

Weeping and Returning

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[0 : 00] Let us now read from the Old Testament from the Book of Ruth on Chapter 1. The Book of Ruth on Chapter 1, reading from verse 6 down to verse 21.

Joshua judges Ruth for Samuel. Verse 6. Then she arose, that is, Naomi, with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.

For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said to her, two daughters-in-law, go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me.

The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept.

[1 : 19] And they said unto her, surely we will return with thee unto thy people. Naomi said, turn again, my daughters, why will you go with me?

Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way. For I am too old to have a husband.

If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons, would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands?

Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again.

Dothba kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back unto her people and unto her gods.

[2 : 22] Return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee.

For whither thou goest, I will go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

Where thou diest, will I die. There will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, of aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they too went, until they came to Bethlehem, and came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara. For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.

[3 : 31] Why then call ye me Naomi? Seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me. Amen, and may God bless to us that reading from his truth.

Let us further sing to his praise from Psalm 60. Psalm 60, and at verse 3. Psalm 60, and at verse 3. Unto thy people thou hard things hast showed, and on them sent.

Thou hast caused us to drink wine of astonishment. Yet a banner thou hast given to them who thee do fear, that it by them because of truth displayed may appear, that thy beloved people may delivered be from thrall, save with the power of thy right hand, and hear me when I call.

These verses unto thy people thou hard things hast showed. Psalm 79, and on them sent.

The divine people thou hard things hast shown. And live- drought,■■■, coments based hon■■■ of doom or doom or doom or doom or doom or doom, hole or doom or doom. on them■■■■■■■■ known masses had thenen after record, ele■ picquetical reflect as theyurde■■ront Veterans Trust Sc■■amropol into sons of respect for last■■■■■ year. Let us go on and on and stand, and let us cross the glass to drink, while the love has only shown.

[5 : 19] And let us cross the glass to drink, while the love has only shown.

Let us cross the glass to drink, while the love has only shown.

All thy bright hand, and hear me when I come.

Let us now turn to the passage that we read, and we may read again at verse 6.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.

[6 : 58] Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.

This morning, for the benefit of any who may not have been present, we looked at the opening verses of this chapter, and of this little book under three headings.

The dating of the story, the decision taken by one family, and the disastrous outcome of that decision.

An astute listener asked me a question at the close of the service, and asked me was there any significance in the fact that Malon and Hylan are described as Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah.

I told them that they were the children of God's children of God. But the scripture doesn't say that they had in any way made use of the privileges afforded to them, and that they had married wives from a country that was in the grip of idolatry.

[8 : 24] But the term Ephrathites is just an old term for Bethlehem. That's just what it means.

And at the heart of the word is the term fruitful. And so you could say that in going to the country of Moab, that they left the fruitful area.

Turn their back on it and you can expand on the nature of fruitfulness, not just in the literal sense, but in the spiritual sense. And they went out into a spiritual desert.

And before I consider this evening for a little the resolve of the three women of whom the writer speaks, I wish to draw attention to the number of times the word return, or a form or a variation of that word, is found in the words in the passage that we have read.

Verse 6, verse 7, verse 8, verse 10, verse 11, 12, 15, 16, and in 22, which we didn't read, it occurs twice.

[9 : 48] And I would suggest that this section of the chapter is about returning. That's where the emphasis falls on returning.

And that, I believe, is very significant. But the return journeys of these three women is very different.

We are told two times that they lifted up their voices and wept. And we know that people weep because of difficult providence.

People weep when they are emotionally upset. People sometimes weep when they are faced with partings.

Not necessarily permanent partings, but just partings from members of family. But especially when the parting may occur through death.

[10 : 51] Those whom they dearly love in life. And it can be a time of weeping. People even weep under the gospel.

Of itself it is no indication of a heart broken by grace or mourning over sin.

I repeat, of itself. But it may be a pointer to that. Nor must we think that weeping is merely a gender issue.

In this passage it is three women who were weeping. And some might be tempted into thinking that it is a female trait. As if men do not weep.

That they are too macho to weep. Not true. We know from the Bible that men also wept. For example, Abram wept on the death of Sarah his wife.

[11 : 57] Joseph wept when he saw Benjamin his brother. And he looked for a place where he might weep in secret.

David wept on the news of the death of his son Absalom. And you remember how he lamented the death of that wayward son.

Despite his rebellion. And so on. In the New Testament, Peter undenying Christ wept. He went out and wept bitterly.

And who was so macho as Peter. And yet, the Bible tells us how he wept bitterly.

And then, I think most significant, the Lord himself wept. At the grave of Lazarus. And I think every believer ought to be glad that they have a Savior who can weep.

[13 : 02] There are different reasons for his weeping that we won't go into at the moment. But he wept at the grave of Lazarus. Well, these three women wept.

It was a highly charged, emotional moment. And partings in life can be just that. However, I would like to suggest that their weeping is not merely to be understood as a result of an emotional parting.

I would like to suggest that they wept for different reasons. Arpah wept because she regretted leaving Moab.

And so she returned. Ruth wept because she regretted that she had not left Moab before now. She was reborn.

Naomi wept because she regretted that she had ever left the land of covenant promises. She was being restored.

[14 : 13] And I hope that reading and reflecting briefly on their lives this evening will help us read our own lives more honestly in the sight of Almighty God.

In fact, the stories of Arpah, Ruth and Naomi represent three very different but very common responses to the Lord, especially in his sovereign, providential dealings with us, particularly when suffering and hardship occur in our lives.

So in Arpah we might say we have a picture of the nearly persuaded. In Ruth, a picture of the fully persuaded.

And then in Naomi, a restored, backslidden believer. What prompted their return? What made them make this journey to return?

Naomi, we are told, has received word that the Lord has at last visited his people in Judah and provided food for them.

[15 : 27] We don't know how long that took to filter through or how it was communicated to them. The famine, as I said in the morning, in the land was a consequence of divine discipline.

It was designed, I believe, to awaken the people and call them back to the Lord. And the discipline of the Lord is only ever temporary in the lives of his children.

Now he has visited them in mercy, provided again their daily bread. Moab was supposed to be the place of plenty instead for this family.

For this family, it was the scene of deep anguish and loss in their lives. But now that God has visited Israel, Naomi resolves to make the return journey along with her daughters-in-law.

And so this evening, three thoughts. In the morning, three days. This evening, three hours. The returnee, the reborn, and the restored.

[16 : 46] The returnee, the reborn, and the restored. The returnee, Arba. Let's think about her story first of all.

Look at verses 6 and 7. The three women set off together for the land of Judah. And I have to emphasize, as I did in the morning, for the land of Judah, not the country.

But Naomi knows she can offer her daughters-in-law no prospect of improvement in their destitute circumstances should they continue with it.

And so she urges them to return. Verse 8. Go return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

And you notice there is nothing acrimonious about this proposed separation. You know, people speak of mother-in-law syndrome.

[17 : 54] I don't know if there's such a thing because I can't say I ever experienced it. But there is no evidence of mother-in-law syndrome in this setting that the writer places before us.

Naomi blesses her daughters-in-law. She invokes the covenant name of Almighty God and she seeks to send them home, back again, to their Moabite relatives or families.

She appears to believe that their best hopes of a better life lies than finding new husbands for themselves.

And she knows it would be extremely unlikely, humanly speaking, that any Israelite would even notice a widowed Moabite girl.

To be a Moabite, not to mention a widow, a Moabite widow in Judah in these days, was to be marked as an outcast and an outsider.

[19 : 07] And so in verses 8 and 9, Naomi is trying hard to spare her daughters-in-law the grief that their circumstances, it appears to her, would inevitably entail.

And notice the initial reaction to Naomi's first speech on the part of these two Moabite women. It tells us at the least that these three have become very close to one another, doesn't it?

She kissed them. They all wept together. And both Ruth and Arpah say in verse 10, and you notice what they say, surely we will return with thee unto thine own people.

In other words, they're rejecting the suggestion that Naomi is making. But Naomi is insistent in her response that they do not follow her.

Verses 11 to 13, Turn back. Turn again, my daughters. Why will you go with me? And so this is the crunch moment.

[20 : 15] It's the moment of decision. Naomi's language, at one level, it seems strange, doesn't it? She is encouraging them to return to the country of idolatry.

God's blessing was associated with the land of promise, not the country of idolatry. The bread of God is not to be found in Moab, but in Bethlehem, the house of bread.

And Naomi, on one level, is telling her daughters-in-law here, there is no possibility of happiness for you. If you come with me, the situation is hopeless.

Go back, return. And now look carefully at verse 14. They lifted up their voice and wept again, and Dorpa kissed her mother-in-law.

It was to be a part in kiss. Affectionate, loving, it may have been.

[21 : 24] But it was the kiss of separation nevertheless, and the consequences were dire. because we do not hear of this young woman again.

The kiss was indicative of Arpa's rejection of life with the people of God. And as verse 15 makes play, that was the moment in which Arpa turned back.

She returned. But she doesn't return with Naomi and Ruth to Bethlehem. She takes Naomi's advice. She went back to Moab. She started on the journey.

Didn't she? She began it. And it looks a little while like Naomi would return with two daughters-in-law joining themselves to the people of God in the land of promise.

But Naomi's bleak portrait of a hopeless future soon overcomes any sense of personal loyalty to her mother-in-law that Arpa may have felt.

[22 : 38] And she turned back. The land of covenant blessing holds no attraction for this woman Arpa.

Both Ruth and Arpa walk together along the road for a while. Both in apparent harmony outwardly one with the other. But as is clear from the story as it develops their hearts lay in very different directions.

They both appeared to respond in the same way to the same circumstance for a season. But while Ruth went on Arpa turned back.

Now some of you here this evening have made the journey from Moab to Bethlehem haven't you? It is symbolic of turning from idols to the living God.

And some of you have made that journey. You've turned from Moab to Bethlehem. You've turned from idols to serve the living God. You've heard how the Lord has visited his people.

[23 : 54] And you have turned your back on the world and you have come to serve Jesus Christ. But let me ask are there any present who have walked for a season on the road and you seem to offer bright hope that you too had come to trust in the God of covenant mercy who has visited his people.

But it is the truth when the prospects ahead looked hard and the real cost of making the journey became plain. You turned back.

Is that true? Do you remember what Jesus said on one occasion? To the scribe who answered wisely you are not far from the kingdom of God.

It's a very sad description. You are not far from the kingdom of God. Within touching distance of the kingdom but not seeing the king.

Maybe you're here this evening because you love a husband or a wife or a parent or a friend who follows Jesus and you're deeply committed to them.

[25 : 19] You honor them just as much as Arpah honored Naomi her mother-in-law. But you know personal loyalty the religion of your family the traditions that you were brought up in is not enough to break the attraction of Moab.

Everything minus Jehovah in Moab. and that's the choice that Arpah makes. She chooses the familiar the temporal and the visible.

The world always looks an easier home than the difficult prospects that will face anyone who seeks a place among the people of God.

And if all you have is love for tradition love for family but you have no love for the Lord Jesus Christ you will surely turn back. Your heart will be like the illustration that is given of the seed sown in rocky soil.

It immediately sprang up but since it had no depth of soil the sun soon scorched it and because there was no root it withered away.

[26 : 43] And Jesus says that person is the one who hears the word immediately receives it with joy yet because you have no root in yourself though you endure for a while tribulations or persecutions arise on account of the word immediately you fall away.

Oh how we need to search our hearts in the light of Arpah's turning back. do not be like the rich young man.

You remember him? He came to Jesus with his questions and after speaking with Christ and being confronted by Christ with the cost of discipleship he went away sorrowful because his possessions were great.

The cost for him of following Jesus was just too demanding. You see the attractive pull of Moab is very strong.

So be sure that your pilgrimage to the land of promise is not a temporary diversion from the broad road that leads to destruction.

[28 : 03] Do not be almost persuaded. The returnee the verdict of scripture is she has gone back to her people and to her idols to her gods back to her gods and her idols.

It's such a heart breaking picture isn't it? As you watch her walk away not just walk away from her mother-in-law and Ruth walk away out of the pages of the Bible.

You don't hear about her anymore. Walk away out of the life of Ruth and Naomi. Walk away from God on the blessings that he promises.

It's a heartbreaking picture. You wouldn't want anyone to be like that. Well that's the returnee.

Secondly the reborn Ruth. Look at verses 15 to 18. If Arpa is almost persuaded Ruth becomes a new believer doesn't she?

[29 : 24] You notice how Naomi rounds on Ruth and tells her to do the same as Arpa. Behold your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods return after your sister-in-law.

As if Naomi were saying to Ruth of you too had any sense you would follow Arpa. And Ruth replies in words that are possibly among some of the best known well known words in the Old Testament it's a most memorable reply.

Look at what she says and treat me not to leave you to turn from following after you and so on. And you notice the affirmation that she makes here goes above and beyond marital vows.

you know when two are joined together in matrimony they are promising to be together until death do them part. But you notice what Ruth says here she goes further than that.

Your people shall be my people your God my God where you die I will die and there will I be buried. You know you're not asked in your marriage vows to promise to be buried with the person you're marrying.

[30 : 59] It may be implied but you're not asked to do it. You're asked to be faithful unto death until death separate you. But you see this woman is professing and affirming that she will remain faithful even beyond life itself.

What has happened to Ruth to produce this extraordinary statement and declaration of commitment when Arpah has already buckled under the pressure and turned back?

Well there's only one explanation. Ruth has been converted. She has been reborn. Her tears were not just emotional.

They were tears of new found joy. And Naomi is almost brutal in insisting that if her daughter in law follow her to Israel to Judah things are only going to go from bad to worse.

And here in verse 15 do you see she even seems determined to send Ruth back specifically to her paganism.

[32 : 15] go back to your gods she says. And it's strange encouragement from Naomi.

And yet it's a test. And through Naomi God is testing in his wisdom testing this young woman and is using this test to differentiate between the principle of sin in the life of Arpa and the principle of grace in the life of Ruth.

There is no reason to doubt that Naomi meant what she said. She is speaking perhaps more openly than she ever did during the last ten years that she spent in the country of Moab as she seeks to draw attention to the cost of discipleship.

Perhaps she hadn't engaged in a conversation like this with Ruth previously. She didn't feel that she could open up about the cost of discipleship.

And despite Naomi's discouragement Ruth by her strong affirmation indicates that she has experienced a wonderful gospel change.

[33 : 41] You see that in the number of ways. You attend to the details of the text. Notice for example how Ruth echoes the language of God's own covenant promise to Israel.

God told Israel I will take you as my people and I will be your God. I commit myself to save you, to love you, and to keep you, and considered all of the discouragements that Naomi has brought up.

She knows that humanly speaking there are really few prospects of a brighter future ahead of her in Judah. She's watched her sister-in-law whom she clearly loves leave for the attractions of Moab.

She's lost everything with no earthly hope of recovering, and one of the only people in the world who knows exactly what it's like to walk through it all with her has turned her back and returned.

Ruth knows that the road ahead could be difficult if she continues to travel from Moab to Bethlehem, and yet she presses on. And the only explanation that can account for her determination to make the journey is that her heart has been profoundly changed by the power of the Spirit of God.

[35 : 32] She's been saved by grace and by grace joined to the God of Israel whose covenant name you notice she takes on her own lips.

This Moabite woman, the Lord Yahweh, do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.

She takes the name by which God has revealed himself to Israel as their deliverer and their saviour. The name that signals his covenant love and faithfulness to them in remembering his promises to them and bringing them out of Egypt from slavery and bondage.

This God says, this woman I take to be my God. His people, my people, I can't leave you Naomi because I cannot leave the God I love.

I cling to you Naomi because I am clinging to him. Not the reverse. She's not clinging to Naomi first and then to God but she's clinging to God first and then to Naomi and that is important.

[37 : 01] Here's the great difference you know between an almost persuaded and a true convert to Jesus Christ. The almost persuaded follows on the path perhaps because of personal loyalties.

In this instance because of the love of a mother-in-law who has lost everything and in the end however strong these loyalties are the almost persuaded turns back.

It's easier to go to Moab. The new believer knows that to follow the Lord Jesus means to take up the cross.

That's how we die to self and our own interests. It is by taking up the cross. We bring nothing to it but the great depths of our need.

And if you try to bring anything to contribute to your salvation then the cross becomes a stumbling block. And Ruth is learning as the apostle expresses it that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom.

[38 : 28] God has come to capture her heart and she cannot but follow and serve him. You remember in the New Testament in John's Gospel where we are told of many people after hearing Jesus teaching they considered that his teaching was difficult.

It's a hard saying. Who can understand it? And then we are told that from that time many of his disciples note what the Bible says many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more.

In other words they were almost persuaded. And then the Lord Jesus turns to the twelve and he says do you also want to go away?

And you remember the response and Peter is the spokesman for the rest and do you remember his response? His response I do not think would have sounded at all strange on the lips of Ruth.

the Moabite Lord to whom shall we go? For you have the words of eternal life. In other words there is no one else to whom we can go.

[39 : 59] They would not have sounded strange at all on the lips of this young woman. She makes this declaration and affirmation to follow her mother in law.

So you see he is asking every one of those who profess to follow him do you also want to go away?

Will you also turn back? Or like Ruth do you take me for your God and my people for your people?

do you recognize with Peter however tempting and enticing the world may at times appear however hard and painful following Jesus may be there is nowhere else to go for he alone has the words of eternal life.

Ruth the Moabite is she's always called that whenever she appears in this book the Moabite woman it seems that she can never get away from that label and it's always good to be reminded of our past lest we become inflated with an egotistical view of ourselves that doesn't become anyone who has been brought into grace by almighty God.

[41 : 47] Here she is the outsider and notice what the Bible is teaching us here both the Moabites not Naomi raised in the land of promise to know the Lord and his sovereignty and his promises not out by the other Moabite girl but both the Moabite the outsider is the one who comes all the way in and embraces the message of the gospel certainly number who absolutely word near His for like rose, to take the God of Israel, the God of covenant mercy for your God as he is offered to you in Jesus Christ. The reborn, the return and finally time is going, the restored. Naomi was a backslidden believer. She knows the Lord, that much is evident by her benediction. Away in verse 8 of the chapter, the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. And the word that she uses there is very significant in this book. It's a word that crops up again and again in the book in the Hebrew. The word chesed means to deal kindly, means covenant love and mercy, the special mark of relationship between God and his people. God shows chesed, loving kindness to his children and the New

Testament equivalent might be something like grace, although it is much stronger than that. He gives grace to his people, binding them to himself and they to him. And that is what Naomi pronounces when her daughters-in-law she sends, as she seeks to send them home, her constant push to turn these young women away from God and his people. Her outright recommendation to Ruth that the gods of Moab may in fact be her best bet. It all tells the story, the sorry tale of a heart in dramatic spiritual declension. If you look down at verse 13 you can get some indication of what drives her spiritual condition. When they protested, I had been turned back. Notice what she says, it grieves me much for your sake that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. That's how she reads her circumstances. She believes in the sovereignty of God all right. She's perfectly orthodox on that point.

She has come to learn that Moab was a country of famine in comparison to the land that she left behind. She had wandered far from covenant promises and covenant opportunities. She experienced bitterness in her providence as a result. And you see in her wanderings from God, she was emptied.

And you know that is often how the Lord works. He empties as of pride and self-importance.

How proud Naomi was the day she left Bethlehem. How do we know? Listen to what she says in response to the welcome of greeting extended to her. There is great excitement in Bethlehem. The city was moved about.

[45 : 49] In other words, they were all excited. And they said, is this Naomi? And you remember her response, call me not Naomi. Call me Mara. In other words, don't call me pleasant.

Call me Mara. Call me bitterness. I'm not sure if Naomi remembered the meaning of the word Mara.

You remember in the Bible, it's a place associated with discontent. A place associated with grumbling on the part of Israel. Where they came to, where they had been without water. And they came to a place of water.

And when they rushed to it, they couldn't drink of it because the water was bitter. And you remember the Lord turned the bitter, undrinkable water into sweet, thirst-quenching water.

And by doing so, he demonstrates that he is the Lord, your healer. One who can bring sweet out of bitter. But she says here, call me Mara. Call me bitter. For the Almighty has dealt very bitter. I went out full.

[47 : 10] There it is. There's a pride. I went out full. And the Lord has brought me home empty. I brought me home again empty. You see, only by being emptied can she enjoy the fullness of blessing again.

Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me? She could testify to the pain of chastening. You know, the rod God uses to chasten, it is always hanging in the chamber of his fervent love.

Chastening is an action of love on the part of God. Although those who have been chastened will not read it like that when experiencing the rod.

That's why the Bible states, no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful. Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

I went out full, says this woman, in my own strength, in my own wisdom, in my own pride, without the guidance of the Almighty. But what is true now? Note the contrast.

[48 : 33] I, Naomi, went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty. And you see, implied in these words are this, He didn't leave me, although I forsook Him.

He brought me home. Better, friend, to be empty, and under the guidance of the Lord, than to be full and wandering from God.

The process of restoration can be painful. But you know the benefits are most wonderful. And I see parallels here between Naomi and the prodigal son.

What motivated Naomi to leave Moab? Was it not there is sufficient food in the land of promise?

She had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had visited His people by giving them bread. What motivated the prodigal son to return? How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough unto spare, and I perish with hunger.

[49 : 49] I will arise and go to my father. Both of them emptied in order to be filled. In both examples there is evidence of genuine repentance.

Repentance. Repentance that leads to life. You know, knowing that one is condemned does not on its own lead to repentance.

That requires an appreciation of God and an apprehension of God's covenant mercy. And in this instance it is seen in the provision of bread.

Look at her now. Penitent. In poverty. Empty. But waiting on the God of rich provision.

Who fills the hungry. Remember how the psalmist expresses this provision from God. He the soul that longing is. What does it say? Doth fully satisfy.

[50 : 49] Doth fully satisfy. Not partially satisfy. But fully satisfy. And then notice what else. With goodness. He the hungry soul.

Doth fill abundantly. There is an overflowing. Of the filling that God makes. So ultimately for us.

God's grace is seen in the giving of Jesus. Who is the bread of life. So that we know. That he will pardon the penitent.

And we are encouraged to turn to him. I don't know if Naomi was asking the question why. Why me?

Why my family? It's very possible that she was. Even though Lord inhumanity asked the question why.

[51 : 48] But if Naomi was asking the question why. Why me? Why my family? Could the answer not be. Ruth?

Ruth's conversion. In part at least. The explanation. For Naomi's pain.

For is this not about God bringing Ruth to himself. And positioning her life. In the ongoing unfolding of his purpose. For the word.

God reaching through the life of Naomi. Ruth's glory to bring Ruth to himself. The returnee. Arpa. Forgotten.

Not mentioned again. Never seen again. On the pages of scriptures. Ruth. The reborn.

[52 : 53] The one who experiences much blessing. And the storyteller. Keeps you in suspense. As he waits to unfold the drama.

That awaits this woman. On the restored. Weeping tears of bitter repentance. On the question for you and me this evening is this.

Which one of the three closely resembles you? Which one of the three closely resembles you?

The returnee? The reborn? Or the restored? The restored? And if I am spared.

And because I have been allocated certain duties here. The next time I'm in the prayer meeting. We'll have a look at the last verse. Of this chapter.

[53 : 54] And how it develops and unfolds. Let us pray. Eternal God. Oh we thank thee for thy truth.

The truth is searching. And it is meant to be searching. But the truth is also illuminating. And it is meant to be so.

The truth provides satiation. And it is meant to do so too. May we be searched. May we be illuminated.

And may we be satiated. In the word of life. And the glory shall be thine. In Jesus name we ask it. Amen. Let us conclude by singing to his praise from Psalm 63.

Psalm 63. Psalm 63. From the beginning of the Psalm. Lord thee my God. I'll early seek. I'll early seek. My soul doth thirst for thee.

[55 : 08] My flesh longs in a dry parched land. Wherein no waters be. That I thy power may behold. And brightness of thy face.

As I have seen thee heretofore. Within thy holy place. Since better is thy love than life. My lips thee praise shall give. My lips thee praise shall give.

I in thy name will lift my hands. And bless thee while I live. These three verses. Lord thee my God.

I'll early seek. Lord thee my God.

I'll early seek. My soul thirst for thee.

[56 : 04] My soul thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land.

Will it in no waters be. Thy power may behold.

And brightness of thy face. As I have seen thee.

To for within my holy place.

Thou art is thy love than life.

[57 : 13] My lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name.

I in thy name. Will lift my arms. O bless thee while I live.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. Fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit. Rest on and abide with you all.

Now and forever. Amen.