

# Together for the Kingdom

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Date: 24 September 2023

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 95 in the Scottish Psalter, page 357 of the psalm book, Psalm 95, and we'll sing from verse 1 to verse 6 of the psalm. We sing as we approach God in worship, looking to him to bless our time and his word to us. O come, let us sing to the Lord, come let us everyone a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation.

Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice. Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise. We'll sing from verse 1 to 6 to God's praise. We stand to sing. O come, let us sing to the Lord, come let us everyone a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation.

Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice. Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise. For God, a great God and great King, above all gods he is. Depths of the earth are in his hand. The strength of his hands are in his hand. The strength of his hands is his. To him the spacious sea belongs.

[ 2 : 41 ] For he the same did make. The dry land also from his hands. It's born at first it take.

Oh come and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all. And on our knees before the Lord. Our maker let us fall.

Let us unite our hearts together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God as we come with these words ringing through this building. We thank you that we come offering up our praise to you. We come offering up our worship to you.

The one who is the Lord. The one who is the one who is the one who is the one who is the maker, the creator of all things. The one to whom all things belong. We can so often live in this world and we see it all around us thinking that so much belongs to us.

[ 4 : 22 ] that we have made so many things that we think are for our own possession. They are of our own making. They are for our own good. But we thank you that your word reminds us that every good and perfect gift is from above, is from the one who changes not.

And these words remind us that you are the one who not just made them for a moment, but for all eternity, that you made the heavens and the earth and all that's in them.

You made your people. You made people in your image. And we thank you, Lord, that you are the one who sustains and keeps us, that you are the one who knows everything about us.

Lord, you are the one who has marked out every path in our life. You are the one who knows the end from the beginning, for you are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

And Lord, we come to you as dependent upon you for all things tonight. Thankful for the joy of worship. Thank you for the gift of praising your name.

[ 5 : 28 ] Thankful for your word and seeking its blessing to us anew this evening. Thankful for this, your day, a day that you have set aside for this purpose, that in the busyness of a week gone past, that we have a new week beginning now, Lord, and we begin it setting our focus on you, seeking your blessing to us as a people and as a community and for all around us.

As we go into this week, oh Lord, we pray that you will be with us, leading us and guiding us in every step we take. And so we come, oh Lord, to praise your name this night.

We come thankful for every blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Thankful for the words that we have sung there, salvation. How you are the God of salvation.

How you are the one who is able to save and save to the utmost. And we do pray, Lord, that your great work of salvation will go on in this place and all around us.

That you would call and draw people to yourself by your spirit and through your word. That you will even prepare our hearts now to receive your word to us.

[ 6 : 44 ] That you will help us to put away all other thoughts that may be cluttering our minds and distracting our focus from you. We pray that you will help us to have ears to hear what you are saying.

And so, Lord, prepare us as we seek to prepare ourselves that we might receive from you. And we ask, Lord, that we would not just receive in a selfish way where we keep it to ourselves.

But that as we go on into this week, that we would seek to share what we have with others. For we have the glorious gospel. So, we have the good news of Jesus Christ. We have a news that is able to turn the world upside down.

And we see its great need today, O Lord, when all that goes on around us. We see it in our own hearts, O Lord, first and foremost. How so easily we fall away from you and are cold towards you. How so easily we're consumed by our own lives and what we want. Instead of seeking your will. And so, we pray that from our hearts that you will transform us and change us.

[ 7 : 53 ] And that you would use us, Lord, as your people. As your church here. To serve you in this place. And to serve you far and wide. Both practically and prayerfully.

And we thank you, Lord, that together we have strength. That in your name we have strength. And that through your presence we have that promise of your strength with us.

So, we do not do anything by ourselves or for our own glory. We seek to do all things for your glory. And we pray, Lord, for this week ahead of us and all that it entails.

That all that we would do, we would do as to the Lord. So, that wherever we go in our homes and our families and our workplace. Be it into school or college or university.

Be it with anxieties and worries in our hearts. Or a great sense of joy and anticipation looking forward. Lord, that whatever circumstances we go into in these coming days ahead, God willing.

[ 8 : 53 ] That you would help us. Help us to know that you are with us. Help us to look to you and to trust in you and to depend on you for all things. We do know, Lord, that there are many who go through different trials and emotions in this world.

We know it in our own experience. We see it in the experience of others. And we know, Lord, that broken hearts and grief and sorrow are never far from us. And so, we seek to commit those who need you in these particular ways.

To know your comfort. To know your blessing. To know your peace. We know, Lord, that you know every circumstance, even unknown to us. And so, we thank you that you would be precious to people, Lord, who need you in these ways.

We pray for your church, Lord, that you would protect it. That you would build it up as your word has promised. And we pray, Lord, that you will come in your power, Lord, throughout our islands here, throughout our nation, throughout the world.

We thank you that your kingdom is of great power and might. We pray the prayer week by week, Lord, that your kingdom come. And we do pray it, Lord, even now, that you would come.

[ 10 : 11 ] That you will come and convict those in sin. Come and challenge those whose thoughts are towards evil and self-gain and prosperity.

Convict and convert them, Lord, we pray. We bring peace to lands that no trouble bring, oh, Lord, calmness in the midst of very difficult situations.

Tragic circumstances, as we've seen in Morocco and Libya. And the natural disasters taking place there. And, oh, Lord, there is never a day that goes by when there is not news of some tragedy near and far.

But, Lord, we pray for your grace. We pray for your mercy to be upon us. We pray for your word to go out with power even in the midst of all of these things.

That your word will be heard. A word of peace. A word of comfort. We remember your people throughout the world. Those who are persecuted for their faith. Those who suffer greatly just to have the name of Jesus on their lips.

[ 11 : 16 ] And to confess him as Lord. But we thank you that you are with them. We thank you that you are the one who upholds and strengthens. That you're one who has promised, oh, Lord, that they will be blessed.

And we pray, Lord, that your people far and wide will know your blessing over them. That they will know your great presence. We think of Stephen in the book of Acts.

And how even as he was persecuted and stoned. That he had a great vision of his own saviour.

The heavens opened. And his Lord standing at the right hand of God.

And we pray that your people here and everywhere throughout the world would have a greater vision of Jesus. That we would see him. That we would fix our eyes on him.

So that in all that we do, oh, Lord, our gaze would always be upon him. That we would look to him as the one who is able to provide in all our needs.

[12:18] And so, Lord, as we continue in our worship at this time, we thank you for all that we have from your hand. And we thank you for the blessings that have been ours already this day. And our service this morning with the baptisms taking place.

We thank you for the families who were gathered. And for the children baptized. And for parents and grandparents. And all of us gathered together as a congregation watching on.

And we pray, Lord, your blessing on us to continue over us in all of these things. We ask, oh, Lord, now that you will guide us in your word. Lord, that you will help us in our praise to lift up our hearts to you.

That you will hear our prayers as we offer them up in and through the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we come as sinners before you. Humbly we come, Lord, pleading that you will forgive us.

Forgive us all our sin. Forgive us and cleanse us. Create in us a clean heart as we sang this morning. And renew within us a right spirit. As we ask all of these things.

[13:20] In the name above every name. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For his sake and glory. Amen. We'll again sing to God's praise.

We'll sing in Psalm 47. This is in the Sing Psalms version. Page 62 of the Psalm books. Psalm 47. We'll sing the whole of this Psalm. June is Warrington. All nations, clap your hands and shout. Let joyful cries to God ring out.

How awesome is the Lord Most High. Great King who rules the earth throughout. We'll sing the whole of this Psalm. To God's praise, we stand to sing. All nations, clap your hands and shout.

Let joyful cries to God ring out. How awesome is the Lord Most High.

[14:35] Great King who rules the earth throughout. He has subdued beneath our feet.

The nations who had been our foes. God has gone up with shouts of joy.

The Lord amidst the trumpet sound. Sing praise, sing praise.

To God Most High. To God our King. Let praise abound.

For God is King of all the earth. Sing psalms of praise to Him alone.

[16:13] God rules the nations from on high. He sets upon His holy throne.

The leaders of the nations come to yield themselves to Abram's Lord.

To Him belong the shields of earth. Exalted greatly is the Lord.

In the name of the nations come to Yahweh of all the nations come to the nations come to the nations. We can turn to read together now in God's word in the New Testament and Paul's letter to the Colossians.

Colossians chapter 4. We take up a reading at verse 2. Colossians chapter 4.

[17:31] We're taking up a reading at verse 2. We're reading down to the end of this chapter.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

At the same time, pray also for us that God may open to us a door for the word to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

Conduct yourselves wisely towards outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts.

And with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, they will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

[18:43] Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions. If he comes to you, welcome him.

And Jesus, who is called Justice. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you, and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas.

Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nymphan, the church in her house. When this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans.

[ 19 : 45 ] And see also you read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen, and may God bless that reading from his word. Well, again, sing to God's praise in Psalm 111.

In the Scottish Psalter, version page 391 of the psalm books. Psalm 111, page 391.

You can sing from verse 1 to verse 5. The tune is St. Paul. We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise, and we stand to sing.

Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart.

[ 21 : 08 ] I will God's praise declare, With the assemblies of the just, And congregations are, The whole works of the Lord our God, Are great above all measure, So doubt they are of every one, That does not take pleasure, Is what most on a grapple is,

Most glorious and pure, And His untainted righteousness, Forever doth endure.

His works most wonderful He hath, Made to be thought upon, The Lord is gracious, And He is full of compassion, He gave path, He gave path, Be done to all those, That truly do Him fear, And evermore His covenant, And He in His might well bear.

We can turn back to our reading in Colossians chapter 4. We can look at verse 7 down to verse 11 together this evening.

Colossians chapter 4 at verse 7. Dechicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother, And faithful minister, And fellow servant in the Lord.

[ 24 : 03 ] I have sent him to you for this very purpose, That you may know how we are, And that he may encourage your hearts. And so on. A couple of weeks ago in the evening, We were looking at the first chapter of Nehemiah, And there we were looking at Nehemiah, And seeing that he was a man of vision, A man who was looking around, And hearing about what was going on, And his beloved Jerusalem, How the walls had fallen down, How they were in great trouble, In great need, And how he had a burden for the people, And the place that they might be restored, And built up once again.

And we will come back, Maybe to look at some more of Nehemiah, In the coming weeks. But as you look at Nehemiah, And the vision that he had, As he was looking ahead, And seeing what needed to be done, There were other things that he needed for himself as well.

We read it through Nehemiah, And his preparation for going back to Jerusalem, That he was looking to God, He was praying to God, For his help, For his presence, To be with him.

But there was something else, That Nehemiah needed, For the work, And the vision to be fulfilled. And that was, People. He needed people, To be with him, To be alongside him, To be working together, For the kingdom of God, To see the blessing of God, And the restoration, That might take place.

And it's that I want to focus on, This evening here in Colossians. People. Do you feel a part, Of the congregation here?

[ 25 : 44 ] Perhaps this is, Where you come every week, Perhaps maybe tonight, You're just passing through, You're just visiting. But whatever your situation tonight is, Do you feel a part, Of the congregation here?

Do we have that, Collective vision of the Lord, As we come in here tonight, That whatever our situation is, We're all looking to God, Seeking his blessing.

Do you feel a part, Of the congregation? Do you feel you have, Something to offer, The congregation? Again, Whether you're here regularly, Or just passing through, Do you feel you have something, To offer the congregation here?

We all have, Something to offer. The Lord has made us, All different, But for a purpose. He's given us, A purpose, To serve him.

Our chief end is, To glorify God, And to enjoy him forever, As the shorter catechism tells us. And in so doing that, And seeing that, Working out in our lives, We all have something, To offer God in that way, How we glorify, And enjoy him together.

[ 26 : 58 ] Well as we look at, The conclusion to Paul's letter, To the Colossians, Colossians, It would be easy for us, To just, Skim over this last part, Of chapter four.

When you look at it, You maybe don't think, It's as important, As the rest of the body. If you've read through, Colossians, Or if you heard services, On Colossians, Do you know that, There is a richness, In this letter, About the glory of God, And Paul's, Ministry to the people, There, The preeminence, Of Christ, In chapter one, There's such beauty, In theology there, And then as you read on, There's practical ways, That Paul is, Teaching the people, To live together, But then as you come, To the end of the letter, Perhaps you think, Well there's no real, Deep theology here, There's no deep teaching here, Or there's no practical, Purpose in this last part, Of the letter, And yet, The closer you look to it, You see it as both, There's rich theology, In teaching here, And there's very practical, Teaching for us as well, So it would be easy for us, Just to glance across it, Brush over it, And not really see, The importance of it, In some ways, It reminds me of a book, As you're reading a book, And you start reading a book, Either at the beginning, Or the end of a book, You'll often find a section, By the author, That's acknowledgements, Acknowledging people, Either maybe family, And friends, Who have supported him, Or other friends, Who have helped, In preparing the book, For publishing, And the list can go on, And on sometimes, A list of names, But who reads it?

Do you read these things, If you start to read a book, Or do you skip past that, And just get into the, Contents of the book itself? Well as Paul is writing, His letters, In the New Testament, You find that both, The beginning of his letters, Maybe the opening few verses, And the last verses, You can often be parts, That you just skim over them, And not see, Just how important, They are, Perhaps, It's just, A list of names, And it's got nothing much, To say to me, But there's more to it, Than first meets the eye, When you look at the people, Mentioned here, And we're just going to look at, Verse 7 to 11, That we could go on through, To the end of the chapter, Where there's, A lot of different names, Mentioned here, Of people, Who, Paul is thanking them, For different ways, That they've supported him, And encouraged him, And in his ministry, And for the spread of the gospel, The good news of Jesus, As it's spreading throughout, So many different parts, He's thanking them, For their help, And for their involvement, In this, We often can speak today, About team ministries, Or every member ministry, We have these phrases, That we can put out, In our own day, But as you look at, The scriptures, As you look at, Paul's letters here, You find that, He was someone, Who had this vision, Of team ministry, Of everyone, Working together, For the good of the kingdom, Of God, And that's the challenge, To ourselves today, Paul here mentions, A variety of different people, With different gifts used, To spread the gospel, And to encourage, Believers, Then far and wide, And ourselves, To this day, At the heart of it all, Is God, And his goodness, At the heart of it all,

[ 30 : 48 ] Is the gospel, The good news, Of Jesus Christ, But through this, Is also people, Being used, To spread, The gospel, And so we're going to focus, This evening on verse, 7 to 11, And look at five people, Who are mentioned here, And just take, A little bit about each of them, And think about ourselves, And the lessons, That we can learn from them, And apply to ourselves, As a church, Individually, In our own lives, On a daily basis, So that even as we go into this week, Ahead, That what we look at this evening, Will make us think, How am I going to be, Different, In the week ahead?

Am I going to, Change things, In the week ahead, In my attitude, In how I live, In what I do, In what I say, In all of these things, Am I going to think of, What these people, In mentioned here, And what God's word, Is saying to us, How is it going to change, How I live, In the week ahead?

So let's look at these, Some of these, People that we have mentioned here, And the first one we have, Is in verse 7 there, Tychicus, Now here is someone, Who along with Onesimus, Was key to having this letter, Delivered to the church, At Colossae, And this was, No small task, In itself, Paul was writing, To them from prison, At this time, And he was sending, This letter, To the people in Colossae, And someone had to be selected, To take this letter, It wasn't a stamp, Put on an envelope, And it popped into, A letter box, And the post office, Would see to it, This needed, People to be standing up, And to be willing, To serve in this way, To take the letter to Colossae, Was a long way to go, It was a dangerous journey, And one that Paul needed, Trusty servants to undertake, And here we are told, Of two of them, Who were entrusted with this, Tychicus and Onesimus, They were entrusted, With taking the letter, To them, So, Tychicus was sent, With a purpose, Paul, We see here, Thrusted him, And what we see about Tychicus, Is he was, An encourager, He says here,

He is, Paul says of him, He is a beloved brother, And faithful minister, And fellow servant, In the Lord, What wonderful words, To speak of anyone, Who's working, In the gospel, Man or woman, Boy or girl, It doesn't matter, He is a beloved brother, Or sister, A faithful minister, And fellow servant, In the Lord, That we would be used, In this way, For God, He says in verse 8, I have sent him to you,

For this very purpose, That you may know, How we are, And that he may, Encourage your hearts, He was selected, For this very purpose, When you look at Tychicus, In the New Testament, You find him, Mentioned in different parts, And it reveals us, More to us about him, Than just these few words here, You find him mentioned, In the book of Acts, Being with Paul again, Going to deliver, A collection, That has been taken, Money that has been collected, For another church, He is found as the one, Who's entrusted, With carrying this collection, You find him mentioned, In Titus and Timothy, Being sent with letters, To Crete and to Ephesus, He's experienced, He's well traveled, A partner in the gospel, With Paul, He's dependable,

[ 34 : 57 ] He's dependable, And these words, Expressed in verse 7 here, Show how Paul describes him, In this loyal way, A beloved brother, Faithful minister, A fellow servant, In the Lord, Here is someone, Who has experienced much, Who has learned much, Along the way, But in all that he's learned, He's willing to give, He's not holding it, To himself, He's willing to give, And to give sacrificially, To give everything, For the cause, Of the Lord, To see, These roles, That he was fulfilling, In delivering letters, In delivering collections, They were all dangerous, They were all, Putting his life, In danger, And yet he was, Called upon, And depended upon, Again, And again,

So he was, Trusted, And how did, Take us come to be, Trusted, By proving himself, By showing himself, Worthy of this, By putting himself, Forward, For this role, For that cause, Of Christ, In this way, His aim, Was to please, The Lord, In everything, He was beloved, He was faithful, He was a fellow, Servant, And every church, Needs, These kinds, Of people, Experienced, Faithful, Dependable, People who put, Themselves forward, People who, Use the experience, Gained through life, In so many different ways, And to put it to use, For the cause, Of Christ, He has gained, So much experience, Through Paul's,

Ministry, Through being with him, In different journeys, In different places, Through relationships, With the Lord, That he's grown in, He's come to serve, The Lord, In this way, We need, More and more, Of these kinds, Of people, Those who are, Experienced, In the Lord, Those who have, Learned so much, Over the years, To be there, To be depended upon, To teach, The generation, Coming after, To show them, The way, To show, What they've learned, To encourage, Others to come, Alongside, And to help, Along the way, As you see here, With Tychicus, That's what his, Purpose was, He was bringing, He was bringing, He was bringing, News to them, And to encourage, Their hearts, To enliven them, For the Lord, To help them, To go on, In the strength, Of the Lord, So for ourselves, Are we,

Encouragers, Are we willing, To put ourselves, Forward, To give ourselves, To the Lord, To give ourselves, Wholeheartedly, For the Lord, How do you, Learn to drive, There's probably some here, Who have, Perhaps just, In the last year, Maybe passed their test, Others who've, Been driving for years, But how do you, Learn to drive, You don't just, Sit a theory test, You don't just, Watch a DVD, About driving, And that's it, You're qualified, To drive, You've got to get, Behind the wheel, You've got to go out, In the car, You've got to drive, The car, And drive it in all kinds, Of different conditions, In nice, Calm, Sunny weather, In dark, Wet nights, In snow and ice, That's how you learn, Through experience, And that experience, Teaches you, And you can, Pass that experience, On to others, And that is how it is, With the Lord's people too, We need, People like Tychicus, Encouragers in the Lord, People of experience, In the Lord, In different ways, In different situations, In different circumstances, Who can come alongside others, And encourage, Their hearts, So it's so important, To have people, Of experience, Who are willing, To give, In the same way, As Tychicus, So as we go into this week, Are we going to be, Like that?

[ 39 : 39 ] Are we going to be, Encouragers? Are we going to be people, Putting ourselves forward, Using, Our experience, For the glory, Of God?

The second one, We see here, Is who was alongside, Tychicus, And delivering the letter, Was Onesimus, And what do we see, Here, Of Onesimus?

He's an interesting, Character here, Just to see him mentioned, It says so much to us, Because it reminds us, Of the power, Of the grace, Of God, Look at what it says, About him there, In verse 9, And with him, Onesimus, Our faithful, And beloved brother, Who is one of you, There's only a few

words there, But it says, So much to us, And to understand, What we, What it's saying to us, We have to learn, A little bit more, About Onesimus, Who he was, And what his background, What his experience was, And to do that, You have to turn, To another letter, Philemon, And as you read, Through Philemon there, You'll read there, Of a slave, That Philemon had, And this was, Onesimus, He had lived,

In Colossae, He had been a slave, But he left them, And he went on the run, Now, Any slave, Who did this, And was caught, The punishment, Would normally be, To be put to death, You couldn't just, Abandon everything, And run away, In this way, There were serious, Consequences, But Onesimus, Along the way, He met, With Paul, And through, His ministry, Through hearing, Of the gospel, Of the glory, Of Jesus, And the forgiveness, Of sin, And restoration, And all of these things, He had become, A Christian, His life, Was transformed, He was, A changed, Man, Onesimus, Had run away, But had met, With the Lord, Had known, His power,

And now, Here he is, Coming back, To Colossae, Coming back, To people, He would have known, As it says here, He is one, Of you, It's wonderful, To see this, Because it tells, Us of the power, The transforming power, Of the gospel, And it gives us, Two things, A number of things, To consider, But two things, In particular, For ourselves, Here tonight, The first, Is this, As you think, Of being involved, In the kingdom work, Of God, How we need people, Who are, If you like, Local, People who, Know the situation, On the ground, People who know, The place, And the people, All around us, Onesimus, Onesimus, Was one, Of them, He knew, Them already, He knew much, About them, He knew much, About the place, And how powerful, And how effective, Is that, When it comes, To ministry,

[ 43 : 04 ] To have those, Who know, The people, And the place, Our church, Should be a place, Where we see, Everyone coming in, And we're thankful, That we do, So often, But we have to ask, Are there any, People missing, If you like, Of course there are, Because there's many more, Who could be here, We see people coming, Sometimes from other, Free churches, Free church people, We might call them, We see people coming, From other churches, But a church is for all, And especially, For the community, Especially, For the lost, For those, Who do not even know, That they're sinners, For those, Who do not know, That they are lost, That they would come, And meet with Jesus, That they would come, And find, Forgiveness of sin,

That they would come, And be used, For the Lord, That they would come, And be transformed, And be able to go out, And meet with people, They already know, To go out to a place, They already know, And share the gospel, The wonderful gospel, Of the transforming power, Of Christ, You can imagine, Onesimus there, Walking around, Colossae and people, Seeing him, Is that not the one, Who ran away?

Is that the one, Who was up to no good? What's he doing, Here now? And for him to be able to say, The Lord has transformed me, And to be able to share, The gospel, With his own people, Here is one, On the run, Afraid for his life, No intention, Of returning to Colossae, Until he met the Lord, How many of us, Have left this island, Gone away, Thinking we're going, To get away, From the Lord, We don't want anything, To do with the Lord, And yet we're back here now, Loving the Lord, And seeing his goodness, And how many more, Do we want, Who perhaps have gone away, Already, Praying, That they would come, That they would meet, With Jesus, Even as they've gone away, And that they would come back, Changed, And be used, For God's glory, In this place, And that's what,

We are reminded of here, In Onesimus as well, It's a power, It's a power of God's grace, It's a power of God's grace, It's a power of God's grace, It's a power of God's grace, It's a power of God's grace, He was a local one, But he was also one, Who experienced, The grace of God, And God's grace, Is powerful, To transform, That we always hold on to, Onesimus is there, He's now described as, Our faithful, And beloved brother, What a transformation, Has taken place, So we have these two, Who were used, To deliver, The letter, We also see as we go on, There are three then, We see together in verse 10 and 11, And we see that they were Jews, In verse 11 it says, These are the only men of the circumcision, Among my fellow workers, For the kingdom of God, They were Jews, As well, So the three mentioned here, Are Jews, Who had come to faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, And we learn a little bit, About each of them, Aristarchus there, My fellow prisoner, Greets you, Again just a few words, But what can we learn, From Aristarchus, Well we learn that, He is loyal, And every congregation, Every church, Needs people, Who are loyal, When you look at mentions of him, In other parts of the scriptures,

You see that he has been on many journeys, With Paul as well, But he's almost like the unsung hero, He's more in the background, There's others, Who maybe come to the fore, In different ways, But Aristarchus is just more, In the background, But still, So essential to the ministry, Still so important, To Paul, And his ministry of the gospel, My fellow prisoner,

[ 47 : 38 ] It says there, He hasn't, Abandoned Paul, In fact, He stayed with him, To be a comfort, And a help, To him, He has been a comfort, To Paul, As it says, In verse 11, And they have been, A comfort to me, These three, That we're looking at just now, They've all been, A comfort to him, In different ways, And what you find here, Is someone who was, Just faithful to the cause, Didn't want the limelight, Didn't want the glory, But just quietly getting on, With things in the background, And every congregation, Is so often blessed, With these kinds of people, We are blessed with it here, People who just quietly, Get on with things, In the background, The little things, That you don't notice, But if they weren't to do it, You soon would, Those who are loyal, Those who are faithful, Those who are always there, To be called upon,

When needed, He has learned too, From Paul, Of what ministry is about, What serving, In the kingdom, Is all about, Just being faithful, In the little things, And that the Lord, Would bless that, He has been with, Paul through it all, And just quietly, Getting on with things, He's loyal, To him, It reminds me, Of a film I once watched, It was based on a, On a true story, In the second world war, Of a battleship, That had gone through, So many different experiences, In the war, And on board, Was this crew, Who had been together, Through it all, They were, Almost always, It was just the same crew, Again and again, It was the captain, Of the ship, And his second in command, They were together, All throughout the war, And just towards, The end, Of the war, The second in command, Got offered,

His own charge, Got offered, His own ship, That he would, Get promoted, To captain, And have his own crew, Have his own vessel, But he turned it down, Because he wanted, To stay faithful, To the captain, He'd come through, So much with, He didn't want, The glory for himself, He just wanted, To be faithful, Alongside those, He had come through, So much with, And again, There's just a lesson, There for us, Faithfully, Getting on with things, Being loyal, Being faithful, Quietly getting on, With things, In the background, Being loyal, To the kingdom of God, And to the cause, Of Christ, Aristarchus, Is another wonderful, Example to us, Then you have, Mark, As it says here, The cousin, Of Barnabas, Concerning whom, You have received instructions, If he comes to you, Welcome him, Again, Just a few words, And yet, When you look, Into the background, It tells us, So much, Just Paul saying, Those words, If he comes to you, Welcome him, Why would he be, Emphasizing this, What's the importance, Of these words, Well when you look at, Mark, And Paul's relationship, With Mark, It's been, Up and down, To say the least, In the book of Acts, You read in chapter 13, And then chapter 15, Of an event, That's happened, And it, Gives us so much, Background, To why these, Words are so, Important, In Acts chapter 13, Verse 13 says, From Paphos, Paul and his companions, Sailed to Perga, And Pamphylia, Where John, That's Mark, John, Mark, As we'll see in a moment, Left them, To return, To Jerusalem, So Mark, Had left them, At this point, In Acts chapter 15,

Verse 37, It says this, Barnabas, Wanted to take, John also, Called Mark, With them, But Paul did not think it wise, To take them, Because he had deserted them, In Pamphylia, And had not continued with them, In the work, They had such a sharp disagreement, That they parted company, Barnabas took Mark, And sailed to Cyprus, But Paul chose Silas, And left, Commended by the brothers, To the grace of the Lord, They had a fallout, They had come to this point, Where they had gone, Their separate ways, And what does this tell us, Differences occur, We know it, We know it so often, Differences occur, But it tells us more than that, It tells us that differences, Can be overcome, That relationships, Can be restored, For now we see Mark,

[ 52 : 44 ] And Paul together, As fellow workers, Fellow workers, In the gospel, If he comes to you, Welcome him, Never mind what you've heard about us, In the past, Never mind what's maybe, Gone on and happened, In a previous time in our lives, If he comes to you now, Welcome him, So it shows us, That even when we have disagreed, With others in the past, When it comes to the kingdom of God, We should be looking, For restoration, We should be looking, For coming alongside, One another, And working together, Where that is possible, Welcome, All who come, In the name of the Lord, That is how, We are to live, The final one, We see here, Is justice, Jesus who is called,

Justice, Again, Not much said here for us, But what it says, They are the only men, Of the circumcision, Among my fellow workers, For the kingdom of God, And they have been a comfort to me, Applies to justice, Here as well, So what does that tell us?

Well, Justice we can see here, Is the bold one, The one who is willing, To make a stand, The one who is willing, To show his faith, In the Lord, He may be a Jew, One of the circumcision, As he's described here, But he knows the Lord, And now he is standing, For him, And so, What does that say to us?

What does it say to you tonight? As we think of all of these, The ones we've looked at, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justice, You come to him, And this is almost where it begins, Are you making a stand for the Lord?

Are you bold, In standing out for him? For in order to serve the Lord, With all your heart, You have to stand, On his side, To show, That you love the Lord, With all your heart, With all your soul, With all your strength, Will you stand, On his side?

[ 55 : 28 ] The gospel of Matthew, Tells us, Everyone who has left houses, Or brothers, Or sisters, Or father, Or mother, Or children, Or fields, For my sake, Will receive a hundred times, As much, And will inherit, Eternal life, Are you willing, To stand, For the Lord?

We learn lessons, From all, Of these, This is Paul's, Team ministry, If you like, We could go on, And look at others, Here as well, We learn from each of them, They're all important, As are we, As are we all, For the kingdom of God, Here, For the Lord, To use us, There is variety, There is different gifts, But it's about maturing, And developing, Together, And ultimately, It's about serving, The Lord together, And seeking his blessing, Over us, As a people, As a congregation, As a community, As a nation, As a world, That the gospel, Would go out, In power, As we go on, In the wake ahead, Can we take lessons, From all of these, To be encouragers, The local one, Who's come good, Onesimus, To be faithful,

Like Aristarchus, To be like Mark, One who shows, That we're able, To put things in the past, Away for the cause, Of Christ, Justice, Being bold, To stand, For the Lord, We're all, In this list, Somewhere, We can all, Learn, From this list, We don't just, Glance over this, And think, It's got nothing, To say to us, It's got something, To say, To us all, There's lessons, For us to learn, Are our lives, Lived, For the Lord, In the right way, Are we serving him, As we should, And above all, Are we trusting, In the power, Of his glorious grace, The Lord Jesus Christ, As our strength, As our help, As our refuge, May we all,

Serve together, As people, Looking to God, Serving our Savior, With all our heart, Trusting, Encouraging, And going on, In his strength, Let us pray, Our Father in heaven, We thank you, That there is no words, In your scripture, That are wasted, That even when there are times, When we, Maybe see little relevance, To ourselves, Maybe we only see, A list of names, That mean nothing to us, That even, And the names of so much, To tell us, And to teach us, And we thank you Lord, For all that we've, Looked at this evening, And how they, Encourage us, And how they speak to us, And how, They might even enable us, To go on, In these days ahead, Examining our own lives, And seeing how we stand, With you, How we serve you, How we stand with others, What we are doing, For the kingdom of God, And we pray,

Lord, That you will unite us together, For your cause, That you will strengthen us, In our number, And in our faith, And in our trust in you, Use us Lord, We pray, Whether we are passing through, Or whether we are here, Every day of the week, That we might be used, For your glory, To spread the good news, Of Christ, We ask it all, For the forgiveness, Of our sins, In Jesus name, Amen.

[ 59 : 21 ] Amen. We are going to conclude, By singing to God's praise, In Psalm 134, In the Singed Psalms, Page 175, Of the psalm book, Psalm 134a, On page 175, In the tune is Stuttgart, Praise the Lord, All you his servants, As you serve, With one accord, Praise the Lord, In your night watches, In the temple, Of the Lord.

We'll sing, These words, To God's praise, Praise the Lord, All you his servants, As you serve, With one accord, Praise the Lord, In your night watches, In the temple, Of the Lord.

Raise your hands, Within his temple, To the Lord, Your God, Give praise, He who made the earth, And heaven, Bless you, From his holy place.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door, To my right, So we'll close, With the benediction. Now may grace, Mercy, And peace, From God, Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Rest upon, And abide with us all, Now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 61 : 49 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.