

God In The Furnace

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn together for a short time to the book of Daniel, chapter 3, and looking at this passage that we read, especially focusing on words from verse 24 to 25.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, did we not cast three men bound into the fire? He answered and said to the king, true, O king. He answered and said, but I see four men unbound walking in the midst of the fire and they are not hurt.

And the appearance of the fourth is like some of the gods. Now last time, in looking at the first part of the chapter where this command went out from Nebuchadnezzar to bow down, that everyone had to bow down to this image that he had made, to this gigantic golden image.

We saw that that really is something that we can apply in terms of our present situation. And indeed at every time, we can apply it in a way that sees that as teaching us how sometimes government or the state will try to impose its will upon people so that effectively the state is setting itself up as God.

That's basically what Nebuchadnezzar was really doing here. The image as it represented himself and his own authority and his own power was really effectively Nebuchadnezzar or the ruling power of the time saying to all the people, I'm in charge of your life.

[1 : 40] You have to do as I say and therefore I command you to bow to this image. It was an imposing of the will of government or the will of a ruling authority on people in an unjustified way.

It was a denial to them of the freedom that we ought to have and that they ought to have had at that time, especially to worship God as they would want to do.

And that's why these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who with Daniel had been deported from their native place back in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon and came to serve King Nebuchadnezzar.

That's why they refused because it would have been an act of clear idolatry to follow the direction that had been given them by Nebuchadnezzar at the time.

And so Nebuchadnezzar actually carried out his threat. He cast them into a burning fiery furnace with that question that he had asked them or the statement really as it was in verse 16 there.

[2 : 52] Who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands? That's such a vital question and really looking at the whole teaching of the passage and how that question came to be answered so wonderfully and so powerfully by what actually happened.

Because after he had thrown them into the fire, we see that things happened in a way that completely confounded Nebuchadnezzar.

And that's really our first point this evening, that God often confounds his enemies. He looked into the furnace and astonished.

He said, did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They said, true, O king. He said, but I see four men unbound walking in the midst of the fire.

And you see in verse 27 there how very deliberately the passage mentions that all of these people round about, the prefects, these were all the officials of Nebuchadnezzar in terms of government and local authority and so on.

[3 : 59] These are remarkable words.

These are words that really describe this miracle because a miracle it was. We take it, this was in fact a historical event. This is the Bible telling us about something that really happened.

We don't pass it off as a story, as a figment of someone's imagination. We don't pass it off as something that's just been concocted and put together so as to present a message about God to us without really being of any historical value.

This is what they saw. This is what Daniel himself came to record in this remarkable incident. Here was this furnace heated up seven times more than usual.

So fiercely was the furnace burning that the men, the soldiers who carried these three men, because they had been bound up on top of their everyday clothes, they had been bound up with ropes and thrown into the furnace just like that.

[5 : 12] Just thrown in, completely bound up. And the fire was so fierce as the soldiers came to the edge of the furnace to throw them in, they were actually killed by the heat of the flames.

And yet, here you find that these three men, the fire had no power over them. Their hair was not singed. Their cloaks were unharmed.

And it was through not even the smell of fire had attached to any of them. No wonder Nebuchadnezzar was astonished.

This was indeed a miracle. If you believe in God, you believe in miracles. If you believe that Jesus rose from the dead, you believe in miracles.

If you believe that Jesus rose from the dead, you have no problem in believing this. If you don't believe in God, if you dismiss God, if you look on life in a secularist way, then you're going to dismiss this as something that's really just an invention of human beings.

[6 : 18] To kind of make up something that they will apply to their lives and feel good in the midst of all the troubles that life brings. We don't trust tonight in an imaginary God.

We don't trust in a God of imaginary power. We don't trust in something or someone that human invention has brought about down through the course of history as a kind of religious expression of how they feel and of looking for some security in life by putting together things which have come eventually to be put together in this Bible.

But it's really not trustworthy as far as historical things are concerned. We trust tonight in the God who exists from all eternity independent of human life.

The God who is. The God who has always been and who always will be. We trust in the God who created this vast universe that we are a tiny speck in relation to.

We trust this God who gave his son as we saw this morning to come into this world to become part of this creation.

[7 : 38] To give himself to the death of the cross to rise from the dead. That's the God we believe in. And when we believe in that God and all that he has revealed of himself through his word here in the scriptures.

You don't have a problem tonight I hope in looking at these words and saying well yes that's God. And that's my God who can do that. And because my God can do that.

I'm like the psalmist. I can say well what is it that can ultimately harm me. Because this God is my savior and my strength. And he demonstrated that.

In this amazing incident. But then you see Nebuchadnezzar went on to say something else even more remarkable. Not only were these three men walking about in the midst of the flames of the furnace unbound and unharmed.

Untouched by anything of that furnace and its fierceness. He saw a fourth figure. They had thrown three men in. And he looked around and asked those servants that were around him there.

[8 : 48] He came and asked them. Did we not throw three men bound into the fire? And they said yes. Yes king that's what we did. Well but I see four men unbound.

And not only that. They're not hurt. And the fourth. The form of the fourth one. Is like a son of the gods. And that's how this translation puts it.

And I think that's the right translation. Because sometimes in the older translations. It says that Nebuchadnezzar said. The form of the first one is like the son of God. We don't.

We don't. Understand. Nebuchadnezzar to have come to see. Jesus Christ clearly. In this particular incident.

Because in the Old Testament. Even the best saints in the Old Testament. Really saw Christ only faintly. Faintly in their time. And through the ways in which God had come to express himself.

[9 : 45] Whether it was in the sacrifices. Or whatever. But what we find here is that. Here is this pagan king. This king who had really no time. For the God of Shadrach, Meshach.

And Abednego in his own life. And he's looking into this furnace. Into which he has ordered three men to be cast. He's seen them being cast in. And he looks in. And he sees four. Four. And the form of the fourth is different to the other three.

And so different in fact. That he thinks of this as a divine figure. It's not just like any human being he's ever seen. It's different to any other human being he's ever seen.

And the only thing he can conclude is. This is a divine figure. He belongs to the gods. He's one of them. And you know sometimes.

People come to that conclusion. They have remarkable things in their lives. They experience things which are beyond the usual. And they feel that there's been something.

[10 : 49] Of the touch of God about that. And very often they may not be mistaken at all. That's not the point really. The point is that.

As we see next that. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed. But left unchanged. In his heart. He saw.

These men unharmed by the flames. He admired. And was impressed indeed. By this fourth man. That had the appearance. As he put it.

Of a son of the gods. This divine like figure. He was impressed with the miraculous. He experienced himself.

Looking into something. That he regarded as. Miraculous or extraordinary. He witnessed the faithful courage. Of these three men. He was impressed.

[11 : 47] By the way they refused. To bow to his command. When it meant being disobedient. To their God. He was mightily impressed. He was impressed.

By all of these things. But he was not changed. In heart. He didn't come himself. To say then. I'm now going to serve this God.

This God is going to be my God. To the exclusion. Of all the other gods. That I have in. The pantheon of Babylon. God. And the outward acts.

That he showed. As the passage. As the chapter goes on. While indeed. He said. Blessed be. The God of Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. Who has sent to servant.

And delivered his servants. Who trusted in him. And how he gave a decree. Saying that anyone. Who does anything against. Or speaks against. This God of Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. Shall be torn.

[12 : 45] From limb to limb. It's not really the language. Of somebody. Who's come into. A proper knowledge. Of God. Is it? And that's such a solemn point. That this is a man.

Who saw these things. With his own eyes. Who experienced this miracle. As he looked into the furnace. Who actually was mightily impressed. With all of these phenomena. And yet remained himself.

Unchanged. Be careful tonight. Be careful tonight. That.

You are not leaving things. Just to. Being mightily impressed. With the gospel. With your heart left. Unchanged. You are impressed.

With Christ. Aren't you? You're impressed. With the teaching of scripture. You're impressed. You're impressed. With its consistency. You're impressed. With the things. That God has done. Through history. You're impressed.

[13 : 39] With the great miracles. That God himself. Has effected. Down through the course. Of the years. In the history. Of this world. You're impressed. With what he did. In Egypt. When he rescued. His people. Israel out of Egypt.

And delivered them. Safely from the clutches. Of Pharaoh. You're impressed. By the way. He brought. A cleaving of the Red Sea. So that he could pass on. In dry land. You're impressed. By everything.

That he did here. In the experience of Daniel. You're impressed. Indeed. By what you read. In the gospels. About the life. Of Jesus Christ. About the perfection. Of that life.

You're impressed. By the miracles. That he did. By the raising of Lazarus. From the dead. You're impressed. That he never ever uttered. A sinful word. Or made a sinful act. That nobody could find.

Any fault in him. You're impressed. With the way he gave himself. So willingly. To the death of the cross. You're impressed. That he rose. From the dead. On the third day. As the old testament. Had predicted.

[14 : 35] You're impressed. With the spread. Of the church. In the days. Of the apostles. Of the apostles. But this is the issue.

Isn't it? Being saved. Is not just. A matter of being impressed. We need to be born again. We need to be changed.

From within. Not just. Something in the mind. That has. Become impressed. With the acts of God. Many people.

Follow Jesus. Because they were impressed. With the miracles. You read about them. In the gospels. You read about a crisis. For them. In John chapter 6. When the teaching of Jesus.

Made such demands. Upon them. Requiring them. Really to. Receive this. Jesus for themselves. And commit their lives. Holy to him. And they turned back.

[15 : 32] And walked no more. With him. That's when he turned. To the twelve disciples. And said. Will you. Or do you also. Want to go away.

There were others too. In the scriptures. Simon Magus. In the book of Acts. Was so impressed. With the miracles. That he saw. Performed. By Peter. And other apostles.

That he actually. He himself. Came to confess. Jesus Christ. But he was a charlatan. He was outwardly. Impressed.

He wanted to be able. To do some of these miracles. To add them. To his own repertoire. Of magic. And Peter. Had to turn around. To him. And tell him.

That he was still. In the gall. Of bitterness. And in the bond. Of iniquity. He was still. In the clutches. Of sin. He had never been changed. From inside.

[16 : 34] He was not born again. If you're impressed tonight. That's good. Everyone here. Has been impressed. I'm sure. By the gospel.

But please. Go beyond. Being impressed. Go as far. As to commit. Your life. To the one. Who impresses you. Open your heart.

To him. Receive him. Into your life. Yield yourself. To him. Give your own authority. Over to his. Give your will.

To his. That's what it's about. Nothing less. Will do for him. Everything else. Will follow from that. That you need.

Well here is God. Confounding. His enemies. Confounding. Nebuchadnezzar. When he sees these men. Unharmd. In the flames. When he sees this. Fourth figure.

[17 : 32] That he says. Is like a son. Of the gods. And he is so impressed. And yet. The lesson. We take from that is. We need more than that. To be saved.

And the second point. We want to take from. This passage. This evening. Is that. While God often. Confounds his enemies. God. Always. Looks after. His people.

These three. Young men. Were his people. And God. Looks after his people. Always. First of all. Not by keeping them. From suffering. You see.

What these men said. To Nebuchadnezzar. Verse 17. Let's remind ourselves. Of what they said. If this be so. That's. To say. If. This furnace. Is indeed.

Going to be. Prepared for us. Our God. Who we serve. Is able. To deliver us. From the burning. Fiery furnace. And he will. Deliver us. Out of your hand.

[18 : 26] O king. But it didn't happen. They had confidence. That God. Could do this. They were prepared. To commit themselves. To God. In resisting.

The will. Of Nebuchadnezzar. Being quite confident. If God. Saw fit. Then he could. Deliver them. From that furnace. He could prevent them. Ever being thrown. Into that furnace. God.

Had the capacity. The power. The authority. The ability. To bring that about. They had no question. About that. But he didn't do that. And that's how it often.

Has been in history. God doesn't always. Answer. The prayers. Of his people. For deliverance. From suffering.

Indeed. If you go to. That famous chapter. In Hebrews. In chapter 11. There's a list. Of people there. Who lived. By faith. Is. But it's very interesting. How. That passage.

[19 : 22] Not only. Gives us. These individuals. One by one. But then comes to. The end of the chapter. And says. What more shall I say. Time would fail me.

To tell of Gideon. Barak. Samson. And so on. And then he says. Through faith. They conquered kingdoms. And for justice. Obtain promises. Stop the mouths of lions.

Quench the power. Of fire. Escape. The edge of the sword. Were made strong. Out of weakness. Became mighty. In war. Put foreign armies. Armies to flight.

Some were tortured. Refusing to accept release. So that they might attain. Rise again. To a better life. Others suffered mocking. And floggings.

And even chains. And imprisonment. They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed. With a sword. They went about. In skins of sheep. And goats.

[20 : 17] Destitute. Afflicted. Mistreated. Of whom the world. Was not worthy. Wandering about. In deserts. And mountains. And dens. And caves.

Of the earth. God does not always. Deliver his people. From the worst of sufferings. He doesn't actually. Sometimes. Come in answer.

To their prayers. He keeps them. Not by keeping them. From the sufferings. Remember what. Paul said to Timothy. In 2nd Timothy. That he had to be sure.

To take his own share. Of the sufferings. Of the gospel. Romans chapter 5. And verse 3. Paul there. As well as reminding. The Romans there.

Of how. Sufferings form. Such an integral part. Of what. God has actually. Delivered us into. It's a way of life. That doesn't. By. Pass. Sufferings.

[21 : 11] But actually. Comes through. God's grace. To transform. Sufferings. Positively. For us. He says there. More over than that. We rejoice. In our sufferings.

Knowing that the suffering. Produces. Endurance. And endurance. Character. And character. Hope. And so on. And you can take. Other passages.

To chapter 8. Of Romans. Of course. That. That famous passage. Also. Verse 18. Where you find the same thing. For I consider that the sufferings. Of this present time. Are not worthy.

Comparing with the glory. That is to be revealed. In us. And all the way through. You find that emphasis. God. Chooses.

His people. A path. In which suffering. Features. Sometimes. Very strongly. Indeed. Even. To the extent. Of being thrown. Into. A burning.

[22 : 06] Fiery furnace. He doesn't. Keep them. From suffering. He protects them. He looks after them.

But not by keeping them. From the suffering. Nor is it by. Making them face. Suffering. Alone. And here's the great point. That. The passage makes.

In regard to this. Fourth figure. That's like a son of the gods. As Nebuchadnezzar said. You see. If you think of what Nebuchadnezzar. Might have been thinking. When he saw these three men. Bound.

As he commanded. And just thrown. Into the fiery furnace. You can just imagine. Him standing there. And say. Well I told you. Where is there. A God. Who will deliver you.

Out of my hands. He would have been. Thinking to himself. Well. They should have listened. To me. Because there's no God. Able to live it. Out of my hands. And certainly not their God.

[23 : 01] Because he hasn't done it. He hasn't intervened. There they are. They've been thrown. Into the furnace. Where's that God. Well he hasn't kept them.

From the furnace. But he's gone into the furnace. With them. That's the amazing thing. The figure that he sees there. As the fourth figure.

Is actually. A representation. Of God. And we could call. Our study tonight. Very rightly. God. In the furnace. With his people. That's one of the great points.

That comes across to us. From the passage. And is repeated again. In the history of God's church. And of God's people. Individually. That God. Doesn't keep us. From the sufferings.

Very often. But. He brings. Sufferings. In such a way. That assures us. We will not be suffering alone. He will go into. The sufferings with us. It's a thread.

[23 : 59] Right throughout scripture. It's a glorious thread. As you read. As you look at. If you like. The cloth. Of this scripture. Of this book. Of this truth. That God. Has woven together for us.

Here is one of the golden strands. That runs. Right through this cloth of scripture. God. And his people together. God. Sharing in his people's lot.

God. Coming even. To enter into the furnace. With these three men. To walk about. This furnace. Inside the flames. With them. Now that's.

Of course. An extraordinary. Event. In regards to. The way things usually are. But the principle stands.

The principle of God. Being with. His people. And with his people. In all their extremities. It's.

[24 : 56] If you like. The Emmanuel principle. Remember. Isaiah speaking about. Emmanuel. God with us. Matthew in his gospel. Seeing that. Fulfilled. In the way.

Jesus. Then with the son of God. Came. Into this world. And became a human being. Was born. To fulfill the prophecy. Of Emmanuel. God with us.

Three very simple words. But a profoundly important. God. With. Us. Where would you be tonight.

Without these three words. What kind of outlook. Would you have. Where would you stand. How would you face death.

How would you contemplate. Eternity. How would you face. Even up to the crisis. Of your life. God.

[25 : 54] With. Us. The Emmanuel. Principle. Seen in the incarnation. Of the son of God. In our nature.

But it's. Carried through. Into the events. Of. God's people's lives. And their daily experience. Think for example. Of Exodus. Chapter 33. Where. Moses there.

Just immediately. Or very soon. After the incident. With the golden calf. Where God. Had. Said to. Moses. Well. Just. Just leave me alone. Let me alone. Don't pray for these people anymore.

Is what he meant. Because I'm going to destroy them. There are stiff necked people. They've rebelled against me again. I'm going to make a fresh start. I'm going to begin with you. Moses.

And I'll make of you. A great nation. Moses pleaded for the people. Moses. There is a wonderful representation. Of Christ. The mediator. Between a rebellious people.

[26 : 48] And the holy God. And as. Chapter 33. Then unfolds. You find Moses. In conversation. With God. And God saying.

I'm going to send my angel. I won't go myself. Because they're a stiff necked people. I'll send my angel. And Moses says. That's not enough Lord. If you don't go with us.

Don't take us any further on from here. If it's anything less than yourself. And your presence. Don't take us further.

And then he says. How shall we be known. As your people. Is it not in this. That you. Go with us.

It's one of the great features. Of God's people. And how they're known as God people. And recognized as God's people. And of confidence. That they are indeed God's people.

[27 : 50] It's that God is with them. That God has committed himself. To walking with them. To being with them. To sharing in their circumstances. And that's been demonstrated.

Of course. By Christ himself. Think of. Jacob. Think of Jacob. Think of Jacob. Think of Jacob. In his old age. Having to go back. To Egypt. This Egypt. That's. So.

Sinister. In the way. That it. Stands. As a place. Of idolatry. And darkness. Compared. To Canaan. Compared. To the promises. Of God. And yet. He has come. He has come. To realize.

That Joseph. Is actually alive. And Joseph. Is in Egypt. And he's got to go. And see him again. Before he dies. But in order to see. His beloved Joseph.

That he long thought of. As lost. And killed. He's got to go down. To Egypt. And you can imagine. Old Jacob. Just. Hesitating a little bit.

[28 : 45] In his old age. Thinking of. That long journey. Thinking of. What faced him. In Egypt. Thinking. Will I ever return. To Canaan alive. And God.

Came to him. In the night. And said. Don't be afraid. Jacob. Don't be afraid. To go down. To Egypt. For I will. Go down. With you. And not only.

Will I go down. With you. But I will. Bring you up. Again. What an amazing. Promise. What a wonderful. Consolation. To an old man. Facing the prospect.

Of having. To go. To this. Egypt. That's associated. With such. Envy. To the people. Of God. Don't be afraid. He says. To go down. Into Egypt. For I will. Go with you. How very often.

You need to come. To these words. In your own life. In your own experience. Where you find. Something dark. And something sinister. Facing you. Something that makes you. Tremble.

[29 : 43] Something that is. Forbidding. Something that you have to. Really. Bulk. At the thought. Of overcoming it. Some real difficulty. Something. Over which you have to. Take a major decision.

Whatever it is. Illness. An important decision. In the turn of your life. Unexpected events. Trauma. Trauma. God is saying.

To all those. Who have their trust. In him. Don't be afraid. To go down. Into this Egypt. For I promise. I will go with you.

And I'll take you up again. I'll look after you. I'll look after you. In Egypt. And. He then said. A beautiful thing. To him. Joseph. Joseph. Himself. Shall lay his hand.

Upon your eyes. By which he meant. When you do die. Your eyes will be closed. By your beloved son. Wonderful promises.

[30 : 41] Beautiful truths. Take them into your heart. Face life with them. Face death with them. Face eternity with them. Because they're very real.

Still to all. Who trust in God. And you can imagine them. As words. Which Jesus himself. Reinforces. Don't be afraid.

To go on. Towards eternity. Because when you come to die. And your trust is in me. I will close your eyes. I'll look after you.

In the passage. From this world. Into the next. I will not let you down. God. With us. Think of Isaiah 43.

Words which are so very like. These. This passage. This incident. In Daniel. These words. Very well known words. Of promise. In Isaiah 43. Now thus says the Lord.

[31 : 41] Who created you. O Jacob. He's talking there. To the people of Israel. Through Isaiah. Who formed you. O Israel. Fear. Not. For I have redeemed you. When you pass through the waters.

I will be with you. And through the rivers. They shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire. You shall not be burned. And the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord. Your God. The Holy One of Israel. Your Savior. He's not saying. To the people of Israel. Don't be afraid. To go through the flames. Because I'm going to make sure.

That you're protected. Yes they are. But how are they protected? He's going to go in there. With them. He's going to see to it. That they will have his presence.

In all their journeys. If they have their trust in him. And then you have. And finally Acts chapter 18. And verses 9 and 10.

[32 : 42] Where you find. The same sort of emphasis. Given. To Paul. When he was in. The city of Corinth. And where he was. So aware of all the darkness.

Of idolatry. And ungodliness. And the polluted lifestyles. Of Corinth. And their paganism. All around him. And verses 9 and 10.

God came to him. And said to Paul. One night in a vision. Do not be afraid. But go on speaking. And do not be silent.

For I am with you. You see. The last place you'd expect. To find God. Was in Corinth. But is in Corinth. Because his servant is there. And because his servant is there.

God is accompanying him. I will be with you. For I have many. And no one will attack you. To harm you. For I have many people. In this city. Who are my people.

[33 : 39] Don't be afraid. To go out into that world. That world. That's so full of unbelief. And opposition. And darkness. That world. Into which God has commanded you. To go in his name.

With the gospel. And with your gospel witness. And with your believing witness. I know it's intimidating. I know it's frightening at times. I know we're surrounded by.

Such a rampant rise. Of secularism. And humanism. And all kinds of beliefs. That contradict. And want to overthrow the gospel. And we'll think badly of you.

If you are true to God. Just like these three men. As we saw last time. You have to remain true to God. We will not bow to your gods. That's our philosophy.

We have one God. We are true to him. And here is Paul. And we are assured. As well as Paul was.

[34 : 35] Don't be afraid. In the midst of all. Of this darkness. For I am with you. Makes all the difference. In the world. When you know that God.

Is on your side. That God is with you. That God looks after his people. Not by making them. Avoid suffering. Not by making them face suffering alone.

But being with them. Throughout their experiences. And God looks after his people. By giving them. Appropriate grace. Well we can say that.

These three men were. Amazingly. Spared. Any effect at all. From the flames. It's not always like that. As we say sometimes.

Life really hurts. And we experience the pains. And the traumas. That God sends our way. But he gives.

[35 : 32] Strength to us. We saw last time. These people had to make. Their decision. To actually stand. Against Nebuchadnezzar. And grace. Is not God.

Providing you with strength. So as to avoid. Taking difficult decisions. That's not what grace is. Grace is. Yes. You have to take the decision. For yourself.

To save the Lord. To be true to God. But he gives you the strength. Then to face that. To do that. And to face the consequences. Grace is.

It's not a mere attitude. On the part of God. Where he has a. Favorable glance. Or attitude. Toward you. Grace is the power. Of God. Actively at work. That's why we're told.

In the Bible. We're saved by grace. It's not just. God looking upon us. And casting a look. In our direction. Favorably. Grace is something. That really. In God's own sense.

[36 : 28] Is God. Actively at work. Creatively at work. In our lives. And grace follows us. And grace. Continues to work. In our lives. To help us.

That's why Paul. In that. Classic passage. In 2nd Corinthians 12. You know the passage. Very well. We've looked at it. Many times. At least. In some detail.

Where Paul. Was saying there. That this thorn in the flesh. That he had been given him. As a messenger of Satan. To buffet him. To stop him. From being exalted. Above measure.

Having had these. Wonderful experiences. Of being lifted up. To the third heaven. And so on. Well this is what he concluded. He concluded that.

When I am weak. Then I am strong. This is what I will boast of. He says. The power of Christ. Resting upon me.

[37 : 23] For when I am weak. Then I am strong. His grace. His grace. Made perfect. His strength. Made perfect. In us. That's how we are strong.

By the grace of God. That he measures. To our circumstances. And time. God doesn't give us. Grace for the circumstances.

Of tomorrow. Today. He gives us grace. For today. To face the issues. Of this day. Hebrews 4. Makes that clear.

That we may come. To the throne of grace. That we may receive mercy. And find. Grace to help. In time of need. Or grace to help. In a timely way.

He always measures. His grace exactly. To our circumstances. Never short. Never. Over much. Let me finish.

[38 : 23] By a story. It happened. In a church. In Atlanta. God willing. We hope. To be going. Ourselves. Shortly. Across to America.

With Alistair. Atlanta. And then onwards. To south of that. But this story. Took place. This took place. In a church. In Atlanta. This church. Was. Introducing.

An old pastor. Of the denomination. He was actually. Ninety-two. And he was introduced. As somebody. That had been invited. Along. To give a message. And when he was introduced. And he got up.

From his chair. Remember he's ninety-two. He took his time. Slowly. Walked up to the. Podium there. With great effort. And he actually. Put his hands. Then onto. The sides of the pulpit.

There to steady himself. And then he began to speak. Very quietly. And he said something like this. When I was asked. To come here today. To talk to you. Your pastor asked me.

[39 : 19] To tell you. What was the greatest lesson. Ever learned. In my fifty years. Of preaching. I thought about it. For a few days. And I boiled it down.

To just one thing. That made the most. Difference in my life. And sustained me. Through all my trials. The one thing. That I could always rely on.

When tears. And heartbreak. And pain. And fear. And sorrow. Paralyzed me. The only thing. That would comfort me. Was this verse. Jesus loves me.

This I know. For the Bible. Tells me so. Little ones to him belong. We are weak. But he is strong.

Yes. Yes. Jesus loves me. The Bible. Tells me so. How is it? And he went back.

[40 : 18] And he sat down. And the whole of that large church. Was just. Totally. Silent. They understood.

Or most did. That he was right. What else can sustain us. But this. That we know.

Jesus. Loves us. Let's pray. Lord our gracious God.

Once again. We give thanks for your word of truth. The reality that it brings to us. Of how you need to feature. So centrally and foundationally.

In our life's experience. And we thank you Lord. For the assurance that it brings to us. That our trusting in you. Is something that will never put us to shame.

[41 : 16] Though we may have to experience shame for you. Yet how different it is to experience shame from you. We thank you Lord. That you will never put to shame. Those who have their confidence in you.

For in you they truly trust. And you are the one who looks after your people. In all their times and circumstances in life. And you are the one who has prepared for them.

A path on which they walk in your providence. Assuring them that you know the way. And that you go before them and with them. As they journey on. Oh grant us we pray that assurance.

That we are safe in your hand. That you will constantly. Never be anything short of your promise to us. And grant Lord that even this night.

We may know. That you truly love us. And as we place our trust in you for that. Help us to know that your love follows us. Into every avenue of life.

[42 : 13] Hear us now we pray for Jesus sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.