

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 September 2022

Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[0 : 0 0] now as the Lord enables us let us for a short while turn again to the chapter we've read together on the book of Psalms and chapter 72 and focusing again in particular on the words of verse 16 as our text there shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth we read at the beginning of the psalm that this is a psalm for Solomon and at the very end of the psalm in verse 20 it says the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended so it looks as if

David at the very end of his days seeing Solomon as his God appointed successor that he gives his blessing to Solomon and prays on his behalf the opening verse of the psalm give the king thy judgments O God and thy righteousness unto the king's son and quite quickly after that opening petition on behalf of his son Solomon David is led by the Holy Spirit to speak of one who is greater than Solomon he is speaking in particular throughout the psalm of the king of kings and the lord of lords he is speaking particularly about the lord Jesus Christ now in a limited sense

Solomon Solomon was a king like Jesus during his time there was much peace in the land of Israel there was much plenty among the people but David sees in Solomon a more glorious king and that king was the king of the church even the lord Jesus Christ and throughout the psalm he highlights various aspects of his reign for example it says in verse 7 Solomon in his days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures and then he shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth

Solomon did not have that kind of jurisdiction but the lord Jesus does he is the king of all the earth and then it goes on verse 9 they who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him his enemies shall lick the dust kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents the kings of Sheba and Sheba shall offer gifts yea all kings shall fall down before him all nations shall serve him clearly speaking of someone much greater than Solomon and these words find the realisation in the lord Jesus Christ verse 12 he shall deliver the needy when he cries the poor also and him that has no helper he shall spare the poor and needy and shall save the souls of the needy redeem their soul from deceit and violence and precious shall their blood be in his sight and he shall live and to him shall be given the gold of Sheba prayer also shall be made for him continually and daily shall he be praised those who come under his blessed influence are willing to part with the best that they have even the gold of Sheba which was particularly precious will happily and readily be given to him just as everyone into whose lives the blessing of God has come happily give themselves in service to the lord Jesus Christ prayer also shall be made for him continually and this particular phrase in verse 15 has posed a problem to some people but it really means that those who have the lord's cause close to their heart pray for its success pray for the blessing of the gospel to be bestowed richly upon mankind and the people address the lord Jesus Christ the mediator that he might bestow blessings upon a needy world prayer shall be made for him for his cause continually and daily shall he be praised so the psalm really is highlighting the lord Jesus Christ and verse 16 in particular

I wanted to highlight there shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth I'd like to say a few words under three headings in relation to verse 16 first of all he's talking about a particular location the earth upon the top of the mountains secondly the handful of corn that will be placed in the earth on the top of the mountains and thirdly the fruit that is to be born as a result the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon I want to focus in particular on this verse as an illustration of the work of God in the experience of the individual

[8 : 02] Christian the individual sinner in need of salvation the individual Christian journeying on through life firstly it talks here about a particular location it says that there shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains from the top of the mountains now that illustrates to me the kind of nature we have as fallen sinners what is true of the top of the mountains well first of all they're high there are some mountains higher than others of course but let's think of let's say Mount Everest the top of that highest of all mountains as an illustration of the way we as sinners are in the presence of God what is true about a sinner when the sinner is likened to being like the top of a mountain well it's very very high what does that point to

I think it points to the pride of man man by nature thinks himself higher than he needs to bow down before Christ he doesn't need Christ he doesn't need salvation it's as if he is living in that rarefied atmosphere of self sufficiency and self importance the bible says thou would save the afflicted people but would bring down high looks and then it says also in Proverbs chapter 6 six things that the Lord hate yea seven are an abomination to him first is a proud look man by nature is so proud doesn't need God and in

Psalms number 10 verse 4 it says the wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God God is not in all his thoughts that's that's how high by nature we think we are we don't need God God is not in our thoughts the height of the mountain secondly under this first heading thinking particularly of mountains as high as Mount Everest and some even lower than that there is intense cold intense cold and that is true regarding the human soul and the human heart as we are by nature we are estranged from God remember that God after man sinned God cast him forth from the garden of Eden as it were he cast him forth from the center of fellowship and spiritual warmth into the cold wilderness and that's the way we are by nature we need to be warmed there's an amazing picture in 2nd

Kings chapter 4 of when the woman of Shunem's son died and Elisha came and by the grace and power of God that child was brought back to life there's a very interesting detailed account in 2nd Kings 4 around verse 34 it says Elisha stretched himself upon the child and the flesh of the child walked warm and that's exactly an illustration of what God does by his grace by his love in his mercy to those who are frozen by their self importance and self sufficiency in the heights of their own self righteousness feeling they don't need

God nevertheless like Elisha drew near the child and embraced it the child walks warm and that's what God does with us the third thing under this first heading we've spoken about the height and the cold of the mountain now there is the hardness of the rock or the hardness of the ground there is hard rock the top of the mountain I mean you don't find a farmer deliberately taking his equipment to the top of a mountain and planting seed he wouldn't do that it's too cold too hard unproductive but we see here that that's exactly where the

[14 : 04] Lord sees fit to cast his handful of grain what does it mean that this mountain top is so hard well it's an illustration of the hardness of our hearts isn't it Ezekiel was led by the Lord to write these words a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes ye shall keep my judgments and do them the Lord takes away the stony heart of unbelief and he gives us a heart of flesh upon which his own commands and law are written and this is all under the influence and direction of the great king spoken of by

David here he's looking at Solomon but he's seen beyond Solomon down to the coming of the Messiah and he walks as eloquent in relation to the mighty work of the Messiah as saviour and lord of his people and however high the mountains are however cold they are however hard they are they are no problem to the lord Jesus Christ when he sends his word and his spirit into our hearts and into our lives and that brings us to the second point it says here there shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains a handful of corn it's not a lot of corn handful nevertheless it is sufficient for the lord to use as an illustration of the work of his holy spirit in applying the scriptures savingly to fallen men it is by

God's word and spirit that people are enlightened in their minds in the knowledge of themselves as sinners their knowledge of the danger in which they are on the road to eternity without a savior they are enlightened in their mind regarding their sin and their misery their inability to correct the situation in which they find themselves we cannot save ourselves and we need to be taught that and that is part of the teaching of God's spirit upon us when this handful of corn that is the word of God in the hand of the spirit comes into our lives into our minds into our affections into our will with great power and we see our need of

God and of salvation there shall be a handful of corn in the earth in the tops of the mountains with the illustration carried forward the height of self sufficiency and pride the hardness of unbelief and everything else regarding your sin but when the Lord by his spirit comes into our lives this corn begins to grow begins to grow some of us are old enough to remember fields of oats around in our villages on the crops and after having sown the oats you wait until the first blades appear and when it comes to the time when the corn begins to grow sometimes you think yes

I think it's growing but when you look at another angle no I don't think it's there at all depending on the light depending on the angle you're looking at and that's the way it is sometimes with the work of the spirit it's as people don't realize how slowly it grows and how seemingly fragile it is and sometimes they realize I don't think it's growing at all I don't think grace has come at all but then a shaft of light comes and they see that it is there they know that the light shows them that there is growth there is a new beginning in the experience of those who are being blessed by the Lord a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountain the

[20 : 11] Lord does his work of preparation by his spirit in grace and in providence I mean the Lord knows exactly where we are what our needs are what our particular situation is and he brings us face to face with his word in such a way that that word is personalized to ourselves and it's as if we see our situation spoken of in the infallible scripture and we cannot get away from what it says about us and the seed takes root deeper and deeper root in our hearts and in our life a handful of corn handfuls of corn have been shed abroad in this community for years

I mean the corn of the gospel the corn of the word of God we have had sermon upon sermon preached to us down through the years and our prayer is that that seed if it hasn't already taken root that it will take root despite our hardness despite our pride and our sin despite all the problems of cold heartedness against the word of God and the things of God that that word would take root in our lives and bear fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life that is the handful of corn I'm just touching on these things and thirdly it mentions in this verse the fruit thereof shall shake like

Lebanon the location the corn and fruit what kind of fruit is born by this corn well ordinary corn bears fruit exactly according to the nature of the seed that is sown and the spiritual corn that is sown in our hearts by the Holy Spirit bears a spiritual fruit also and when you think of what the apostle Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter 5 and verse 22 you get a light on what he's talking about the fruit of the Spirit he said is love and joy peace long suffering gentleness goodness faith meekness and temperance that's the fruit that you and

I need to be looking for on a Thursday evening of preparatory services for our communion the fruit of the Spirit is one fruit with different aspects to it it says in the singular the fruit of the Spirit and then he starts off with this aspect of the fruit love when the gospel comes into our experience with power it is a gospel that assures us of the love of God and it makes us able to respond in love to the God who loves us the meaning of the word in the original leads us to this kind of

English rendering it is benevolence giving and that's what God does when God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son and when the power of the gospel comes into our experience the power of God's love comes into our experience we are made willing to give ourselves to him we love him because he first loved us do we find that love in our heart and then there is also love joy joy the word here joy means having a calm delight in something and when the power of

[25 : 59] God Spirit comes to deal with us in a saving way it gives us the grace to delight ourselves in God we no longer delight in worldliness as we used to or in sinfulness or in self sufficiency or in self righteousness the focus has moved from self to him and we love him and we delight ourselves in him it says there in Psalm 37 delight thyself in God he'll give thine heart's desire to thee love joy the third aspect of this fruit born through the handful of corn in the top of the mountains is peace love joy peace and very central central to this word peace is a coming together adjoining together and that's true is it not you come together as it were to embrace the

Lord Jesus Christ you embrace him by faith and although you cannot see him you love him and you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory and although you don't see him you see his people and you love his people and you love his word because you believe it's inspired by his spirit and you want it to be the rule of life in your private life and your public life all that comes as a result of the fact that you have this fruit of the spirit peace you are joined with him and you rest in him and that makes you prosperous with spiritual prosperity and then he goes on he's talking about long suffering well two words in the

English illustrate what this long suffering involves forbearance firstly forbearance patience and also fortitude in the face of adversity and difficulty he makes us patient in the midst of trial things are often difficult for the Christian in life but by the grace of God we have long suffering also gentleness goodness faith meekness and temperance gentleness this is a demeanor of our personality we are no longer angry men or angry women as we may have been he has taken he has taken the anger out of our soul to this extent that the

Holy Spirit makes us gentle in our disposition and then goodness we seek to do good because good has been done to us we seek to do good to those around faith basically this is conviction in the truth of the scripture conviction in what God says reliance upon what Christ has done committing yourselves to him as our only hope for time and for eternity meekness means humility no longer pride rules and temperance means self control there will be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains maybe we can see ourselves in that very graphic picture that we have been as it were warmed by

God's grace despite the fact that we have been so proud and self sufficient and self centred before by his spirit he has come and warmed our hearts and given us to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as he has freely offered to us in the gospel the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon what an amazing picture the commentators on these verses they talk about excuse me the cedars of Lebanon and in the high hills of Lebanon when the cedars were in in flower and in foliage the wind blowing through them was just a memorable thing to witness it's as if the whole place was singing as it were when the holy spirit the wind was blowing through them and he says that's the way it is with the people of God the fruit thereof the fruit of the spirit will make itself known in the way we love in the way we have joy peace long suffering and so on we will make ourselves known by the way we live and then it says they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth not only the mountain tops but they in the cities the Lord will reach us wherever we are he will find his elect and he will apply to them the redemption purchased by Christ nothing can stop this work is a work that he fulfills and David saw that and he rejoiced when he says his name shall endure forever and his name shall be continued as long as the son it's as if he's saying

[33 : 22] I am about to die the prayers of David the son of Jesse are in but his work goes on and the work of the gospel goes on in every age to the end of the world and they used to say and we heard it often said the world will remain as long as God has one soul to save and once the last soul has been saved there will be no reason for the earth to continue because all of God's people have been gathered in well whether that is accurate or not certainly there are a lot of truth in it at the end his name shall be praised by all who taste that he is gracious and we pray that each one of us will join that chorus of praise and singing in our lives day by day amen

I'd like to ask Donnie McLeod to lead us in prayer at the end again our God we bless you and give you thanks that we can gather round your word this time we thank you that your word is a living word and it speaks to our very hearts and our very souls and we pray our God that what we've seen and heard this night would indeed be blessed to us the singing of your praise the reading of your word and having your word opened up to us we thank you our God for our many gospel privileges we know that as a people we've indeed been truly blessed by you and how we pray that through your word that you would be pleased to build us up with a body of people that as we come together to praise your name even this night that our souls be blessed for being in the presence of

God we thank you for your promise that if even two or three gathered your name that you are there with them and how we know our God that you are indeed here with us that you are here blessing us that you are here teaching us that you are here building us up in our faith and we pray our God that we would love you more and more through being together and rejoicing in the good news of salvation that comes through Christ we thank you again our God for this weekend that we look forward to we pray oh God that as we come together again to remember the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that we've come humbled before you rejoicing in you thanking you oh God that you have done for us what we could not do for ourselves thanking you oh God as we remember the death of our Saviour and yet we remember too oh

Lord that we do not worship a Saviour who is dead and although we are asked to remember his death we too do remember his resurrection and we bless you oh God even this night that the grave could not hold our Saviour down we thank you that he conquered the grave we thank you oh God that our Saviour rose the third day our Saviour has ascended into heaven our Saviour sits at the right hand of God the Father and he is the one who has saved our souls we thank you that although we could not save ourselves Jesus has done all that work for us and we pray oh God that your blessing would indeed be upon us this weekend from what we've heard this night from what we hope to hear over the weekend that you spiritual Lord would go forth amongst us convicting converting building us up in our faith challenging those who are still strangers to grace and to God and may in all these things may you be glorified may you be exalted and may we praise you watch over us and keep us now and forgive all our sins for Jesus us seek and we'll conclude our worship but this time singing from psalm 72 and the verses we have spoken of or been speaking about psalm 72 verse 16 to the end of the psalm of corn and handful in the earth on tops of mountains high with prosperous fruit shall shake like trees on Lebanon that be the city shall be flourishing your citizens abound in number shall like to the grass that grows upon the ground his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the

Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone doth wondrous works in glory that excel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let it be psalm 72 from verse 16 to the end of corn and handful in the earth another i know none will sprint shall never hum pandale shall sentiments light shall light them and other o I'll shake thy feet, but let alone my feet.

[39 : 48] The city shall be flourishing, her sick descends a pound.

In the armor shall life turn the grass that rolls upon the grass.

The sleep shall ever shall endure, lost like the sun their child.

Men shall be blessed in heaven and blessed, on this shall shall be flourished.

Now blessed be the Lord, the Lord, the Lord of Israel.

[41 : 17] For thee, my Lord, the wondrous works in glory that I excel.

And blessed be the Lord, the Lord of Israel. Amen.

The whole earth is glory full. Amen.

Soledadis. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.