

Gather My Saints Together

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: 06 June 2009

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Psalm, Psalm 50, and we'll read at verse 5, Psalm number 50, reading at verse 5. Gather to me, my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Now, as we read through this psalm, one of the things that strikes you is just how powerful a psalm it is. It's a psalm that highlights God's coming judgment. It's a psalm that speaks to us about fire, devouring fire, and mighty tempest. And indeed, as you come into that psalm, or I should say maybe as that psalm comes to you, it hits you almost like a bolt. And it's certainly the kind of psalm that should waken the slumbering from their sleep. It should indeed waken the indifferent from their apathy. Because when we find that God calls, and God is going to call, we see from here, all humanity to appear before him, no one can escape, no one can dodge, nobody can hide, nobody can just disappear. We can do these things in life in many different situations. But we can never do it from God. When God summons, all will have to appear before him. This summons, as we see, is to the whole earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting. In other words, from one end to the other, from east to west, all will have to appear before the Lord. And it is the kind of psalm that really is quite remarkable, because we see here that the righteous judge is going to come. And there will be a righting of all the wrongs. You know, that's one of the great things that the Bible highlights before us. And I don't think we can really understand or appreciate just what that will be. But there will be. God is a God not only of order, but a God of absolute justice. And we don't need to think that all that is happening in this world, because so often there is so much injustice, so much oppression, so much that is not right. And sometimes we say it's not fair. God is taking note. And there will be a day when all these things will be addressed. We are absolutely persuaded of that.

And indeed, we find that people often, and that's not what we're going to look at just now, but a lot of people live their lives, people who have an awareness of God live their lives almost as if God was not. Or that God was in full agreement with what they were doing, irrespective of what they do. That's what we find there. Like, for instance, in verse 21, these things you have done, this is where they're sinning, and I have been silent. You see, the Lord is a God of long-suffering, patience. These things you have done, and I have been silent. You thought that I was one like yourself. And that's part of the problem with so many people, that they have such a low view of God.

[3 : 37] They have such a low view of Jesus Christ. And they think it's no big deal to defy God and live in any way they please. They do not have any real conception or understanding of the holiness and of the majesty of God. And is it not true that while this is spoken of those particularly of the wicked, it says in verse 16, but to the wicked, God says. He's addressing a different type of person in this part of the psalm. But is it not true that as we review our own lives, that there are times that we are guilty of this very sin, that we bring God down from the height of his being.

And we bring God down almost to our own level. And we say, oh, he'll understand. It's all right. We're almost living like practical atheists, as if God was not viewing us, if God was not marking us and taking note. And so this psalm is a kind of psalm that's a real, like a bolt from the blue. It's a psalm that challenges, a psalm that hits us where we are. Now, as I say, while there are different types of people being addressed in this psalm, and there's just one group that I want us to focus on here in this particular verse, where we find the focus tonight, or our focus here, is on the faithful ones.

Gather to me, my faithful ones. And this word, the faithful ones, can be translated holy ones. It can be translated the godly. It can be translated saints. There's different translations, but this is what it means. Gather to me, my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice. Now, while we can look at this in different ways, I want us to think of the principle of God gathering, God gathering his people to himself. And that is really the main work that the Lord is involved in in this world. God rules and governs over all things. But the main work is the ingathering of his people to himself, and

molding and shaping his people to become like himself. And of course, that is why the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world. It was to bring his people to himself.

And of course, Jesus came by way of a covenant, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice. Now, while this can be, and it probably can be looked at in a different way, I think it's not stretching it beyond the realms of not just our imagination, but what is true biblically, is that the covenant that we are in with God is a covenant that has been made by sacrifice.

A covenant that has been made for us, not by us, but on our behalf. It is a covenant that has been made.

[7 : 01] God has made a covenant with God. God the Father has made a covenant with God the Son on our behalf. And Jesus Christ had to make that covenant on our behalf.

Now, Jesus Christ, in and of himself, had no need to make this covenant with the Father apart from for us, because Jesus Christ was infinitely happy, infinitely full in his enjoyment with his Father throughout eternity.

But God the Father made a covenant with God the Son on our behalf. And we term this a covenant of grace, because it is all of grace. It's all an act of grace for us and to us.

And the idea of this covenant was not from us, that God the Father would make a covenant with his Son. And that the terms of this covenant involved the sacrifice, the giving of the Son, giving his life. Not just coming into this world to die, but coming into this world to make a sacrifice for sin. Just as all the Old Testament sacrifices, the Passover, all these things were speaking of who Jesus is and what Jesus was going to do.

[8 : 32] Now, we could never have come before God and suggested to God the Father, here will you do for us this thing.

How about sending your own Son in human flesh into this world to be our representative and to die a cursed death and to bear upon himself the punishment for sin and that his perfect righteousness would be transferred, imputed, put to our account?

We wouldn't have the audacity. We wouldn't have the know-how. Such a thought could never enter into our thinking. It is all of grace, planned in eternity, before ever we were.

We had no knowledge of this. But before we were, God the Father and God the Son entered into covenant on our behalf. And it was to be by way of sacrifice.

And you see, we couldn't deal with our own sin. We're incapable of dealing with it. We cannot deal with anybody else's sin. That's part of the problem.

[9 : 53] You see, our sin, our own personal sin, automatically disqualifies us from dealing with any other person's sin. You know how much you love your own family.

And if you're here tonight as a believer, and there are members of your family who are outside Christ, you want that they will come into the safety of the kingdom.

And you would give your life, would you not? For their life. Would you not? I'm sure you would.

Being safe in Christ, rather than that they would perish, you would lay down your life. But it's to no avail.

Because you cannot, your own personal sin disqualifies you from in any way trying to make, sort of make sacrifice before God.

[10 : 55] Make another person right. Irrespective of how much you love them. Even the angels were insufficient for this covenant. Only one who was truly God.

And one who became truly man. The two natures in the one person. Was able to make this sacrifice. And to enter into this covenant.

And so although this covenant is made with Christ. It is made on our behalf. So it is correct to say who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

And so we see here the psalm says, gather to me my faithful ones. And you see there is this ingathering by the shepherd. In gathering of the sheep.

Every single one. Every day throughout this world, people are responding to the call of the shepherd. The shepherd who gave his life for the sheep.

[12 : 00] The shepherd who made a covenant by sacrifice. Every day people have been called in. You're here tonight. Because of the sacrifice.

The covenantal sacrifice of the shepherd. And by the call of the shepherd. There came a point in your life.

Where you heard the shepherd's voice. Calling you. Personally. You may not have realized it at the time. It may have been instant.

It may have been so gradual. But you came to the place and to the point. Where you knew his voice. And you loved his voice.

And you wanted to be close and closer to him. Than ever before. You were drawn to him. You wanted him. You were committed to him.

[12 : 57] You wanted to follow him. And it's the same tonight. It hasn't changed. Even although you might be struggling tonight as a believer.

You might even be questioning tonight. Whether you're a believer or not. You might be a member here. For the last 30 years.

You might be a deacon. An elder. You could be a minister. And questioning. You may say to yourself. Is that possible? Yes it is.

You might be questioning. Am I really a Christian tonight? I believe a lot of the Lord's people question that from time to time.

But the fact is this. That just as there came a point in your life. When you began to desire the Lord. Tonight. Tonight. You still desire him with that same desiring.

[13 : 59] Isn't that true? That's why you're here. That's why you're preparing yourself. In your heart. For tomorrow. Because you want to be where he is.

When you strip it all away. There is nobody else you want in this world more. Than the Lord. Your sight of him might be poor. Your understanding of his dealings with you might be limited.

You may be saying to yourself. If only I could see more of Jesus Christ. And you're looking around the church. And you think that all the other believers. See an awful lot more of Jesus than you.

But the fact is. That you want him. You want to know him. You want to be with him. As the disciples said to Jesus.

Or as Peter said. To whom else can we go? For thou hast the words of eternal life. And that's exactly. How it is with you tonight.

[14 : 59] You're saying there is nowhere else to go. It is to Jesus. And Jesus alone. And so this desire. This desire for Christ.

Is an evidence. That you belong to him. They saw no beauty in him. That they should desire him. That's what's spoken about in Isaiah 53. Of those who reject Jesus.

Those who do not want him. They don't desire him. But you do. Gather to me. Then it says. Gather to me.

Those who have been gathered. Really that's what's happening. Gather to me. Those who have been brought into the fold. Gather to me. My faithful ones.

Or as we said. My holy ones. Are the godly. Or the saints. Very often. God's people in the New Testament. Are described as saints.

[15 : 56] God doesn't gather. Certain people to himself. Because they are already saints. He gathers. He gathers. People. Who are sinners.

In order to make them saints. That's what we find. Every person who comes to faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Becomes a saint.

We tend to think of a saint. As somebody who is. Incredibly holy. Or exceptionally pious. Somebody who is. Because. We would say.

You know how some Christians. And their very life. There's almost an aura. Of holiness. And godliness about them. They seem to. Have.

Just their. There's a stamp upon them. That almost sets them apart. And we tend to talk of them. In the terms of saints. And we say. Oh do you know. He's a saint. She's a saint.

[16 : 52] And while that is true. So are you. Despite all our failings. And all the clumsiness. Of our spirituality.

Despite all that we are. And all the baggage. That we carry with us. And all the things. That we've done. And all the mistakes. That we've made.

We are still. Termed. Saints. Isn't that wonderful. And that's what. Who God is saying tonight. Gather to me.

My faithful ones. And gather to me. My saints. And at the end of the day. It doesn't matter. Ultimately. What other people. Think of you.

Or how they define you. Or even what you think of yourself. What matters is. What does God think? How does God call you? How does God label you?

[17 : 49] Does he label you tonight? A saint. A saint is a faithful one. Faithfulness. It's a beautiful word. Faithful. Dictionary. Many definitions.

It defines. Faithful. It's defined as constant. True. Great words. When somebody is faithful.

They're constant. They will. If somebody is faithful. To somebody else. It means. It means that they will. Always be true. I suppose.

In a sense. Just now. When we see. What's happening. In government. In parliament. And you're seeing people. Who are. With regard to the prime minister. They were. They're displaying.

Faithfulness. Some. Are displaying. That. This. Being constant. Being true. Others aren't. That's what we're reading about. Just now. But you know.

[18 : 43] What is spoken about here. Regarding the Christian. Is somebody who's constant. Somebody who's true. This is our life. Day by day. Not just in the spirit.

Not just when we meet together in church. And walk down the aisle. And take our place. And sing our psalms. And we rise to pray. And read the bible. And it's all very well.

Being constant. And faithful. And true. In that time. But when we're at our work. When we're being provoked. When we meet people on the street. When we laugh. When we share. When we do this. Are we aware of the Lord? Is it possible that we drift through the day? And just every so often. Think of the Lord. You know.

We should be praying. For our God consciousness. Every day. Wherever we're at. Whatever we're doing. Even supposing. Just supposing.

[19 : 35] You're reading the newspaper. And you say to yourself. Am I aware. That the Lord is here. With me. As I read the paper.

And I think even things like that. Would have a difference. Because as we read. It could bring a prayer. We're reading about. Situation in the world. There are so many things.

That we ought to be praying for. You see. There's a spirituality. A spirituality. About everything in life. And that is what. The Lord wants us. To have. So that we be involved.

That there's a God awareness. In our life. In all the. Things that. We are involved in. Day in. Day out. This faithfulness. This constancy.

Are you true to the Lord tonight? Am I? Why? Because you know. This is what. One of the great. Characteristics of God. His faithfulness.

[20 : 34] The Psalms are. Full of it. How is faithfulness. In Jewish. From age. To age. God. Can never. Ever. For one moment.

Be unfaithful. To us. I'm sure. When we look over our lives. There are times. We have not been faithful. In our attitudes.

By some of the things we have said. By some of the things we have done. There are moments in our lives. And we say. Lord. Forgive me.

For my lack of faithfulness. But the fact is. That. The overriding. Characteristic. Of your life. Despite the faults. And the failings.

Is faithfulness. That's why you're here tonight. That's why you want to be here tonight. As we said earlier. That is because. There is nowhere else you can go. Nobody else you want.

[21 : 32] And so. The Lord will gather. His people. To himself. His faithful ones. And he will gather them. And he will deal with them. In different ways.

He will gather them. To himself. As a prophet. As a one who teaches. As a one who leads us. And shows us the way. Through the word. This is part of what he's doing.

Revealing. This himself. To us. Through the word. He gathers his people. As a priest. Atoning for our sin. Gathers his people. As a king. Ruling and reigning.

On their behalf. Gather. To me. My faithful ones. And you know. As the Lord gathers. And again. If we think of the shepherd. Gathering.

He gathers together. Gather to me. Yes. Each one. Being gathered. Individually. Personally. But. When you gather.

[22 : 28] One. And another. And another. They are all. Coming together. And that's. We must never lose sight. Of this fact. That yes.

Christ is preeminent. Christ is number one. And as we come. Prepare for communion. Our desire is. To see Jesus.

But we mustn't lose sight. Of one another. Either. Because we. In our belonging. To Christ. We are also bound. And belonging. To one another. Another. And it is imperative.

That the church. Doesn't lose sight. Of this. This sense. Of communion. With one another. In him. He is a center. He is a focus. But that the Lord.

Is gathering us. Together. Because. Remember. We are the body. We're family. We must be concerned. With one another. We must love one another. And as we come.

[23 : 23] To the Lord's supper. In a sense. That is what the Lord. Is doing. He is gathering us. Together. To his table. That is. What we are remembering. And this sacrament.

Is his appointment. And when he has appointed. Something. We can look for him. To be there. And as he gathers. His people together.

His faithful ones. His saints. Together. With him at the table. It is a table. To refresh us. Just as we come. To a table of food. That is one of the things.

We can come in. And. Sometimes. When you. If you have gone. If you are tired. It is amazing. Sometimes. If you have been out.

And working. And you come in. And you eat something. You get something to eat. It nourishes you. It strengthens you. You feel encouraged. And ready to go on.

[24 : 17] And you say to yourself. Oh that is me. I feel. I feel recharged. I feel refreshed. I feel that I am able. To do more. And that is true. Spiritually.

The Lord has prepared. This table for us. A table as it were. In the wilderness. As we journey on. And maybe tonight. Some of you. Feel weak. And you are in need.

Of refreshing. You are in need. Of more nourishment. You are in need. Of encouragement. And so the Lord. Has prepared this for us.

And he wants all his people. To be there. And I hope tonight. That if you are. Belonging to the Lord. That you will come. Because he is calling. He is gathering. If the Lord has gathered you. To himself. Through the work of the Holy Spirit.

[25 : 14] If he has gathered you. To himself. So that you have come. By faith. To trust in him. He is calling you. Tonight. To come to him.

At his table. To profess. To make. To make that profession. To be the faithful one. That is what you have to do. To be faithful to him. By declaring your faith.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord. Just as he is gathering. His people to himself. In life. He will also gather.

In death. He will also gather. At the end of this world. There are going to be. Great gatherings. And the gathering.

That we have. Here. Is just a little picture. Of a great. Great gathering. It is an amazing thought. How the Lord. He won't miss one.

[26 : 10] If you have ever been out. Gathering sheep. And you have done it. A few times. I am sure there are times. You have come back. And you say. You know. I am missing one. I have lost a sheep.

I have lost a lamb. The Lord will never lose a sheep. He will never lose a lamb. When that great. Final. In gathering. Takes place.

Every single one. Will be presented. Before. Isn't that a wonderful thought. Well as we prepare. For another step. In our journey. In this life. A step. That the Lord has provided for us. May we come. Seeking.

That we will know. This faithful Lord. This mighty Lord. This Lord who has prepared. And done everything for us. And this Lord who is asking us to come.

[27 : 09] To be with him. Even here. And as we prepare. For tomorrow. Let us pray. O Lord.

O God. We ask thee to bless us. We pray to. Make us. Conscious and aware. Of the fact that. Thou art the.

King of kings. And Lord of lords. The God who is doing. Far and beyond. What we can understand. There are times Lord.

We. Try and grapple. With our mind. To fully understand. What God has done. In Christ. And while we.

Lay hold upon. These truths. By faith. There are areas. And aspects. That are beyond us. But we believe. And we accept. Help Lord.

[28 : 04] Our trembling faith. Help us Lord. As we go forward. Looking and. Leaning upon Jesus. We pray to encourage. Any here tonight.

Who may be. Wanting to. Confess and profess. Christ as Savior. Lord. Give them strength. Keep us all. Looking to thyself.

Take away your sin. For Jesus sake. Amen. We're going to conclude. Singing in Psalm 107. From the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 107. From.