

New Year Service - Where Delight Meets Desire

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[0 : 0 0] spiritually and in other ways. And let's pray and hope that it'll be an easier year for us and for the nation and for the world indeed than it has been over the last couple of years with the pandemic that we've had to live with. And it's caused such a lot of damage throughout the world, but we're grateful that it's God we look to and that it's God who governs all the events of his creation and universe. A couple of intimations, there is a collection being taken today, that's in aid of the campaigners' work in the congregation. And also you may have heard publicly that Iolaire Memorial Service, which was due to have taken place today at one o'clock, has been postponed. For the next year it's been cancelled. We decided to cancel it yesterday because the weather forecast rightly, as it turned out, was looking very grim. So that's been cancelled. And you can let folks know if they don't already know. So a very warm welcome to you all today on this New Year's Day. To those of you joining us online as well, we wish you a very happy

New Year too. And we trust together today that we'll, as we worship God, we'll know his presence. We're glad to have some visitors with us today as well. We welcome you and are grateful for your company with us. Let's begin by singing in Psalm 34, Psalm number 34. We're singing from the Sing Psalms version on page 40 of the Psalm books, if you're using those. Psalm 34, verses 1 to 9. At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt his name with me. I sought the Lord, his answer came from fear. He set me free. Psalm 34, verses 1 to 9. We'll stand to sing. Amen.

At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, Let troubled souls rejoice Together let us praise the Lord Exalt His name with me I sought the Lord His answer came From fear He set me free

[3 : 0 2] They look to Him And shine with joy They are not put to shame This suffering man cried to the Lord From Him the difference came The angel of the Lord's errand And guards contangely All those who fear and honor Him He sets His people free

Come taste and see the Lord is good Through trust and in His plans O fear the Lord You saints with me You will not be oppressed O prayer Let's call upon the Lord now in prayer Let's join together in prayer Let's join together in prayer Gracious and eternal God We give thanks that we are here today to worship you And we give thanks for all the enabling grace that has brought us to this place of worship today We thank you as we begin a new year that we come to the God who is unchanging Whose years fail not Who is brought before us in your word as the God who is eternal and everlasting Without beginning of days or end of life We thank you Lord today that we can come to you to worship you to seek to glorify your name and also to enjoy you For you have created us Lord that we might find fellowship with you and life in that fellowship We thank you Lord for all that you have been to us down through the years and over this past year And that has now given way to this new one We thank you for the way in which you came to be with your people in this world In the person of Jesus Christ And for the way that your own presence with your people continues through your Holy Spirit We pray Lord today for your Spirit to guide us in the way of worship We thank you for your word that we use in our daily lives and in our worship And give thanks that in your word you have revealed to us those things that are so necessary for us to know

With regard to our salvation We give thanks too that it leads us to the government of the world by you We bless you that for all our questions and sometimes our bewilderment Especially as we look back over the past two years Oh Lord we thank you that you reign over all of these things and the calmness of your being And in the way in which you exercise your prerogative To guide and to govern the world in such a way as you see fit We thank you today for your readiness to receive us Your readiness to accept us Lord as we come in the name of Jesus Christ your Son And we give

thanks that in him you have provided for us an access into your holy presence And we pray today that we may rejoice in the fact that we can draw near to you And in such a way as we know that we will not be consumed Though you reveal to yourself to us in your word as a consuming fire We thank you for all your perfection For everything that makes you the perfect God For the way that all your attributes as they are revealed to us in your word Your majesty and your might and power Your holiness For the way that they all combine together In the perfection that is yours We thank you oh Lord that you preside Undisturbed over the events of the creation And we give thanks especially that you entered into it In order to take the sin of your people to yourself In order to die that death of the cross That we find so much in your word about Bless us we pray today In all our different circumstances in life Grant to us oh Lord that you would draw near to us now And help us to delight ourselves in God And grant to us we pray in our family groupings In our homes, in our communities

[8 : 15] That your blessing will go before us into this new year Oh Lord our God we would say like Like Moses long ago when he prayed For the people of Israel As they journeyed onwards towards the promised land As they were beginning to flag in that journey And as Lord he prayed so we pray too Accept that you go with us Take us not up from here Lord we ask that you would go with us That it might please you to accompany us On this journey through life And into this new year And we thank you Lord today That your presence is promised to those Who trust in you Who fear you Who worship you In the way in which you are deserving of We thank you today for all the gifts That you have given to us For the way that you have maintained Your cause amongst us We thank you Lord for ourselves as a congregation That we can look back over a year

That has been so challenging So testing So difficult in many ways And still realize that the Lord Has been good to us That you have enabled us Lord To support the gospel In every way in which we find it open to us Financially and practically Physically We thank you Lord for that For it is out of all that you give us That we give in return to you Make us thankful oh Lord For all the ways in which you deal with us And your forbearance And your forgiveness And your patience with us Make us thankful especially For the abundance of that salvation That we find in the Lord Jesus Christ Oh help us Lord today And as we begin this new year To commend this gospel To the world around us The good news of Christ And his crucifixion And resurrection from the dead His person as he sits At God's right hand above And Lord we ask that In this year that has begun

That we may find more opportunities As we pray to you So that we may find Easier conditions for the gospel itself In our ability to Freely be amongst people With the news of Christ And Lord we ask that You would bless throughout our communities All who seek to testify And witness for you We pray that you'd bless today Those who have heavy hearts We pray that you'd bless Those who have lost loved ones During this past year And others who reflect upon The death of loved ones In times before We know that this time of year Lord Is very emotional And very poignant Especially in regard to these things But we pray oh Lord That you would draw near to them That you'd assure them of your love And of your own commitment To your people To all who come to place Their trust in you We ask that you would Comfort the bereaved Draw near to the broken hearted And come Lord

To calm the minds of the distressed Whether it be in mental health Or physical health We pray today Lord For those who have health issues And struggles in life And we commend them to you We pray for our young people We pray for our children We pray for our communities We ask oh Lord That you'd bless them With the gospel We pray for those who look To help us in our times of need We ask especially Lord today For our health workers In hospital and care homes In our community Throughout the land We commend them to you And give thanks for their dedication And pray that you would help them Oh Lord As we find a further increase In the virus In this new form Lord we pray that you would Preserve life We pray that you would Strengthen those Who care for the needy Whether it be In these nursing And medical terms Or whether it be In other forms of help In our communities Lord we ask that you'd bless them

We pray your blessing now As we turn to your word And we ask as we Reflect upon times gone by And we Lord know That today We were intending To have a memorial service For the disaster That took place In the Isle Air loss We Lord look back upon that And remember the poignancy Of such a loss For us as an island Yet we thank you For the sustaining grace That you have shown to us As a community Ever since these times And we pray that That will continue Into our lives As a people Bless our governments Be with them As they themselves Reckon with the issues Of the day Lord

again we pray That you would Give them the wisdom That is from on high From yourself And we pray that They may be ruled By you And rule wisely In your name Receive our thanks Now we pray Pardon our many sins

[13 : 20] For Jesus' sake Amen Now we're going to read Some words from the word of God In the book of Psalms In the Old Testament In the book of Psalms Psalm 37 And we're going to read Verses 1 to 19 So Psalm 37 Verses 1 to 19 A psalm that's headed Of David Fret not yourself Because of evildoers Be not envious Of wrongdoers For they will soon Fade like the grass And wither like the green herb Trust in the Lord And do good Dwell in the land And befriend faithfulness Delight yourself In the Lord And he will give you The desires of your heart Commit your way To the Lord Trust in him And he will act He will bring forth Your righteousness As the light And your justice As the noonday Be still before the Lord

And wait patiently for him Fret not yourself Over the one Who prospers in his way Over the man Who carries out Evil devices Refrain from anger And forsake wrath Fret not yourself That tends only to evil For the evildoers Shall be cut off But those who wait For the Lord Shall inherit the land In just a little while The wicked will be no more Though you look carefully At his place He will not be there But the meek Shall inherit the land And delight themselves In abundant peace The wicked plots Against the righteous And gnashes his teeth at him But the Lord laughs At the wicked For he sees That his day is coming The wicked draw the sword And bend their bows To bring down The poor and needy To slay those Whose way is upright Their sword Shall enter Their own heart And their bows Shall be broken Better is the little That the righteous Has Than the abundance

Of many wicked For the arms Of the wicked Shall be broken But the Lord Upholds the righteous The Lord knows The days of the blameless And their heritage Will remain forever They are not put to shame In evil times In the days of famine They have abundance And so on May the Lord bless to us That portion We have read Of the psalm Now we're going to Praise his name again And this time we're singing In Gaelic This is our custom At our New Year service So our singing is From Psalm 71 And verses 23 To 24 The last two verses From the middle Of verse 23 I'll read these In English First of all My lips will shout With joy I'll praise you And extol your faithfulness When you have rescued And redeemed me From every trouble

And distress All day my tongue Will tell the story As I your righteous Acts proclaim For everyone Who wished to harm me Has been disgraced And put to shame Psalm 71 In Gaelic At verse 23 By suachis Is aivinus mór Er mannum fain A ye By hirig let Get trácaedoch Or hyblajiv gulier Is bimoch hengar Deirantoch Gimmarag fagin la Or nadhis Anluch hwadunrawn Ge orri Moloch A ta Na jar ansian By suachis Is aivinus mór Er mannum fain A ye Wur a man Seated for the galaxy Is aivinus mór Er mannum fain

Er mannum fain B'latche kudye Er mannum fain O nuh Er mannum fain B'latche kudye Er mannum fain Is bimohen Er mannum fain Er mannum fain Er mannum fain Cat.

[18 : 54] Singing In■■■ I ask you to turn with me again now to Psalm 37 in the scriptures we read in the book of Psalms, Psalm 37, and we're going to consider for a short time the words of verse 4.

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. It's obviously closely related to the verses before and after, where other aspects of what we are required to do in our relationship with God are brought before us. But we're going to confine our thoughts largely to verse 4. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Now, we often hear that from those of such persuasions that are contrary to the gospel, that don't like to think of our type of Christianity as anything other than boring, that our Calvinism, our theological precision, our persuasion, that it really kills joy out of human lives. And that is not the case. We know that that's not the case, but we do have to accept that sometimes we may actually give that impression, that our Christianity is not something that fills us with delight, that it's something that represses rather than actually uplifts. And we mustn't give that impression. In fact, our joy and our pleasure and our delight in our human experience can only reach their peak when we come to know Jesus. And far from actually killing joy and destroying that sort of aspect of human life and human experience, the joy and pleasure and delight you have when you come to know Jesus is superior to any other joy or pleasure and delight that you know of from any other source.

And in fact, in the psalm here, it's obvious that the psalmist celebrates the fact that he can and calls others to delight in the Lord, to rejoice in God, to trust in Him and commit His ways to Him, and to take pleasure in all that God provides for Him. And in fact, you can see how these words in verse 4 and the similar verses are really set out as a counter to what he says at the beginning there, fret not

yourself because of evildoers, be not envious of wrongdoers. And as you go down through the psalm in a few places, this same sentiment occurs, fret not yourself. Don't fret yourself. Don't get worked up over this issue of evildoers, of those who are enemies of God or opponents of the gospel. What he's saying is don't fret yourself over that. Don't get so worked up over it. Don't let it bother you to the extent that it interferes with your life. Because, he is saying, there are very many things along with these injunctions to delight in the Lord, to trust in the Lord. There are explanations of why we shouldn't fret ourselves. Because for one thing, the place of the evildoer is short-lived. And he tells us that just a little while, verse 10, the wicked will be no more. Though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. And that fits in with the whole tenor of Scripture, with that teaching throughout the whole of Scripture, that as we look at things in the long term, as we take a long-term view of things, as we look into eternity especially, the lot of the righteous, the place of the believer, the place of God's people is secure. So, there's no need to fret over the wicked and their actions, the opponents of the gospel. We want them to be converted. We want them to come to know the Lord.

But if they don't, and if they continue to act against the Lord's cause, we are not to fret over that. So, these imperatives that you find here from verse 1, don't fret yourself, trust in the Lord, delight yourself in the Lord, commit your way to the Lord, be still before the Lord, refrain from anger, all of these are imperatives. They're, in a sense, commands that the Lord is setting before us and inviting us to consider us things which are alternatives to fretting, alternatives to that worked-up state that sometimes we get when we think of what's happening in opposition to the gospel.

[24 : 25] And we're looking at verse 4, and I want to look at it as a text that we could take with us into this new year. And let's pray that the Lord will enable us to follow through on what this text contains for this new year. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Now, if we began every day in this new year, God willing, with these words and put them to ourselves, we would live not only a very fulfilled life, but even more importantly, a God-honoring life, a God-glorifying life, because that's really what it amounts to, delighting yourself in the Lord. It should be an everyday occurrence for us. And it's something we could put to ourselves throughout this year as we find ourselves becoming frustrated, becoming disquieted over everything that you see in the world that is contrary to God and in opposition to God.

God is saying to us, just leave that with me. I'll look after that. You delight yourself in me. Trust in me. Trust in me. And I'll give you the desires of your heart. So, we're looking firstly at the call to delight in the Lord in the beginning, the first half of the verse, delight yourself in the Lord. Then we'll look more briefly at the consequence of delighting in the Lord, which is He will give you the desires of your heart. So, here's the call, first of all, to delight in the Lord. Now, you notice the order of the words. It doesn't say, the Lord will give you whatever you want, therefore delight in Him. That's the other way around, isn't it? You begin with delighting in Him, and then it moves on to saying, the Lord will give you the desires of your heart. In other words, the desires of the heart, as he sees it here, as the psalmist David sees it, are actually shaped by delighting in the Lord.

He doesn't begin with the desire of our heart as if God would give us whatever we desire, whatever we want, whatever that's like. He says, delight in the Lord. That's first and foremost.

[26 : 35] And when you delight in the Lord, then the desires of your heart will be shaped by that. They will actually be in accordance with God's will and God's Word and God's priorities.

These are the order. This is the order of the words. And it's so different to that worldly philosophy expressed in different ways, but amounting pretty much to saying, as you often hear, well, if you really want that, if your heart is really set on it, if you're committed, if that's what you really want in life, go for it, and you'll achieve it. That's the worldly philosophy that you hear in the world. That belongs to us all naturally, I'm sure, to some extent. If you really want it, if you want it badly enough, go for it, and you'll get it. You'll get there. You'll achieve it.

Now, you know that that's not at all achievable. And even if we were to get much of what we ourselves would want or desire, it wouldn't do us much good. So, he's saying in the beginning, let your desire be those desires that are shaped by your delighting in God.

So, what is this delighting in God? And how is this a counter to not only the thinking of the world, the thinking of those who live and want to live without God, how is this delight in the Lord given us a counter to fretting and to getting worked up? Well, delight in the Lord you can begin with, I think, what we were created for. Begin with the purpose for human life. When you ask the question, what

is it to delight in the Lord? Well, the Lord is saying, go back to your creation when I created human beings at the beginning. And those of you who know your shorter catechism will know that it is a brilliant summary, if you like, very concise and yet very full summary of the most important Christian truths. All arising out of the Bible, but you know how the catechism, the shorter catechism begins with the question, what is the chief end of man? In other words, why were we created? What's our chief end? What's the chief purpose in life? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Sometimes you'll hear people saying, well, man's chief end is to glorify God, full stop. We are thankful today that that's not what it says. It says that, but that's only half the story. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. God made us, God created us to enjoy himself, to live in fellowship with himself, to delight ourselves in him. But as you well know, the Bible tells us how that came to an end and how in our fall in Adam, how sin, as we sinned against God, brought such a blight and curse upon human life and indeed upon the creation. So that we're no longer set as we were at the beginning to glorify God and to enjoy him, we've become warped in our thinking. And until God shows us otherwise, we have a very warped view of joy. And at the same time, we delight in sinning. We are honest about it when we come to confess our sins to God. Part of that means, Lord, I did take delight in the pleasures of sin, so-called. But now I want you to deliver me from that, to enable me to delight in yourself, to live a holy life, to live a life committed to you and committed to being like you. And you know, that warp view of joy and of that delight that you have naturally or by in your fallen state, in my fallen state, delighting in sin and sinning against God, it's really demonstrated and it's evident in the very fact that we want to avoid God, want to avoid having anything to do with God until God draws us to himself. Just like Adam, who sought to hide amongst the trees of the garden, to hide himself from this God who had created him, created him for fellowship with himself, he sought to hide from him, knowing that he had sinned against him. Why do we naturally avoid God? Well, it's not just the fact that perhaps there's an element of being afraid, and I'm sure there is deep down in our hearts, even for those who claim that there is no God. But it's especially because we've come to the conclusion as fallen sinners, there's no joy there for us. There's no rejoicing there for us. There's nothing there that can satisfy this religious stuff, this gospel stuff, this following Christ stuff. That's not the source of joy for me at all. I'll just avoid that. You can see from that itself how contrary to the teaching of God himself this is, contrary to his invitations, contrary to his appeals to us in the gospel to come and enjoy himself.

[31 : 52] That's what the psalmist is basically doing. Don't get worked up over what you're seeing in the sinful lifestyles of many people in the world, especially those who are opposed to God. Instead, delight yourself in the Lord. Well, how do you come to delight yourself in the Lord? How does that great change take place from delighting in sin to delighting in the Lord? Well, of course, it comes about through God's work of restoration in Christ. Jesus came into the world. Jesus died on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead so that we'd be turned from delighting in sin to delighting in God, that we would have restored to us in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our minds, the very purpose for which he created us, to seek that it be fulfilled in our experience. When you're born again, when you're converted, reconciled to God, restored into friendship with God, what does that entail in terms of our text today, delighting in God? Well, when you come to be converted, to be reconciled to God, to be friends of God, you delight in the Lord himself. You delight in the Lord himself. It's logical, isn't it, that the person that you love most, you delight in them. The person that's most deeply in friendship with you, whether it's a husband or wife or a close friend or whoever it may be, you delight in their company. You delight in being with them. Your delight is in them. Even if you lavish gifts on them, it's not in the fact that you're able to give them these gifts that you delight, though you take pleasure in that as well.

You delight in themselves and whatever gifts you receive from them. It's not the fact that they've given you all these gifts that fill you with delight. It's the fact that they have shown their love and the fact that you return that love in delighting in them. And you translate that into the spiritual relationship that we have with God. And that's basically what the psalmist is really saying to us. Delight yourself in the Lord. Delight in himself first and foremost. And when you delight in himself first and foremost, everything follows on from that. All the desires of your heart are shaped by that, as we said at the beginning. Of course, you delight in his word. We delight today in his word. Delight in the Bible. We delight in his word being preached. We delight in sharing in his word together in the gospel. We delight in his worship. We delight in drawing near to him and singing his praises and calling upon his name together as we do. Even if it's just one person that's leading in prayer, we

always say, let us pray. Let us join together in prayer. Why do we say that? Because we know that you yourselves who pray for yourselves delight to share together in praying to God. Our hearts extending out to him, delighting in seeking him and reaching out to him. We delight in his people. We delight in sharing with them the journey through life. We delight in their fellowship. We delight in their support. We delight in being supporting to them. We delight in the creation, even on such a day as this, filled with the strength of the wind, with the majesty of the pounding waves on the seashore, just as we do in the bright sunshine of a lovely summer's day. We delight in the creation of God. We delight in the work of his hands. We delight in all of that because it gives us pleasure to actually realize and confess and wonder at the fact that

God created this, that God brought this into being, that he placed us as part of it, that we are the work of his hand, that his fingerprints are all over it. And of course, we delight in all of these, in his word, in his worship, his people, his creation. But you know, we delight in these because we delight in himself. And indeed, you cannot delight in these properly, consistently, until we first of all delight in him. We delight in himself. When you take your delight in God through your relationship with Christ, with Jesus, then everything else follows on from that. You delight in his love.

You delight in his forgiveness, in his power, in his holiness, in his perfection. You know, when you think about it, to delight in the holiness of God is entirely contrary to our fallen nature.

[36 : 37] It's something that we find completely at odds with our priority until God comes to change us from within, to give us a new heart and a new mind and a new way of living. But once we have that, then we come to delight ourselves in the Lord, in his holiness as much as anything else, the purity and majesty of his nature, in his forgiveness and wiping clean our record and replacing it with the righteousness of Jesus so that we stand before him uncondemned. We could widen this out, of course, from Scripture, other ways in which we delight in God and in who he is and what he has done and what he continues to do for us. Let's take this into our new year. Let's seek by God's grace that we will begin every day with the thought, I must today delight myself in God, even when things are not going my way, even when they're not the kind of experience that I would have chosen for myself, even when it involves a degree of pain and of sorrow and of loss, even when it means I'm questioning,

I'm wrestling with this as an aspect of God's providence for me, yet I'm still required and I still would want to take delight in my God who knows best, and I would delight in his wisdom, though I can't have all the answers and he won't provide me with all the answers, yet I can delight in his wisdom because I know he does not make mistakes. He gets nothing wrong, and everything about him, as is marked by perfection, I can take delight in, and I want to take delight in, and we come with our prayers to God, seeking to delight in God and realizing how far short we come, and we ask his forgiveness for our failure to delight in the Lord. And just in passing, although it's important in itself, I don't want to emphasize the negative side of things today, though sometimes, of course, you have to bring that into perspective as well. I want to emphasize the positive, delighting in the Lord, something of what that means, the need to take that with us into this new year, but the delighting that we are required to delight in God with carries with it a detesting, a detesting of everything that's unlike Him, a detesting of sin, a detesting of all that we need to repent of, everything that we see is ugly and contrary to God and unlike God. And again, we don't do that, I don't do that, to the extent that I should, and I realize every day that I live and as I come to deal with God, I need to confess the fact that I have not shunned and I have not hated and I have not detested the things He detests, the unrighteousness, the injustices, the sinfulness, the pollution of my heart, the state of the world without Him. Delight in the Lord, your God. So here's my question to myself today, the beginning of this new year, it's a question that you have to address yourself as well. Am I enjoying God? Am I enjoying

God? Is God my delight? Do I have a greater delight than to delight in God Himself? Do I anticipate greater delights in this year as it unfolds, however little or however much of it I will see? Do I anticipate delighting in anything more than I delight in God? Well, if you were to ask David who wrote this psalm, he would say, well, as I am at this moment, as I write these words, I would say, no, I don't want to delight in anyone or anything more than I delight in God. There's our priority, friends.

What a great privilege it is to know God and to know God in such a way that you want to delight in Him more and more. Are you today, am I today, enjoying God? Very different to saying, do I know something about Him? Do I know what the gospel is? Do I know something of what Jesus did? Do I

know something of what Jesus provides for His people? I can know all of that in my head? I can know all of that intellectually? I can know all that formally. That's not delighting in God, because delighting in God means a living relationship with where He is my best friend, where I delight in being with Him, where I delight in speaking to Him and praying to Him, where I delight in worshiping Him, where I delight in everything that comes my way in terms of delighting in God. There's the great question, isn't it?

That's always a challenging question. It's good to begin New Year's with a challenge. Good to begin a New Year with resolutions. Some of them, it doesn't matter too much, all that much, whether you break them or keep them. This one does. Do I delight in God? It is my intention for 2022 to grow in my delight for God.

[42 : 18] There's the call to delight in God, and then briefly the consequence of that, where He says He will give you the desires of your heart. We'll go back to the point we made at the beginning. The desires of the heart here are governed by the mention of delighting in God. They're not just any kind of desire.

They're not just desiring things that we please or would please ourselves or that we might think would be best, and certainly not the desires that you find arising out of our sinful heart. It's desires shaped by our delight in God, desires of the sanctified heart, desires that are actually compatible with God's will and with God's Word. And you know, these desires, another way of looking at it is, these desires are really the fuel for your prayers. They're fuel for your prayers. Let me just give you the example of that that we commonly use. We use it pretty much every Lord's Day, and we built it into our service, so that our children especially would come and learn it, and learn it by heart, but also hopefully learn it in terms of understanding its meaning. And what am I talking of? I'm talking of the Lord's Prayer. There's where you see someone, Jesus Himself, teaching His disciples to pray. And one of the things that marked Jesus, along with much else, was the fact that He delighted in God the Father.

This is why He taught the disciples this prayer, Our Father in heaven hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, and so on.

All the way through that prayer, you find delighting in God has led to asking these things of God. These are His desires. These are the desires of the disciple of Jesus as far as Christ's teaching is concerned, desires of the heart. And you see, as you went on in that, which is, of course, part of the Sermon on the Mount, as we call it, Matthew 5 to Matthew 7. And then He says in verse 25, Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them, and so on, all the way through there. How can you add to the span of your life? Why are you anxious about such things as clothing? If God so clothes the grass of the field, surely He will do the same for you, O you of little faith. Therefore do not be anxious. What is He saying? Don't fret yourself. Going back to the kind of language of Psalm 37. Don't fret yourself. Don't be anxious, just saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear. For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God. Delight yourself in God, in the things of His kingdom, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, don't be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, sufficient for the days, its own trouble. Don't be anxious. Don't be over-anxious.

[45 : 54] Don't be fretful about things that come your way, or some things you see in the world. Instead, delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Now, as you enter into this new year, you're going to meet much, and I'm going to meet much, that will themselves be inclined to frustrate us. There's many, many frustrations built into the workings of the world in which you meet, where you meet as a Christian, where you meet with all of those events, and all of those attitudes, and all of that opposition. There's much in the world to make us feel frustrated, and to fret, and to get worked up over. And God is saying, here's the alternative. You delight yourself in Me, and you will not be worked up about how things are in the world, or the things you meet with that frustrate you. Here's the counter. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. And you know, in closing, really, it amounts to this. Yes, this is an

imperative. It's in the form of a command. Delight yourself in the Lord. Do this. Just as trust in the Lord is, and do good. All of these imperatives down there, commit your way to the Lord, be still, refrain from anger, all of these, they are in the form of commands, and they are actually imperatives.

But when you think about it, it doesn't stop being an imperative. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. But it's an imperative, in a sense, that really amounts to an invitation. What do I mean by that? An imperative that really amounts to an invitation.

Well, God is saying, when He's saying, delight yourself in Me, He's saying, instead of fretting, come and feast. Replace your fretting with a feasting of all that I can and will willingly provide for you.

Let your desires be shaped by delighting in Me, and dwelling in Me, and dwelling with Me. Let that shape your desires. And when that is the case, come and feast on the abundance that I provide for you in the gospel, that I provide for you in my salvation. Have a look at my table, He's saying, the table of my provision in Christ. Have a look at all that that contains. It's all spread out for you on this wonderful gospel table. And instead of fretting, come and feast. Come and enjoy what I offer you.

[48 : 32] And above all, He's saying, come and enjoy Myself. Delight yourself in Me. Let Me be your delight. Let me be your joy. Let me be the ballast of your life. And when you delight in Me, I will give you the desires of your heart. May God bless these thoughts to us. Let's pray.

O Lord our God, we thank You for all that You provide for us so richly to enjoy. We thank You that You call us into fellowship with Yourself, and that in calling us into fellowship with Yourself through Jesus Christ, You enable us to partake of that wonderful provision that You continue to make available to us in Him.

We bless You, O Lord, for all the rich food spiritually that You provide for us. We thank You, too, for Your providence in what we see as the ordinary issues of life. But we know that nothing is ordinary when we know it comes from the hand of the Lord. So, Lord, we pray today that You would enable us indeed to enjoy being in fellowship with You. Enable us to delight ourselves in You. And we pray that You would therefore give us in our petitions for those things that You offer to us. Give us, we pray, the desires of our hearts.

And enable us to look out upon the world from that vantage point and security of being in Christ.

And Lord, we pray today that He will be the one we prize most of all.

Receive our worship, we pray, and cleanse us from all our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 84.

[50 : 29] Psalm 84, this time in the Scottish Psalter. That's on page 340. Sorry, it's page 339. We're singing verses 8 to 13.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear. See God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

For in thy courts one day excels a thousand. Rather in my God's house will I keep a door than dwell in tents of sin. For God the Lord's a sun and shield, heal grace and glory give.

And will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live. O thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed. Who by assured confidence in thee alone doth rest.

These verses to God's praise will stand to sing. Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear.

[51 : 46] O Jacob's God, give ear.

A thousand brother in my God's will. My God's will my King adore.

And dwell in tents of sin. For God the Lord's a sun and shield. For God the Lord's a sun and shield.

He'll praise and glory give. And will with hope, O God's will. And will with hope, O God's will.

O God's will. O God's will. O God's will. Thou that art the Lord of hosts, that will. Thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed.

[53 : 26] Thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed.

Thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed.

Thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed. Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy be with you now and evermore.

Amen.