

Through Many Tribulations (4) - Refocusing On God

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: 28 April 2019

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] 1 Kings chapter 19. Tonight we're looking at that passage from verse 5 down as far as verse 15 where we stop reading.

Last time we looked in this series of studies we've called, named it under the title of Through Many Tribulations, and just looking at some of the ways in which God's people endure and suffer tribulation, various kinds, and how the Scriptures give us some direction as to how the Lord especially deals with these circumstances.

And we looked last time at Elijah, and we left him really at verse 4 there, where he came and sat down under his broom tree and asked the Lord just to take away his life.

Remember we noticed that that had risen from two things, mainly exhaustion and frustration with his lot at that time. How he thought it was really not worthwhile going on, his disappointment and discouragement is evident.

No change had taken place in the people, despite what had happened in the previous chapter recorded for us on Mount Carmel. And nevertheless, there's no change in Ahab and Jezebel. In fact, now they're actually, Jezebel especially has said that he is the next person to die.

[1 : 22] So he ran and he came to these circumstances that he's in, in the wilderness, far away from his service to God, far away from his responsibilities, far away from where the Lord indeed would take him back to.

And as we look at these verses from 5 through to 15, we'll actually see some more details about his condition coming out for us, some more features of how he is and how he's feeling and what he's like inwardly.

But as well as that, we want to notice especially how God actually dealt with that, because that's one of the main things running through these verses, the way that God actually addressed that situation, addressed Elijah in that situation, and made provision for him in such a wonderful way. And so we can summarize all of that tonight, as we go through with this next study and through many tribulations. Let's summarize that as refocusing on God, because that's really what God is doing for Elijah.

He's giving him, he's treating him in such a way as is enabling him to refocus upon his God, and upon the work that God had actually given him to do about his service and his prophetic ministry.

[2 : 40] So let's first of all look at Elijah's mindset, because that's important. We saw some of that last time, but Elijah's mindset, especially noticing that he was preoccupied with himself.

He was preoccupied with himself. Secondly, we want to look at God's pastoral care. We speak a lot about pastoral care nowadays.

Pastoral care is important, and not just the pastoral care that ministers, elders, leaders in the church are obliged and privileged to give to people, but your pastoral care is for each other.

It's something that belongs to the flock of God, to the people of God. But here we're looking at God's pastoral care, God's shepherding care of Elijah, as he dealt with him in that condition.

And God's pastoral care is something that brings out that he refocused Elijah's mind for him. God refocusing Elijah's mind.

[3 : 41] So first be Elijah's mindset that he was preoccupied with himself. Now we saw last time something of a sense of failure, his discouragement, his gloom, and you can see in that that the root of that is really as you go through the passage, it becomes obvious that he is overly focused upon himself.

When you look at these verses, you can see that's coming through again. He speaks about himself. He speaks about what he has been doing. He speaks about what the people of Israel are not doing. But there's a lot of focus on himself, a lot of focus inwardly, a lot of introspection. And while that's not, of course, something that's wrong for us to engage in, it is wrong when it comes to fill your mind to the extent that he is so preoccupied with himself that he has lost his focus on other things.

I'm going to have five quotations tonight from the writings of Samuel Rutherford. Samuel Rutherford is such an excellent source of teaching and comfort for us.

When you read his letters, for example, you'll find many of them written from prison, that he has such a view of Christ, such a view of things outside of himself.

[4 : 59] And one of the things about reading his letters is that it takes you outside of yourself. When you are feeling low, yes, I know his mind is a challenge, his view of things is a challenge to us, and many times you come away thinking, well, I wish I was like that.

And one of the things we're going to look at tonight is that we shouldn't be comparing ourselves to others in an unjustified way. But when you read Rutherford, some of the quotations I have tonight are to do with the kind of study we've got.

And when we're saying here that Elijah was preoccupied with himself, that he was, in fact, focusing on himself, Rutherford says, we are as near to heaven as we are far from self.

We are as near to heaven as we are far from self and far from the love of a sinful world. Now, what Rutherford is saying there is, the further you get away from being preoccupied with yourself, although you have to examine yourself, although we're required to examine ourselves, examine our relationship to God, the further you can get away from actually being overly concentrated on that, the nearer you are to heaven.

That's what Rutherford was saying. We have to primarily engage our minds with God himself, with God's word, with God's promises, God's truth, which really takes us out of ourselves.

[6 : 23] The more you look in upon yourself, even the best Christian in the world tonight, the more he or she would look in upon themselves, the more reasons they will find there for coming to really be discouraged and be disappointed and to have a sense of failure similar to what Elijah has here.

And you can see this focus on himself, this preoccupation with himself in three things. First of all, he relied on his own assessment of things.

He relied on his own assessment of things. Now, when you go through the passage, look at verse 4 there, for example. He said, He asked the Lord that he might die, saying, It is enough.

Now, Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my father. Verse 10, you have a similar thing. I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts, but the people of Israel have forsaken you a covenant. The same thing again in verse 14, where he more or less repeats that.

I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts. And he's relying on his own assessment there, because what he's done is, he's looked at the situation, he's looked at himself, but he's looked at the people, he's looked at the ministry that he has for the Lord, and he's come to the conclusion that it's not worth going on with it.

[7 : 38] He has relied on his own assessment. He's measured things up. He's come to his own conclusion. He's come to really see, as he's preoccupied with himself, as he's looked at that situation, he's come to this judgment, to this conclusion, as to his ministry, as to the people that he's been ministering to, as to his future, as to the future of these people.

He's come to the conclusion that he's not really in a position to go on, and it's not worth going on, and he's had enough. He has made up his mind using his own assessment, rather than relying on the Lord's, and going back to the Lord's, setting off him in that situation, first of all.

Now, it's very hard sometimes to live by some of the promises, even if you haven't God's Word, because they come into a situation in our lives, where we find ourselves stressed, where we find ourselves anxious, discouraged, disappointed, even depressed at times.

For example, it's very, very hard to live by Romans 8, verse 28, in all our circumstances. You know that verse that says, all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

When you're really struggling and going through the mill, and you come to that verse, all things work together for good, your mind is usually taken up, and my mind is usually taken up, with the things that are really causing the pain at this present time.

[9 : 14] And you ask the question, well, how can all things be working for my good? And of course, the verse says, all things are working together for my good, not just the painful things, but the things

that give me joy and comfort as well.

But that verse is really about a willingness to accept God's control of your life. That's essentially what it's saying.

All things work together for good to those who love God. God taking control of your life and willingly letting God, if you like, willingly having God in control of your life.

to have the mindset that says, well, I can't look after my own life properly. I can't fulfill God's purposes by myself. I can't reach right conclusions. I must accept God's wisdom.

I must accept God as the sovereign king of my life. Whatever turns in his providence take place, whatever events take place, I must never lose my focus on the fact that God is the one who controls all things, including my tiny little life within this big world, this big universe, this big plan of his.

[10:29] I think I mentioned before, cars that have adaptive cruise control. Until you get used to it, it's very, very hard just to let that take control of the car.

And really, when you're using it, you're, you're, you're, in, in, steering the car, you've obviously got to steer the car yourself, but adaptive cruise control is something that works the distance between the car in front and yourself.

You've set your speed according to the limits, and that means that when the car in front slows down, your car slows down. Keep that distance until the car in front slows down, and your car slows down.

And if the car in front suddenly breaks, then the brakes go on a new car as well. The thing that's really difficult is when you see the brake lights for the first few times that you're in that sort of car, when you see the brake lights coming on, you know that car in front is coming to a dead stop.

It's so hard to keep your foot off the brake and let the adaptive cruise control do it for you. And it's the same with God. Sometimes we find it very, very hard to let God have full control, don't we?

[11:36] To accept His will is best, to accept that He knows what He's doing in our lives, to accept that, for Elijah to accept that what happened with that response to his labors on Mount Carmel was already in God's plan, and God would take care of whatever the outcome would be, whatever the eventualities would be, including the threat from Jezebel.

But he had lost his focus. He was preoccupied with himself. He was looking too much in on himself. And he had just lost sight of the fact that it's God, really, who knows best, and it's God who must control every feature of our lives.

Again, going to Rutherford, this is what he said, My faith has no bed to sleep upon, but omnipotence.

My faith has no bed to sleep upon, but omnipotence. That's God's almightiness, which, of course, is part of the way that God controls everything, part of the way that God has sovereignty over all our lives and all the events of our lives.

My faith has no bed to sleep on, but omnipotence. Well, Rutherford sometimes didn't have a very comfortable bed to sleep on. He was in prison in Aberdeen many times, many years.

[12:56] Yet, this is what he says, My faith has no bed to sleep upon, but God's omnipotence. That's a blessed situation to be in.

How different to the situation of the conclusion of Elijah. So, Elijah is very much taken up with himself, and he's relied on his own assessment. He's looked at the situation in Israel, his own relationship to that and his ministry, and this is his conclusion.

Lord, it is enough. Now, take away my life. Take me out of here, for I am no better than my fathers. The second way in which you see him preoccupied with himself is that, again in verse 4, he is measuring himself against others.

That's in these words, I am no better than my fathers. He's been looking at his ministry in relation to the fathers, to the others who have gone before him, prophets or patriarchs that have gone before in Israel.

And what he's saying is, I'm no better than my fathers. Essentially, he's saying, I'm not as good as they were. I didn't have the same results as some of them had. So, it's enough. I've had enough.

Take me away. Now, it's always wrong for us to compare ourselves to others.

[14:15] To compare yourself to others is dangerous because, for one thing, we really don't know everything that's going on in other people's lives. You might think that some people as Christians really have a life that's full of joy, that's full of exuberance, that there are no problems in their lives such as we ourselves may have, that there are no times when they're going through tribulation like

we ourselves experience, if that's our lot.

Don't think that. People can put on an exterior that really hides the state of their minds and their hearts or the difficulties and the troubles that they're going through in their lives.

And that's maybe deliberate on that part because they don't want to give the impression as a Christian that they're not really believing in God or following God or accepting God.

But he's looked at others before him and compared himself to them. The Bible always tells us that that's a dangerous thing. You don't compare yourself to other people when you ask yourself what must I be like as a Christian?

How must I live as a Christian? What should I be doing as a Christian? What is the tenor of my life? You remember something that happened in the experience of Peter and we saw this when we look at the life of Peter.

[15:36] It's in John chapter 21 and at verses 21 and 22. You remember Peter had actually been told by the Lord that when he was older he would be taken and apprehended by other people and another they will carry you where you do not want to go and this is what Jesus said showing what kind of death by which he was going to glorify God.

And after that he said to Peter follow me. In other words Peter was given a glimpse into the future something that God had planned for him. It wasn't an easy thing.

It was about his death. It was about him being unable to have freedom the way that he would have liked. But then Jesus said follow me.

I'm saying this to you he says but still this is my requirement this is my command follow me. And then Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved we take it to be John following them.

And he said to the Lord Lord what about this man? In other words Peter was saying to Jesus well I hear what you're saying about me I hear what you've got for me in the future and that you want me to follow but what about this man?

[16:51] Is he going to go through that sort of thing? Is he going to have such experiences in his life? How does my life compare to his? How does mine or his match up to mine? And the Lord said to him if it is my will that he remain until I come what is that to you?

You follow me. Now you see what he's saying he's saying to Peter you follow me though this is what is going to be the case with you at the end of your days this is how you're going to end your days it's not going to be an easy time for you and Peter is saying well what about this man? What about this disciple? What about my brother here? And the Lord is saying if it is my will that it's entirely different from him and that he remains until I return what is that to you?

That's not your life that he's going to live and that's not his life that you have to live you have not to compare yourself to him or ask why is that in his life and not in mine or in my life and not in his you see what's happening with Elijah as well I am no better than my fathers I'm comparing myself to others to my fathers and this is the conclusion that I've come to and it's the same not just for ourselves as individuals it's also the same for the generations of the church the generation of the church we belong to sometimes we might say well I wish I was back in the days of the Puritans I wish I was back in the days of the Reformation when it swept across Europe and came to Scotland and I wish I was there when John Knox was preaching and when John Calvin was still living and producing all of these wonderful commentaries and works of theology and I wish I was living in those conditions at the time you can't go back there you can't go back to the church in Victorian times you can't go back to the church in the early 20th century or 21st century we have to live in the context of today and we have to be what God requires us to be in the context of today see Elijah Elijah can't go back and live in such a way in such a context or in such a framework as was the case with those before him he has his own day to live he has his own circumstances to face that's the challenge for us as a church not to harp back or to mope in such a way that says well I really wish things were the way they were 20 years ago 50 years ago 100 years ago things are as they are that's how God planned it that's how God's wisdom set it out and what he's requiring of me and of you as he was of Peter and of John you follow me you be true to me in those circumstances of today live out my gospel live out your Christian life and let God be in control of your circumstances and that's really what Elijah was doing secondly he's preoccupied with himself because he was relying on his own assessment secondly he was measuring himself against others and one other thing that you can see this from is that it comes across fairly strongly doesn't it that he was really dwelling on the negatives he was really dwelling on the negatives

[20 : 23] I am no better than my father a negative the children of Israel have forsaken you of covenant they're not obeying you they're not true to their calling they're doing all of this but they're not what they should be and they've not changed and nothing has been effective in what I've done you see he's focusing on what the people were not what he himself was not what was not the case with them or with himself the negatives are what he was dwelling upon and if you dwell upon the negatives your mind will soon come to really become discouraged and disconsolate if you just dwell on the negatives of life all the time and Satan loves that that was that that is what you would do Satan loves the bypasses if I may call it that Satan loves these bypasses after all he took the Lord and in his temptation of the Lord in Matthew 4 and in Luke chapter 4 notice what he was saying to him he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and he said all of these will I give you because he then had before the gospel of course had gone out these nations were in darkness in pagan darkness held blinded by the power of Satan still under God's sovereignty of course but he's saying all of these will I give you if you fall down and worship me what was that suggesting what was that proposing to the

Lord himself take a bypass around the cross take a bypass around the sufferings you don't have to go through these sufferings you don't have to continue on this road of obedience to the father's will you can actually avoid all that and you'll still get all of these I will give them to you the only condition the question is that you worship me Satan loves the bypasses and he wants to take you on a bypass tonight he wants to take you on a bypass around committing your life to Christ he wants to take you on a bypass around the positives in your life as a Christian if you're here as a Christian and we're all prone to doing this to dwell on the negatives well Satan wants to take you on a bypass around the positives so that you'll dwell on the negatives so that you won't see the positives let me just quote again from Rutherford in regard to this kind of thing he said believe God's love and power more than you believe your own feelings and experiences your rock is Christ and it is not the rock that ebbs and flows but the sea see what Elijah had come to almost think at least is well the rocks moved where is God in all of this maybe that's the question that comes to ourselves at times as well well where can God be in this how can God actually be at the center of these difficulties these troubles that I've got well the rock hasn't changed the rock hasn't moved the sea moves it ebbs and flows providence ebbs and flows sometimes our experience seems to be more full of certain things like comfort or joy than at other times sometimes the sea ebbs and it's a struggle you have to keep your eye on the rock on the Christ who never moves who is a sure foundation don't let Satan take you on a bypass round the positives think of the positive things in your life as a Christian you have Christ that's the most positive thing of all you have his word you have his guarantees you have his promises you have his people you have the privilege of knowing the importance of his church and of worship and of all of these things so many positive things in your life don't let Satan take your eye off that onto the negatives because that's what will lead us

Elijah did to life under the broom tree life disconsolate life just looking at the negatives and filling your mind with things that cause darkness and gloom so there's Elijah's mindset he was preoccupied with himself taken up too much with himself and we're all prone to doing this myself included he relied on his own assessment he was measuring himself against others comparing himself to the fathers and he dwelt on the negatives in his life and his experience he was preoccupied with himself but let's look secondly at God's pastoral care because that's so important he refocused Elijah's mind I mentioned last time that one of the things that led to this was that Elijah was actually exhausted physically mentally he was exhausted spiritually too you could say he was suffering from that exhaustion but the first thing that God did was he met his physical and mental needs he met his physical and mental needs his physical especially and the angel came and touched him verse 5 and said arise and eat and he looked and behold there was at his head a cake baked on hot coat stones and a jar of water and he ate and drank and lay down again he was still exhausted but he took some of the food and drank some of the water when you're in the desert you need sustenance you need water especially there is God the shepherd of this man this wonderful God who's looking after him who's in covenant with him what does he do when he comes to find him in the desert he doesn't actually come and say what are you doing here Elijah he doesn't say that immediately he doesn't awaken him he doesn't actually once he's fallen asleep he doesn't come and just roughly shake him awake and say come on get on with it get up on your feet and go back to where you should be that's not what God is like there's no rough awakening there's no rebuke he sends an angel he sends an angel to show him that God himself has prepared now

nothing we're not told anything here about where these cakes came from or where the water came from he's in the desert after all he went a day's journey into the wilderness you don't find cakes on a rock in the wilderness after a day's journey God mysteriously miraculously prepared it for him but the emphasis really in that the fact that you don't know anything about where they came from you come to the conclusion

God's looking after this man God has come patiently lovingly caring to actually look at this man and his condition and the first thing that God knows he needs is rest rest and physical sustenance and that's what God gives him sometimes we have to remember that ourselves we just try and push on with things and try and meet the deadlines and try and fulfill the agenda of our lives on a daily basis sometimes it's just a situation that we can't possibly complete you know sometimes we need to just say to God well Lord you know that I've done as much as I could and I have to leave the rest and please bless what I've done that's what life is like and it takes a bit of time in our experience I can look back on my own life especially when involved with the assembly and so on things like that so many things that were undone at the end of a day that remains still to be done and no time to do them what do you do what do you actually do with that these are important things but there's just not the time you need the rest you're falling asleep doing it so you have to say to the Lord [28 : 21] Lord I just can't do it just now I committed to you help me to do it if I can tomorrow or whenever that's what life is like don't push yourself to the point of breaking point to the point where you come like Elijah to have to take time out to recover in a crisis situation he met his physical needs secondly he opened out his thoughts see this is another thing that comes across when Elijah had come to the cave and he lodged there and then here is God coming with this question what are you doing here Elijah now two times twice he asked him that question what are you doing here Elijah it's not of course that God doesn't know that's an obvious thing to say he's not asking this so that Elijah will actually tell him something he doesn't know God knows all about this already why is he asking

Elijah this question why is he addressing him by way of this question why is he doing it twice well it's so that Elijah will open up his heart to him it's so that Elijah will actually tell him what's on his mind what his situation is how he feels what is concluded that's exactly what he does when he came after four days to that place and he met Martha and eventually Mary as well and he dealt with them exactly how they needed to be dealt with what did he do to Martha when Martha said to him if you had been here my brother would not have died what does he do he says your brother shall rise again I know that he will rise again she said in to tell him what was on her mind and he spoke back in a way that gave her the most incredible theology to address that practical situation of her bereavement that is what

God is like that's the God we worship and for Elijah to open up here is really God facilitating the weight that's on his mind the weight that's on his heart we sang in Psalm 62 what an important thing it is you people he says pour out your heart to him pour out your heart to him is what the psalmist was encouraging those that were addressed in that psalm to do because that's what he had done himself and what a wonderful expression that itself is and the context of the psalm of course is one where the psalmist is really in a crisis again he's attacked by enemies he's surrounded all of that stuff going on in his life and yet he pours out his heart to God and he says to the people that he's advising now pour out your hearts to him oh people what Elijah is really doing here is what God is enabling Elijah to do is to take his frustrations to himself that's one of the greatest privileges you have as a human being that you can tell God how you feel that you can tell him your frustrations that you can tell him about your failures that you can tell him about your fears that you can tell him everything that's on your mind in whatever situation you're in even in the most critical crisis what a great privilege that you know God will listen to you that God will enable you to pour out your heart when the shepherd cares for the sheep when they get tired when they need attention when they need treatment when they need encouragement when they need defending they look to the shepherd they expect the shepherd to do that and that's what

Elijah is given this facility from God to open up to him don't ever close your heart against God don't ever think well God is too big to listen to my problems and God is too holy for me to express to him exactly how I feel it's not like that you can tell him exactly how you feel even if you feel it's bordering on being even disrespectful to God pour out your heart to him tell him what's on your mind speak to him as it is as you feel it as you know it because he's not a God who will not accept that and say unless you tidy up your thoughts I'm not going to listen to you anymore he's not like that and that's

again how

[33 : 32] Rutherford put it there is no sweeter fellowship with Christ than to bring our wounds and our souls to him there is no sweeter fellowship with Christ than to bring our wounds and our souls to him does that surprise you that surprised me the first time I read it because we think of the sweetest fellowship with Christ is the fellowship we have outside of our struggles at times when the going isn't really tough that the sweetest fellowship is when we have a great comfort and a great assurance in our heart yes of course you can have sweet fellowship with Jesus in these circumstances of course you can but this is what Rutherford experienced Rutherford speaking from prison Rutherford speaking from his confinement from the abuse that he suffered in the hands of those people who didn't want him to preach the gospel anymore the sweetest fellowship with Christ is when you bring your troubles your sores your disappointments to him that's when you really find out who

Jesus is what he's like what he can do for you so he met his physical needs he opened out his thoughts third thing that God did for him or enabled for him was to renew his awareness of God in his life to renew his awareness of God see verses 11 to 13 where you find three awesome powers that are mentioned there where you find the wind this was obviously a gale a raging gale we're not unfamiliar with that but it tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord you can just see the strength of that wind it's really just smashing some rocks up against each other but the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind an earthquake but the Lord was not in the earthquake well imagine what an earthquake feels like you've perhaps seen video of it it's terrifying even on a minor scale but the

Lord was not in the earthquake and after the earthquake a fire but the Lord was not in the fire what is the Lord doing it does say the Lord passed by the Lord is doing this the Lord is arranging this what's it about why is he to teach Elijah something very important and it's something like this it's more or less God saying to him I don't need the likes of a Mount Carmel to fulfill my purposes I don't need great and tremendous events in the experience of people such as equate to a wind a gale an earthquake a great fire because after the fire the sound of a low whisper a still small voice as the AV puts it a low whisper the sound of just somebody whispering now what did

Elijah do when he heard it he wrapped his face in his cloak and he went out and stood in the entrance of the cave he knew that God was in the whisper as he had not been in the wind and in the earthquake and in the fire and God was saying to him I can do things with a whisper or with an earthquake or by the fire or by fire or by wind it's just as easy for me to whisper people people into life as it is to dramatically convert them by an earthquake and of course such a great lesson in that for ourselves too isn't it it means that because we're not seeing dramatic events in our congregation dramatic in terms of what other people might say are dramatic great events people falling down people coming to really just have all sorts of experiences by which they say well this was just completely otherworldly this was completely something that has never been experienced before God whispers more people into the kingdom than he brings in by dramatic events how did you come into the kingdom was it not just that you heard the voice of God that God spoke to you through the scriptures that God addressed you in a still small whisper you know what that sounded like don't you in your soul you knew he was speaking to you you knew it was your circumstances that he was taking note of and that he was doing it for your benefit a still small whispering voice isn't that what you're hearing tonight and as you're hearing this still small whisper don't doubt whose voice it is not my voice it's the voice of God still speaks still addresses people exactly where they are he comes to speak to them in a way that makes it clear it's himself and that's what

[39 : 04] Elijah is experiencing a re-awareness if you like of God God is saying to him I'm here I'm not here in the way you might expect me to be here but I'm still here and I'm here as your God now go go back to place that's the fourth thing he met his physical needs he opened out his thoughts he renewed his awareness of God and let's finish in that point we can say that really to be aware of God in our lives doesn't take doesn't necessarily mean that you're the greatest Christian experientially or theological that ever lived it just simply means that God has not forgotten you that you know God is still with you that you know God is true to his promises that he will never fail you that he's there in your life as he's always been as Ellie Holcomb says in one of the songs regarding God and the love of God and how she came to know the love of God and as she sings this song speaks about the love of her mother and speaks about the love of her father how precious and how close that was but you are closer than all of that closer she says than the heart within my chest

closer than the heart within my chest that is what God is reestablishing for Elijah I am here and I'm still your God tonight if you're disappointed if you're discouraged if you know failure in your life as a Christian if you think you've let the Lord down if you're avoiding your responsibilities if all of that and other things are in your life one of your greatest needs and mine is this that God would reestablish the sense of his presence of his commitment to you rather than our commitment to him that's that's where our life is it's in fellowship with God so the first thing he does he redirected his service verse 15 after all of this his physical needs met his thoughts opened out he poured out his heart to him his awareness of God again rekindled renewed

God is now redirecting his service go return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus God is saying to him go back to your station go back to where you should be now there's something more of a rebuke perhaps in that because let's face it Elijah's situation here is one of disobedience everything you're saying about Elijah verses 3 to 5 as you read of what he did there he's being disobedient to God he's turned away from his calling he's turned his back upon that though momentarily that's exactly what he's done and his disobedience needs to be addressed by God and that's what God is doing yes God came to him gently and patiently and touched him into an awakened state even physically by an angel and he fed him and he opened out his thoughts and he renewed his awareness of God but still the point comes where God is now saying now go go back to where you should be go back on your way to the wilderness of Damascus because to an extent when we look into ourselves and are preoccupied with ourselves and come to wrong conclusions and all that we've seen we are in a sense there of course being disobedient to God we've taken our eye off him we're following our own way let us be faithful and care for our own part which is to do and suffer for him and lay

Christ's part on himself and leave it there and then he says duties are ours events are the Lord's duties are ours events are the Lord's may God bless this word to us let's conclude we sing to God's praise finally in Psalm 56 that's in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 56 beginning at verse 18 through to verse 13 tune this time is martyrdom Psalm 56 verse 8 my wanderings all what they have been thou knowest their number took into thy bottle put my tears are they not in thy book where the psalmist is comforting himself in the knowledge that God has kept a record of all his wanderings of all his tears of all his tribulations and their safely taken account of by God himself so we'll sing verses 8 to the end my wanderings all what they have been my wanderings all what they have been thy lost their number took and to thy god of them my dear are they not in thy birth my foes shall end my time turn back thy

Lord what is for me for me in God his word I'll praise his word and God shall praise him be and God I trust I will not hear hear what man can do to me thy vows upon me are O Lord I render praise to thee will thou not do from death be saved my feet from forth be free to walk before

[46 : 35] God in the life of those that live in me I'll go to the main door after the benediction and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more Amen a seminary heal One last week the day See you