

Treasuring Jesus In Our Hearts

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 December 2023

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Let's join together again in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord. O Lord, our God, as we once more come before you to seek your blessing and to give you thanks, we do come before you, O Lord, as those who confess our need, that your Spirit would once again work in our hearts and minds, that we may be stirred up in our souls to magnify and bless the Lord, that we might find our dependence upon you increased, that we might grow too, O Lord, in the love of your name and in the service that we owe to you.

Bless us then, we pray today as a congregation of your people. We pray, Lord, that you would bless each and every family represented here, each and every family belonging to us, even if they're not able to be out here this morning.

We ask your blessing for those who are watching online and participating that way in the service. We give thanks, Lord, for the technology that enables people who cannot come physically out, that they would nevertheless find a means by which they involve themselves in the service as it proceeds.

We pray especially that the preaching of the gospel might today come to be blessed to those who hear it, either here or online. We thank you, Lord, for the many encouragements that you give us in relation to people's comments with regard to your word and how they prize it and how it remains to them a precious, precious gift from God.

We pray today, Lord, for each one of us here. You know our needs and you know our concerns. You read our hearts and you're able to deal with us as no other can.

[1 : 48] We thank you today, Lord, for that, for the way that it brings to us encouragement, that we can bring all our concerns to God, even if we at times ourselves, Lord, feel unable to express them and put them adequately into words.

You are able to read our thoughts and read our hearts. You are able, Lord, to read all that we experience in our inmost soul, the pains of our heart, the joys of our heart, our confessions of sin and shortcoming.

We pray that as we come to you today, Lord, we may know anew of your blessing, of your hand upon us and of those rich things of the gospel being blessed to us once again.

We ask, Lord, your blessing today for those who are ill or in other ways unable to be here with us today. We pray that you bless us in our families, in our family circles.

We pray that whatever our circumstances, Lord, in life may be, help us to realize that they are ordered by your providence. As we look to you and seek your blessing, so you are able to bless our events of our lives to us as well, the providences in which we are involved.

[3 : 06] For you have ordered them and you have patterned them according to your wisdom. We pray, Lord, as we go through from day to day in life, that we may learn more and more to place our confidence and our trust in the hands of the Lord.

Lord, bless those who are ill at this time. We pray that your blessing will reach them in their time of illness. We pray for your good hand to be upon them. We pray for their recovery. We pray that you bless their families.

We pray especially, Lord, for those who are seriously ill and ask that you bless them whether at home or in hospice or in hospital. Graciously provide for them, we pray, and for all who care for us.

During these times, we ask, O Lord, for thankful hearts, that you continue to remember us with those to whom you have given the skills that are able to deal with us and to nurse us, whether we are physically or mentally in need.

We pray for those who have mental health issues at this time, and we commend them to you also. We ask, O Lord, that we may constantly bear them before you, and that you are able to deal with us in our minds as well as with our physical needs, that you would graciously, Lord, provide for them at this time your own healing and supporting touch in their lives.

[4 : 28] We pray, too, for those who are lonely and those who are isolated at this time when many people are able to be together to enjoy so much at this time of year.

Lord, we recognize that there are others of whom this is not true. We pray for those who are on their own, for those who feel the time long, for those who don't have family members to call and visit them.

We pray for those, Lord, caught up with various types of addictions. We pray for them and ask that you would, O Lord, that you would come into their lives powerfully and deliver them.

And we pray that you would bless those who seek to give them counsel and advice and help. We pray, too, Lord, for those who experience the difficulties and trials of old age, for those whose memory is beginning to fail or has failed already.

Remember them, Lord. Remember the trauma, the families for whom the trauma of these things is very real each day. We pray for those who today feel exhausted with looking after others.

[5 : 34] And we feel themselves, Lord, that their health is declining because they so willingly and lovingly give of their time to look after others. Remember them, Lord, we pray. And grant to continue to remember us as a people, as a community, and as a nation.

Gracious One, remember us, we pray, with the power of your Spirit. Bless the gospel amongst us and make even these times when Jesus is probably more often spoken of than at other times.

We ask, O Lord, that your word as it goes forth, even as it is read, might prove to be a blessing to many. Remember, we pray, the world at large as well.

Lord, we are so conscious of how the peace that is often mentioned at this time of year is very much lacking in different parts of the world. O Lord, remember these nations and peoples of the world who are embroiled in war, in hatred, in violence, in strife.

And I ask, O Lord, that your word may go forth with power to bring many people out of such situations, and even in these situations, to know yourself.

[6 : 46] And we pray for days of increasing peace in our nations and throughout the world. And we pray that the peace of the gospel especially will come to permeate the hearts and minds of many people, to lay aside hatred and violence, and come to follow the Lord himself as the Prince of Peace.

And Lord, we ask that we may find better days to come than we see in these present days. And we pray that you would bless us now as we continue to wait upon you here.

Bless your word to us especially. Open up our hearts and our minds to receive the teaching of your word. And graciously receive our thanks. Cleanse us from all our sin.

And we ask it freely in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, if we turn now to the gospel of Luke, chapter 2. We're going to look, as we said already, at verse 20 for a little time.

Luke, chapter 2, and verse 20. And I'm dividing the sermon into two just to make it a bit easier, maybe for the young ones to listen, so that they're not such a stretch of mind for them to listen. So we're going to have two main points, and in between we'll sing another psalm, as it is on the outline of the service in the bulletin.

[8 : 04] So our text for today is Luke, chapter 2, and verse 20. Verse 19, sorry. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

A loving mother never forgets any detail of her children's lives, if she can help it at all.

Everything affecting her children for a loving mother is always remembered, always thought upon, always things that she tries to work her way through in her own mind.

She remembers when they were born. She remembers before they were born. She remembers what they were like when they were born. She remembers their early days. She remembers their school days.

She remembers their sufferings, their times of illness. She remembers many other things about them and what they said. She remembers them growing up.

[9 : 07] She remembers what was said of them by other people. And all of that she keeps in her mind. All of that she goes over from time to time, if not on a daily basis.

Because to a loving mother, what is more precious than her children, apart from the Lord himself? That's how it is with Mary in verse 19 of this chapter.

Mary is trying to put all of that together. Because what she's doing, as we'll see, is taking the things that she has seen and the things that she has heard, and putting all of that together, or trying to put all of that together in her heart and her mind.

And as she's doing so, we read here that she treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. In her heart. So Mary is really noting the things that she had seen, the things that she had heard.

She's trying to put all that together. Remember, this is a very early stage in the New Testament. Jesus has just been born. She had heard prophecies about him. She knew prophecies from the Old Testament scriptures about the Messiah who was coming.

[10 : 13] And as we'll see, she had been told by the angel, and now by the shepherds, things about this child. And as she tried to put all that together, we read here that she treasured these things in her heart, and she pondered them.

She thought deeply about them. And you notice the word, but, at the beginning of the verse, but Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

And that little word is always very important. Because what it's saying is, here is Mary, who is somewhat different to the others that are mentioned. We read that all who heard it, in verse 18, wondered at what the shepherds told them.

They were amazed about it, but it doesn't really say that it affected their lives very much, apart from the fact that they wondered at it. They were amazed at it. But it didn't seem to change their lives in any way.

But Mary pondered these things in her heart. Most of the people who heard the shepherds, who heard these things being told, it was interesting for the moment.

[11 : 19] They wondered at it. They filled them with a sense of amazement. But it seems to have just dissipated very quickly after that. And so it was throughout the whole ministry of Jesus. But Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart.

And so especially about Mary. And the first point I want to make is that Mary's treasuring and pondering is a treasuring and pondering of the good news.

Of the news of Jesus, the news that is, in fact, the gospel itself. We'll look at that. Mary's treasuring and pondering of the good news. Then we'll have a wee break for our singing.

And secondly, we'll look at the benefits for ourselves of treasuring and pondering the things that God has brought us in the gospel. So, Mary's treasuring and pondering the good news.

Well, it says here, she treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the question in your mind possibly is, what things? What things is the verse speaking about?

[12 : 21] She treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Well, literally, the verse actually says words. In the Greek text of the verse, I should say, Mary treasured up all these words or sayings, pondering them in her heart.

And you've got to go over the first part of Luke's gospel in order to actually see from chapter 1 and verse 26. There's Gabriel, the angel sent from God to a virgin, to this Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph.

And then it goes on to tell what the angel said to Mary. So, there's the beginning of things, of the words, of the information that God sent to Mary, to this young woman.

And then you find later on in chapter 2, later on in chapter 1, that you find Mary coming to visit Elizabeth, a cousin who was going to give birth to John the Baptist.

And you find a conversation that took place there as well. And the words of Elizabeth especially about the child that Mary was going to have. So, that was something that was significant and important for Mary to take with her.

[13 : 29] Words of the angel, words of Elizabeth. Now she comes here again to hear from the shepherds about what they had experienced and what had been told them, especially what you find in verse 14 there.

Glory to God in the highest. On earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. Or peace and goodwill to all men, as it's translated elsewhere. And the message then came in the shepherds as they told the things that they had been told themselves by the angel.

So, here at verse 19 you find Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. So, all of these things that she was told, the information, the revelation from God, especially about this child that she had now given birth to in chapter 2, she treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

And these two words go together in a very important way. Treasuring it and pondering it. They belong together. And in fact, we'll see that something you really treasure in your heart is something you're going to be thinking about often.

And that's exactly what you have. Mary was treasuring the things in her heart that she heard. And as she was treasuring them, so she pondered them. She considered them further. She thought about them.

[14 : 49] She was trying in her mind to just get to grips with all that had been said. And treasured is an important word. Let's look at the two words separately, although they're joined together, as I said, in a very important way.

Mary treasured up all these things. It really means to keep very carefully something that is precious to you. Think of something like precious jewels, for example, items of precious jewelry.

Very often they're kept together, especially ones that are most precious to you. They're kept together, and they're kept carefully. And very often you ponder them in your mind or think about them as well, because they're precious to you.

That's how we can look at God's words to Mary. But more than that, God's words in the whole of the gospel message. God's words, indeed, in the whole of the Bible. That's what you really have in your Bibles today, friends.

That's what you have, a collection of these precious jewels that God has given us. These jewels of truth, these precious items, these precious words of God that you find set out in this collection in the Scriptures.

[15 : 58] What do you have in the Bible? You have statements from God. You have promises from God. You have commands from God. You have exhortations from God. You have different kinds of invitations from God.

Various other types of passages that you have all the way through the Bible, which we regard rightly as the Word of God, come to be put together over all of these centuries, but now freely in your possession and mine, as these precious spiritual jewels that God has given us in this collection box of the Bible.

What are they for? What is this for? Why has God revealed all this to us? Why are we today on Christmas Eve worshipping God here and using the Bible as a central feature, if not the central feature of our service, of our worship?

Well, because these words of God are to be treasured. They're to be looked after and prized in our hearts as Mary prized the words that came from God, whether it was from the angel or through the shepherds.

She regarded them as God having given her this information. This information about Jesus. Are we treasuring the incarnation today?

[17 : 15] Are we treasuring the truth and the fact of the Son of God coming into this world to be born as a human, taking our human nature to himself?

Are we treasuring it today in the way that you find others in the Bible described as treasuring the words of God? You go through that great Psalm, Psalm 119, which is really about the Word of God and responses to the Word of God and attitudes to the Word of God, different words used there for the Word of God.

Statutes, precepts, words, commands, comes to the same thing. That's what you've got packed into your Bible. And in that one of the verses there in Psalm 119, verse 162 says, I prize your word as one that finds great spoil or great treasure.

As if he had come across the most precious jewels that you could ever see in this life. That's what he says about his word. I prize your word. I prize your commandment. I value them so highly.

As someone who has come across great spoil. Is that what the incarnation is to yourself and to myself today?

[18 : 39] Is the coming of Jesus something you prize deeply as your most precious jewels? Is the truth about Jesus given that place in your heart and my heart today?

So we find her treasuring. These words. And then also pondering. She treasured up all these words, pondering them in her heart.

Now pondering is another interesting word. Because it literally means to gather things together. Or to assemble things together.

That's really the background meaning, if you like, of the word. And it's developed different meanings and nuances from that background meaning. She was pondering. Something she went on doing.

That's the language that used shows. This is something that she went on doing. It wasn't something that just came to her for a moment. She didn't just ponder it for a few brief moments and then forget about it and move on to something else.

[19 : 40] Because the verses really put in such a way that Mary treasured up all these things and went on pondering them in her heart. She kept on assimilating, putting together these great truths that she had come to be spoken to by God.

So it means really bringing things together, comparing things, weighing things up. Now here we are today and we're in a way like Mary because this word of God, this truthful word of God is reliable.

When you read about this event, this particular event itself, it's really because you can trust the word of God as being accurate. It's really taking you back. It's just as if you were there.

It's just as if you were there before the manger. As if you were there kneeling in front of the manger with the infant Jesus in it. Are we pondering it? Are we trying to bring together today everything that's revealed about this Jesus for our benefit?

Are the things of the Old Testament, the things that we find in the New Testament Gospels, the things that Paul wrote and Peter wrote and John wrote, these are all the precious jewels. These are all the wonderful jewels of truth.

[20 : 54] And here is Mary as she finds all of these sayings and these statements and these words. What is she doing? She's bringing them together. That's essentially what Bible study is.

It's not just coming to church once in a week or twice in a week or whatever and listening to a sermon. Good though that is. Important though that is. Significant though that is.

Beneficial we hope though that is. It's something that you follow up by putting together, by assembling together each and every day the things that God has revealed.

And especially as we're here today focusing on the coming of Christ. All the things that have to do with His coming. All the things that have to do with the Son of God and this wonderful, amazing fact that He took our human nature.

It's for our thinking of. It's for our thinking of. For our weighing up. You see Mary you could say here is exercising her memory, her mind and her heart.

[21 : 55] All three elements of her person, if you like, of her soul are engaged in this treasuring and in this pondering.

It's something that affected her emotionally. She's using her heart is in it. It's not something just formal and stiff and distant. She's caught up in it.

Her mind obviously is caught up in it. Her memory is caught up in it. She's remembering the things she heard. Her mind is trying to work through them. She's thinking deeply about it and is moving her heart.

All of that is in exercise at the manger of the Lord. And we're at the manger of the Lord today. Where's my heart?

How is it with my heart? Is it hitting my emotions? How is it with my mind? How is it with my will? Has it made me more aware of my need to depend upon Christ?

[22 : 54] To love Jesus? To talk about Jesus? To commend Jesus? As I kneel in front of the manger today, what is it with my heart?

And my mind and my memory? Am I treasuring this? Am I pondering the incarnation, the coming of the Lord? Is it something that in the exercise of my mind?

And am I saying from today onwards, this is something that I will have to do every day. It's something I want to do even for a few moments. At the beginning or at the end of a day or both.

I'm trying throughout each day that I live to exercise my mind, my heart, my memory and gather together as I go along through life those things that have to do with Jesus.

The things that have to do with the truth of God incarnate, God in the manger, God coming into this world, God the Savior, God the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[24 : 02] So Mary's treasuring and pondering the good news. She treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Treasuring them as you keep precious jewels together and pondering them as you try and bring together all of these truths about the Lord and how you not just store them in your heart but work your way through them and the relationship between each and every part of the truth about Jesus as they're brought to you in the Bible.

So we'll pause just for a moment now and sing. And this time we're singing from Psalm 119 and from verse 33, that's on page 159.

Verses 33 to 40. Teach me to follow your decrees then I will keep them to the end. Give insight and I'll keep your law with all my heart to it attend.

We'll sing the four stanzas down to verse 40. To God's praise. Teach me to follow your decrees then I will keep them to the end.

In this I count by being pure law with all my heart to it attend.

[25 : 48] With me endure the man's breath. For there, O Lord, delight I find and guide my heart to war to loss.

from selfish gain from selfish gain reset my mind. O turn my eyes from worthless things give life according to your word.

To me, your servant keep your flesh so that you may be feared, O Lord.

remove from me the shame I dread your loss excel in uprightness O how I long for your decrees deserve me in your righteousness well the second point we want to spend a little bit of time over is the benefits for ourselves of treasuring and pondering the truth about Jesus or the things of the gospel.

We've seen Mary's treasuring and pondering and something of what these words mean what benefit is it to ourselves to treasure and to ponder the things of Christ the things of the gospel.

[28 : 04] Well, three things I'm going to mention first of all it helps us grow in our understanding of Jesus helps us grow in our understanding of Jesus who he is that he is indeed God that he is God having come into this world he didn't cease to be God he was still the creator and the upholder of the universe mysteriously and wonderfully even in becoming human.

He didn't lay aside his deity he didn't lay aside any of the attributes of godhood when he came into this world and became man. So as we bring together the truths of the gospel and of the Bible together in understanding Jesus we grow in our understanding of who he is and it's important we always ask who is this?

Luke's gospel asks that a number of times we find passages where the question is asked by various people who is this man? And it's such an important question who is he?

Not just what has he done but who is he? He is the Son of God that's his person the Son of God who took human nature the human nature does not describe in itself entirely who he is because he is the person of the Son of God who took this nature this human nature we have to himself and it helps us grow in our understanding of Jesus not only who he is but why he became human.

Our last study remember the words you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. Why did he come into this world?

[29 : 47] Why did the Son of God why did God in his Son come into this world to take out human nature to place himself as he placed himself in a situation of being deprived of so many comforts a situation of being tested of being tempted of suffering a situation where he ultimately came to suffer the death of the cross and die the death of the cross the death that you and I deserved for our sins.

Why? Why did the Father send him into the world to such a situation and such a death as he experienced and accomplished at Calvary? Well it's so that you and I would be saved or could be saved he shall be called Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.

It's not so that we would have nice stories about him at Christmas time it's not so that we would know formally the things the Bible tells us about Jesus it's not so that we become accomplished theologians not that that's a bad thing it's so that we'd be saved so that we come to possess him and embrace him and take him as he's offered in the gospel as the catechism says as our savior he is offered as God's gift don't leave that gift unwrapped this Christmas time if you haven't already unwrapped it what I mean by that is taking the gift of God that Jesus himself is and making it your gift God's gift to you making it personally your gift God's gift to you your acceptance of that gift you would never leave the most important and precious gift given to you at Christmas time or any time and just leave it unwrapped and just keep looking at it formally and just leaving it and ignoring it and pushing it into a corner well some people sadly do that with the greatest gift of all it's not that they absolutely don't care but they just don't want to commit their whole life to him they think that's just going too far that you don't need to become as people think religious remember there's a big difference between religion and Jesus religion and salvation religion itself is a formal thing

I know we talk about the Christian religion but sometimes people think being a Christian is just having religion and having a Bible and having a set of rules that you value that you maybe try and keep but no salvation is not the same as religion salvation is faith in Christ bringing that salvation into our possession salvation is being saved from our sins from the consequences of our sins from the guilt of our sins I think we saw that last time when we saw the name Jesus he will save his people from their sins that's why he became human and it helps us our understanding of Jesus but not only in that sense to save us from our sins but even through the course of life we learn about Jesus and the benefits of treasuring and pondering the truth about him is that he will we will know his companionship through life we will know that he's with us through life we will know that he stands beside us as we go through the different experiences and the difficulties especially of life

Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 18 you remember finishes in that way he had made in every respect like his brethren that's like ourselves human beings for because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted and that word help means come to their aid come alongside them and come to support them it means a strengthening it means an encouragement it means all of the things that you find inside that word help or strengthening that's why he came into the world that's why he came to die the death of the cross that's why he took out humanity we don't have a priest as Hebrews elsewhere says we don't have a high priest in heaven as the high priest of his people who is unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses doesn't matter what you have to confess today about yourself about your concerns about your worries about your troubles about your illnesses about your state of mind about your loved ones you know that there's someone today on the throne of heaven who has been through all of that himself and who as the son of God in our nature is now able to help to succor as the AV puts it to strengthen to give you the help you need that no one else can give you that's why you treasure and ponder the truths about Jesus because as you gather them together you begin more and more to understand this savior is for me you begin to understand how can I possibly go on without him how can I face the issues of life without him how can I die without him how can I go to face

[35 : 18] God without having him as my savior it helps you to grow in your understanding of Jesus but secondly it helps us to grow in our appreciation of Jesus and once you treasure and you ponder the truths that you find about Jesus in the Bible so as you do that just as it was for Mary there's an increase in your love your affection your regard for this Jesus you increase in your thankfulness thankfulness to God for him thankfulness to himself for all that he's done for you and for who he is thankfulness for his perfection thankfulness for his faithfulness thankfulness for everything the Bible tells you as you bring all us you gather us you ponder these things and it helps you as well to add to your dependence upon them which you and I certainly at times have to confess it's not as it should be but the more you find out about him and the more you put these truths together about Christ well the more you add to your dependence the more you add to your willingness to serve him the more you add to the concern to make him known to your fellow human beings it's as you find out more about him as you treasure and ponder the truth about Jesus in your heart so you're constrained all the more then the more you find out the more you appreciate that the more you ponder that the more you say

I have to tell other people about this I have to tell them where they can find salvation I have to tell them about this Jesus like the woman of Samaria in John chapter 4 come and see this man is not this the Christ he told me all the things that ever I did and what did they do they went out from that town they went out to meet Jesus they flocked out to meet him and then they said to the woman eventually after Jesus had been with them for a time now we believe not for your word for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ the savior of the world is that not where you are today is this not the most wonderful thing in your own experience that God has given you the benefit of treasuring and pondering Jesus to increase your understanding of him and who he is and what he's done but to also grow in your appreciation because all of these things as you assimilate them you see like Mary what they will do is just fill your praise of God you'll begin more and more just to fill all of these things into and fit these things into your praise think of the psalmist

Psalms 116 I love the Lord because he has heard my prayers and listened to my voice he speaks then about how he was in such a predicament how the Lord heard him how the Lord rescued him and came to his aid 1 Peter chapter 1 and verses 8 and 9 tells us about Jesus we don't see physically here is Peter writing to these people scattered through all the regions he mentions and what's their situation they're being persecuted some of them for their faith they're certainly suffering greatly for what they believe for their faithfulness to Jesus and they don't see him they can't see him physically like they did in the days of the apostles and these disciples here in the gospels what does Peter say whom though not seeing you love and in whom though now you see him not yet believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory what is Peter saying it's saying the more you put together in your heart the more you treasure in your heart the more you ponder in your heart the things of the Lord himself the more it will add to your sense of appreciation and thankfulness to God and dependence upon him and the more it will enlarge your determination to praise the Lord to have your mouth filled with praise because what Peter is really saying is the more you get to know about Jesus and the more you get to know Jesus himself especially not just knowing about him but knowing himself the more you do that the more you treasure and ponder these things the more you have a foretaste of heaven because that's what

Peter is saying you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory where is that? where is that in perfection? it's in heaven but it begins to flow into your heart the more you know this Jesus the more you treasure him the more you ponder him the more you value him the benefits of treasuring and pondering well it helps us grow in our understanding of Jesus it helps us grow in our appreciation of Jesus and thirdly finally it helps us prepare for meeting with Jesus the incarnation was the beginning of his life as a human being the end of it the crowning of it end of it in that sense is in his return he's gone to glory he's sitting at the right hand of God he's presiding over the universe but he's going to return and on the day of his return he will be seen not as he came the first time as an infant in a manger dependent on his mother being nursed by his mother being helped by his mother he's not going to come then in his humiliation and in his dependence upon other human beings he's going to come in his glory he's going to come in the majesty of his kingship he's going to become he's going to come decked out in all the garments if you like of his glorious kingship he's going to be accompanied with an innumerable company of angels the whole world will know here is the king blow the trumpet he's arrived you know in 1st Thessalonians there's a passage among others that tells us how grand this will be what an immense moment this will be what an awesome thing it will be when Jesus returns 1st Thessalonians 4 verses 16 to 17 for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command with a voice of an archangel with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord what a moment what an event what a glorious sight what an indescribably great coming this is not a helpless babe in a manger but a king of glory in all his splendor and how do you prepare for that well you bring together in your heart you ponder you treasure all the things that are spoken about him you placed your trust in him you ask him to look after you when you come through every issue of life and through death and when you come to meet him in eternity you see what it's saying in verse 18 of that passage in 1 Thessalonians therefore encourage one another with these words because these words we don't just assimilate them and gather them together and ponder them and treasure in our own hearts just for our own personal benefit as we gather together we're gathering together as a people who have the same truths of God prized surely and treasured in our hearts and it's not just for our own benefit we don't keep it to ourselves the apostle said encourage one another with these words you remember at Christmas time how as children we treasured and pondered what Christmas

was going to be to us we looked forward to opening presents whether they be many or few it was always an exciting time and so it is for the children who are here today and thank you for being here today it's great to have you and it's great to be here at Christmas time in church worshipping the Lord with your parents or grandparents or other adults there's nothing we like better than having children here and hearing children's noises and children's voices it doesn't disturb us at all it encourages us it gives us a great thrill so you're looking forward to Christmas Christmas day aren't you looking forward to opening your presents looking forward to actually whether or not you get the things that you asked for looking forward to just that moment when you open up those presents and these thoughts right now in your mind what are you doing you're treasuring that they're precious to you you're pondering it you're thinking about it your mind and your heart are engaged in thinking about these presents and opening these presents and being having a good time well that's what we do with Jesus we treasure him we ponder him until that great day comes when he himself has the greatest gift will arrive before us in his glory and until that day here's our privilege friends our privilege to gather together and also for ourselves individually to treasure and ponder in our hearts the truth about Jesus let's pray

[45 : 48] Lord our God we thank you for your word we thank you we thank you for all that it contains we thank you especially that it brings to us that good news that great message of a saviour who was born in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord we thank you Lord for all that you are in yourself that you have been from all eternity as God we thank you for all that you came to be in taking our humanity to yourself we thank you for the prospect of your coming having accomplished all that you did in this world oh Lord we thank you that your people look forward to your arrival yet on the last day prepare us we pray for that and give us daily to think and to ponder deeply and treasure in our hearts all that is revealed about you hear us now we pray for Jesus sake Amen our final psalm today is psalm number 4 we're singing in the

Sing Psalms version of Psalm 4 that's on page 4 and the last three verses from verse 6 oh who can show us any good I hear so many say oh Lord shine on us with your light show us your face I pray you filled my heart with greater joy than others may have found as they rejoiced at harvest time when grain and wine abound I will lie down and sleep in peace my heart will rest secure for you alone oh gracious Lord will keep me safe and sure these verses oh who can show us any good I hear so many say oh Lord shine on us with your light with your light show us your face

I pray you filled my heart with greater joy than others may have found as they rejoice whose ancestors could run and love who can hold can increased and youth more behind how and the months in heaven I will try earth should to run through me For you alone, O gracious Lord, will keep me safe and sure.

If you allow me to get to the main door, please, I'll see you there after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen.

Amen.