

Chosen to Praise

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Date: 21 January 2024

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Good evening, brothers, sisters and friends. We are, of course, aware of the weather warning from 6 or 7 this evening. There's a good number of congregations that have actually closed this evening, so we'll be mindful of that.
- And with all that being said, just to remind ourselves, tomorrow evening, God willing, Bible study in the Mance. Everyone welcome. Please come along. 7 o'clock in the Mance. There's at least tea and cake, at least tea and biscuits, so please do come along.
- And this Thursday, God willing, after the prayer meeting, we'll have a Kirk session. All that being said, we're here to worship the Lord. We can do so by singing to his praise, first of all, from the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 78.
- Scottish Psalter, Psalm 78. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 4, double verse 4 of the Psalm. Psalm 78, double verse 4.
- Attend, my people, to my law. There are two, there are two, give thou an ear. The words that from my mouth proceed, attentively do hear. My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and as our fathers told.
- [1 : 0 9] Psalm 78, verses 1, to the double marked, verse 4. To God's praise. Attend, my people, to my law.
- There to give thou a new life. The words that come, my love proceed, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and as our fathers told.
- The same which we have heard and known, have us that father told.
- We are so well that we are concealed, of the same which we have heard and known, and as our fathers told.
- To God's praise. We are so well that we are concealed, and as our fathers told. The faces of the Lord are not out, and His almighty strength.
- [2 : 5 6] The wondrous works that He hath done, we will show forth at end.
- Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. As we come before you, as we are once again so aware as to our place before you, just now as we come before you, we come before one who is great and lifted up, who is mighty, as we sung just now, one, in your wisdom, you are incomparable, and all that you have done, and all your deeds, all your acts, and you are worthy of eternities of praise.
- We also come this evening to one, you have not remained cold nor distant, indeed you have made yourself known to your people. To your people of old, you revealed yourself through the prophets.
- You give access to your people through the priesthood, as they brought the prayers of your people, as they sacrificed to you, year after year, indeed day after day.

There's all these things, both prophets and priests and kings, in their roles, in their accomplishments, but also in the ways that they failed you, that they all pointed forward to the coming, creature, the coming one born of his own creation, the coming one who was of created man, the coming one who was born with a mind, a personality, was born to live as we live, and he was born to be king, priest, prophet, who fulfilled these three roles perfectly, without error.

[4 : 47] It's to him we come this evening, it's to him we bring our worship this evening, our offering of worship, our offering of our time together, and we're mindful that this is a precious time.

We pray just now, especially for those who long to be with us this evening, those who by means of the weather alone, Lord, are not able to join us. We ask, Lord, you give them comfort, they would not feel distant from us.

Lord, they would not feel the distance, instead they would feel part of this church family, and they would know that we remember them, that we love them, that we bring them before the throne also.

Help us for a short time this evening, to understand, that we come together as a church, as brothers and sisters, as we remind ourselves as to what our purpose is, as to what you have called us to be.

With that, we do pray for your church here, for your people in this place. We pray especially for your people in this congregation, in this family gathering. We come each week, and we seek to join together, and we do so understanding, we come from so many different backgrounds.

[5 : 53] Each one of us with a different story to tell. Every one of us with different personalities, different needs, different desires, different ideas on various topics, and we come as a mixed family.

We come as a complicated family, as we heard last week. We come as different members of a one body. Help us this evening, to remind ourselves, that we are one body.

Different, yes. Scattered at times, yes. But one body. We are one body. Serving our one saviour, with one goal. To see your name glorified, and your name praised, in this district.

We bring before you once more, the dark homes of North Tulsa. The dark areas of North Tulsa, where your word is not known. Where there is no gospel understanding.

Where there is no gospel witness, in homes, or in neighbours of those homes, Lord. There is house after house, with zero gospel interest, and zero gospel connection.

[6 : 54] Lord, we bring these houses before you, these families before you. We ask that you would work in their lives. You bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. We know there are several, even this evening, who have expressed interest, in coming to this place of worship.

Lord, we ask you would give them that push, to enable them to come out, and to hear, perhaps for the first time, what will save them. the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray just now, Lord, for the reality that they face, that as they seek to come out, they are faced with the full power of the enemy, who does all that he can, to keep them away from hearing the word.

Lord, we ask you would destroy his schemes. You would lay to nothing, all the plans that he has, to disrupt the sharing of the gospel. And Lord, we ask that, in this new year, you would give these people, these individuals, these couples, Lord, give them the, not just the desire, but give them the means, and clear for them the way, so they can come and worship in this place, and come and hear the gospel, and come and we ask, worship you as brothers and sisters, one day soon.

Lord, you, as we heard this morning and last week, you have broken down, that middle wall of partition. You have made it in yourself, that all who come to you, can know full and certain, and eternal forgiveness of sin.

[8 : 16] Help us, Lord, then, to come before you, with that spirit this evening, that understanding, that we are brothers and sisters, blood-bought, those of us who know and who love you, we are blood-bought brothers and sisters.

Help us, then, to address one another as such, to view one another, as those who have been redeemed, and loved by you. Help us, this evening, around your word, to understand, and be reminded once more, our calling, what it is you have called us to do, as you have called us to be salt, and light, and home, and in our community, as you have called us, as you did your church of old, to be bold, and brave witnesses.

We do not face, the danger of the Roman Empire, we do not face, the danger of attack, and of death. Like many of our brothers and sisters today, we don't fear, the danger of enemies on the door, waiting to take us to prison, or worse, for daring to share the gospel.

But we still find ourselves, every one of us, as your people at times, so, so scared to share the good news, so scared to engage, in that, that essential, commanded work, of sharing the good news.

Lord, give us opportunities, we ask this new week, give us chances, to share the gospel, of those around us. Give us then, we ask the sense, and the wisdom, and the words, to share the good news, with those, who are desperately, needing to hear it.

[9 : 45] Pray to say, Lord, this evening, as we hear the wind, rising, as we see the, predicted forecasts, Lord, we ask for safety, safety and travel, for ourselves, but also safety, for all, who are out this evening.

We pray especially, Lord, for our emergency services, we pray especially, for those involved, in works of necessity today, those in charge, Lord, of the electric, and of the water, and those in charge, of all the various elements, which keeps, things going, as it were, behind the scenes.

Lord, we ask you, give them safety, as we hear just now, even of, of some coming over, just to be ready, to deal with, the power cuts, Lord, we ask you, give them safety, as they go about their business.

We thank you, we live in a country, we have access to power, access to, to clean water, and we take these things, for granted. For the brothers and sisters, this evening, who have access, to none of these things, Lord, we bring these, prayers before you, understanding, that, we ourselves, have no idea, as to how fortunate, we are.

You're a God, who gives, good gifts, and you've given us, so many good gifts, so many, it's hard for us, to number them, so hard for us, to keep track, of just how good, you are to us. Help us then, this evening, to spend the short time, around your word, ready and willing, to listen to you, as you speak to us, through it.

[11 : 04] Help us then, to respond to you well, in our prayer, and thanksgiving, and praise, as we're reminded, once more, just what we're called to be, what we're called to do. Lord, keep us, we ask, forgive us for sin, we come before you, confessing sin, confessing sin, this past week, and this past hour.

Lord, you know our heart, and you see our hearts, you see the parts, of our lives, and the hearts, we hide from others, and even the parts, we ourselves, try and keep from ourselves. Lord, you see it all, it's all exposed, and all known to you.

Forgive us, for awareness, help us to cling, again and again, to the finished work, of Jesus, and to him, and him alone. Open our hearts, take away from us, all distracting thoughts, we ask, and we come, perhaps this evening, clinging on to Jesus, who holds eternally, on to us, asking all these things, in and through, and for, his precious name's sake.

Amen. Let's read in God's word, we're going to read, in 1st Peter chapter 2, a chapter we've covered before, in various ways, but, a different angle of this evening, 1st Peter chapter 2, it's on page 953, page 953, of the church Bibles, 1st Peter chapter 2, page 953, let's hear again, the word of God, so put away, all malice, and all deceit, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all slander, like newborn infants, long, the pure spiritual milk, that by it, you may grow up, into salvation, if indeed, you have tasted, that the Lord is good, as you come to him, a living stone, rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up, as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ, for it stands in scripture, behold I am laying, in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him, will not be put to shame, so the honour is for you, who believe, but for those, who do not believe, the stone, that the builders rejected, has become, the cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, they stumbled, because they disobeyed the word, as they were destined to do, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim, the excellencies of him, who called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light, once you were not a people, but now you are God's people, once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy, beloved,

I urge you as sojourners, and exiles, to abstain from the passions, of the flesh, which wage war, against your soul, keep your conduct, among the Gentiles, honourable, so that when they speak, against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds, and glorify God, on the day of visitation, be subject for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether it be, to the emperor as supreme, or to governors, as sent by him, to punish those who do evil, and to praise those who do good, for this is the will of God, that by doing good, you should put to silence, the ignorance of foolish people, live as people who are free, not using your freedom, as a cover up for evil, but living as servants of God, honour everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the emperor, servants be subject to your masters, of all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust, for this is a gracious thing, when mindful of God, one endures sorrows, while suffering unjustly, for what credit is it, if when you sin, and are beaten for it, you endure, but if when you do good, and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing, in the sight of God, for to this, you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps, he committed no sin, neither was the deceit found in his mouth, when he was reviled, he did not revile in return, when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued, entrusting himself to him, who judges justly, he himself, bore our sins, and his body on the tree, for we might die to sin, and live to righteousness, by his wounds, you have been healed, for you were straying, like sheep, but have now returned, to the shepherd, and overseer, of your souls, and then, give praise to God, for his holy, and his, perfect word, let's again, sing to God's praise, once more singing, in the, the psalm, that we had,

[16 : 11] Scottish Psalter, Psalm 78, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 78, we can sing, verses 5, down to verse 8, of the psalm, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 78, verses 5, down to verse 8, his testimony, and his law, in Israel, he did place, and charged, our fathers, it to show, to their succeeding race, that so the race, which was to come, might well them, learn and know, and sons unborn, who should arise, might two of their sons, them show, Psalm 78, verses 5 to 8, to God's praise, to God's praise, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, a biblical service,

The earth's in control, to next I see thee grace.

That soul's a risk which was to come, They well and when they are not born, They Dragon's Rebellion That in my stead, the golden God, I'm certain not to call.

This mighty works, our God let mine, but we this priest at home.

And might not like their father's feet, a sick rebellious face.

[18 : 53] And might not like their heart with God, who's been God's day as false.

Turning back to the chapter we had, 1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2, these are verses we read before, verses 9 and verse 10.

We've covered these verses before, both here and next door in the prayer meeting. But this evening we're using verses 9 and verse 10 as a scaffold for us to answer a very, almost impossible to answer question.

In that the question is so large, it's hard in one sermon or in ten sermons to answer it. But also the question is so simple, we could save ourselves a sermon and answer it in a sentence.

So we'll hopefully go halfway between both things this evening. A simple, concise sermon, not because of brevity, but because it's an issue we have to have clear in our heads.

[20 : 07] We started our series last week looking at the church, didn't we? And we saw last week the church as a body. What are we? That's the question we asked. What is the church?

We are a body. Well this evening the question, what does the church do? What is the church's purpose? If you like to word it differently, what is our mission?

Well quite simply we could take our own wording of things. If you're online, if you're on Facebook, you've seen that recently we put a new thing up, a new cover photo, a new picture on top of our Facebook page.

You know that picture? A picture of the Tri-Av-A-Word. And quite simply it says, sharing the gospel from the Glen to Gary. Sharing the gospel from the Glen to Gary.

Now that is what we are. That is what we're here to do. With that we encourage one another. We disciple one another. We build one another up and we share the gospel.

[21 : 11] In other words, as a church we seek to reach up together. To disciple, to grow together as Christians in our knowledge and our love. Reaching up. And also we reach out.

We evangelise. We share the good news. And to be honest, that's sermon done. That's what we are as a church. We could go home just now and be quite happy I'm sure. But just to help us flesh that out a wee bit.

We can turn to the verses we have here. If our mission is reaching up and reaching out. If our mission as a church here is sharing the gospel from the Glen to Gary.

What does that actually mean? What does that look like for us? Verses 9 and verse 10 here in 1 Peter. Help us. Help us. Of course Peter here. He's writing.

We said this before. But just to refresh ourselves. He's writing to a young church. He's writing to a struggling church. Struggling mostly as we see elsewhere in the text.

[22 : 11] Because they are facing a hard time of it. The outside oppression is growing. And they're struggling. They're struggling to serve well. There's internal problems too.

And Peter here reminds them in verses 9 and verse 10. He reminds them just what it is they've been called to be. And with that what they've been called to do.

So using that as our scaffold. We can then build around that. That's our base. Just three very simple points from verses 9 and verse 10.

Three ways in which we can see the mission, the purpose of the church. First of all, we belong to God. We are his possession.

Taken from the text there. We belong to God. Second of all, we serve God. We are the royal priesthood. And thirdly, we praise God.

[23 : 11] We're called to proclaim. We belong to God. We serve God. And we praise God. That is who and that is what we do and what we are as a church.

So what does that look like for us here, especially in North Tulsa? We are his possession. First of all, we belong to God. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

A people for his own possession. We belong, church, to God. Brothers and sisters, we have been called. We heard a few weeks ago in the In Christ series in the morning.

We learned that we are chosen in Jesus. Chosen before time itself. Why? To belong to him. He has us for his own beautiful, precious possession.

We are, first of all, then his people. Known from before time. Known by him. And known by him so we can, in time, know him.

[24 : 16] Brothers and sisters, I think and I worry perhaps we lose sight as to not just the simplicity, but the privilege that we have. Brothers and sisters, we, this very moment, we can say, not understand it, but we can say for certain that every single second of every single day, we know the God of all creation.

You know him. And better than that, you can say with certainty that he knows you. We've been known from before time.

And we're known to then know him. We are his people. We've been known before time and chosen before time to serve him in our families.

We'll see that later on. Known before time to serve him in our wider community in North Tolstall. We'll see that later on. We are his people. Loved and precious from all time.

Not just known clinically. Not just known coldly. No. We are known and called loved and called precious from all time.

[25 : 32] We belong to him in that as he knew us, he then gave us gifts and talents, as we heard last week. Gifts and talents. To use for the church. To use in North Tolstall.

We are different members, different body parts of the body. And we said last week, and again, I won't check up on the homework, but the homework was to pray.

Every one of us, myself included, to pray and to ask the Lord. To show us, or at least guide us into using the gifts and talents he's given us for his glory in our congregation here, in our family gathering here.

We are his people. We belong to him. Also, as his people, we see his promise. We get to enjoy the fact as a church that he has promised never to leave or forsake us.

As we seek to serve him. As we seek to grow in our understanding and our discipleship. To grow together as a family. And then as we seek, as we grow up then, to reach out and to evangelize and to share the good news in Tulsa.

[26 : 45] We do so knowing we have a God who promises never to leave us or forsake us. Now that counts, of course, for the big events of life. And we know that.

The awful hard days and hard years. Where there's health disasters and family disasters. And all the big, awful things that happen to us. But that also matters in the small things of life.

Brothers and sisters, when you share the gospel. When you tell someone about Jesus, it goes a bit quiet. And you think, oh, what have I said? Or you make a mess of sharing the gospel.

He doesn't leave or forsake you. He's still with you then. As you muddle your words up and make a mess of things, perhaps, as far as you understand it, he is with you. He also promises to provide for us as a congregation.

As a gathering of his people. We belong to him. Therefore, he looks after us. We know that. And with that, he equips us. He has called us to serve him here in North Tolstall.

[27 : 48] So he's promised, therefore, because we belong to him, he has called us and he equips us. And you think we can't do it. And you're right.

And you think your minister can't do it. Perhaps. You're right. Your elders aren't equipped. You're right. In and of ourselves. Not one of us are.

We've all been gifted, though. With his gifting. Various skills and talents. And he equips us. Brothers and sisters, there's 400 odd people.

In North Tolstice. Say a hundred of them know the Lord. Just take rough maths. There's 40 of ourselves here.

Say 40 next door. And 20 or more who come and go to our denominations and our churches. Say a hundred people. A hundred and ten, maybe. That's pushing it.

[28 : 46] No, the Lord in North Tolstice. At least 300, give or take. Who have no knowledge. Or at least who aren't coming to church. At least have no gospel care for their souls.

As far as we know. It's a big task. But we're not unequipped for it. He equips the ones he calls. And brothers and sisters. He has called every single one of us.

To serve him. We are his people. He gives us his promise. And because we belong to him. All that we do. We do it for his glory.

We ourselves were saved for his glory. So that he would be magnified. As those who once knew us. Family and friends. Even we ourselves. As we see who we once were.

And what we once were. That's viewed and that's seen. And the contrast is seen. And the change is seen. And he is glorified in and through that.

[29 : 46] He is glorified as he takes. Those who are once dead. And brings us to life. He is glorified. As his word is preached. He is glorified as we seek to engage.

With our family and friends. And neighbours in North Tulsa. And yes at times it feels awkward. And awful. And slow. And it feels just odd. Tough.

For all of us. Tough. We're called to engage. We're called to share. And he gets glory in that. Whether we think we're doing a good job or not. He gets the glory. As long as we do it for his name's sake.

And for his glory's sake. He is glorified. The example. We use it plenty of times. The boy. Feeding the 5,000. He brings us his few loaves. And his few fish.

His few wee bread rolls. And his few wee tiny wee fish. His wee lunch. And he offers that up. To be used. A useless offering.

[30 : 44] What a silly offering. I think it's the bread. I think it's the fish. What an excuse. What a rubbish offering that wee boy has. Is that what we see? Course not. That wee boy gives what he can.

Does what he can. And the Lord takes that. Multiplies it. Blesses it. And uses that small offering then. To bless thousands of people. We're praying the Lord uses us.

To bless hundreds of people. The Lord can do it. And do it easily. It's no effort for the Lord. We wish to see ourselves.

Grow in number. Not for our glory. Not so we can send. A statistical review. Back to Edinburgh. We'll do that on Thursday.

Part of our meeting on Thursday. We're to fill in our yearly forms. Filling in our numbers for the year. And if next year. We fill that form in. And there's ten more names. Or twenty more names. Praise the Lord.

[31 : 40] Are we doing that for our glory? No. For his glory. We don't care. And we shouldn't care.

To see the free church grow. For the sake of the free church growing. We care. In the words of Thomas Chalmers. Who cares for the free church.

Other than the Christian good of Scotland. Who cares for North Tolstada Free Church. Other than the Christian good of North Tolstada. If the Lord blesses us. He blesses us.

It's for his glory. It's for his sake. Because we belong to him. As a church. And also because we belong to him. We serve him. We see that here.

We are called priests. A chosen race. A royal priesthood. We serve him. We belong first. And because we belong. We can then serve.

[32 : 37] Just to summarise. I know we know this. But just to summarise for all of us. Because we are called priests. Here in the kingdom of God. The wording of priests.

Is to remind us. That we have access. There's a whole sermon here. We've actually done this before. So just in shorthand. It's access. We have access to God.

In other words. Brothers and sisters. That access is to the whole church. From the youngest Christian. The newest Christian. The most clueless.

Young. Brand new Christian in our faith. To the oldest. Most wise Christian here. We have equal access. To the throne. Brothers and sisters.

It's your access. Paid for you. Purchased for you. Secured for you. By the first work of Jesus. We all have equal access.

[33 : 33] In our prayers. In our pleading. In our understanding. That comes then. With equal responsibilities. So the access is equal.

But so is the duties. So what then. Are the duties. We can see later on. Our privileges. But first of all. What are the duties then. If we're priests. In the church of God.

If we're called. To serve the church. As Christians. What does that mean for us. Well like the priests. First of all. We're called. To be in prayer.

We think of the priests. So we think of. Perhaps the Old Testament priests. That most of our time. Was sacrificing animals. That was a good portion. Of our time. But actually most of our time. Was spent in prayer.

We were engaged. In constant prayer. For the nation of Israel. Constant prayer. For the people. Who would come to them. Offering corporate prayer. Public prayer. But also offering private prayer.

[34 : 32] Of sorts. That's a sermon. For a different day. But we were engaged. In communication. We were engaged. In dealing with people's. Stresses. And strains. We were there.

Of a whole nation of priests. We were there. Around the temple. To serve the people. And we think ourselves. As priests here.

As servants. We'll say. We perhaps think of. The obvious ways we serve. And that's often seen. And this is not. Just ourselves. I'm just saying in general.

I haven't found this myself yet. I haven't. But very often. And I include myself in this. Very up until about a year ago. Very often. Down in South Lochs.

When I would evangelise. Or try and share the gospel. My mind would always say. Well I get them talking. And I'll give them to Ian. I'll pawn them off almost. To the minister.

[35 : 27] That's his job. Now. Maybe because I've become one myself. I realise that's perhaps not the biblical way. But actually that's not the way. Now. I am here to serve. And you're paying me.

To read. And to study. And to be there. As that person. And please do that. Please do that. But. It's not my job. To save them. Individually.

As brothers and sisters. In our own circles of influence. Family members. And friends. We are to save. No one. But we are to point them. Towards Jesus.

Not towards me. But towards Jesus. That if there's questions. And things arising. You think. I might be able to help with. Crack on. I'm here for you. But we point them. Towards Jesus. That is the job.

As priests. We are there. To serve. We do that. By prayer. Are we praying. For our neighbours. Are we praying. For North Tulsa. I hope we are. I'm sure we are.

- [36 : 23] If not. Perhaps. Then let's begin that. Seriously. Praying for North Tulsa. Let's begin seriously. Praying. For our community. Pray for our neighbours.
- And our friends. Pray by area. Pray by street. By however it works. Pray for North Tulsa. The Lord answers prayers. We serve as priests.
- Each one of us. By studying the word. We all have different giftings. Yes. But we can all study the word. We all can read.
- A verse. A chapter. Whatever you are reading. Read a verse. Spend five minutes. Ten minutes. Spend the day. Thinking through that verse.
- Applying that verse. To your life. Praying that verse. Taking it to the Lord. Read a chapter. If that is your thing. And spend time. Taking that chapter to the Lord. Whatever your ability is. Whatever your limitations are.
- [37 : 19] Either way you study. And you grow. In your love. In your love. Of the Lord. And his word. We pray. We study. We also fellowship. One another.
- Not just formally. But also just as brothers and sisters. As a family. We engage one another. We engage with one another. Spend time together. We enjoy each other's company.
- We grow. We grow. As a family. In love. We also share the gospel. Work together. And here's where.
- I say the opposite. What I just said. Just now. Don't point them towards me. Point them towards Jesus. But at the same time. I'm here to serve you. As your minister. You've called me to serve you. And I will do my utmost.
- To serve. However I can. Please speak to your elders. Speak to myself. And together. If you see there's someone. Of gospel interest. In yourself.
- [38 : 14] And ourselves together. We will. Be there for that person. Praying for them. Supporting them. Whatever. Needs done. We have to be proactive. We have to be.
- Intentional. We have to be ready. To reach out. And to look for opportunities. And to grab them. The seed.
- Doesn't grow. Unless the sower. Actually. Sows the seed. We have the seed. We all have the gospel. Those of us who know the Lord.
- We have the good news. If we aren't sharing that. And seeking to spread that. There won't be growth. It's as simple as that. We don't discredit.
- God's sovereignty. We assume that. But that's our discussion. Our discussion tonight is. We are priests. We must serve. We pray. We study. We serve one another.
- [39 : 10] We support one another. But also. We do the gospel work. We share the good news. In your homes. In your families. Day by day. In the village.
- You pray for opportunities. And you lay hold. On every opportunity. The Lord gives you. It's not easy. It's definitely not easy. But it's work.
- We are all. Called to do. With duties also. There's privileges. It's not just duty. The priests. Had privileges. And we. As priests.
- In the kingdom of God. We have great. Privileges. Unstructured. I said. We have. Unobstructed. Unstructured. Unlimited access. To God himself.
- Unlimited access. To the very creator. Who knows you. Who loves you. Sustains the whole universe. With the word. Of his power. You. My friend. My brother. My sister.
- [40 : 08] You have equal access. Unlimited access to him. If you know Jesus this evening. You are. But a thought away. But a word away.

From communing. With the one. Who is God eternal. What a privilege. What a privilege we have. We have access. To take up.

And to read. Or to listen. However it is. You take in God's word. We have access. To take up God's word. And to read it. And to see. Revealed to us.

The mystery. Hidden. For generations. That God would send. His own son. We have that mystery. Prophets. Priests. And kings. Before us. Didn't have that mystery.

Revealed to them. It's been revealed to us. And us. Here in North Tolstice. Can rejoice. In that mystery. Revealed. And can read all about Jesus. What a privilege. We get the joy.

[41 : 04] Of knowing. That as we eat. And drink. And get dressed. In the morning. And live our days out. Normally. We are doing so. To God's praise. And God's glory. As we seek to share. The gospel. Perhaps.

With faltering lips. And with scared lips. We do so. For God's glory. And with the Lord. To be praised. If it happens.

As we see. Folks. Folks. Coming. To know the Lord. In our congregation. Coming to serve the Lord. And coming to love the Lord. Together. We have the great privilege. Of welcoming them.

Welcoming. Them in. To our family. Seeing the gospel. Transform. Lives. We belong to him. We serve him.

And finally. We praise him. We are a holy nation. A royal priesthood. A people of his own possession. Why?

[41 : 59] So that you may proclaim. The excellencies of him. Who called you out of darkness. Into his marvelous light. That yes. There are times.

We are scared. And times. It is awkward. It is difficult. To proclaim the good news. But if we love him. We must proclaim him. We must worship him.

And doing so. We must be willing. To share that good news. To our community. It is not easy. The work of sowing. Isn't easy. I have planted.

Nothing more than. A grow bag. Of potatoes. In my life. But I have helped out. At plenty of. Of planting sessions. Of family members. I have been there. Plenty of times.

Having to dig around. And dig out. And clean things up. It is hard work. It is hard labor. Having to sow the seed. It is hard labor. Having to do the work.

[42 : 55] To share the gospel. It is hard. It is awkward. It is painful at times. But we must do it. Why? Because we ourselves. Know the joy.

And the love. And the wonder. Of being called. To proclaim. His wondrous mercy. As these verses tell us. We are called. Out of darkness. Into his marvelous light.

And if we know that. We should want to then. Proclaim that. No matter the cost. And we say that. No matter the cost. We think of. Of the big costs. Of losing loved ones.

And family members. And being dragged to prison. Brothers and sisters. We don't face that cost. The cost we face. Is embarrassment. Is awkwardness. And we should be willing.

To face that cost. To share the glorious good news. Of our glorious saviour. Just because we praise him.

[43 : 51] It doesn't mean we have to be happy. The apostle Paul. Proclaimed God's goodness. In prison cells. In sinking ships. In shipwrecked ships.

Attacked. And lashed. Parts of his body. Gouged off. The apostle Paul. Knew suffering. He shackled up in prison cells. In the deepest of prisons. The very dungeon.

Shackled to a cold floor. And there he is. Praising God. Our call to praise him. Doesn't depend on our situation. We're called to praise him. Regardless. Not a fake show of happiness.

No. But a genuine praise. And no matter what takes place. In our life. He is in control. No matter what happens to us. He is sovereign. No matter what we might face.

His love and care. For us. Does not change. But whatever we may experience. Or see. Or know. Or go through. Once. We were in darkness.

[44 : 54] As verse 9 tells us. But now. But now. We've been called. Out of that darkness. Into his marvelous light. Brothers and sisters.

Verse 10. Is what should inspire us. To praise him. And that praise should then go. Into our outward. Proclaiming the good news. Once you were not a people.

Brothers and sisters. Once we were not a people. But now you are. God's people. Once you had not received mercy. But now. You have.

Received. Mercy. We praise God. And as we praise him. That should then encourage us. To want to share that good news.

To those. Around us. As a church. Our mission is simple. Grow in grace. And share the gospel.

[45 : 49] Grow upward. And then share. Outward. Quite simply. Once more. For ourselves here. You might not like it. Maybe we could change it. It's. It's not set in stone.

But. A mission statement for us. Just in our minds. Quite simply. We're here. To share the good news. From the Glen. To Gary.

It's a short distance. We can walk it in. An hour and a bit. Maybe. It's going to my pace. You can walk it. It's walkable. Our mission field.

Is not the ends of the earth. That's part of it. But our mission field. Is actually. Here. And often for us. It's much easier. To have a mission field. That's out there. Somewhere. In far flung China.

At the end. Of some. Tibetan village. The Lord. Is doing his work. There too. And we. We work towards that. And we give money. And we provide. And we pray. That's fine.

[46 : 49] But sometimes. I wonder. If we're happy. To do that work. Out there. But it's much harder. For us. To do the work. Here. We've been called. To live. And serve. In North Tulsa.

This is our mission field. We are the church. Here. Called. By the Lord. Called. Because. We belong to him.

Because we belong to him. It means we must serve him. As we serve him. We praise him. The one who took us. From darkness. And from death.

To life. And to his marvelous. Light. We who once knew no hope. And knew no mercy. We now have hope. And have. Received.

Mercy. Brothers and sisters. That is our calling. In one sense. It's simple. It's also impossible. And we will engage.

[47 : 46] In ideas. And we will engage. In programs. And we will engage. In these things. I will make use of. All the gifts. And all the ideas. The Lord has given his people. We will run courses.

And all these things. I will do it. For God's glory. But no one is saved. Through things. Now we use means. And means are good. We don't disparage means.

Christianity Explored. It's a successful mean. And we will use that. Discipleship Explored. We will use that. Gatherings. And ideas. And community walks.

Soup lunches. Whatever it takes. We will use it all. All the means. God gives us. We will make full use of them. But the Lord alone saves.

And the Lord saves. By using means. And brothers and sisters. We are the ultimate means. That the Lord has employed. In terms of sharing the word.

[48 : 44] Now he saves through his word. He saves through the spirit. We heard this morning. But we are the hands. And the feet. Of our saviour. As we go out. We engage with the world. And we show.

And point them towards Jesus. However we do that. We can decide on. And we can work through. And we will do everything we can. Ultimately. Individually. We pray for our place.

We serve our place. We love our place. All for God's glory. Sharing the gospel. From the Glen. To Gary.

That is the mission. Of ourselves here in North Tulsa. All for his glory. We would see. And we pray we would see. More faces here. We pray we would see. More come to us.

Save the knowledge of the Lord. And we pray that he is in it. As we seek to do all these things. Bow our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord we bring once more. These things before you. As we.

[49 : 43] With anticipation. Come before you. Asking you. Bless your word. And bless. The reminder of that. We have been called. For a purpose. Give us Lord. Then wisdom. To make full use of that purpose.

In this place. And to. To share that. Glorious good news. We. Confess often to our shame. It is so difficult for us. So difficult to share. The simple gospel. Especially with those.

Who are closest to us. Give us Lord. Opportunities we ask. Give us the words to say. Help us to bravely. And boldly. Share the good news. Even if it costs us.

Shame. And embarrassment. And awkwardness. Lord we would be willing. To lay these things aside. For the sake of the gospel. We would see your name. Glorified in North Tulsa. We would see your praise.

Ring out from home to home. From the Glen. Lord to Gary. We would see. And we would see. Days of refreshing. And days of renewal. Until we see these days. Lord help us to be faithful. Sowers.

[50 : 36] Help us to be diligent. In the place you have placed us. In this field. Of your service. We have you praise. The glorious gospel truth.

Is true for here. As is for everywhere else. The harvest. Is plenty. The labourers are still few. But help us to be faithful labourers.

In this field. Where you have placed us. And help us. To rejoice. When we see the good and glorious news. Of some coming. And many coming. To love and know Jesus.

The first time. Take us home Lord. We ask in safety. Pray once more for our own safety. And also safety of all. Who we love and care for. And all connected to this place. Let's call these things.

Relying. On the finished work. Of our glorious saviour. In his name. And for his sake. Amen. Let's bring our time. Of praise. To a conclusion. By singing.

[51 : 30] To God's praise. From the sing psalms. Sing psalms. Psalm 96a. Sing psalms. Psalm 96a.

That's on page. 126. Psalm 96a. On page. 126.

We sing verses 1. Down to verse 10. Of the psalm. Psalm 96a. Verses 1. Down to verse 10. As we sing of God's glory. And God's.

Saving power. Sing a new song. To the Lord. Sing praises. To his name. And his salvation. Day by day. Let all the earth proclaim. His glory. And his mighty deeds.

To every land declare. How great and awesome. Is the Lord. With him. No gods compare. Psalm 96a. Verses 1. Down to verse 10. To God's praise.

[52 : 27] Sing. Praise. Amen. Will sing a new song. To the Lord.

Sing praises. To his promoting. And this salvation divine King Let all be at your end This glory and this mighty peace You may be happy there And we can trust and be set on With Him, O God, compare On that their cross by wood and stone

The Lord made heaven's high O God, and the majesty, the palace He dwells in glorious light All nations could have our last night Let all be at your truth Glory and strength Has tried to God And this is Emmanuel And that his works with joy and pain

God, I'm coming with you Worship the Lord And holy, the Father Be for the night And every one The Lord is king His commission is the end And now, the Lord will judge The Lord will judge The people The Lord will judge The people His truth Please be careful around the corner It's pretty bad just now

Let's close with an action The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit With you now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amenfryzh Amen On the mercy of God