

The Bright Path of the Christian

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[0 : 00] I want to extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning as we are beginning our worship of God and wherever you are, if you're a visitor joining in with us, it's great to have you sharing in our worship today.

And we pray that the Lord will bless the word to us. It is so important to come under his word because it is through this that we come to know Jesus and we come to grow in Jesus.

We're going to begin by reading from Psalm 27 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 27 in the Scottish Psalter. The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed?

My life strength is the Lord, of whom then shall I be afraid? When as mine enemies and foes most wicked persons all, to eat my flesh against me rose, they stumbled and did fall.

Against me, though an host in camp, my heart yet fearless is. Though war against me rise, I will be confident in this. One thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain, that all days of my life I may within God's house remain, that I the beauty of the Lord behold me and admire, and that I in his holy place may reverently inquire.

[1 : 24] And so on. Let us now engage in prayer. Let us call upon the name of the Lord in prayer. O Lord of gracious God, as we gather before you today, we pray that you will bless us.

It's a new day in our experience. A new day that brings with it so many blessings and so many privileges and so many opportunities.

And it's another day that reminds us of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the great work of salvation. We give thanks for the Saviour that we have.

Lord, we give thanks for showing us the way of salvation, because in and of ourselves we can't work it out. And so we pray that as a nation there might be a growing hunger for your word, because your word shows us the way of life.

You have revealed to us everything that we need to know. You have shown us in your word how this world came into being, how everything that we know has come into being.

[2 : 34] Because we're reminded that it is in you that we live, move and have our being. And help us, Lord, to study your word and to come to see that not only have you provided this wonderful way of salvation through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, but you have also given to us in the word a way in which we are to live.

And so we pray for the grace every day to be moulded more and more according to your word, that your word will shape us and your word will indeed direct us. Because we do not know ourselves the right way to go.

Your word says there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. So we pray, Lord, that we will hear your word which says, I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you shall go.

I will guide you with mine eye. And so we pray that we might set the Lord always before us. This is what David did. It was part of what made him the great man that he was.

But he was a man after God's heart. And even although he fell and fell badly, he was always repentant of his sin and that he always sought to have the Lord at the forefront of his way and of his thinking.

[3 : 51] And so should we. And we ask, Lord, that that might motivate us. Help us to remember that if we are risen with Christ, that we are to set our affections on the things that are above. Lord, forgive us for how worldly we sometimes are and of how preoccupied we become with the things of this world that are passing.

And while there are so many blessings in this world and you have given them to us to enjoy, help us not to be fixed upon them, but always to have them and to have them hanged loosely so that we

might be most in the main things and that we might be looking to you, to the things that are fixed and eternal.

We give thanks, O Lord, for the growing desire that is within the heart of your people for that heavenly country. That this is what is a growing longing within your people's heart for the day when they are able to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Lord, as we don't know when the day of our death will be, but we pray that for all your people that you will grant them a passage from death into life, as it were, from this world into the next world, where they will know the joy and the safety and the security of that passage.

And that their eyes will be filled with the glory of the Lord and that your people will pass from this life full of faith, persuaded and assured of the Christ that they have loved and served in this world.

[5 : 29] We give thanks, O Lord, for the great hope that is in the word of God. And we pray that that hope will burn bright within our hearts. And we ask, Lord, that you will do us good today.

Bless your word to us, then, we pray. And bless us each and every one. Bless every home and every family. We pray for our young people back to school. And ask, Lord, that you will be with them and with teachers and assistant, classroom assistants and with janitors and with canteen staff and all the different helpers, all who are involved in that work.

And so we pray for safety. And particularly with the virus around, we ask, Lord, that you will protect young and old alike. We pray for our elderly and we pray that you will keep them safe and that you will protect them.

We long, Lord, for the day when we can get back to church. And we know that some churches have managed to reopen and that's wonderful. But some of us are still not able to do so. But we give thanks for the technology which enables us to worship in this way.

And while it is not the same as meeting together, and we long for the day when we will be able to meet together, we ask, Lord, that you will continue to bless this means and that many will come to faith, come to know Jesus, to be built up in their faith.

[6 : 49] We ask, Lord, that you will be gracious to us nationally. We pray for all those who are struggling financially, those who have lost work or are threatening the threat of losing their work looms large over the distressing times, disturbing times, worrying times.

O Lord, our God, we pray that you will make provision for people and that people will not go into financial wreck and ruin over this.

But Lord, may our eyes be upon thee. Because so often we come to that point and place where we have to say, our eyes are upon you. For we know not what to do. O Lord, bless and piteous.

Shine on us with your face. Have mercy upon us nationally, Lord, we pray, because we have turned away from you. By and large, we have abandoned the living and true God.

And we have, as the word says, hewn out for ourselves broken cisterns which can hold no water.

And so often as we look around at all the unrest that is within our nation, it is an unrest that so often will find its root in the fact that we have abandoned the source of peace who is the living and true God.

[8 : 04] And so we pray for every hurting heart, for every broken home, for every ruined relationship. We pray, Lord, where there is hurt today, that you will bring in healing.

Pray, Lord, for those who have bereaved, those who have lost loved ones. We commit them to your care and to your keeping. We ask, Lord, that you will support them and uphold them as they come to terms with the passing of loved ones.

Lord, we give thanks for our families, for our friends, for all who enrich our lives. And so we pray that you will do us good, cleansing us from every sin we pray.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. I'm going to say just a wee word to any of the young people who might be watching. There is a huge pile of earth, of topsoil, next door to us here.

There is a house being built there. And when the site was cleared, all the earth at the top was piled up high. It is way, way up.

[9 : 06] It is probably about, I don't know, 10, 12, I am sure 12 feet high. Anyway, this huge pile of earth. And it was lovely earth to begin with.

Lovely topsoil. But over time, of course, again, the grass grew. But right now, it's just full of thistles. There seems to be just hundreds of thistles.

In fact, there doesn't seem to be much else there but thistles. And the other morning when I got up, I looked out. And this lamb, the lambs and the sheep are back in the field.

They've been for a wee while now. And of course, the lambs are now big. They've really, they've really grown. And this lamb, I looked and was standing on the top of this great mound. And I said, how on earth did you get in here? Because there's a fence running along the back there and running along behind our wall. And I said, how on earth did you get in there?
[10 : 09] So I thought, I better go down and see if I can get this lamb back. So I went down and I went round. And as I came, the lamb just kind of ran down the slope and disappeared behind the wall of our house.

And then in a minute, it was back out in the field. So I looked and the part of the fence back there has kind of collapsed. So this lamb had worked out if I vault this, jump over this wee bit, I can go and have a feed over there.

So I thought, oh, that must have been just a fluke. But the next day, I looked out and there it was again. And I opened the window and I said to it, hey, phew.

But it just looked at me, just went, meh. As much as to say, I'm the king of the castle. So I thought, no, I'm going to put it back in case it goes near the road. So round I went and sure enough stayed and went back down, back into the field, no problem.

The next day, it was back again. And it got me thinking and I said to myself, right, why are you doing that? You have the most beautiful, big field full of grass where all the other sheep and all the lambs are grazing happily.

[11 : 30] But you have to come to this lump that is full of thistles. Yes, there's a little grass amongst it, but it's all big, jaggedy thistles.

But somehow you think it's better to come here. And I was just thinking about the saying which says, The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

It's not. But we think it is. And that lamb thinks it is. And that's so often how it is in life. That sometimes we look around and look at other people and we say, Oh, I wish I had what they had. Oh, I wish I was him. I wish I was her. I wish I had. I wish I had. Look at what they have. If I had that, I'd be really happy. And so often we can become unhappy with what we have, which is great. But we've stopped enjoying what we have because we want to have what other people have. And we always think, oh, they've got a better house. They've got a better job. They've got a better in school.

[12 : 35] They wear better clothes. They're better clever. They're this or that and anything. Do you know what the Bible says? Be content. With such things that you have.

And that's one of the things we should ask the Lord. Lord, give me a spirit of being content, of being at peace with what I have. Help me to enjoy what I have.

Because there's an old chorus that says, count your blessings. Name them one by one. And it'll surprise you. It'll amaze you what the Lord has done. And that's so important that we stop and we thank God for what we have.

Now, it might be possible that looking in today, there might be somebody who says, well, I'm struggling in life. My life is really difficult. And I'm not just looking at other people and saying, I wish I would.

But I'm in a really difficult situation. And how can I be content with that? Well, do you know the beautiful thing about this verse, which says to be content with what we have?

[13 : 40] It goes on to say, for the Lord says, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And then it goes on to say, for the Lord is our helper. I love that. So if you're in a situation in life where you really need help, then the Lord is your helper.

And he wants you to go to him and say, and say, Lord, please help me. I'm struggling. And you tell the Lord exactly what you're struggling with. And he promises to help you.

And that's where our faith in the Lord grows. And where our love for the Lord grows. But I want us, by and large, to stop and to think and remember that we have so much.

And we don't need to be like that lamb going into the pile of thistles because we think it's better. If that lamb was able to use its intelligence, it would realize, say, Oh, actually, where I was was better. This is all jaggedy and sore. And these thistles, they're all jaggedy and sore as well. So remember, the grass isn't always greener on the other side.

[14 : 48] Ask the Lord to be content, to be at peace with what you do have. And if you're struggling, then remember the Lord is your helper.

Let's say the Lord's prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.

Amen. We're going to read God's word now in the book of the Proverbs. In the book of the Proverbs, I'm going to read chapter 4. Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive that you may gain insight.

For I give you good precepts. Do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words.

[15:56] Keep my commandments and live. Get wisdom. Get insight. Do not forget and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you.

Love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this. Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you.

She will honour you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a graceful garland. She will bestow on you a beautiful crown. Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.

I have taught you the way of wisdom. I have led you in the paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble.

Keep hold of instruction. Do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil.

[17:04] Avoid it. Do not go on it. Turn away from it, and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong. They are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.

For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

The way of the wicked is like deep darkness. They do not know over what they stumble. My son, be attentive to my words. Incline your ear to my sayings.

Let them not escape from your sight. Keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Put away from your crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forwards, and your gaze be straight before you.

[18:14] Ponder the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure. Do not swear to the right or to the left. Turn your foot away from evil.

Amen, and may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. And I want us to focus on the words of verse 18 of Proverbs chapter 4.

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. Although David didn't always get it right as a father, he certainly took his parental responsibilities to Solomon very seriously.

Because it's very obvious from Solomon's writing, or writings, that David, his father, spent a lot of time with him, and that he taught him, and that he instructed him.

And that the teaching of David had a lasting impact on Solomon's life. David, as we know, was an exemplary believer. He was a man after God's own heart.

[19:27] Yes, he had his faults, he had his failings, he had his serious sins, he was a sinner. And sometimes the lusts and the sin of his heart broke out into his life.

And of course, it had lasting impact, but it had a huge impact on David himself, and we see his great sorrow because of his sin.

But the beauty of David's life is that he had the Lord always before him. In Psalm 16, he says, I have set the Lord always before me.

And I love that. What a motto for a person's life. And I would ask you, and as I have to say to myself, may that be the motto of our lives, that we will always set the Lord before us.

Because if we do, then we have a sense of his presence. He's there so that we're constantly speaking to him in the quietness of our own heart. We can count on his guidance, on his leading, on his forgiveness, of just being there with us.

[20 : 35] As we said to the young people, the Lord who never leaves us nor forsakes us. And if we have this sense of the Lord with us like this all the time, it does give us a contentment.

In a world that's really lacking contentment. As you look out on society today, there seems to be a real lack of contentment. But the Lord offers us this contentment.

And David, it's quite obvious that there was a contentedness very often, despite all the troubles of David's life. And that is because he had said the Lord always before.

Now, as we say, David obviously spent a lot of time with Solomon. And he was instructing him in the right way. And it's very important for us to teach your children well and teach them when they're young.

That's the time to teach them. And set the example and set God's word before them. Teach your children well. Because you only really have one go at it. And before you know it, they're up and they're away.

[21 : 39] And so it's very important. And I think it's also one of the, I suppose, the worries, it's one of the blessings and one of the worries, is that our children often become what we are.

And both strengths and weaknesses can appear in the children. The father's weaknesses and strengths, the mother's weaknesses and strength can appear in the children.

Very often the children will grow up mirrorly. And we find that very much with the likes of David and Solomon. Because when David was a great man and a good man, David had his weaknesses.

And one of the obvious weaknesses in David's life, he had a weakness for women. But back in Deuteronomy, the Lord had said to the king not to multiply wives.

And particularly, that was meaning going into making foreign allegiances. And David, as we read, he did, he multiplied. And in the end, it caused, there was a lot of, he was the father of a large, dysfunctional family, by and large.

[22 : 52] And that was partly as a result of what he did. And we know that David's great sin came about because of his weakness for women, where he entered into an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, which was bad.

But what he did afterwards was ten times work. He had Bathsheba's husband murdered, put to death, killed, although he tried to make it look like an accident, killed, in order to try to cover his sin. And it's monstrous. David's behaviour was monstrous and inexcusable. And of course, the amazing thing is that this is where amazing grace comes into it, is that God is able to turn all things, although there's the hurt and the pain and some of the stuff can never be sorted at a human level, yet God would bring good even out of the mess.

And out of that mess we are Psalm 51. And how thankful we are to the Lord that we have that Psalm. But what is even more extraordinary, God's amazing grace is that out of the relationship, because David afterwards took Bathsheba to his wife, and Solomon was the son that they then had afterwards together as husband and wife.

and David, Bathsheba, and Solomon are part of our Lord, Jesus Christ, his human ancestry. So we see God's amazing grace that even out of the human mistakes and the human mess that God is still able to bring good.

[24 : 25] But we see that what we're highlighting just here before we come in to look at Solomon is that David's weakness is magnified in Solomon's life.

And early on Solomon had written about how to live joyfully with the wife of your youth. But Solomon, as he became greater and greater, began to multiply wives and congregations at a level way beyond David.

And he went against what God had said. And remember, this is what the Lord, this is what it tells us in 1 Kings. Now, King Solomon loved many foreign women. And God had warned, you shall not enter into marriage with them.

For surely, why? For surely they will turn away your heart after other gods. But Solomon clung to those in love. 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines.

And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

[25 : 38] That is one of the saddest verses I find in Scripture. Here's this man, Solomon, who was gifted by God with the most extraordinary wisdom, wiser than anybody else.

Here is this man who truly loved the Lord and who taught some of Solomon's writings and his teachings about the Lord are unparalleled.

He was somebody who built the temple, the most magnificent structure to the Lord because he loved the Lord. He was somebody who sacrificed to the Lord like nobody else sacrificed.

God was at the very centre and God blessed him and yet through his weakness we find this sad thing later in life that his heart was turned from the Lord.

We must guard our hearts. That's why if Solomon had only listened to his own instruction because it tells us there in verse 23 keep your heart because that's a problem.

[26 : 40] All the problems in our lives begin in here. Keep your heart with all vigilance for out of it flow the springs of life. If Solomon had only listened to his own instructions that sad verse wouldn't be there.

However having said all that we give thanks for all that Solomon was and all that Solomon gave us and left us. And so Solomon here is very personal at the beginning of the chapter because he talks about his father and his mother and in verse 4 he tells us some of the things that his father taught him.

he taught me and said. And it's so obvious that the teachings of David had a profound effect upon Solomon's life and that he remembered these things throughout his life.

And that's very true with the teaching that we have from our parents. I remember many things that my parents taught me and the influence that they often had. I remember telling before this but it was this was before I came a Christian I was going away on holiday one time and I had huge plans for a ride this time away and I had it all planned I was throwing caution to the wind this was going to be a crazy crazy few days.

My father ran me to the ferry and he was a pretty savvy kind of man and he kind of he often knew he kind of knew without any words being said and he said when I was going off and he said oh well before you go remember he said how you have been brought up and he said remember what you have been taught remember God's word and he said we took vows for you when you were young and we tried to bring you up the best that we could according to what we promised and according to God's word you're of an age now there are all the responsibilities upon yourself but just remember that wherever you go and whatever you do God's eye is upon you and one day you're going to have to give an account before him of all that you've done and he said have a good holiday well I can tell you that the riders living that I had planned kind of petered out because I couldn't get these words out of my head and it kind of haunted me because there was this sense that whatever I'm doing it's a defiance of the living and through God and I was a wise father as a father

[29 : 16] I over looked back at his wisdom and he knew when to speak and when not to speak and as I was a shot across the bow and it stayed with me it stayed to me with me there's loads of things I've forgotten but I never forgot that and there were lots of things my father and mother taught me that have stayed with me so it's important to teach your children well well that's how it was for Solomon David although he got it wrong often this is one area that he got right is it was in teaching Solomon well and so Solomon writes here and he talks about two paths and in verse 14 there is before us the path of the wicked and he warns against entry on this path now this path of course is already on a broad road because the broad road which leads to destruction we know that there are two roads Jesus talks about two roads two gates there are two paths and this is the path of the wicked and this is a path that leads to ruin and it's a it's a dangerous path to be on but then

Solomon contrasts that path to the path of verse 18 which is the path of the righteous sometimes translated the just the just shall live by faith the righteous is a person who has been made right with God and we can only be made right with God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ when we're born again born from above when God sets his love upon us when God touches us with his spirit when we are made new we are brought on to that path you see we didn't always walk on that path we weren't on that nobody's on that path naturally it is a path that we're brought on to the moment we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and if today you're not on that path ask the Lord Lord take me on to this path take me on to the path of the righteous help me Lord to walk with you this is a the beautiful thing so the moment the

Holy Spirit comes into our heart and that we are united to Jesus Christ by faith through grace by faith you're saved through grace we begin to walk on this path now the thing is the moment that we are born again the moment that the Holy Spirit touches our heart is not always known by us or discerned by us and sometimes a person can spend a long time seeking the Lord and they don't

realise that they already have the Lord so sometimes our awareness of being on this path is not clear to us not until we get an assurance of our faith and so it's possible today that you are already on this path but you haven't come to understand it but Ravresh tells us what is happening to those who travel along this path that the path is like the light of dawn which shines brighter until full day and how true that is in

Christian experience we've said it before you can be outside at night through the night and the dawn is beginning to approach and at the very beginning it's just little shadows little you see this and that and there are shapes and shadows but you can't put any clarity on it you can't make out exactly what it is and then as the dawn begins to begin to come just gradually gradually you're beginning to make out well that that's actually a house well these are cows well these are trees they before you couldn't make out they were just shapes they were it was like a blurred shape in the distance but then gradually the light begins to open up we begin to see ah that's what it is and that is so true also in Christian experience as well because often when we come to faith that's our experience because we're in this world of shadows and shapes and we're not seen we're wanting to see but we can't everything is blurred if only I could see if only I could make out but I can't Lord help me I want I want to be a

Christian but you see the thing what's happening is that the spirit has come into your heart that's why you're crying to the Lord and the first light the very first flicker of dawn is happening in your soul and you're beginning you're beginning to see it a little more and a little more and a little more and a little more and then you're beginning to understand a little more ah I see now I see the I see the role of Jesus I couldn't quite see it before I can see it's personally for me and you begin to understand things that your head maybe had kind of grasped in a sense but it still didn't make absolute sense but now all of a sudden heart and mind have come together and you're beginning to grasp it and so the dawn is giving way to the day and that's how it goes on in the Christian experience because you look at the sun when it's just beginning to rise maybe out of the sea and you can look at it but a couple of hours later you go back and try and look at it and you can't because as it rises up and it comes into its full it's impossible to look at you just oh even if you try to look at it you say oh I can't look at that and that's what happens as the Christian grows and goes on in life that there are growing light with the path that we're on is shining brighter and brighter and the

[35 : 18] Christian is shining brighter and brighter until the full day or the perfect day in other words it comes to the to the full point and when is that in glory the day that we're translated from this world into the next when we will fully resemble the Lord Jesus Christ when we shall be like him and we will shine with all the glory of the mediatorial glory all the glory that Jesus as our saviour and mediator has in himself as our saviour we share in that glory and we too will shine with all the fullness of that glory what a prospect but already that shining has begun here we are already on that path and the obvious thing here that that what has been shown us here is that the Christian is somebody who is developing and growing that's what happens as Christians that we we develop and we grow as we go along scripture makes that very clear that we're to grow and grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ but unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings and you shall grow up as calves in the stall Bible shows us that as Christians as we develop we learn to walk to run eventually that we will soar like with eagle's wings so this shining path that we're going on is speaking about the

Christian's development and growth until we arrive in glory so how does the Christian grow in various ways first of all grows inwardly this is where we learn to abide in him this is where this is where all the work really goes on this is where our faith grows deeper and our love grows stronger and our hope grows firmer it's in the quietness of our heart that we speak to him and he speaks to us and we learn often we're aware of the hidden touch of his presence upon our soul and year by year there is this on growing development and maturity and learning and becoming more and more like Christ it's a daily weekly monthly yearly process and progress that is taking place within the Christian's life so that this is inward growth but where there is inward growth there is always outward growth what is happening in words is reflected in the outward in other words there is an evidence that you are a Christian and that is evidenced in your life that your life is more careful it is more loving it is more serving it is more gentle because you are beginning to resemble more and more the Lord

Jesus Christ the growth is also downward because that's that is how the Christian growth this is where the humbling take place takes place because we are humbled under the mighty hand of God

you see all the battles that go and go on inside us battles with temptation battles with all the different lusts that take place battles with a flesh battles against the world these battles are daily and that they're crushing us where we're struggling with God's will where our will has been changed and molded into his will that's not easy doesn't happen in a day or a week or a month it's a lifetime in fact even throughout our life we will never be completely and all together and utterly molded into the will of God although it's our desire there is still that there's still that corner of self there's still selfishly and the selfish the self will but God is the business of breaking us so that's all part of the downward but there's also side by side with that there's an upward growth where there's a heavenly desire if you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above set your affection on the things that are above there's a growing desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better you know it's funny as you go on in this world a weariness grows in your heart a weariness of the world and the world is growing weary of you and there's no longer any desire to impress the world or to be to be recognized as anybody in this world because it's part of what happens as a Christian you begin to lose these kind of things they're not important anymore what is important is becoming more like Jesus yes they're still the old still rises up every so of them but in the main you're like the the the the pilgrims and you and you read of the like your Abraham and Isaac and Jacob who are they were blessed in this world and they had many they had troubles and trials and they were blessed but always they were looking ahead to that heavenly city and so are you if you're a Christian this is part this is part of this this great growth it's part of the one of the great marks of the Christian is their desire to depart and to be with Christ and you long to see more clearly you long although we talked about about the dawn of the day and beginning to see a bit more clearly there is this real growing desire that we that we will see him see him as he is so this is this is this onward this ongoing work that's taking part within our lives all the time and God's word is central to it all that is why every day we have to be under his word that's why even today as we are under his word God's word is doing something to you and my soul because we're told that the word of God sanctifies it is a cleansing impact it is a purifying effect it is a directing caution to our lives and God's word is integral to what we are and what we become and God's great work for you and for me is that we might resemble Jesus

Christ in this world and that we might live for him and serve him and be of use to society because remember the Christian is salt and light and we are to impact society all around if you're a Christian today you should be growing in the spirit the fruit of the spirit ought to be of peace in your life what is the fruit of the spirit but we know we're told in the Bible it is love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control are these qualities are these virtues becoming evident in your life as you live out your day live at home live at work live in school live wherever you are are these things what what others notice in your life because if a person professes to be a Christian and yet their love their life is characterized by being loveless and joyless and anxious and impatient and unkind and lacking in goodness and faithless and harsh and out of control then irrespective of what profession they make then you see the fruit that they're supposed to be bearing if the spirit is within you and you're bearing fruit and there's no fruit in fact it's the very opposite then a big question mark has to hang over the life but as we said the great aim is that for the Christian is that there's this growing Christ likeness shining more and more like Jesus in this world until we will shine absolutely resembling him in glory forever what path are you on today you see the first part that was mentioned here is not a good part to be on it tells us there in verse 14 do not enter the path of the wicked do not walk in the way of the evil because then it tells us in verse 19 the way of the wicked is like deep darkness they do not know over what they stumble like time to walk in the dark and when we walk if we walk in the dark and it's all very well walking in the dark on the road do you try to go along a path in the dark you have no idea what might be there you end up stumbling over this that the next thing that's what happens when we try to walk through this world without Jesus Christ who is the light of the world it is it is a way that ends in ruin but if we go on to the right path and there's the great choice that is set before us because Jesus is saying today I offer you the path of life and the path of life and the path of life there is fullness of joy on it we're told that and Jesus who is the light of this world and the life of this world is offering to you light and life today so that you will know the peace the contentment the joy in life that the Holy Spirit will give you you will change your life and you will change your life and you will begin to see things from a new perspective you will have new hopes and aspirations you will enjoy life enjoy it enjoy all the good things that God has given us in this life but you see God in that makes such a difference make sure that you're walking along this path

Lord we pray to bless us and bless your word to us giving thanks for it and watch over us and together we are sin in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude singing in Psalm 36 from Sing Psalms Psalm number 36 from Sing Psalms we're going to sing from verse 5 through to verse 10 Psalm 36 from verse 5 verse 5 your steadfast love is great O Lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is wonderful extending to the sky your righteousness is very great like mountains high and steep your justice is like ocean depths both man and beast you keep Psalm 36 5 to 10 your steadfast love is great O Lord and give us life thy referendum being holy is resources our souls and your love is your love to the sky.

[46 : 45] Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high on steam.

Your justice is like ocean depths, hope, man, and peace you keep.

How precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings.

Both high and low find shelter in the shadow of all your wings.

They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight.

[48 : 12] For with you is the source of life, in your light we see light.

To those who know you as their God, your steadfast love impart maintain your righteousness to those of pure and upright heart.

now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more.

Amen. Thank you very much for joining today and we pray that God's word will have been blessed to your soul. Do join again this evening if you can at 6.30 when the service will be taken by Reverend James McKeever.

Thank you very much.

[49 : 51] Thank you. Thank you.