

# A Vision and Mission Statement

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Date: 15 October 2023

[ 0 : 00 ] We'll begin our worship this evening by singing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 106, the Scottish Psalter version, Psalm 106, page 378 of the Psalm books. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 5. The tune is done firmly in Psalm 106. At verse 1, give praise and thanks unto the Lord, for bountiful is he, his tender mercy doth endure unto eternity. We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise, and we stand to sing.

Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, for bountiful is he, his tender mercy doth endure unto eternity.

God's mighty works who can express, or show forth all his grace.

Blessed are they the judgment key, and justly do always.

Remember me, Lord, with that love, which thou to thine dost bear. With thy salvation, O my God, for send me draw near. But I, my chosen stood may see, and in their joy rejoice. And may with thine inheritance, Let us unite our hearts in prayer.

[ 2 : 39 ] Let us pray. Our gracious and everlasting Father, we thank you that we come to you as our Lord and as our God.

We come with so much to be thankful for. We thank you for the peace that we enjoy. We thank you for the blessing that we have in coming to praise your name together.

We come, Lord, thankful for your tender mercies towards us, mercies that are new each day. And Lord, as we just look into our hearts this evening and as we look into your word and as we look out into the world, O Lord, we come just thankful, Lord, for the very fact that we have a God to call upon.

We have a God who hears the cries of his people. We have a God who is able to do so much more than we even ask or imagine. And when there are times when we feel helpless, when there are times where we feel much grief for our world, when there is so much sorrow and sadness around us, we thank you that you are a God who is able to comfort, that you are a God who is able to change, to change war into peace.

And as we have heard and seen in this last week, Lord, the devastation of war in our midst once again in the world, we do pray for you as the God of mercy, the God of peace, even to bring a quick end to this awful war in Israel, as we are reminded on our prayer notes.

[ 4 : 19 ] But in other parts of the world, too, we see much devastation, much atrocities. And we pray, Lord, for quick ends to it all. In many ways, we know that that will not be until you return.

For your word reminds us that there will be wars and rumors of war. But we thank you, too, Lord, that you are still God in the midst of it all, that you are the one who is able to change evil to good.

And we pray, Lord, that in these days that we would see your power at work, that again, as we see, oh, Lord, so much that we wonder at, we don't have answers to the many questions we might face.

We don't have answers to the wickedness of mankind. But, Lord, we thank you that in the midst of confusion that you are able to bring more clarity.

We thank you, Lord, that your word is such a great blessing to us and to all your people, even as we have sung in these words together this evening, remember me, Lord, with that love which thou to thine dost bear.

[ 5 : 34 ] We thank you that your love is unending and unchanging towards your people, wherever they find themselves and whatever circumstances they are in this evening, that your love is unchanging towards them, that you are the God of all covenant and all grace, that you are the God who keeps his people, not just here, but for all eternity, and that whatever comes the way of your people in this world, we know, Lord, that as your word says, that it's greater to come, that our blessings unending and at the throne of God in heaven.

And we thank you, Lord, that in the midst of turmoil, that your word is such a blessing to us, but how we need the eyes of faith, how we need to hear your word through ears that hear what you are saying to us.

For in the midst of it all, there are warnings to our world and to our people as well, to each of us even here this evening, that our times, O Lord, are out with our control, that all our lives are in your hands, our days are numbered by you, and teach us, Lord, to do wisely with them.

For we know, Lord, that we can so often put things away, we can put them off till tomorrow, when tomorrow is never guaranteed for any of us. And so we pray, Lord, that as you remind us again and again of how quickly our lives and our world can change, teach us, Lord, to come near to you, to call upon you, to find our refuge in you.

And we pray, Lord, that as a church and as a people, that we will be spoken to in these days as well. For we are reminded that there is nothing new under the sun, that your church, your people have been opposed down through all the generations and all time.

[ 7 : 34 ] And we are reminded even in your word, as we will read it this evening and as we study it together, that whether we look in the Old or the New Testament, we see your people suffering at the hands of evil.

We see, O Lord, the church, as it were, being attacked from all sides. And yet we see, Lord, the need for your people to stand strong and to stand strong in the Lord, to be a people of vision, to be a people who have fixed their eyes on God and who trust in him with all their hearts.

And we pray, Lord, that in our day and in our time here, that you will help us to stand in the Lord, to stand strong in the Lord, to put on the full armour of God and so to stand as your word sees.

And we pray, Lord, and thank you for all the armour that we have, for all the provision that you have made for us through your word, through prayer, through your righteousness, through the church at large, Lord.

We thank you that you have equipped us in every way to be your people, to stand in this world and fight for your cause. And we pray, Lord, that you will encourage us, that you will encourage us in these days to see the urgency of the gospel and to see the need to tell others of a saviour, to show them the love of Christ, the one who came to take away the sin of the world.

[ 9 : 10 ] And so we pray and thank you, Lord, that you are able to build your church in the midst of every conflict, every worry and every anxiety, that your promise is that you will build your church.

And so we ask, Lord, that to all ends of the earth today, that you will speak, that you will minister, that you will draw people to yourself, from all tribes and from all people, from all ends of the earth, Lord, that you will be the God of salvation that the psalm speaks of.

With thy salvation, O my God, to visit me, draw near. We sung these words and we pray these words, that it will be so for all your people, near and far.

Draw near with your saving power. Draw near with your grace and with your mercy. Lord, remember us as a congregation here and remember us in homes and families represented and connected with us as a people.

Remember us, Lord, in all our different needs. Help us and draw near to us, Lord, as we go through all the different emotions and experience of life, whether it's times of joy, O Lord, as we saw the marriage of Yoin and Dawn on Friday, as we saw such joy and happiness.

[ 10 : 30 ] We thank you for that day. We thank you for the marriage and the celebration of it. And we pray your blessing upon Yoin and Dawn as they set on and married life together, Lord.

We pray your blessing will be upon them and for their families too, Lord, as they enjoyed the day together, Lord, that your blessing would be upon them also. And yet in the midst of joy, Lord, we know that there is so often sadness, even on the same hour, Lord, just here and along the road, a wedding in one place and a funeral in another.

And it's just a reminder to us of our lives and all that they entail, joy in one place and sorrow in another. And we know that the experience of many, even in this past week, has been that sorrow and grief of loss.

And we pray, Lord, that in our communities here and throughout our island, that your comfort would visit homes that have endured such sorrow and sadness.

We pray that your comfort will be with them, Lord, who mourn the loss of loved ones. We pray also for those who are unwell. We pray, Lord, for those who are in hospital and homes and confined to their own homes, Lord, going through different experiences just now, times of trial and yet times when you minister, Lord, in powerful ways.

[ 11 : 53 ] And we thank you that your grace is sufficient, sufficient for all experience, that you are the one who draws near in all our times of need. And so, Lord, hear our prayers for one another and do us good, we ask.

Look down upon us, Lord, and continue with us this day and in the days ahead as well, Lord, that we would know your leading, your guiding, your blessing with us as we come confessing our sins, Lord, how we fall short of your glory in so many ways and as the word says in thought, word and in deed, how there are so often things that we are convicted by in our own hearts, in our own lives, in so many different ways.

But Lord, we thank you for that sense of conviction, for for so many their conscience is dead to sin. But we thank you that when you stir to life there is that sense of conviction.

But we thank you too that you do not leave us there, but that with you there is forgiveness, that you are the one who is able to lead us to the rock that is higher, to our Saviour Christ Jesus, our Lord, that we can come confessing our sins, knowing that he is faithful and just to forgive.

So, Lord, hear our prayers and draw an ear to us now and continue with us in this time of worship. We ask it all in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and for his glory.

[ 13 : 23 ] Amen. We'll again sing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 17 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 17, page 217 of the Psalm books. We'll sing from verse 4 to verse 9. Psalm 17, page 217, verse 4.

The tune for this one is St. Andrew. As for men's work, I buy the word that from thy lips doth flow, did me preserve out of the paths wherein destroyers go.

Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those thy paths divine, so that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine.

We'll sing from verse 4 to 9 to God's praise. St. Andrew.

[ 14 : 50 ] St. Andrew. St. Andrew.

ST. those ways of life. I call in love on me, O God, because thou wilt me hear, but thou is hearken to my speech, to me in my, my ear.

Thy wondrous loving kindness show, thou art not by thy right hand, since them are just in thee from those that up against them stand.

At the apple of the ivy keep, in thy wings shake me close, from lud of deserts compassing, the hand of the heavenly voice.

We can turn together this evening to read in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, reading in chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2.

[ 17 : 29 ] We read from the beginning of the chapter down to verse 16. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, and at verse 1.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of such conflict.

For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive. But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God, who tests our hearts.

For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed. God is our witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you, not only in the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

[ 18 : 59 ] For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil. We worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

You are witnesses and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct towards you believers. For you know how like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased God and opposed all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

So as always, to fill up the measure of their sins, but God's wrath has come upon them at last. And so on.

[ 20 : 32 ] May God bless that reading from his word. Before we turn back to look at part of this passage, we'll sing again to God's praise in Psalm 43. Psalm 43 in the Sing Psalms version, page 54 of the psalm book, and we'll sing the whole of this psalm.

The tune is Marl. Psalm 43, We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

Amen. Amen. Get me, O my God, Against destruction Bleed my cause.

Deliver me From wicked foes And hypocrites To break your laws You are my stronghold And my God Why then have you rejected me Why must I go Abound in me Untrodden by the enemy O send your life For found your truth

Let them direct me In your grace And bring me to your holy hill Into your sacred dwelling place Then to God's altar I will go To God my joy And my delight And I will praise you With the heart O God, you are My God of might

[ 23 : 33 ] Why are you downcast O my soul Why are you so disturbed In me Trust God For I will praise him yet My Savior and my God is he Well we can turn back To our reading In 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 We're going to look at Verse 13 to 16 Together this evening 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 Verse 13 to 16 Reading at verse 13 There we also thank God Constantly for this That when you received

The word of God Which you heard from us You accepted it Not as a word of men But as what it really is The word of God Which is at work In you believers And so on In some ways We're picking up Where we left off This morning Where James was preaching On the gathered church And being gathered To listen To God's word We were challenged At the end To be hearers Of the word And not Doers of the word And not just Hearers of it And this evening As I was sitting This morning I was saying Stop James You've got so many things I'm going to say tonight That there will be A little bit of overlap Perhaps this evening But hopefully not just Saying the same things But we're continuing Our study In Nehemiah And how are we Continuing the study In Nehemiah When we're in First Thessalonians We're jumping forward Some 500 years

We're in the New Testament We're in the days Of Paul writing To this church So how are we Continuing our study In Nehemiah Well as I've said As you go through In the book of Nehemiah The danger is It can easily become About us And not about God It's about our plans Our works Our strategies All of these kinds Of things That naturally Appear in the book Of Nehemiah As he comes to To rebuild The walls of Jerusalem It can become Very structured And organized In some ways But as we saw Before When you look At Nehemiah As one commentator Says It's all about Jesus It's all about The kingdom of God And the kingdom of God Being built When you go back To the days of Nehemiah What was at stake It was more than just The walls

It was more than just The city Of Jerusalem It was the good Of the Lord's people And it was the worship Of God And the spread Of the gospel You wonder If Nehemiah Had not had That burden And that burden From God To go back And to rebuild The walls What would have become Of Jerusalem Jerusalem A place where 500 years later Paul left from To take the gospel To other parts Of the continents To reach out To the churches In Philippi Thessalonica Corinth All of these Different places But it all goes back To Nehemiah In some ways And you think Nehemiah's ministry Was more about Just the there And then For the people Of his day It was for the kingdom Of God And generations To come In Nehemiah Chapter 4 We saw How the people

Had become Overwhelmed By the work All they were seeing Was the debris Of the wall And it was coming To that point Where they were Starting To be discouraged And to ask Different questions And the question That can often arise In the midst of a work Where you don't really see The purpose in it Is What's the point?

[ 28 : 01 ] What are we doing? And why? What are we doing? And why? And that's the question That can continue To arise Arise in the days Of Paul As he was going out With the gospel To all these places What are we doing?

And why? The question that arises In our day to day What are we doing? And why? As a church It's always A danger For ourselves And that's why It's important That we see The whole picture Not just Of the gospel And the mission Of the gospel Not just from Nehemiah But right throughout The word of God So as we go Through Nehemiah We intersperse it With little bits From here and there We look before At the team ministry In Colossae How everyone Had a part To play And how we saw That Inacted too In Nehemiah's day Where all the people Came together To work On the wall Everyone had Their part To play But I think In the midst Of everything else That's going on This question Of vision Is why And what are we doing And why It's to see it As the work Of God's kingdom

That's what's important To remind ourselves Of constantly It's not just For us It's not just For today It's for generations Coming after So that if we were To think even Of Nehemiah's day And Paul's day 500 years apart How they're connected By the kingdom Of God And the work Of the gospel So that if God willing 500 years from now There's still a congregation Of God's people Here And the gospel Is spreading Far and wide They may look back On days Long long time ago And think Well in difficult days In days when the world Was in crisis We thank God For those who were Faithful to the gospel In these times That they stood strong In the gospel That they preached The word of God That their vision Was for God For his people And for his cause

Far and wide That is the aim Of the gospel In all generations Our eyes Fixed on God Many churches today They speak Excuse me About vision statements Vision statements It's a way of reminding us About what we are about Just a few words That maybe give us A summary of What we are doing The Free Church of Scotland Has a vision statement A healthy gospel church For every community In Scotland Just one sentence And yet In that sentence Is packed So much vision A healthy gospel church For every community In Scotland Not everybody likes These kinds of things But isn't it good To have something To focus on And ask ourselves What are we doing And why

The Free Church Is this vision A healthy gospel church It wants God To be worshipped In the right way In every community In Scotland That the gospel Is for all people Here in this land Because it is The word of God That can make Such a difference And as you look back In the word of God You look Into Nehemiah's day You think to yourself Well what was Nehemiah's Vision statement For the people Of Jerusalem In his day Did he have one Well as we see Nehemiah is a man Of vision He is someone Who is fully focused On God And in Nehemiah 2 Verse 17 You have If you would like A vision statement A vision of what's Happening And a vision Of what's to be done In Nehemiah 2 Verse 17 We've looked at it It says You see the trouble We are in How Jerusalem lies

[ 32 : 21 ] In ruins And its gates burned Come Let us build The wall of Jerusalem That we may no longer Suffer derision So there's three Aspects To that vision Statement The trouble That they are in There's a realization There's a realization That we are in ruin The walls are in ruin The gates are burned But there's a vision For the work Come Let us build The wall of Jerusalem And there's a purpose In it That we may no longer Suffer derision That the people of God Would no longer Be mocked And so that As they come up Against challenges Along the way They can go back To this They can go back To these words And look on them And say What are we doing And why When it doesn't seem To be gaining Any headway When it seems To be failing What are we doing And why We don't like

What we're seeing We don't like What's going on Around us We want to build The wall of Jerusalem Because we don't want The people of God To be mocked And for ourselves There's a vision statement There for us today We look around We see the ruins We look around And we see the work That's to be done And we are to go To that work To rise to it But always This vision of God Before us That we are doing it For him And so As we come into First Thessalonians We are reminded here Of another kind of Vision statement What are we doing And why Paul may be asking In the days Here in the New Testament And you've got Great statements In First Thessalonians In chapter 1 Verse 3 It's wonderful Verse 2 And verse 3 It's wonderful The way Paul here

Looks at the church At Thessalonica We give thanks to God Always for all of you Constantly mentioning you In our prayers Remembering before Our God and Father Your work of faith And labour of love And steadfastness of hope In our Lord Jesus Christ What vision What vision there is In these words What purpose There is In these words How Your work of faith Your labour of love Your steadfastness Of hope But as you come To the end of chapter 2 Where we're going to focus On this evening You see it kind of Builds on that vision there So that as the believers As he's praying for them As he's so encouraged In all of their faith Their love Their hope In the Lord Jesus Christ In verse 13 To verse 16 Although it's A slightly longer section It's like a vision statement

It's like a mission statement For us Where it's highlighting for us Three things That the church At Thessalonica Was about And it's these things That I want us to focus on This evening These This section Verse 13 To verse 16 It highlights Three things for us Three things that Nehemiah would have A focus on In his day as well Three things that we Can have our focus on In our day as well A vision For the church Here A vision for Any congregation Of the Lord's people And the three things That we can take From these verses Are this One Preach the word This is what we were hearing This morning The focus The centrality Of preaching The word of God The second thing is Building up

Of believers Building up Of believers A sense of As it says In verse 14 Become You become Imitators Of the churches Of God In Christ Jesus That are in Judea The believers Are being Built up And then thirdly You see the focus You see the focus In verse 15 And 16 Of the opposition Of the opposition That Paul And the people In Paul's day Were facing Those who were Opposed to the gospel Just as we saw In Nehemiah There were those Who were opposed To the work And there is This sense Of reaching The lost So you have These three things Preach the word Build up Believers And reach The lost And you could Take them In that order It is so Necessary First and foremost To preach The word And in the

[ 37 : 25 ] Preaching of the word Believers Are built up And in believers Being built up There is this burden And this sense Of reaching The lost You know What are we doing And why It is such an Important question For us To always have In focus Preaching the word Building each other up And reaching the lost We can ask the question What is the point In preaching And you can come at it In two ways You know What is the point In preaching And come at it In a negative way Nobody is listening People are rejecting The word of God What is the point In preaching That is the focus Of those who would Lose heart In it But we don't Lose heart We don't lose

Confidence In the word Of God What is the point In preaching It is because The word of God Is powerful To change God Is able To change To change This world To change The people Of this world So we do not Lose heart In the work We fix our eyes On God In it Nehemiah Did that for his people As they set To rebuilding The walls Of Jerusalem Don't think The encouragement Was there last week To rebuild A wall From the church Here to plaster Field and back But we're involved In the kingdom Work Of God That's our work Today Not building A physical wall In many ways We're breaking Down walls We're breaking Down barriers And we're here To build

The kingdom Of God To be used By him So the three things That he reminds us Of here To have In our focus As we get on With the work Of building The kingdom Of God Firstly Preach The word Because of the Faithfulness Of Nehemiah And the people The gospel Is here being Preached In Thessalonica And look at what it says In verse 13 We also thank God Constantly for this That when you received The word of God Which you heard from us You accepted it Not as the word of men But as what it really is The word of God Which is at work In you Believers There's a powerful Reminder to us there Of what the church of God Is about In every generation We'll see it more As we go back To Nehemiah Again we'll look at it

In a later date But throughout Every generation Of God's people The importance As we are hearing This morning Of listening To what God Is saying Nehemiah Listened To God He was given A burden But he listened To God The good hand Of God As it says Again and again Was upon him And so it was With Paul As he listened To God As he took The gospel To all corners Of the world In that day As he preached The gospel Look at how it was Received In Thessalonica Not as the word Of men But what it really is The word of God There was power In this There was hope And there was A realization That this is What we need Nehemiah's day This is what we need We need God with us

No other God Can help us And this is What we need Today The same God And it's The same word That we have Today It is The word Of God Which is at work In you believers It is A powerful Word Jim Packer He says this Of preaching In preaching The word of God Delivers through the preacher A message from God To his people About God And godliness How we trust in God And how we live

[ 42 : 28 ] For him There is commands And there is instructions For us And as we come under The preaching Of God's word It should stir up in us A love And appreciation For the word of God The blessing that is ours To be able To come and hear The word of God Proclaimed And to share In this together The gathered people Of God With God's presence With us We should hunger To learn More of this Christ More of God And what he has done For us And this is what Paul Is rejoicing in here We also thank God Constantly for this That you received The word Of God It was something To rejoice in And what we See here Is God's word

And being received And at work In them And you wonder What does it mean The word of God At work in them It's keeping The people going Day by day It's this word Of God That's sustaining them And encouraging them And building them up And keeping them going Day after day Think about it In this way It's like a car engine And a car engine Needs certain things To keep it going You need to put fuel in To keep it going You need to put water in To keep it cooled But you also need To put oil in To keep all the parts Moving and lubricated And all working Together So for ourselves Too We need all aspects Of the gospel Of God In our lives We need prayer

We need fellowship But we need the preaching Of the word That keeps everything Moving And lubricated Together The preaching Of the word Is essential Essential In any vision And mission Statement That we're going To have We are going To preach The word Of God Romans Chapter 10 Verse 15 Shows us Just how important The preaching Of the word Of God Is And says How are they To preach Unless they Are sent As it is written How beautiful Are the feet Of those Who preach The good news But they Have not all Obeyed The gospel For Isaiah Says Lord who Has believed What he has Heard from us But faith Comes From hearing And hearing Through The word Of Christ Faith Comes Through hearing

So the word Of God Preached Is essential In our vision In our mission The next thing We see here Is the building Up of believers There's a sense Of the believers Responding To the word Of God In verse 14 For you brothers Became imitators Of the churches Of God In Christ Jesus That are in Judea For you suffered The same things From your own Countrymen As they did From the Jews You look at this And you see The similarities With Nehemiah's day You know As soon as The people In Nehemiah's day Started to build The wall They were met With opposition Opposition From hostiles Outside Their own people But opposition Within From their own People as well And here it is

Again in the days Paul writing To the Thessalonians There's opposition From out with Which you can Understand But here it's Coming within As well The same things That you suffered The same things From your own Countrymen As they did From the Jews It's fascinating How whenever There's something Good happening With the Lord There's always Opposition Nehemiah's day The work Had been At a standstill There was Nothing Happening There was No opposition But as soon As the stones Started to get Built up together All of a sudden The evil one Is in there And the same Is true here The gospel Is spreading Through the ministry Of Paul And his partners And again The evil one Is in there Straight away There'll be Opposition



[ 47 : 30 ] And for ourselves Today There'll be Opposition In whatever We do For the gospel If we are Going to stand For the gospel If we are Going to preach The gospel If we are Going to be Witnesses For the gospel Whatever the Lord puts us There will be Opposition And so What do we need What do we need In our vision In our mission Statement Well we need To be built up As the word Of God Is preached We need to be Building one Another up As well What do we need Most As a church Today Do we need More people To come Yes We long For that Do we need What do we need Is it not Spiritual Growth Is it not So that when People come In They meet With mature Christians People who

Have experienced Life in all Shapes and Form And who are Able to meet People in Their need Now And to show The power And the wonder Of the gospel That the gospel Can help In every Situation A church Will never Grow or Prosper When there Is no Spiritual Growth When there Is no Growing In our Understanding Of god And who He is Again This is what We see Paul Teaching Again and Again as He's writing To all These different Churches Encourage one Another Build one Another up That the One Another Are there Constantly For us And there's Just another Reminder to Us here You brothers Became Imitators Of the Churches of God in Christ Jesus That are in Judea We learn From one Another We share With one

Another And it is This that Will see us Through The times Of persecution The times Of our Afflictions The times Of our Suffering When we Have been Built up Through the Preaching of The word And we Are built Up in The fellowship Of god's People It is this That enables Them to Stand It is this That will Enable us To stand As well And you Go back Again to Verse 3 Of chapter 1 Verse 2 And 3 Where he's Giving thanks To god Always In his Prayers Remembering Before our God and Father Your work Of faith Your labour Of love Your steadfastness Of hope Why was this So important Why were These things Three things There so Important A labour Of love Steadfastness Of hope All of these

Things Were so Important Because it Is what Kept them Going When the Days Were hard And difficult It's what Kept them Going God With them God Giving them Assurance It's what We're seeing In Nehemiah Chapter 4 As the people Were dismayed At the rubble That seemed To be everywhere The lost cause Asking these Questions What are we Doing And why It's for God It's because God is With us Because God Is at work In this place He wants Good For his People God is On our Side So Paul Is thankful Here that He sees The word Of God At work In these People Building Them Up And this Is again Is a great Part Of our Vision Statement For us As well We preach

The word We build Up one Another And all Of this Is focus On God Who is Good to His people A focus On Christ Our Savior That is What keeps Our vision Right But added Unto these Two things Is the Last Part Reaching The Lost What you See At the End of Verse 14 Down to Verse 16 Is again A reminder To us Of the World in Which we Live Today That the Gospel And Jesus Christ Is so Often Rejected Verse 15 Who killed Both The Lord Jesus And the Prophets And drove Us out And displeased God And oppose All mankind By hindering

[ 52 : 34 ] Us From speaking To the Gentiles That they Might Be saved You see What's Happening Here Paul is Reaching out With the Gospel And he's Got his Church Reaching Out With the Gospel Reaching Out Speaking To the Gentiles That they Might be Saved But in This There is Opposition And again You ask What are We doing And why What's Our vision In the Midst Of this What was Nehemiah's Vision In his Day As all Around Was Opposition Well it Was so The nations Wouldn't Ridicule God And his People So that Jerusalem Would stand Tall Once again As a Place that Worshipped

God And honoured Him And sought For others All around Them To see This is Our God He is On our Side And you Will not Defeat Us And when You look Into the New Testament When you Look at The days Of Paul Here Where he's Saying You know Those are The ones Who killed The Lord Jesus They were So opposed To the Gospel That they Killed The Lord Jesus Did they Win Were they Victorious Was the Gospel Silenced No The Gospel Spread Spread Even as Paul was Preaching Here Ministering Here To the Church At Thessalonica To all To all Ends Of the Earth The Gospel Still Goes Out God Is Building His Church And we Are part

Of this Work We are Involved In the Kingdom Work Of God What's The point What are We doing And why We are Seeking To worship God Through His Word To build One another Up And to Reach Those Who are Perishing Those Who are Lost Those Who as it Says at The end Of this Verse 16 But God's Wrath Has come Upon them At last To realize God's Wrath Is a Thing To be Feared And you Want no One To experience And to Suffer That And so We preach The gospel So we Reach out With the Gospel Even when It means At times That we Suffer For it

You know As Paul Was writing To them Here he Was saying You will Suffer As Nehemiah Was speaking To the people In his day You are going To suffer In this There is Opposition All around It But all He was Doing was Confirming One thing That people Were noticing They were Noticing That they Were faithful To God The Lord And because They were They were Attacked The question For us Today is Are we Are we Noticed Does anybody Notice What we're Doing for The Lord Does anybody See the Faith that I have Do they Challenge me For it Do they Take notice Of who we Are and What we Do Do they Because if

We do If we Are doing It right There will Be those Who oppose It There will Be those Who reject It But we Have God On our Side And that Is what We are Always To remember To set The Lord Always Before us What do We do And why When Hudson Taylor Was director Of China Inland Mission He would Often interview Candidates For the Mission Field On one Occasion As he was Meeting with A group Of applicants He wanted To ask What their Motivation Was In going On the Mission And he Asked the Question To each In turn Why do You wish To go As a Foreign Missionary The first One replied I want to Go because

[ 57 : 36 ] Christ has Commanded us To go into All the World and Preach the Gospel The next Replied I want to Go because Millions Are perishing Without Christ So the Answers Kept coming One after Another And at The end He had Them all Together And he Started sharing Some of the Motivations That people Had shared And he Says He says You've all Given your Motives Many of Them are Good Motives But these Motives Will fail You in Times of Testing Times of Trials Times of Tribulations Times even Of possible Death He says There is But one Motive That will Sustain you In all Of these Situations Love of Christ That is your Greatest Motive The love Of Christ All these Other things Are good

A burden For people Perishing A burden To go and Preach to All the Ends Of the Earth But it's All to be Done in The love Of Christ Because he First loved Us So everything That we Do is to Be for Christ For his Sake And for His glory And so What is our Vision here What is our Mission here In Nehemiah's Day It was for The glory Of God That the People Would worship God And not be Mocked and Ridiculed as They were In Paul's Day It was a People Would hear The word Of God Be built Up by it And reach Out to The lost Is it not Still the

Same for Ourselves Today For the Glory of God And for The love Of Christ We are To preach We are To encourage And we Are to Reach May that Be our Vision And our Mission Statement Day after Day Our eyes On Christ Who loved Us And gave Himself For us Let us Pray Our Father In heaven We rejoice In you As the God of All glory The God Of hope The God Of all Love And grace And mercy And we Thank you Lord That you Are indeed Building Your church And that Through your Word Proclaimed There is Such power Such mighty Power Even as the Psalmist Says It is the Power that Is able to Convict And convert The soul That lies In sin And we Pray Lord That as

Your word Has been Proclaimed Today Through all Ends of The earth That it Will have Gone out With power That it Will accomplish All the Purposes That you Have for it And that it Will not Return to You Empty Or void We commit Ourselves Into your Hands Oh Lord Take care Of us Lord Help us To be Strong In this Day To stand Up for You To have A great Vision of Christ And to Love him With all Our hearts To serve Him With all We have Knowing that He has Loved us And given Himself for Us So Lord Hear our Prayers Watch over Us and Continue with Us now In Jesus Name Amen We are We are Going to Conclude by Singing to God's Praise In Psalm 84 Psalm 84 On page 339 of The Psalm Books We will Sing from

Verse 8 To the End of The Psalm Psalm 84 At verse 8 Lord God of hosts My prayer Hear O Jacob's God Give Ear See God Our Shield Look On the Face Of Thine Anointed Dear The tune is Gerlach And we'll Sing from Verse 8 To the End of The Psalm Lord God of Us My Prayer Hear O Jacob God Give Ear See God Our Shield Look Look On The Face Of Thine Anointed Dear For In Thy

[ 62 : 38 ] Course One Day Excels A Thousand Brother In My God God Has Thine Thine Thine Adore And Dwell In Tempts Of Sin For God The Lord Thine Son And Shield Heal Grace And Glory Heir And Well With Hope No Good From Them But Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Thine Who I'll go to the main door after the benediction.

Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.