

The People's Response

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Date: 04 December 2022

[0 : 00] We'll begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 95 in the Scottish Psalter. We're going to sing from verse 6 down to verse 11.

Psalm 95 in the Scottish Psalter at verse 6. O come and let us worship him, let us bow down with all, and on our knees before the Lord our Maker let us fall.

For he's our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep today, if ye his voice will hear. And so on. We'll sing from verse 6 down to verse 11, and the tune is Gainsborough. O come and let us worship him, Let us plunder with all, And on our knees before the Lord, Our Maker let us fall.

For he's our God, the people we of his own pasture are, And of his hand the sheep today, And he his voice will hear.

[1 : 57] Then harden all due hearts, Our sin and provocation, As in the rest of the day of the temptation, As in the rest of the day of the temptation, When me your Father's strength and crew, How did my work in sin?

In mind, the face of forty years, This grace hath beared me.

I send this people less in high. My ways they do not know.

To whom I slip in wrath, not to my rest they should not go.

Let's come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Amen. Our Father in heaven as we continue to worship your name and praise you as our Lord and our maker.

[4 : 10] We thank you that again we can come in praise and worship for that is your call to us as your people. That is the call that we have sung from this psalm.

We as a people are to come and worship you, to bow down before you and on our knees before you fall. For you are our maker and our Lord.

And we thank you, Lord, that the way is opened up for us. That we have such a great privilege to be able to worship you in peace and security.

But help us, Lord, never to take these things for granted. Help us, even this day, as we have been around your word and around the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Never just to think that this is always going to be what our Lord is. For we know, Lord, that there is much blessing in your word for your people.

[5 : 08] We are so encouraged through your word that you are a God who has loved us and remembered us and given us your own son as the way to salvation.

But your word stands through too. There is a warning in it as well. Even the warning that we have sung from these words before us.

That we as a people, we are not to harden our hearts as we hear your word. There was a warning from the psalmist to the people then of their forefathers who had indeed hardened their hearts.

And we live in a day and an age when the same is true of so many around us and even so many of ourselves. When our hearts can become hardened.

When we do not listen to what your word is saying. When we heed and listen to the wisdom of this world. And to all the things that will lead us astray and lead us away from you.

[6 : 08] And so we pray anew this night, Lord. That you will speak to us. But that we will have ears to hear. And that your spirit will work in our midst.

That your spirit will minister to our hearts. That you will, O Lord, melt our hearts.

By your grace. By your mercy. By your love. For we know we cannot do it ourselves. Because only you can. But we thank you that there is so many promises in your word that we can hold on to.

That we can remember and even pray over as we come to you as the only way to salvation. We thank you that there is a promise that for all who come you will never cast them away.

That there is a promise that all who come to you, you will give them rest. There is a promise that all who come to you, you will hold on to. That you will never forsake them or leave them.

[7 : 18] And so we pray, Lord, for all your promises. That they will be ours through Christ Jesus. And that we may know them more and more precious in our hearts and in our experiences day by day.

The more we go on, the more we learn through the joys of this world. But also through the sorrows that it brings. We experience, O Lord, so often the highs and the lows.

We so often feel alone and helpless in these times. And so we thank you, Lord, for your promise to draw near. And the promise and encouragement that we have in your word.

That we are indeed to be a people who encourage one another. And pray for one another.

Remembering one another in so many different ways. So help us, Lord, that we will be a praying people.

An encouraged people. A people with a sense of expectation of what you are doing in us and around us. And in the midst of all that goes on. That we would see that you are the God who does indeed do all things well.

[8 : 23] Help us to understand these truths, Lord, when they are difficult for us. And so we thank you that you have not left us. That you have spoken and are speaking to us.

And that you are reminding us, Lord, of the wonderful gift of your grace. Help us to long for it more and more. And to experience it through that faith that comes from your grace towards us.

That faith in Jesus Christ, your Son. We thank you, Lord, for the encouragements your people receive on a day-to-day basis. We thank you that even as we pray in our own quietness of our homes.

And in the quietness of our own hearts. That so often we see prayers answered. And we thank you, Lord, that even before us this day, there are prayers answered now and from maybe even many generations past.

Prayers offered up by your people maybe long ago. Prayers for children in young years who are now into old age. But who have come and tasted of the goodness of God.

[9 : 35] We know, Lord, your word teaches us to be patient. And we continue to pray with that sense of urgency. That sense of patience to wait upon you.

Praying for those who are still strangers to you. Praying for those who are even in the darkness of this world tonight. Praying for those who are struggling in so many different ways.

Those known to us and even those who we do not know. Those who in your plan and purpose.

Maybe we are yet to meet. Yet to have opportunity to share a word in season with.

But we thank you that in your kingdom. And in your plan and purpose. Everything is foreordained.

And so help us to commit ourselves into your hands.

And to go forward even from this day. In the knowledge of all that is uncertain for us. Is known unto you. And we pray, Lord, your will be done in all things.

[10 : 34] We thank you for our Lord and Saviour. The one who we have remembered this day. The one who has done all for us. We pray, Lord, and thank you for the many prayers he offered up.

The prayers we read in scripture. The prayer in Gethsemane. Even as he looked ahead to the cross. And saying, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

We thank you for that great sacrifice. We thank you that he gave his life. We thank you anew this evening. That he is risen. That he has overcome.

The power of sin. The power of death. That it could not keep hold of him. But we thank you that he is risen. And has appeared to many. And that he has now ascended.

To the right hand. And we await the day of his return. In a world that groans. In a world that has many pains. We do thank you that we look forward to a day.

[11 : 36] When he will come again. And we pray, Lord, that even those thoughts of the Lord's return. Will stir us up in our mission for God in this world.

That it will stir us up as a church. To serve you aright. To long to see many coming to salvation. To long to see many throughout the world.

Turning to you. Repenting of their sins. And hearing the great gospel message. We thank you for every way it goes out. We thank you for every means that there is.

To share the gospel in this day and this age. We thank you that even as we gather here. This is a service. And a worship that can be heard. To all the ends of the earth.

How our world has changed in so many ways. That a voice can be heard in the far corners of the world. Even immediately. But we thank you above all that your voice is heard.

[12 : 35] That you are a God who knows every person throughout the lands. That you are a God who speaks and ministers to people far and wide. We thank you that your gospel is not contained in any way, shape or form.

We do pray Lord for the ongoing ministry of your word. Whether it's the preaching of your word. The translating of your word into the many languages of this world. The ministry of your people in so many different ways.

To all ends of the earth. Teaching. Shepherding. Guiding. Helping. Nourishing. Caring. And for so many different people. In so many different places.

We ask and plead though Lord your mercy upon us. That our world would see the great emptiness of a desire for self in this world.

A selfish heart that longs for the things of this world in a greedy way. We see so much around us that makes us troubled in our hearts and our souls.

[13 : 40] And we know too Lord that you grieve over the lust of this world. And so we pray Lord that you will come in a day of your power. Remember us as a people Lord.

Look down upon us and remember those who we so love and care for in our own homes. And our families and our communities near and far. Remember us Lord and hear our prayers as we ask all things.

Acknowledging our sin anew. But thankful for the forgiveness that is ours as we repent and confess. And approach that great throne of your son Christ Jesus.

Our great high priest. We thank you for all done for us. And we pray Lord encourage us. Strengthen us on the way. Even into the rest of the week that lies ahead before us.

Guard us oh Lord and keep us. And help us to have that great expectation of you. The one who is able to do abundantly more than we ask or imagine.

[14 : 39] As we commit ourselves into your hands now and always. Go before us. Cleanse us anew. In all we ask. We ask in Jesus name for his sake. Amen.

Amen. Let's again sing to God's praise. This time I'm singing in Psalm 5 in the Scottish Psalter. It's on page 203.

Psalm 5 on page 203. We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 7. Give ear unto my words. O Lord my meditation way.

Hear my loud cry. My King my God. For I to thee will pray. Lord thou shalt early hear my voice. I early will direct. My prayer to thee and looking up.

An answer will expect. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7. To God's praise on the tune of Spor. Give ear unto my words.

[15 : 46] O Lord. My meditation way. Hear my loud cry.

My King my God. For I to thee will pray.

Lord thou shalt early hear my voice.

I early will dry head. My prayer to thee and looking up.

An answer will expect. For thou art not.

[16 : 54] God thou art not. God thou art not. In wickedness delight.

Neither shall evil dwell with thee.

Nor will thou art not. Nor will thou stand in thy sight. All that will do. All that will do.

Or shine thy heart. God's love that fire. Lord thou art not. O Valentine shall see.

M Gesetzent may andingsbee. Unbeceived woman, a poetess by thee.

[18 : 00] But I into thy house will come, and thine abundant grace.

And I will worship in thy fear, to hold my holy grace.

Well, can we turn together to read God's word in the New Testament and in the book of Acts? The book of Acts, chapter 2. Let me take up our reading at verse 14.

Acts chapter 2, reading at verse 14. But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them.

Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

[19 : 29] But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions. And your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants.

To those days I will pour out my spirit. And they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above. And signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness. And the moon to blood. Before the day of the Lord comes. The great and magnificent day. And shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs. That God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

[20 : 39] This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death.

Because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me. For he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad. And my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to haze.

Or let your holy ones see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence.

Brothers, I say to you with confidence about the patriarch David. That he both died and was buried. And his tomb is with us to this day.

[21 : 40] Being therefore a prophet. And knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would not set one of his descendants on his throne. He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ.

That he was not abandoned to haze. Nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up. And of that we all are witnesses.

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God. And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

For David did not ascend into the heavens. But he himself says. The Lord said to my Lord. Sit at my right hand. Until I make your enemies your footstool.

Let all of the house of Israel therefore know for certain. That God has made him both Lord and Christ. This Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this.

[22 : 46] They were cut to the heart. And said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles. Brothers what shall we do? And Peter said to them.

Repent. And be baptized. Every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you. And for your children. And for all who are far off. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words.

He bore witness. And continued to exhort them. Saying. Save yourselves from this crooked generation. So those who received his word.

Were baptized. They were added that day. About three thousand souls. And so on. And may God bless. That reading from his word.

[23 : 42] We'll again sing to God's praise. This time in Psalm 116. In the Scottish Psalter. Page 395 of the Psalm. Book Psalm 116.

At the beginning of the Psalm. Singing down to verse 8. I love the Lord. Because my voice and prayers heeded here.

I while I live will call on him. Who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cords and sorrows did. About me compass round. Pains of hell took hold on me.

I grief and trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord. Then did I call and say. Deliver thou my soul O Lord. I do thee humbly pray.

We'll sing from verse 1. To verse 8. And the tune is Cunningham. I love the Lord.

[24 : 38] I love the Lord. Because my voice and prayers he did here.

I beim on there.

Of death the courts and sorrows did, How hard we come was run, The grace of hell to hold on me, I keep my trouble firm.

Upon the name of God the Lord, When did I call and say, Give ever love my soul, O Lord, I do Thee humbly pray.

God merciful and righteous, O Lord, O Lord, God saves the meek, I was brought home, He did me help, O Lord.

[26 : 48] O Lord, my soul, do thou return, And to thy quiet rest, For largely know the Lord to Thee, Its bounty hath expressed.

For my distress is so from death, Delivered was by Thee, Thou missed my warning, I strong tears, My feet of falling free.

Well, we can turn back for our time this evening to the passage we read in Acts chapter 2.

Acts chapter 2. And our main focus is going to be in verse 37 to the end of verse 41.

But as you see, this section is one long section that we read together, the sermon of Peter on the time of Pentecost, where there were people around who had seen the wonders of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the power seen in different ways among the people, and there were those around who were accusing them of being drunk and of being out of their minds and all kinds of accusations being made against them.

[28 : 49] It was a hostile crowd that Peter was preaching to. But what you see as he preaches God's word, as you see as he takes texts from the Old Testament, you have Joel in the book of Psalms being quoted here, read here, and he's preaching the word to them and it has a powerful impact.

And that's what we see in verse 37 where it says, Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

And as we come away from a communion weekend, as we come away from again hearing God's word preached whether it was last evening or today, during the day, this morning or tonight, as we come away from this weekend, what kind of expectations do we have coming away from it?

How are we coming away from hearing the word of God or seeing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, either having taken it or watched on? What are our thoughts of God?

Are we as a people hardening our hearts? Are we just going to go on into the week and carry on just like any other week, forgetting what we've heard? Or is it going to linger with us?

[30 : 10] Is it going to pierce into our own hearts? Is it going to make us ask questions of ourselves and questions of God? We are reminded constantly through his word that God is a God who is sovereign, a God who is reigning on high as we were thinking of last night.

He is a God who is working. He is a God whose spirit moves among us at all times. He is a God we've been encouraged in seeing the work he is doing in our own midst here in calling a people to himself to profess faith.

He is a God who promises he will bless. And as we look to him and as we trust in him, that he will bless his people. There are so many promises that we can take from his word.

But we have to be faithful to him. And here Peter is addressing a people who in many ways had been in a similar circumstance to ourselves.

Gathered around and hearing God's word. But what are they going to do with it? The purpose Jesus had for his church in the book of Acts, as you see, is that the good news of Jesus Christ would be proclaimed.

[31 : 34] It's wonderful to read through the book of Acts because you see the power of God at work in so many different ways. And in some ways, it can almost make you feel a little discouraged, if you like.

For example, that verse, the last verse we read, verse 41, those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day about 3,000 souls. When you read that, you perhaps wish, if only we could see these kinds of days just now.

If only here in our midst, today, 3,000 were added to the number being saved. That doesn't mean we should be discouraged, though. There is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner saved.

And so tonight, we rejoice. We rejoice that God is still working, that God is still active in our midst. And not just here, but throughout our islands, throughout our nation, throughout the world.

God is still building his church, so we do not lose heart. And when you think of the apostles themselves, Peter and others, you don't have to look far back to see a time when they were discouraged, a time when they thought their hope was gone.

[32 : 44] Having been with the Lord Jesus for three years during his public ministry, they watched on as he was crucified, not understanding what was happening, thinking that this was the end for them.

All their expectations dashed, thinking of all the great things that he was going to do for them and to them. But here he was, their Lord and Savior, crucified, put to death at the hands of lawless men. But their hope was once again realized when they met with the risen Lord, when they saw that he is alive, that the pain of, the power of sin could not contain, the power of death could not have a hold on him.

He is risen. And so tonight, as we go on, as we go forward from this communion, we remember too that he is risen for us. He is ascended to the right hand of God, that he is working and sovereign. So how will we come away this evening from this time of communion? There was a great change that took place in the apostles, even Peter himself.

[33 : 58] You think how he had disowned the Lord, how he had turned away, denied him three times. And yet he was asked that question, Peter, do you love me?

You know, Lord, that I love you, was his response. And is that our response today as we were thinking of this morning, the love of Christ, it asks the question of us, do we love him?

Do we love him as his people? Do we love him as those who are seeking, even as those who are maybe blind to him? Do we begin to realize the great love that he has shown to us as a people?

So it challenges us, it rebukes us, it encourages us, it does all things for us as we see God's word encourage the disciples, the apostles, and all his people together.

As we see a word that convicts people, as we see a word that is powerful and active, it reminds us that we continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 04] That is a powerful word that is still able to save. So the focus this evening as we see in verse 37 is how are we going to respond to this word coming away from this weekend?

What kind of response will we have and what kind of expectations will we have of ourselves and of our Lord going forward? Are our expectations of ourselves too high?

Do we expect of ourselves to be able to do everything to obtain our own salvation? Do we have to realize that these expectations will never be realized?

Are our expectations of our Lord too small? Do we think he's not able to do all that we see him doing here in the word before us? He is still able.

In that chapter we read this morning in Ephesians it says that we pray and look to the one who is able to do abundantly more than we ask or imagine.

[36 : 07] We are to fix our eyes on him. So what's happening here? Well God is at work through the preaching of the word and the power of the spirit and what we pray for is that God will continue to work in this way.

The people here are convicted. It says there in verse 37 when they heard this were cut to the heart and that's something you've heard this weekend cut to your heart.

Has God been piercing you with his word in this way? Ministering to you in a new way and reminding you that when you have Christ you have so much.

Don't lose your focus from him. Don't lose your sense of expectation in him. Don't lose your urgency for him or if you are seeking him or even blind to him is he cutting you in the heart and reminding you you are lost without him.

This word is a powerful word. When it says there that they were cut to the heart pricked to the heart it means that they were pierced or stabbed. There's a sense of pain in this word.

[37 : 19] It causes discomfort and as we hear God's word if we are not believing in its fullness then it causes us pain. It should prick us to our heart.

And so God is still speaking and as he speaks it calls for a response. A response from every one of us. Will we go forward in faith?

Will we put our trust in him? And the response that we see here we see it in three different ways.

First of all we see the inquiry the inquiring nature of the people.

A people who had just before this sermon had been mocking and joking about God's people who had the spirit poured out upon them claiming that they were drunk claiming them that they were crazy out of their minds.

Well Peter says at the start of this section we read in verse 14 men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem let this be known to you and give ear to my words these men are not drunk as you suppose.

[38 : 29] He's giving them a warning. He's saying don't mock them but hear what I have to say. And that's what we are to do as we listen to God's word. We are to hear what he is saying to us.

And Peter here preached a powerful sermon. A powerful sermon calling on people to come and see their need of Christ. And to come and see that he is the only way to salvation.

And the gospel it always leads to questions. It always leads to us asking questions. Sometimes it's asking questions of us and sometimes we're asking questions of the gospel.

And perhaps that's the stage we're in in our lives just now. We're asking these kinds of questions of the gospel. Is it true? Is this really true?

This word that I've heard so often, this word that has been around for so long, is it really true? The world tells me it's not. The world tells me we don't need this anymore so can I just leave it aside or is there some truth in here that I need to hear?

[39 : 43] There is truth here for us all to hear. Do I need it? Maybe you're saying that to yourself. Yes. We all need this word.

Every one of us. We need to hear this word and we need to heed this word. Do I believe it? It's the question that it leads to as well.

Do I believe what this word is saying? Tonight do you believe what you read in the word of God? Do you believe in the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ?

The fact that he came into this world that he died on the cross that he rose again that he is coming again. Do you believe these things in your heart? This word leads to inquiry.

It leads to questions. But what we see here is initially the people had no interest. They had no interest until this word was preached to them.

[40 : 45] A people who had gathered to remember the Passover. What foreshadowed the Lord's Supper. They had come to remember. But what's amazing about it is they missed the whole point.

This Christ who had represented, who they had seen, who they had crucified, he meant nothing to them. They were oblivious to the fact that he was before them, that they had crucified him.

And that's the way God's word can sometimes be for us. I pray not, but today did you come and go from here without thinking, what does the bread and the wine mean?

Has it just become a ritual that we go through? Has it become something that we don't really think about? What are we actually doing? What are we remembering here?

I pray that today, as we are reminded once again, that it would be real to us. That what we would have been thinking wouldn't have been the kind of things that they would have been thinking as they remembered the Passover.

[41 : 51] Probably just looking ahead to the week that lay before them. Looking ahead to going back to their own homes, going back to their work, going back to their families, carrying on with life, making no impression on them.

Is that how we are going to go away from here today? Once again, having seen or taken part in the Lord's supper, but not realizing or not letting it sink in to us, what we've done, what we've experienced, what we've seen, what God has said.

It should lead to us to ask questions. Instead of meaning nothing, it should mean everything. We came to remember the Lord's death until he comes.

And the inquiries that that leads to, it leads to us asking questions. When we are dead in our trespasses and sins, as the word says, when we know that we are lost in this world, we have all these questions, where can we turn?

Well, the people here, as they heard this word, as they were cut to the heart, they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do? And is that the question on your heart tonight?

[43 : 11] What shall I do? There are so many questions in the Bible, but some of the most powerful questions are the personal questions that we have to reply to the Lord Jesus himself.

There's two I want to highlight. One is before us here, the other is in Mark chapter 8 and verse 29.

The question that Jesus asks of the disciples there, he's saying in Mark, he's speaking to them about what people are saying about who he is.

Some are saying you're a prophet, some are saying you're Elijah. There are all kinds of opinion on who Jesus is, just the same as the world we live in today. All kinds of opinion about Jesus.

But Jesus, he boils it down to one question. And he says to them as he says to us, but what about you? He says, who do you say that I am?

And that's the question we're asked tonight. Who do you say that Jesus is? And the question that Peter has for them here as well, that they have of Peter is, what shall we do?

[44 : 35] When Jesus asks that question, who do you say that I am? Surely our response is what should be the same as Peter who answered him, who said, you are the Christ, the Messiah, the chosen one.

God has for him. And when we begin to realize who he is and what he's done, it leads to this second question that we have here in verse 37. As they ask of him, brothers, what shall we do? The same question that later on in the book of Acts in chapter 16, the Philippian jailer has. What must I do to be saved? That should be the burning question in our hearts tonight. What must I do to be saved? Because it comes from understanding of who Jesus is. And that's what Peter has done for them here.

He has laid the word of God bare before them. This Jesus, you crucified, you put him to death. You did all of this.

[45 : 44] Your sins nailed him to the tree. But God has raised him from the dead. Look at verse 22.

He says there, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst.

As you yourselves know, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

But God raised him up. You crucified, he says. And this is what leads them to ask, brothers, what shall we do?

In all that we hear from the word of God, is that the burning question in your heart tonight? What shall we do? Well, from inquiry we see here, it leads to the exhortation of Peter.

[46 : 49] In verse 38, Peter said to them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises for you and for your children and for all who are far off.

everyone whom the Lord, our God calls to himself. This is Peter's response to them, exhortation, what they must do, what we must do.

As we come away from this weekend, this is a reminder to us of what we go on doing, coming to the Lord Jesus, fixing our eyes on him, repent, repent, he says.

Turn, that means, turn away from the direction you're going, away from God and turn to him. Can you imagine what it would be like if no one listened to a word you said?

If anyone you spoke to, anyone you shouted to, they're not listening to a thing that you say. Maybe you think this is your experience even just now. Come to my home for a minute, you think nobody's listening to a word I'm saying anyway.

[48 : 16] But imagine if that was your situation day after day after day. You're crying out, you're shouting for help, you're asking for help in so many different situations, and no one is listening.

Is that the way God is with us? We may feel that no one's listening to us, but there is a God who is. And that's what we're constantly reminded of in his word, that he is a God who listens, and a God who hears the cries of his people.

That psalm that we were singing together, Psalm 116, a wonderful reminder there of a love for the Lord. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here.

Even when we feel no one else is listening, God is listening. And that is Peter's exhortation to them here. Repent, be baptized, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God listens to the pleas of his people. God listens to the cries of his people. and he will listen to yours. If you are seeking the Lord, the Lord says, seek and you will find.

[49 : 40] Knock and the door will be opened unto you. And he's saying keep going. He's listening. As a people, as God's people, do we give up in prayer too easily?

Or do we keep praying with that prayerful passion? That he will listen, that he will answer our prayers. Again, as we come away from this weekend, is to have that expectation that he will listen, that he will hear my cry.

So here in verse 38, Peter is exhorting his people. He is exhorting them, repent and be baptized.

And if you do, there is this promise for you that you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for you and your children and for all who are afar of, everyone whom the Lord calls to himself.

And you notice how he keeps going. It says in verse 40, with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation.

It was the role of the apostles, the early church, to go out and proclaim the word of God. It's the privilege of every preacher to go out with the word of God, to exhort a people, to plead with a

people.

[51 : 11] And it's the same message. Same message you hear from myself, you hear from James, you hear from every preacher who stands in this pulpit, a pleading, an urgency, a crying unto you who are lost, repent and be baptized, every one of you.

Listen to what he is saying. He says, save yourselves from this crooked generation. salvation. We live in a world that is perishing.

We live as a people who are perishing. We live as a people who have no continuing city here. The day will come when we're called away.

Our time will come. And that is the urgency of this message. save yourselves from this crooked generation.

Repent and be baptized. Turn to the Lord. Do not harden your hearts. Don't let this become just a ritual, coming into the place of God and going away and thinking nothing of it.

[52 : 33] Hear what God is saying. Hear that he is crying to his people. Be saved. Repent and turn. The word says here that with many other words he exhorted them.

And those who received his word it says in verse 41. In other translations it says those who gladly received his word.

They were baptized. they believed they turned to God. Oh the joy of hearing the voice of God and turning to him.

Listening to him and finding in him the joy of salvation. Finding in him the beauty of this world fulfilled through Christ. Because there is nothing in this world that compares on the love of Christ to us.

that is the exhortation that he gives to us again and again. And the exhortation that I give to you tonight to plead with you that if you are lost repent turn save yourselves from this crooked generation by coming to the Lord Jesus.

[53 : 56] He hears your cries. He will listen. and he will never turn you away. You may find others who won't listen to a word that you say.

But the Lord will always listen. And may you come to sing that song anew with more meaning than ever before to say I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here.

The final thing we see in this is that sense of expectation. that sense of expectation that we should have in our hearts in two different ways.

When you look at Peter preaching this gospel to the people then you wonder what he expected at the end of it. A people who had been shouting abuse one minute you notice what it says in verse 41 they received the word gladly and were baptized and they were added that day about 3,000 souls. The wonder and beauty of the power of the gospel and we should never lose sight of that. So two expectations that we should have coming away from this weekend.

[55 : 16] First of all for those who may be seeking the Lord to have your expectations in him and not in yourself.

You will never be good enough through anything that you do but you can put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Until we come under this conviction of the word we feel that we are good enough that we are all right as we are but this word that cuts to the heart is you're not.

You're not all right without Christ. It's not all well without him far from it. There's a lost eternity before you.

But you can expect great things from God. You can have an expectation that he will listen to you. That through his word he is speaking to you.

this word that cuts you to the heart. But will you respond? Will you listen? The pleading is to not harden your heart.

[56 : 31] Listen to what he is saying and repent and believe. Because what is more important to you? A few years in this world with the pleasures that it offers and I lost eternity or years of blessing by him in this world and an eternity with him forever.

Nothing compares. So your expectations coming away as a seeker. Keep seeking. Keep asking. Keep knocking.

Keep going. Because he will listen. But what about our expectation as believers as well? We come away from this weekend and let us have great expectations of what God can do.

Great expectations that God is working. That God is always sovereign and overruling in all things. We may not see 3,000 souls converted here today.

