

The Church What are We

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: 14 January 2024

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 0 0] worship the Lord in this corner of his vineyard. This evening we're focusing on church, what we are as a church, so we sing, first of all, Psalm 84, in the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 84, verses 1 down to verse 6.

Psalm 84, verses 1 down to verse 6, that's on page 338, got off our Bibles, or Psalm 84, verses 1 down to verse 6, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant Lord they be, my firstly soul longs vehemently, ye fainth thy courts to see, my very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.

Psalm 84, verses 1 to 6, to God's praise. Psalm 84, verses 1 down to verse 6, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace, thy blessing of me be, my time is full of shame and vain, res Serethis variable, your Lord of hosts to me, my holy holy heart and flesh cry out, no living God for thee.

In all this battle, find a hand that has fed to rest.

The swath of all, so God ourself, have purchased in our midst.

[2 : 0 7] In all this battle, find a hand that has fed to rest. I am one soul in me.

Oh, that Lord, I be Lord of hosts, to God, my God and me.

Blessed are the earth, thy house, our heavenly air, our heavenly air.

Blessed is the Lord, his strength, our love, their peace, our time, our grace.

For passing, Father, take us through, and in the day of the world.

[3 : 1 3] O soul, your name, and all the count, the bulls with water in the earth.

So join together in our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. as we come before you this evening once more lord we ask that our hearts would assume the same position perhaps as our bodies that if we might bow before you just now in our pews we ask also our hearts would bow before you understanding and knowing that you see the heart you look past the physical you look past how we might present ourselves week by week you look past how we show ourselves to the world and you see us as we really are you see us for who we really are you see us as it were on our own you see us as aware of it at times and places and ways that no one else sees us not even those closest to us you read our hearts you understand our hearts we at times don't even understand our own hearts but all these realities of who we are they are known to you we come this evening then with that humble posture of hearts held out before you confessing that you see all and those who see on you you know all and you understand all that we are those who who are so unworthy before you as we read today from your word and effusions at one time we were all lost at one time we were all without help and without hope at all time we were all outside the commonwealth of israel's aliens to that glory of the covenantal truth that you have given hope and life to your people give you praise as we come before you this evening we do not hold out hope vainly hoping you have heard us and vainly hoping that you might have rescued us no we come this evening confessing that you have heard us you have heard the prayers of your people because you hear us through the finished work of our saviour it's in his name we gather this evening as we come as we gather before you as we confess you see us and that you know us we know we are clothed now and forevermore in the finished work of our saviour that the wrath that was meant for us was placed onto him so now we may know and know for certain that no longer that hangs over us that no longer we need worry the day of judgment but no longer we need worry our eternal security no longer we need worry for when our home and the future will be the answer is simple it is with you for all those who know and love jesus our home is with you for all time time without end until these days of glory come help us to serve you well in this place we uh pray for ourselves this morning we pray once more for the wider gospel cause in our island we pray lord for the wider presbytery pray for all the domination all the congregations attached to the domination in this presbytery pray lord for the vacant congregations of our presbytery remember especially just now north uist also remember shallost pray for them in our vacancy give them both encouragement we know a vacancy is a a trying time a testing time a time where disunity where the body is threatened where the evil one often finds footholds in the most unlikely of ways lord we ask you'd bolster them and uphold them and support them together in newest and together in shabbos they be of one mind and one spirit as they search for one who will lead and guide and we ask you be in that process we would do nothing out of vain desire but lead and take all things to you and follow your leading as you lead them to a man of your choosing thank you lord for the gift of ministry the gift that you see the congregations and you know the congregations and you choose and give them men and servants who are there to serve but that may case our own congregation here as we pray

afresh for ourselves lord we would know that we would all know that you're a god who has chosen to serve your people as we come to see our savior the glorious exalted savior he became a servant he washed the feet of his disciples he came as a servant king to serve to seek and to save help us then we ask as your people as church members not members locally but members of a worldwide eternal glorious church help us to emulate what we have seen in our savior help us to replicate that help us to be servants to one another help us to love one another as brothers and sisters understanding we are a part of the same family despite our difference despite at times our our perhaps annoyance despite at times how unlikely a family we might be we are a family saved a family redeemed a family called precious to you and help us never to name anyone other than precious whom you have called precious to you pray just now for those who are yet to join our our family our friends in this village our family members who as of yet have no understanding who as of yet don't know jesus for themselves lord we ask that you bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself lord we pray and we struggle and we strive and we seek to sow the seeds lord you alone bring increase we pray that for our own congregation here in the weeks and months and years ahead if you give it to us lord as we seek to sow the seeds week after week in various ways making use of every opportunity you've given us of every availability to share the gospel you give us help us to be wise to be smart enough to lay hold every chance to make your name known in this place but leaving the result to you help us to strive hard to to plant hard to as aware go home in tears but then to rest well knowing that you will bring the increase in your time and in your way but first lord let us plant first let us strive first let us be willing to lay ourselves out before you as servants as we seek to do that lord give us rest help us find our rest and our security not in our service not in the results we may or may not see but to find our rest and our risen savior who tells us to come to him and to find eternal rest to come to him and find safety and security for all who are heavy laden all who are broken and burdened all who need the love and warmth of a savior he opens up his arms he tells us to go and to approach him those of us who are bought with his precious blood he has redeemed us and rescued us as he heard this morning he has freed us for himself help us then to make the most of that freedom as he calls us to come to him help us never to run the opposite direction before his people this evening help us to be found looking to him for our safety our support our security we thank you once more for the reality we have of a witness in this village we pray just now for our own events this week we pray just now for the upcoming deacons uh extension elders meeting lord help us as elders to be wise help us as elders to plan carefully to think carefully help us as elders first and foremost to put you and your gospel cause at the very heart of what we seek to do help us to be motivated by your love motivated by our calling to serve you well help us lord then as we look forward to thursday we pray for malcolm and his family we pray for him especially as he engages once more in this year

of sharing the gospel around the world lord bless him and be with him as he ventures into places that are spiritually and that are physically dangerous lord we ask you be a comfort for him and a safety around him as he brings comfort and assurance and help both physical and spiritual to your people around this world help us as we find ourselves here this evening so many miles away so many miles away from these brothers and sisters help us never to forget them in prayer pray especially just now for that brother in iran pastor milad as he is awaiting the near certain news that he'll be in prison again for sharing the gospel lord be with him be with his family his children his wife lord we can't imagine or understand the the worry that they have but you know it and you're with them proud for the wider work in the nation of iran that place where once there was gloss gospel flourishings but now we see the gospel being cracked down on but even that crack down we see the gospel is still flourishing you're still building your church even amongst the ruins even in places and ways we would begin to understand and imagine you have your people there you have your church and you're building your church help us as a church here to be built up in ourselves in our hearts and minds and understanding we pray for our ongoing discipleship that as brothers and sisters we built up together built up individually in our own faith and then at the same time building one another up in love and understanding as we build ourselves up lord help us then to go up but also to build out to reach out to this community that needs to hear the life-giving gospel of our savior help us then lord to be warm-hearted towards the glorious good news of the gospel help us to share it faithfully in this place to those who as well yet haven't heard it help us to be salt and light help us to fulfill our role every one of us as missionaries as ambassadors of the lord jesus that's forgiveness for sin sin today sin this week sin this month lord you know it you see it we confess it we confess it sin which we engage in sin which creeps up on us lord it's sin either way as we heard this morning we so often like to blame the evil one we often blame the devil for sins that are fully and completely our own lord we bring these sins before you confessing them just now asking and relying on the forgiveness we find of the lord jesus christ in his name and for his sake asking these many things amen i'm trying to read in god's word first corinthians chapter 12 first corinthians chapter 12 that's on page 901 first corinthians chapter 12 page 901 let's again hear the word of god now concerning spiritual gifts brothers i do not want you to be uninformed you know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols however you were led therefore i want you to understand that no one speaking in the spirit of god ever says jesus is accursed and no one can say jesus is lord except in the holy spirit now there are varieties of gifts but the same spirit and there are varieties of service but the same lord and there are varieties of activities it's the same god who empowers them all in everyone to each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good for to one is given through the spirit the utterance of wisdom to another the utterance

of knowledge according to the same spirit to another faith by the same spirit to another gifts of healing by the one spirit to another the work of miracles to another prophecy to another ability to distinguish between spirits to another various kinds of tongues to another the interpretation of tongues all of these are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills for just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body though many are one body so it is with christ for in one spirit we were all baptized into one body jews or greeks slaves or free and all were made to drink of one spirit for the body does not consist of one member but of many if the foot should say because i'm not a hand i do not belong to the body that would not make it any less a part of the body and if the ear should say because i'm not an eye i don't belong to the body that would not make it any less a part of the body if the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be if the whole body were an ear where would be the sense of smell but as it is god arranged the members of the body each one of them as he chose if all were a single member where would the body be as it is there are many parts yet one body the eye cannot say to the hand i have no need of you nor again the head to the feet i have no need of you on the contrary the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty which are more presentable parts do not require but god has so composed the body giving greater honor to the parts that lack it that there may be no division in the body but that the members may have the same care for one another if one member suffers all suffer together if one member is honored all rejoice together now you are the body of christ and individually members of it and god has appointed in the church first apostles second prophets for teachers then miracles then gifts of healing helping administering and various kinds of tongues are all apostles are all prophets are all teachers to all work miracles to all possess the gifts of healing to all speak of tongues to all interpret but earnestly desire the higher gifts and i will show you a still more excellent way amen give praise to god for his holy and his perfect word let's again sing again from the psalter from psalm 133 a psalm we all know so well but a psalm perhaps we won't lose its beauty in our singing of it psalm 133 that psalm which speaks of us as a church body of brothers and sisters together psalm 133 behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity do it well psalm 133 the whole psalm to god's praise psalm 133 the whole psalm to god's praise psalm 133 the whole psalm to god's praise psalm 133 4PR notjoin

[19 : 42] psalm 131 the whole psalm 131 the whole psalm is tambourSe Nernid omnium ye age that o'er the tin■ ■.

functioning with the earth created the O the Lord's Where the blessing of Thomas thy love shall never end.

Let's turn back for a short time. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. This was supposed to be a four week series.

Because of a swap last week. It's now a three week series in January. Looking at what the church is. Who are we or what are we as the church?

So we can condense down tonight into a simple question of what are we? And then God willing next week what do we do? What is our mission? And then finally what is our future?

[21 : 36] So what are we? What is our mission? What do we do? And what is our future? And we're doing this series. I hope you notice this perhaps as we go forward.

It's in conjunction of all we said a few weeks ago in our prayer meeting. We said that this year we're looking toward discipleship and evangelism. And all of that's under the umbrella of church revitalization.

A big word we said but it simply means to renew what we already have. To re-enliven what we already have. So that in the back of our minds. The simple question tonight is what are we as a church?

Not just here in talks but in general what are we? And I know this is basic. I know we know the answer straight away. But please engage with me as we engage in God's word together. And pray the Lord opens our eyes.

There's no new teaching tonight. There really is. We were hearing last week. If your minister every week claims new teaching you might have a heretic. Not a minister. There's often not new teaching.

[22 : 43] It's the same old teaching. Good teaching. Correct teaching. Refreshed in our ears week after week. Because we forget so easily what we already know. So quite simply looking at the verses we have from verse 12 down to verse 30.

Give or take as time allows us. Looking first of all at unity in the body. Then seeing the glory of diversity in the body.

And finally we are together in the body. So unity, diversity and together in the body. Quite simply as we know when Paul speaks of the church.

He uses different illustrations. We're a building. We're living stones. It's part of that building. And here it's the same image isn't it? The same image is used.

But this time it's a body. Christ as head. And we are there as the members of the body. The eyes and the hands. The feet and the ears. The bits and pieces which make us work as humans.

[23 : 46] So we begin with unity in the body. Verses 12 and verse 13. Taking in the whole section. But verses 12 and verse 13 for our focus.

We are many parts of one functioning body. Paul uses this illustration because it makes sense. It's how we function.

We are a collection of bits and pieces. Which the Lord puts together. And together it makes us us. Our hands and our legs. They make us us.

We know that. But perhaps we forget it. We're not just a brain. As our modern world tell us. We're just a thinking brain. No.

We are us. Our hands. Our legs. Our ears. Our noses. Our eyes. It's all part of what makes us. Work. And in God's glory.

[24 : 43] This is also how the Lord has ordained. The church to work to. Now let's be honest. For a second perhaps. Perhaps that's not how we would have ordered the church.

If we had say in it. If we were in charge. Of how the church is ordered. Perhaps we would do it differently. Perhaps you'd want a more rigid. More clear structure.

Not the messiness of arms. And legs. And eyes. And ears. And different members. Who have different ideas. And do different things. And different needs. And different wants. Perhaps you'd sound different.

But the Lord hasn't. This is how he has made us. Each one of us. Doing our own thing. At the same time. Each one of us. Dependent. On everyone else. Why?

Because that way we're reminded. That ultimately. We're all dependent. On our head. Who is of course. Our saviour. We're united.

[25 : 43] In him. And in him alone. For just as a body is one. As many members. All the members of the body. Though many are one body. So it is with. Christ.

And here we see. The source. Of our unity. Why. As North Tulsa. We take ourselves. But of course. We're focusing on us. Because this is. Well we're talking to ourselves.

But this applies to us. Not just in North Tulsa. Not just in the free church. This applies to the full body. Of Christ. Across the world. Not just the free church.

Not just the Presbyterian church. It applies to brothers and sisters. Across all the denominations. Who worship the Lord. As spirit and truth. Who love him faithfully. Who seek to serve him well.

It applies to them. So across the whole church. Across the whole world. We are one body. But for ourselves this evening. Let's just focus on ourselves. That's enough. That's enough for us.

[26 : 39] To think about. What is the source. Of our unity. In North Tulsa. North Tulsa free church. What unites us. Is it your minister.

Well as you know recently. Ministers come. And ministers go. Lord willing. I am here. As long as you want me. As long the Lord has me here. But one day. By retirement. Or by removal.

By calling perhaps. I'll be gone. Could be 10 years. Could be 50 years. Who knows. One day. I'll be gone. As we be elders. Are we united.

In the correct session. For good men. I assure you. I'm sure you know that. For good men. Who try hard. And work hard. But they'll come. And they'll go. Are we united.

Perhaps then. By the location. Because we're North Tulsa. Therefore. We're united. Because we're from here. Well of course we're not. Many of us here. Some at least. Are not from here.

[27 : 36] But still we're part. Of the church. Are we then. United by our shared. Interest. Our shared likes. I assure you.

I'm sure you know this yourselves. There are many people here. Who have very little in common. In their interests. In what we perhaps. Would read. Or watch. Or think about.

Apart from the Lord. We're different people. Different tastes. Different interests. Different stories. Is it just then.

Mere circumstance. We've just all been. Lumped together here. So we might as well. Just get on with it. Are we united together. By just our. Our distinctives.

Hennessy aside. Is it just what. What we like to believe. And what we think is right. And scriptural. What is our unity based on. As a church. It is based on.

[28 : 34] Jesus. And on him alone. Everything else. Will change in time. Will alter in time. Ministers come and go. Elders come and go. Buildings will crumble. The free church.

Will one day come and go. His church will not. Why? Because it is based. And united. And kept. In him. And because he does not change. His people are kept.

Because he is the head. The body. Will remain. Until the very end. And individually. As believers. We are his. And he is ours. He covers us.

And we call ourselves. His friends. His brothers. Or his sisters. We call him. Our elder brother. But also collectively. As a church. He is our king. Is he not?

He is our saviour. He is our head. And the truth is. We are united together in him. Whether we like it or not.

[29 : 30] Whether at times. We have issues. Outside these walls. Within these walls. We are church family. And we'll see later on. There's not one family. In this world. Who is somehow.

Without issues. Without complications. Brothers and sisters. You know this. And I know this. Every church family. Has issues. And complications. We are a strange bunch.

At times. And that is good. And we'll see in a second. Why that is good. Our unity is also shown to us.

By how we are sealed. How we are sealed. Again just verse 13. For in one spirit. We were all baptized. Into one body.

Jews or Greeks. Slaves or free. And all were made to drink. Of one spirit. Our unity. It is sealed. It is assured to us.

[30 : 25] By the unity that we have. In the one baptism. Everyone here. This evening. Who is the Lord's. We have all been. Both physically.

And spiritually. Baptized. Many of us as children. A few of us. Mature perhaps. In our adulthood. Same baptism. But.

The water baptism. We'll cover this. God willing. This year at some point. In our series. We'll look at. Of what we believe. As a church. But the water baptism. It is just a. A showing.

Of what takes place. As it were. Behind the scenes. As we are sealed. By and to the spirit. And sealed. In what way. Well. It's the assurance. That we are part.

Of the church. And we're part. Of one another. Members. Of one another. Attached. All of a sudden. Now. Forever.

[31 : 22] To one another. No matter. No matter how different. Our brothers and sisters. Might be to us. In personality. In quirks. In views. In ideas. We are united.

Together. And brothers and sisters. You know that yourselves. I hope. When you're. In company. With someone. And your soul.

Just knows. That our person. Is a Christian. And your soul. Rejoices. In that you spend time. With our Christian. It does your soul well. Now I can't define that. I probably could. But. I hope. It probably isn't the best place for it.

Because it's my own thinking. But. We all know that sense. Our souls know. When we're with. And have a believer. And the opposite is true. Our souls also. Quite adaptive. We'll let them be.

Ad knowing. Our spirit. Ad knowing. When we're not talking. To a believer. Who says they are. But. That's a discussion. For a different day. But all to say. We're sealed together. We're set together.

[32 : 18] We're knitted together. As one body. One body. But. And that body. There is. And secondly. Great diversity. As Paul is at pains here.

To make clear. Verses 14. Down to verse 20. One body. Many. Many. Members. For the body does not consist of one member.

But of many. And he goes on. Verses 15. Down to verse 17. There. To elaborate that for us. At the. At the. At the.

The silliness of it. If our body parts. Would have become suddenly. Independent. And do their own thing. And if these verses sound like we're supposed to be funny.

They are. Paul is the. Most perfect. His arguments are great. In fact. He employs all rhetoric. He's a trained lawyer. Don't forget.

[33 : 12] Our equivalent of. He's a trained lawyer. And Paul employs all the means of argumentation he has. And here. By means of just. Humor. By means of just.

How silly an image it is. He says quite seriously. If this all sounds silly to you. Then how silly it is for us. If we think we're all the same.

We are one body yes. But many different members. So we are a church family. And every family are certainly. Different.

Because I am an only child. So. My lived experience of this is somewhat short. Somewhat curved. I've. Married into a family with plenty of siblings.

As we heard this morning. I've now got friends. Who have. Members of large. Very large families. We are a church family. And brothers and sisters.

[34 : 10] Make no mistake. As Paul reminds us here. There is diversity in the family. But diversity does not mean division. That's our main thought to this point. Diversity and division are two very different things.

There's a diversity of opinion. A diversity of action. That does not mean a division of opinion. Or a division of action. Often. Often. We confuse the two.

Often families. Human families confuse the two. If our family members. Who have different opinions. Sometimes that's seen. As a disunity. In reality. Fact. It's just a different opinion.

It's diversity. And the scriptural example here. Paul gives. Is quite clear. There is. One family. With one head. But every member.

That family. Has. Its own purpose. Has. Its own movement. Its own ideas. Perhaps. Its view on things. But together. We are. One. And if we think.

[35 : 11] Somehow. We're modern in that. We're not. When you. If you're. That way inclined. To look back at church history. You go back to early church fathers. With respect.

They are a strange bunch. The first generation. After the apostles. So you have the apostles. You have the first generation. Of the men. That they have taught. And these men.

They are. Different. Every one of them. Different to the last. But so. The apostles. Jesus chose men. Who are so different.

To one another. Why? To show us. That there is diversity. In the church. And that is good. That is God. Ordained. Paul says here.

All are different. With our hands. And feet. And eyes. In other words. Every one of us here. Who knows. And who loves the Lord. When I say.

[36 : 10] And I say this carefully. When I say members. Of the body. We mean members. In terms of those. Who know. Who love the Lord. In every congregation. And I know. Almost for sure. North Tolstice. It's going to be no different.

In every congregation. There are many Christians. Or a few Christians. Perhaps a handful of Christians. Who are not yet members. But who know the Lord.

And who love the Lord. Or who aren't members. And who know the Lord. And who love the Lord. So when I say member. I mean member. Of the church of Christ. As a whole. Not just member. To ourselves. Here in North Tolstice.

It's a whole different discussion. In other words. Everyone here. Who knows. Who loves the Savior. We have. A purpose. We have.

A function. But every one of us. We are different. Some can preach. Some can sing. Some can pray. And of course. We all pray. But some. Are real prayer warriors.

[37 : 05] To steal that. Often used. And often mangled. Term. It's a beautiful term. Some are prayer warriors. That they fight. To battle daily. In prayer. Some.

Are hospitable. And of course. We are all called. To be hospitable. But some. Have a. A gifting for that. Some are good at organising.

And so on. And so on. And so on. There is a variety. Of talent. Of use. Of gifting. In a good. And healthy church. As a church.

North Tolstice. We aim to be a healthy. Gospel church. In this village. Church. And a healthy church. Is a healthy body. And a healthy body. Is full. Of different people.

Serving the Lord. In different ways. Some. Congregations. Indeed. Some denominations. Get this wrong. And they get it wrong.

[37 : 59] To their own detriment. At times. They get it wrong. To their own death. Some. Congregations. And some denominations. They expect. And indeed.

They exact. Their members. To be. One. Single. Mold. Look. This certain way. It goes even. To the base.

Earthly levels. Of dress. This certain way. Think. This certain way. Act. This certain way. And no word. No word. Of the gospel.

Cause. No word. Of. Of. Of. Of gospel. Work. No word. Of anything else. It's just. Appearances. And ideas. And the gospel. Work. Is abandoned. And churches.

And denominations. Which do that. They decline. And they die. They decline. And they die. Cause they have. No diversity. A body.

[38 : 54] That's not diverse. Is a body. Which is dying. A body. Whose members. Aren't working. As they should. Is a body. Who is slowly dying. We know that.

Humanly speaking. If your. Arms. And legs. And liver. And lungs. If your organs. And your body parts. Slowly shut down. You won't live for long.

If as a church. We aren't allowing. Our members. Our body members. To grow. And to serve. As they've been called. To serve. We won't live very long. It's as simple as that.

Brothers and sisters. We are. A mixed. Bag. Of people. Every one of us. Quirks. And ideas. Ways of being. Ways of thinking.

I assure you. Every one of us. Unique. In how the Lord. Has made us. And with that. Every one of us. Every one of us. Uniquely placed. In North Tulsa. Not just here.

[39 : 52] By accident. Not just here. By birth. We are placed here. Before time itself. To be here. At this time. To serve us. Together. In this way. And together.

As one body. We serve. The Lord. My. Homework. For you. This week. I won't check it up on you.

But. One day I will. One day I'll be some homework. We'll come back to haunt you. My homework. This week. And please. Please do prayerfully consider this. This is vital for us. The congregation. Going forward.

It'll actually. Feature again. And. God willing. Next month. Or a month after. We'll have Gordon. McLeod. The discipleship worker. Come to speak with us. And. He'll ask the same questions. So.

I'm warning you now. He'll ask the same question of us. As a congregation. What. Are. Your skills. Brothers and sisters. How has the Lord. Gifted you.

[40 : 47] Now. I know. We go humble. I know. We love to be humble. I know it's hard for us to think. What we're good at. At times. As. I say this very very carefully. As someone.

And. It's hard to believe. I promise. As someone who. Myself. I am shy. I can be awkward. It's very hard. To be forward with. With. What you think the Lord has given you.

Skill wise. But you do yourself. A disservice. But more than that. You also do the. The wider gospel. Cause a disservice. If you want. At least consider.

How the Lord has gifted you. And that gifting. It perhaps isn't one we mentioned tonight. That's fine. I'm just giving examples. Perhaps you're good. At something you haven't seen us.

Engage in yet. And you have skills to offer. And offer these skills. Let us know you have them. Perhaps we don't know about it. So the homework is. This week.

[41 : 43] Just pray. And seriously consider. And ask the Lord. What your function is. What your talent is. What your skill is.

As a member in the body. My friends. You have one. Brothers and sisters. You have one. You were created as part of Christ's body.

Therefore you've been given a purpose. As we carry on. The gospel work in North Tolstice. We all have a use. A purpose. A part.

To play. And note this body. Excuse me. As diverse as it is. It's all perfectly placed. In its diversity. Verse 18. We see that.

But as it is. God arranged the members. In the body. Each one of them. As he chose. Strange. And different.

[42 : 39] Different skills. Different talents. As we might have. And different ways of living. We might have. And different ideas. We might have. Every one of us.

Different members. The Lord has put us together. Here we are. In this place. At this time. Many of us. Indeed most of us. Probably wish we lived. 50 years ago.

100 years ago. In times of gospel flourishing. In this place. We're not. We're here now. This is our time to serve. This is our place to serve. And we are.

The church. The Lord has put together. We are the body. We are as a wearer. The hands and the feet. Of our saviour. In this place. At this time. That is our reality. That is our calling.

And with that. We have the full assurance. That as we work together. As one body. He will bless that work. As each one of us.

[43 : 33] Individually. Seek to serve the Lord. And seek to encourage one another. In our joint service. He will bless that work. Not because we're trying really hard. But because he uses means.

And we are the means. The Lord chooses to use. We know that. We've covered that before. And again. The dying church. And you can do your surveys. In church history.

If you want. And it happens around us. Still to this day. It is the churches. And the denominations. Who have a theology. That God will bring them in. And he will do it.

And he will not use us to do it. We just sit here and wait. Where in scripture. Do we find that? Where in the New Testament. Do we find that? Now don't get confused.

We're not saying. It relies on us. It doesn't. He will do the work. He alone saves souls. He alone changes. Hearts and minds.

[44 : 30] He alone transforms. The dead. And brings them to life. He alone redeems. As we heard this morning. But what do we see. The very first Christians doing. The disciples doing.

The apostles doing. The early Christians in Acts. And so on doing. They serve. They pour themselves. Paul pours himself out. As a drink offering. Did Paul not believe.

In the sovereignty of God. Of course he did. Our whole theology of that. Comes from Paul. But yet. Paul poured himself out. Because quite simply.

Paul was commanded to serve. And Paul gave his life. In that service. We are called. To serve. In North Tulsa. God doesn't need us. But often.

That's the excuse. We've been using. Time and time again. God doesn't need us. But God. Has instructed us. To be salt. And light. To be ambassadors.

[45 : 25] All the illustrations we have. Are there. Blazing. Clear examples. As a body. We have to be in movement. And our desire. And our hope in the Lord.

Is we will be in movement. In North Tulsa. As one body. We are united. As one body. We are diverse. But not divided.

And finally. And quite beautifully. As one body. We are. Together. Not in the sense. That we are united. But we are together. In the sense. Of support.

Verse 21. As one body. We need. One another. The eye cannot say to the hand. I have no need of you. And so on. Down to that glorious. 22.

On the contrary. The parts of the body. That seem to be weaker. Are indispensable. Down to that verse. We know so well. Verse 26. If one member suffers. All suffer together.

[46 : 23] If one member is honoured. All rejoice. Together. Verse 21. We all need one another. Some of us perhaps.

Have roles that are more public. Than others. Some of us have roles that are different. To one another. We know that. We see that. But to ask perhaps.

How we understand. That difference. Just to ask you yourself. Just now. When you think of the body of Christ. Do you mentally perhaps. Do you mentally place.

An elder. As more important. Than a deacon. An elder. And deacons. Somehow more important. Than members. And over all you members. Elders and deacons. There's me at the top there.

As minister. Am I more important than all of you. In the body of Christ. Is that what we see in scripture. Is that how we see the church being displayed. Christ takes that worldly thinking.

[47 : 25] And he turns upside down. And he tells us. He came what. To serve. To serve. How do we view.

The church. Are not all the members. Important. Are not all members. Of great value. Think of the soldier. At the front line. This is an example. Stolen.

Quite all. Happily stolen. From. Reverend Macleod. Colin and back. Who knows of warfare. More than I do. He gives an example. Speaking. At a conference. Once.

He gave an example. That. I think of a soldier. On the war. On the battlefield. The soldiers. Are on the front line. And they. They're doing all the work. They're keeping the enemy away.

They're. They're gaining ground. Behind the soldiers. There's medics. And behind the medics. Way back. Somewhere there. There are canteens. Full of chefs.

[48 : 21] Cooks. Helpers. There's people doing transport. There's people doing all logistics. And suddenly you see. Yes. One.

Is on the front line. Look like. We're doing all the hard work. Without this group. And that group. There is no front line. In other words. Without all the members.

Supporting one another. The body. Falls. To bits. Who is of more value. To the Lord. Who is of more value.

To the Lord. The minister in the pulpit. Or the older lady. At home. Bed ridden. Who's been praying for the gospel cause.

For the last 50 odd years. Without fail. Without end. Who is more valuable. Who's of more purpose. It's a trick question. Because neither of them are. They're both of equal value.

[49 : 15] They're both of equal value. Both needed. See in verse 22. Paul continues his thought.

He speaks about the honourable parts of the body. The weaker parts. We cover the weaker parts. We cover the parts. Which deserve less honour. We cover them. Because they deserve.

The honour. In other words. We. As a church. Seek to build up. Those. Who are our number. Who feel unworthy. Who feel dishonourable. They are worthy of our worth. They are worthy of great honour.

Build one another up. Quite simply. Brothers and sisters. We must bear. One another's burdens. When one part of the body hurts.

The whole part is affected. As Paul reminds us. We're in this together. If you'll forgive me. An example. But it works just now.

[50 : 11] Even just now. As I'm standing here. I'm thinking about it. 10, 12 years ago. I used to do. Sport. Believe it or not. I was involved in. Some martial arts stuff.

And my ankle. Was kicked out from under me. And my ankle hasn't recovered. Since. Ever so often. My ankle will just turn. Just. Just. When it feels like it. My ankle goes a bit weak. And I lose my balance. And I fall over.

Because. For the last 12 years. I've had a weak ankle. And I did nothing about it. Which is a different story. I've got a weak knee. I've got my wee's weak. My hip is weak. Because while that's weak. Often. I'll be a bit.

Quite weak. In this whole side of my body. Because I'm so used to. Dragging myself that way. If one single part of the body is weak. It should drag the rest of us down with it.

If you've got an eye infection. A small infection. In a small part of your body. The rest of you is ruined. A small hole in the enamel of your tooth. A tiny wee dot of a hole.

[51 : 08] In a tiny part of your body. You're gone aren't you? You can't think. You can't function. You can't eat. You can't speak at times. Your whole day's gone. Your whole week's gone. Until they get it sorted.

Every part of the body is essential. We should bear one another up. Keep one another going. As brothers and sisters. We are called to serve one another.

So that. Verse 25. With no division in the body. But that the members may have the same care. For one another. This is how we must view one another as a church.

Not as ministers and elders and so on. These are functions we perform. These are duties we have. But these are not who and what we are. Together we are members of the one body.

And brothers and sisters. We all need support. We all need help. Don't we? And we hear of the suffering members. And our minds quite rightly go to the likes of Malad.

[52 : 10] Pastor Malad in Iran. The work of Steadfast Global. As Malcolm shared it with us on Thursday. We see and hear of the death and torture of these brothers and sisters.

We think well. We pray for them. We remember them. We support the hurting body. That is true. But again taking it local to ourselves. In North Tolstice. But are some here this evening.

Brothers and sisters. And they are hurting. Brothers and sisters. You this evening are here. And you are hurting. You perhaps don't show it. And that's up to yourself.

You perhaps put a brave face in it. You perhaps struggle on with health situations. Mental and physical. Spiritual situations. Family situations. Private situations. Brothers and sisters.

Every part of the body. We all struggle. Also every part of the body. We have reason to rejoice. For good things happening in our lives. And as a body. We should be engaging with one another.

[53 : 08] In both these things. This is the last bit of homework. As we come to a conclusion of this sermon. This is far more serious for us. If I was to ask you.

Honestly. When was the last time. Brothers and sisters. When was the last time. That you. Asked for prayer. From another brother.

Or another sister in the Lord. When was the last time you asked for prayer. To go on the back of that. When was the last time. You asked a brother or sister.

If you could pray for them. Or how you could pray for them. I fear. For whatever reason. That has left our culture. It was once such a strong part of our culture. You see that all the books.

That were once written about our island. About our culture. About the west coast. Christian culture. It was one. We loved. And prayed for one another. That was the backbone of our fellowship.

[54 : 04] And for whatever reason. I fear we've lost that. So perhaps this week. With the Lord's help. It might be a week.

Where you ask. A brother or sister in the faith. How you might pray for them. It's hard perhaps to say it. It's embarrassing to say it. It shouldn't be. But it is. Ask them. How you can pray for them.

Ask them. How you can help them. And perhaps. Even more difficult. Perhaps this is a week. Where you. Share of a brother or sister. How you can be prayed for.

I'm not saying you divulge. Your deepest struggles. Not yet. I'm just saying. Just share. And together. As we get. As we are prayed for. As we pray for one another.

Now don't miss out. Your elders. Or your minister. And that. We all need your prayers. Together. Don't we. As one family. As one body. We need. Prayer. Perhaps. This week.

[54 : 59] We begin. A new stage. In our body. A new stage. In our church fellowship. Where we see one another. And remind ourselves. That one another. Together. We are. One body.

Many members. Loved in the Lord. Kept in the Lord. And our reasons to pray. Reasons to mourn. Reasons to rejoice. If one member suffers.

All suffer together. If one member is honoured. All rejoice. Together. We are one body. United. We are one body.

Diverse. But not divided. Our one body. Supporting. One. Another. Let's bow our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord.

We thank you. For the glorious gospel. Truths. Of that passage. And of others like it. Where you remind us. The truth. Of. The. Glorious. Way.

[55 : 54] You have formed us. As your people. You have formed us. To be a body. Serving you. Formed us. Individually. To be. A member of that body. With. Skills.

And talents. And. Ideas. And ways. Of doing things. That work. For your name's sake. But also together. We are. One body. For always members. Joint together.

We do pray Lord. For our. One body. Here in North Tulsa. To help us. To serve you well. Help us. To proclaim. The gospel truth. Help us. To do so. As we. Battle. As we're. On the front lines.

Remembering. We're here. To support. One another. And uplift. One another. Help us. Lord. To be humble enough. This week. To ask. But also. To be asked. How we may share. Our burdens.

One another. Thus. Fulfilling. The glorious. Command. To have given your people. To bear. One another's burdens. Help us.

[56 : 47] Help us Lord. To come to the conclusion. Of our time today. Giving you praise. We're here. Under your word. Giving praise. Once more Lord. For the ones. Who lead this worship. Week after week. The essential work.

As we lift our voices. And praise. To a saviour. Who deserves. Eternal praises from us. It's in his name. And for his sake. We ask these many things. Amen. Amen. We're time to conclusion.

Singing again. Psalm 84. It's got a psalter. Psalm 84. Of course. For that great psalm. Which sings. Of the journey. Of the Christian. The journey.

Of the church. In this life. And the great joy. We have. At worshipping. The Lord together.
Psalm 84. Page 339. Singing verses 7. Down to verse 12. Psalm 84.

Verse 7. So they from strength. Unwearied. Go. Still forward. Unto strength. Till in Zion.
They appear. Before the Lord. At length. Lord God. Of hosts. My prayer. Hear. What
Jacob's.

[57 : 47] God give ear. See God. Our shield. The convent face. Of thine. Anointed. Dear. Psalm 84.
Verses 7 to 12. To God's praise. God's praise.

God's praise. God's praise. God's praise. God's praise. God's praise. God's praise. God's
praise.

God's praise. Christ is ISTINChy. God is son-in- ■ Christ is pedo. God's praise. For this
is frame. Father's praise. God is sin-in- esteable amend.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[60 : 27] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit, from now and forevermore. Amen.