

Where Are You?

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Date: 21 August 2022

[0 : 00] Well, begin our worship this evening. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 116, the Scottish Psalter version on page 395 of the Psalm books.

Psalm 116, page 395. We're going to sing from the beginning of the Psalm down to the verse marked eight. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the chords and sorrows did about me compass round. The pains of hell took hold on me, I grief and trouble found.

We'll sing from verse one to verse eight to God's praise and we stand to sing. I love the Lord because my voice and where she did hear.

My wife, I live with all of him who bowed to me his ear.

[1 : 19] Of death the chords and sorrows did about me compass round.

The pains of hell took hold on me, I grief and trouble found.

Upon the name of God the Lord. Then did I call and say, He delivered the Lord.

He delivered the Lord. My soul, O Lord. I do the humbling praise.

God merciful and righteousness. He gracious is our Lord.

[2 : 47] God merciful and sorrows did about me, I was brought home. He did be held upon.

God merciful and sorrows did about me, I was brought home. He sang to me, I was brought home to God.

In thy quiet rest For God's below The Lord to thee His bounty hath expressed For my distress And soul from death Delivered caused by thee Thou gives my pouring eyes From tears, my feet Of falling free We'll come to God in prayer.

Let us pray. Our gracious Father in heaven, as we come to offer up our praise to you and you this evening, we thank you for the words which we have shared in praise to you that we can come echoing the words of the psalmist that we can love you because you have heard our voice and our prayer.

And we thank you that your promise is that you will always hear your people, that your ear is towards all who call upon you. And we thank you that there is such a great privilege in prayer, such a blessing to us to know that in our needs and in our helplessness that you are a God who hears and is always there for us.

[5 : 14] We thank you that as we look through the psalms we see the great experience of the variety of psalmists and the positions and situations that they found themselves in.

And so often, Lord, we recognize ourselves in them, whether it's going astray and away from you, whether it's in times of sorrow and distress, whether it's in times of questioning and uncertainty, or whether it's in times of great rejoicing and praise.

We thank you that our experiences are echoed in these words so often. And we pray tonight, Lord, that we will enter in to these words and to the experience of them, that we will hear your words speaking to us, that you are the one who is able to deliver us and to give us great rest for our soul. We thank you that there is that reminder that we are a people who are perishing, for we are a sinful people. We are living in the midst of a sinful world, and our hearts are wicked beyond all that we could imagine.

But we thank you that your word reminds us that you have sent your son into this world because of our sin, that he came to save us from our sin. And we thank you that your word is a word of hope, a word of hope even in our most troubled times.

[6 : 41] So we pray that you will bless your word to us together this evening, and indeed bless it to us in this week ahead as well as we look forward with a sense of anticipation and prayerful preparations as we will come, God willing, to prepare ourselves for the Lord's Supper and all being well to partake in it next week.

We thank you, Lord, for these seasons and for being able to meet once again in this way after a period when things have been so different. And we pray that there will be a sense of urgency and longing for us to meet with you in the midst of your word and sacrament.

And so we pray that you will help us to prepare our hearts for it, to prayerfully approach each day of the week and pray for the services to take place. Your word preached and those who will preach, preach your word to us in our fellowship together.

And in your people's hearts, Lord, may you encourage us and build us up. May you draw people to yourself. May you help those even now who may be wondering of what they should do of coming to the Lord's table, feeling unworthy, feeling unprepared, feeling undeserving of the least of your mercies.

But yet that's the way we all come. We recognize we do not deserve it in and of ourselves, but that we are to look to Jesus, the one who took our place, the one whose death we come to remember, the one who we can trust in, the one who we can put all our hope in, for he has done all that we could not.

[8 : 27] And so we pray that you will encourage us all in our hearts to hear and see of the wonder of Jesus Christ, the one who died for our sins, but greater than that, who rose again, and whoever lives making intercession for us even now at the right hand of God the Father.

So as we come in our prayers, we come in his name, seeking your goodness and mercy upon us and seeking your blessing on us as a church and as a church throughout the world, as your people gather in your name throughout this day.

We pray, Lord, that your kingdom will be blessed, that you will be bringing many sinners into repentance and into salvation, into your kingdom.

We pray, Lord, that you will continue to pour out your blessing upon us as a nation at this time, undeserving as we are, yet still we see your hand upon us.

We see your hand upon us in teaching and rebuking, but we see your hand upon us in encouragement as well, that there are people who are seeking after you, that there are those who in the midst of some of the greatest turmoil maybe we've ever experienced in our own lives, who are looking to you and recognizing how frail a people we are, but how great a God you are.

[9 : 53] And so we pray that as you continue to teach us many hard lessons, that we will recognize your grace and your love and your mercy towards us, and that if we as a nation would repent and turn and seek you as our God and as our Lord, what a blessing that would be and the blessing that would be ours poured out from heaven.

So, Lord, we pray that you will rule over us in the midst of these days, rule over those who are our nation's rulers, that they would recognize that they must bow the knee before you, give wisdom and guidance to all who would seek to lead us in every aspect of life, be it in our governments, in our councils, in any line of work where there are decisions that affect us as a nation and as a people.

We pray, Lord, for your mercy and grace when we think of the trying times we face in terms of financial crisis and pressures upon people.

We pray, Lord, that the hearts of those who are so often greedy for more, although they have so much, it's never enough and no matter the consequences of others, they seem to just want more.

We pray, Lord, that you will change the hearts that are greedy for financial gain in this world to hearts that are filled with mercy, hearts that will show favor and help and kindness towards others.

[11 : 26] We know, Lord, we live in a world where we so often hear it said, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. But we know that to know Christ and to have him would be to make us rich beyond all comparison.

So we pray for rich and poor, young and old, everyone to come to know and to understand the love of Christ, that love that is beyond all comparison.

So we pray, Lord, your mercy upon us and we pray, Lord, that you will go before us in this week ahead as well as we look forward to the time of communion season in our midst.

We pray your blessing on all the services that will take place and upon every preacher who will minister in our midst. May you help them as they prepare for the services in these coming days.

We pray for each of them, Lord, that you will bless them and use them to your glory and for our blessing here. We pray for Reverend Kenneth Ferguson for the Thursday evening service.

[12 : 31] We thank you for his years of ministry and his willingness to serve in so many ways. We pray that you will bless that time around your word there. We pray for Emma Critchie and Paul Murray as they come on the Friday evening.

May you bless them and use them too. We pray for Reverend James McKeever and Reverend Colin McLeod too as they minister over the weekend and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. May you bless them, Lord, and encourage them. And may we be ever prayerful towards them. We thank you that even in this past week, Mr. McKeever has celebrated 35 years in the ministry. We pray you'll continue to bless him in his ministry here and further afield as well. Thanking you for the congregations he's been in in the past, for East Kilbride and for Point. And we pray for the congregation here as well, Lord, and his ministry here. May you bless each one and may you continue to help us to know your goodness with us all the days of our lives. [13 : 35] So we continue to seek your face now as we worship you and as we turn to your word, as we sing your praise. May you draw near to us as we seek to draw near to you.

We ask all things, confessing our sins before you anew, that we are a people who fall short of your glory, who sin daily in thought, word, and in deed.

But we thank you that in Christ there is rich forgiveness. So we come confessing anew and looking to him, asking for your mercy upon us as a people, that you'll go with us now.

We ask all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise, this time in Psalm 139 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 139 on page 432. We're going to sing from verse 1 down to verse 10. O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down and rising up.

[14 : 45] Yea, all my thoughts afar to thee are known, my footsteps and my lying down thou compasses always. Thou also most entirely art acquainted with all my ways.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 10 to God's praise and we stand to sing. Amen. O Lord, thou hast me searched, and thus, anche onen of the nations and endure his name again.

I have come to autre the star of 632. If one of the nations ■■■■ reach, or 100% of the nations may have come to Thee and above the nations and where he hailed of mine as I know.

I have come to say though God isMI above us will. Our Lord My footsteps And my lying God Thou God Passest always Thou also Holds My entire Yard I'll wait With all my Ways For in My tongue Before I speak Not any Work Can be But All

Together O Lord It is Well Long to Thee Behind Before The Past We And And Live On Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee From Thy Sand Thine Thee From Thy

[17 : 35] Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee Thee There is in hell I lie.

Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea.

In heaven, Lord, shall thy hand be me, thy right hand hold shall be.

If we could turn together now, we'll read in God's word in the beginning of the Old Testament in the book of Genesis. I'm reading in Genesis chapter 3.

I'm going to read the whole of this chapter. Genesis chapter 3 and the whole of this chapter. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

[19 : 06] He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took out its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

[20 : 23] But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to me to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.

Then the Lord said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. The Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock, and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing.

[21 : 37] In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. And to Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now lest he reach out his hand and take also the tree of life and eat and live forever.

[22 : 47] Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

So I want to make God bless that reading from his word. Before we turn back to that passage, we'll again sing to God's praise this time in the Singed Psalms version of Psalm 56.

Psalm 56. We find this on page 73. We're singing from verse 1 to verse 9. Oh my God, show mercy to me.

Men would take my life away. Hostile forces press upon me. They pursue me all the day.

Slanderers are close behind me. They pursue me all day long.

In their arrogance they hound me. They are numerous and strong. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 9. To God's praise and we stand to sing. O my God, your mercy to me.

[24 : 06] Men would take my life away. All sad forces press upon me.

They pursue me all day long. All day long. All day long. All day long. They are numerous and strong.

When they are no guards without me. They are numerous and strong. They are numerous and strong. When they are no guards without me.

They are numerous and strong. When I am afraid and trusting.

I will praise your faithful word. I will trust and not be fearful.

[25 : 21] What can man do to me, Lord? All day long. All day long. All day long.

They platter hardly. Twisting everything I say.

They will praise my heart. They will praise the Lord. And I will praise the Lord. And I will praise the Lord. And I will praise the Lord. All day long. All day long. To take my life away.

Let them all dishing their anger, ring the nations down, O Lord.

In your hope, write my entreaties, in your scroll my tears record.

[26 : 28] When I call on you to help me, then my faults will turn aside.

This is how I will be certain, that my God is on my side.

Amen. Well, if we can turn together to our reading in Genesis chapter 3. I want us to read again at verse 8.

Genesis chapter 3, reading at verse 8. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

[27 : 40] And so on. But God willing, this coming week, we look forward to a time of communion season in our midst.

And we come to remember the Lord's death. But we ask ourselves as we look forward to it, what is it that we are remembering in the Lord's death? What is the reason for his death?

But we look at ourselves, we examine ourselves, and we turn to Scripture, and we see what God is saying to us through his word is that we as a people are a fallen people.

That is, that our relationship with God has been marred by sin. And in order to be made right once again with God, something had to take place to restore that relationship, to make right that relationship, a price had to be paid.

And the price that was paid was ultimately that the Lord Jesus came to give his life. Everything that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, where you read through it and you see the whole sacrificial system, where sacrifices were offered to have forgiveness of sin, bringing it to the high priest once a year.

[28 : 57] We see ultimately that pointing to a Savior who is Christ the Lord. The way to God was barred to his people, but a way was opened up once again through the death of the Lord Jesus.

And really it takes us back to the roots here in Genesis, in Genesis chapter 3, where we see the coming of sin into the world and how we are all marred by this sin.

And the way back to God was cut off, as you see at the end of chapter 3, where the cherubim were there to protect the way to God. And then we see that the man was cast out, cast out of the garden to work the ground in hard toil.

But it's a chapter that reminds us too of the wonder of God's grace. That God didn't give to them what they deserved, but that he still showed mercy towards them.

And this is the mercy that is shown to us in Christ Jesus. That in him we have one who is able still to take away our sins, to make us right with God.

[30 : 13] So as we look at this passage tonight, I want to think about it in light of one of the questions that we see in this chapter. I want to ask ourselves that question this evening.

But first of all, what's the hardest question you have ever had to answer? What's the hardest question you've ever had to answer?

We all find ourselves maybe in situations where we face up to questions, be it from someone around us or in a setting that we find ourselves in, where someone asks us a question.

And we maybe think to yourself, I'm just not sure how I might answer this question. There'll be some teenagers in here tonight or maybe listening in. And over the last few months, you've had to sit in a classroom situation, sitting exams.

And sometimes when you sit in an exam, you turn over the question sheet and you look at the question, you just think to yourself, oh, I just didn't see that question coming. I'm just not sure how I'm going to try and answer that question.

[31 : 20] Such a difficult question. We're always maybe facing up to situations where we have difficult questions we have to try and answer.

Well, as we look at this chapter, we are reminded of one of the most serious questions that we have to face up to. And maybe it's a question we've answered in the past.

And maybe you thought, I'm okay. I'm fine. Everything's well in my life. Everything's going fine. But then you find yourself coming into a situation where the Lord begins to open your eyes and to open your heart.

And as he asks this question again, you begin to think to yourself, well, actually, is everything okay in my life? Is where I am now, am I right with God?

Or is there something that needs to change? What we find in this chapter, in Genesis chapter 3, is the account of what is called the fall, where sin came into the world, where man's relationship with God was ruined in a sense.

[32 : 30] And yet where God shows mercy. The shorter Catechson puts it well when he speaks about what man entered into in the beginning with God is called a covenant.

This relationship, this bond with God, and it was called a covenant of life. And everything was good and well in the garden. But the covenant had a condition.

And the condition was perfect obedience. And as you read through chapter 3, you realize where this obedience was broken. Where the serpent, the crafty serpent, came into the garden with his own questions, leading them away from God.

And this question that brought them to a place where they sinned. They broke God's law. They broke their covenant relationship with him. The Catechson again says, the fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

And this chapter alone, chapter 3, makes it clear for us what this misery was. hard labor, a relationship ruined with God, cast out of the garden, ultimately the pain of death.

[33 : 46] It also brought with it many other difficulties and trials and temptations. And they are all things that we can relate to today as well.

We live in a world where sin is all around us, but it's not just out there. Sin is in here. Sin is in our heart.

In our own hearts tonight, there is sin because we sin daily in thought, word and deed. You don't have to think too hard to think today, well, how have I sinned?

I'm sure all of us can immediately just think of ways we've fallen short, ways we've sinned, something we've said, something we've done, or more often than not, something we've thought. The sins that we think that nobody else sees, but God knows. So what's the solution for us in this situation where we think to yourself tonight and we all think it may be, well, here I am, just a miserable sinner, the chief of sinners as Paul describes himself.

[34 : 57] What can we do? What's the answer for us? Well, it's not to keep asking questions of ourselves.

We can often ask questions of ourselves, but it's to hear the questions that God asks. And in the midst of the garden setting here, when Adam and Eve had sinned against God, when they disobeyed his command, what happened to them?

They heard the sound of the Lord God. He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day and they hid themselves.

That's not the answer for us. It wasn't the answer for them, as we will see. The answer when we recognize that we fall short, when we're sinners, is not to try and hide ourselves from God, not to try and push God away, the answer is to come near to God and to see that he is a God that is inviting us in, inviting us back.

And that is what we see God doing here. In the midst of everything that's happened, God comes with this question that we have in verse 9. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

[36 : 21] And it's that question I want us to ponder this evening. It's one of the hardest questions you'll maybe have to give answer to. Where are you?

As we remember who is asking that question, it is God, the Lord. And there are three things I want us to take from that question this evening. The first is this, the nature of the question.

Secondly, the nurture of the question. And thirdly, the need of the question. So firstly, we see the nature of this question.

What do we see of this question? In the nature of it, what kind of question is it? The Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

It's very much a penetrating question. It's a cutting question. It's a question that Adam and Eve are hearing, believing they've hid themselves from God.

[37 : 29] But God's asking them this penetrating question. It's not like a question that you or I would ask when we don't know the answer.

Because God has a knowledge of us that we can never have. We maybe ask questions like this in a frustrated situation where we're thinking, we're looking for our keys.

Where are they? Where did I leave them? Or maybe we're trying to drive to a certain place and we're saying to ourselves, Which turning is it? Where do we go? Where do we turn?

We ask these questions and we don't know the answers to them. But God asks the question here, not because he doesn't know where they are. He knows exactly where they are.

This is not a game of hide and seek that God is playing with them. It's not like us as small children or little children playing with our friends and we try and go and hide somewhere and someone's trying to find us and they're becoming frustrated and they're, where are you?

[38 : 32] Will you not just come out? This is not God playing a game. God is asking this question in a much more serious way.

He knows where they are. And Matthew Henry says in his commentary on this verse that he's not asking this question in the sense of it's not what place are they.

What he's asking is in what condition are they? Where are you in the sense of what condition you're in?

And that's the nature of this question. It's a penetrating question. God isn't asking you tonight where are you?

And your answer is I'm sitting in the church in Kenneth Street. That's not the question that God is asking you here. The question he's asking you here is where are you in the sense of what condition are you in?

[39 : 35] What condition are you in in your relationship with God? Do you realize what you've done? Adam and Eve are hearing this question.

God's question has come as a result of their response to the question that Satan the serpent had asked them earlier. Did God really say that you would die?

He had come with his crafty questions. He put doubt into their relationship with God and saying can God really be trusted? That's so often the condition we've been in ourselves.

Maybe we've heard of God all our days growing up but now we want to put him away and there's a doubt that comes in. Is God real? Can God be trusted?

But then God comes with his own question. God comes and asks you tonight but where are you? Where are you now?

[40 : 41] What has all of your life done? All that you thought you could get away with? All the ways you thought you could run away from me and hide and just go on with your life in the way that was pleasing to yourself?

Where are you now? What condition are you in? What is your relationship with me? Where are you?

God's word penetrates. God's voice penetrates here in the garden and it should penetrate into our own hearts tonight asking us that question where are we?

The book of Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12 says the word of God is living and active sharper than any two edged sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

There's no hiding place from God and his word penetrates. His word searches into your heart tonight asking you that question where are you?

[41 : 51] And the question that goes with it is what does that convict you of tonight? Where are you? Jesus' question so often did the same when he was with his disciples and people were discussing who Jesus was.

Some people were saying that he was John the Baptist others saying one of the prophets but Jesus asked a searching question of his disciples he said to them but what about you who do you say that I am?

It's a very similar kind of question it's a searching question it's a piercing question who do you say that I am?

where are you? I like to watch sometimes crime dramas when a crime has been committed and maybe a team is trying to work out who committed the crime and they have their suspects they bring them in one of the questions that they often ask is where were you at midnight or a certain time last night?

It's a searching question it's a question that your defense is maybe going to be based upon do you have an alibi or can you do you have no answer to that question that's going to convince them that you weren't involved in the crime?

[43 : 18] Well God's question comes in the same way tonight as well where are you? So can you say you've got your alibi? I am in Christ I am entrusting my soul to him I believe in him with all my heart or like the psalmist in Psalm 116 you're able to say I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear is that your defense or are you recognizing your sin in the sense you've got no defense where are you?

You're outside the camp you're away from God you're running you're hiding God is calling you not because he doesn't know where you are but he knows your condition and the nature of his question is a piercing one where are you?

But we also see with this question that there is nurture to this question God is asking this in a compassionate way he'll be well within his rights to come and condemn them for what they've done they've broken the covenant they've broken the relationship with God and God was within his rights to cast them away but that's not how God comes so often we maybe see things or hear things where a joke has been played on someone in my younger years it was Beatles about when they

used to set up someone to maybe have their card thrashed or something like that and just filming them and what their reaction would be today it's more aunt and deck on a Saturday night setting up some celebrity when something goes wrong and they're just filming them to see how they'll react there's a funny side to it but there's not humour in the way God looks on us he's not looking on us and thinking well I'm just going to do this to see how they react how does God react when we have wronged him how did Christ react as Peter denied him how did he react on the cross as he looked down and saw those who were crucifying him the wonder of compassion and grace and love that he showed towards his own so when you look at the question here where are you God within his rights to come in immediate judgment on these people to condemn them say why have you done this he could give them a lecture and say Adam Eve I can't believe what you've done how could you after all I've done for you how could you be so stupid but God graciously comes to Adam and Eve asking where are you there is almost a sense of humor here when you see they're trying to hide among the trees trying to hide themselves from the God who made the heavens and the earth it's impossible even as we sang in Psalm 139 Psalm that says you know it doesn't matter where we go in this world there's no getting away from God whether you take the wings to the utmost parts of sea even there God is there's no hiding there's no getting away from God but God is saying here yes sin must be judged he's not letting that go and we see that at the cross as sin was judged finally as Christ gave his life but God does not immediately give what sin deserves thank God for his grace towards us because where would we be without his grace where would you be tonight without his grace where are you tonight in light of his grace are you leaning upon it are you trusting in it we forget the Lord but as one commentator put it he must draw him out of hiding that's what he says of Adam he is a good shepherd who seeks the lost sheep and it's not what

[48 : 13] God does to us when he comes to save us from our sin he draws us out of our hiding place wherever you're hiding wherever you're running to you're running from God but he will come and he will come to draw you out of hiding we so easily forget the Lord our God and there's consequences for that Deuteronomy 8 verse 11 says take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes which I command you today you know he still says to us to keep his laws to keep his commandments but he knows we cannot keep them perfectly but even when we fail in that we have a way to salvation that is through Christ Jesus because when you come into the New Testament you think of the words of Jesus in Matthew 11 verse 28 come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest he calls a people to himself so even as he asks this question that is nurtured in it where are you but there's warning to he's saying to us will you listen will you heed this question will you recognize your condition how far short you're falling when you're running from me what is your condition tonight in this sense do you need the grace of God as we all do or do you recognize your need of the grace of God or maybe you're saying to yourself

I know I need it but I don't deserve it none of us do and yet God by his mercy is able to show grace there's a story told of a man who was struggling to believe and to find peace with God and he came to another Christian friend one day and he said to him I am such a helpless miserable sinner there's no hope for me I've prayed and I've tried my best and I've vowed until I'm sick of my efforts there's just no hope in my situation his friend said to him do you believe that Christ died for your sins and rose again and he said yes of course I do believe that his Christian friend said to him well if he were here on earth in bodily form invisible what would you do he said well I would go to him at once and what would you ask of him well I would ask him to forgive my sins and what would he answer and there was a silence and then he asked him again what would he answer and then suddenly the man's eyes lit up and a smile of peace came on his face he said he would answer I will and that's the wonder of God's grace the devil will have us troubled by our sins forever if he could but the word of God the nurture of it calls us to himself to find one who is able to forgive as it says in first John one verse nine if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness may we see the grace of God the unworthiness because of our sin but see why he came and come and confess our sins and that he is faithful and just to forgive where are you tonight if you will come to him and say to him forgive my sins he is able to say I will the final thing just briefly we see of this question is the need of this question it's such a needful question for us all you know as we approach the Lord's Supper every one of us God willing in this coming week this is a question we need to ask of ourselves where are you if you come as one who

is professing faith you will ask yourself that question and you realize so often we're not where we want to be so often we feel so far removed from God so far away from God we see our sins we know them only too well but it's a question that puts us right back to the cross right back to Christ back to where we need to come always recognizing our shortcomings but recognizing we come to do this in remembrance of him not because of ourselves but in remembrance of him and what he's done and if you are not professing tonight this coming week may the

Lord prick you in your heart asking you this question where are you and if you're not right with God what needs to change it is to come to come to him when you look at this passage the Lord came to them it says in verse 8 in the cool of the day and commentators debate and say well what time of day was this there are some who would say and go along with them and say well it's probably first thing in the morning the morning would bring with it a cool wind and the light would be coming and they say this is almost indicative of where they were from the darkness of night knowing that they'd sinned into the light of day when God calls them and showing there we see what Christ did how he came into the darkness of a fallen world but he came as the light of the world the light to show us the way to

[55 : 28] God and back to him the human response to guilt is so often to try and hide to run away but there's nowhere where we can hide and this question is needful for ourselves where are we today in light of this what is the hardest question you face tonight what is the hardest question you've had to answer in your life well the hardest questions are not the questions for ourselves but the question that puts God into our life and questions prick our hearts one of the greatest questions that challenged me was a question on a tract I was given where will you spend eternity another important question and you can only answer that in light of this question where are you where are you with God tonight is the question we need so how do you answer are you resting in Christ or are you still running and trying to hide in the midst of the trees like Adam and Eve thinking

God won't see me God isn't asking you the question because he doesn't know where you are he's asking the question because he knows exactly where you are he knows your condition and the reason he's asking is that you might come and be right with him so ponder this question tonight and God willing if you have time in the days ahead but don't leave it too long because eternity depends on your answer so where are you may you come and find yourself leaning and resting in Christ and may you come may we all come to remember him in his grace and his love towards us and do it in remembrance of him let us pray our father in heaven help us to have answers to the questions that you pose to us and especially the most important questions of all as we ask ourselves this evening where are we in light of your word and in light of your grace in light of all that you have done for us in Christ

Jesus your Lord help us that we will find ourselves resting in him and trusting in him Lord show us your ways and guide us and forgive us for all we ask we ask in his name amen we're going to conclude by singing again in Psalm 56 in the Sing Psalms version the last three stanzas from verse 10 Psalm 56 on page 74 in the Lord whose word I honor in my God I praise his word I will trust and not be fearful what can man do to me Lord we'll sing from verse 10 down to the end of the Psalm to God's praise word

I will trust and not be fearful what can man do to me Lord I have taken verse before you to my God I will be true sacrifice of thy giving I will gladly give to you for you kept my feet from stumbling and from death you set me free so that I may walk before you and the light of life may see after the benediction

I'll go to the door to my right here now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forever more Amen Thank ser v