

# An Appeal to Pay Attention to 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: 31 July 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 00 ] For the moment, let's sing to God's praise now from Psalm 103. Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter, page 369, and the tune is Evan.

We're singing verses 1 to 5. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. Here is the psalmist, in a sense, speaking to himself, speaking inwardly to his own soul.

And it's not a sign of having lost the plot. It's a sign of stirring up his soul to praise the Lord. And it's something we ourselves thereby are directed to do as well as we speak into our souls as we come to sing these verses.

Let's seek to follow the psalmist's words and example. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

[ 1 : 28 ] O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. Bless, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

And all that in me is, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

[ 3 : 48 ] O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. Let's join together in prayer. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. Help us to enter into the spirit of the psalmist as well as follow his words.

Lord, bless God the Lord. O Lord, bless God the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. that your concern is to bless your people abundantly and not to be meager in your supply of grace for them.

And we thank you, O Lord, that you far exceed what we ourselves even might rightly expect. And yet remember that you are God, and therefore the God who is infinite in his resources and who is concerned to deliver to his people all that would befit them as those who need his grace.

We give thanks, O Lord, tonight for this occasion. Help us to prize it. Help us to realize the privilege that is ours. Help us to benefit from it.

[ 5 : 01 ] Help us to commend it to those around us as a time of worship that is of benefit to our souls. Help us, we pray, to communicate to the world around us how precious, how special gathering together for worship is.

How blessed we are in being able to come together and in recognizing that the living God himself has promised to be amongst his people, to make a home for himself in them and to speak through them to the world around.

And we give thanks tonight, Lord, that this is our privilege. We thank you that your knowledge extends to each and every one of us. And while we confess, O Lord, that that knowledge sometimes brings us even to be disturbed at our own sinfulness, yet we give thanks as well that your knowledge of us as perfect is therefore able to provide against all the detail of our need.

And we give thanks that you will miss nothing out as you come to meet the need of your people, that there is no sin that will not be forgiven in your forgiveness, that there is no element needing to be sanctified, that you will not sanctify in the work of your Spirit, that there is nothing that we require, O Lord, that has not already been taken account of in the death of the cross, in the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And Lord, we thank you tonight for the reality of these things, that they are indeed true and will remain true throughout all eternity. We pray tonight, Lord, as we give our minds once again to your truth, help us to store in mind those things that we learn of and to do it not in a merely intellectual exercise, but with a concern to have these treasured in our hearts, that our lives may be conformed by them.

[ 7 : 01 ] We ask, O Lord, to be conformed to your truth, for this is what you call us to, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God.

And we ask, O Lord, for the delight the psalmist had in the will of God being his portion. And O Lord, at times we recognize that your will contains for us experiences and elements that we would not have chosen ourselves, difficulties and challenges and trials and pains, yet we give thanks, Lord, that they're placed in our lot by a gracious and kind God, by a God whose purpose lies behind all his dealings with his people.

So, Lord, bless us, we pray tonight, as we give ourselves once more to the teaching of your word, as we place ourselves under the ministry of your Holy Spirit.

Lord, how we thank you that your own spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them known to us. And we pray that this may be our experience here tonight, that those things of Christ, those things of salvation, those things that are of eternal importance, will be impressed upon our minds and souls, that we will have our minds renewed in such a way as to receive him and to receive the salvation that comes with him.

Bless us then, Lord, we pray, as we come to seek your blessing. We ask that you would bless us as a congregation in this week that we have entered upon today.

[ 8 : 40 ] And help us to carry from this Lord's Day the blessings that we seek from you into this week that lies ahead of us. And, Lord, we pray that our portion may be that you will go before us and direct us in your ways and show us your paths.

Bless us in whatever way we set out in the world to our employment or to whatever activities we have, in our times of recreation, in our holiday times, in our times of rest.

We ask your blessing, O Lord, to provide for us in all of those different facets of life. And we give thanks that your word contains for us the kind of attitude and mindset that we need to have in relation to the developments of our lives.

We ask that tonight, Lord, you would bless all that we anticipate by your will in this week ahead. We pray for the holiday club. We give thanks for the provision made by so many willing hands.

We pray for the children that will come to take part in the club. We ask, Lord, for them that they might have an enjoyable time, a safe time, but that they will also have a blessed time, a time when your own word and truth is impressed on their young hearts.

[ 9 : 57 ] We pray for all who will be leading in the various activities, and we ask that you will bless them. We pray too, Lord, for the recordings that are taking place in the session room throughout this coming month of the Gaelic translation, a more recent Gaelic translation of the Bible.

We pray, Lord, for the Bible Society. We ask that you bless them in this venture. So much work, Lord, has gone into it, we know. We pray that it will be to the advance of your kingdom, to the furtherance of your glory.

And we pray that those who are currently brought up through Gaelic medium education will themselves come to value the Bible in this language. Not that we, Lord, seek to elevate any language above any other, but we value the various languages in which your word is translated, including the languages local to ourselves.

We do pray that this will be blessed, and throughout the world, that people will come to benefit from it. We give thanks, too, for the way in which we are able to broadcast live stream services from this place and from the seminary.

And we give thanks, Lord, that that extends to services associated with wakes and funerals, as well as worship services on the Lord's Day and other times.

[ 11 : 17 ] We pray that all who hear your word through this medium will come to be blessed in the various parts of the world. And we thank you for the many messages of encouragement that we receive as a congregation in relation to this ministry.

And we do ask, O Lord, that you would continue to enable us to depend upon yourself and not upon any other medium, not upon any medium in itself.

But, Lord, help us to realize that it is your Spirit alone that quickens and the flesh profits nothing. And we ask your blessing to be with those tonight who are ill.

We think of those of our own number, Lord, in the congregation. We pray for those who are recovering from illness, from COVID, other illnesses, recovering from surgery. We pray for those anticipating surgery in the days to come.

And they will be entering hospital tomorrow or during this week. We pray that you bless them, O Lord, and bless to them the treatment that they will receive. Make us thankful, O Lord, for the abundant provision you make for us in this regard, too, compared to so many other places in the world that don't have access to these facilities.

[12:30] O Lord, in a time of much complaint and much grumbling in our nation and at times even in our own hearts who confess, Lord, make us thankful for the blessings we have and help us to count our blessings and to attribute all the praise and the honor to God.

And so we ask now that your blessing will be with all who help us in our times of need with the health services themselves, locally and nationally. Be with us as a nation.

Bless us as a nation. Lord, bless us at critical times as we face them during these days. Times when so much attention is on the political system.

So much of the world is in turmoil. And Lord, we pray that through even these events themselves that you would direct people's minds, including our own, to issues of eternal importance, to the gospel, to the salvation that is in Jesus Christ.

So receive us now, we pray, and as we confess our sins and as we seek your cleansing and accepting of us, we pray this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

[13:39] Amen. Amen. Let's continue to praise God. We're praising him now from Psalm 119. This is in the Singed Psalms version on page 159.

The tune is Finart. And we're singing the section beginning at verse 33. Teach me to follow your decrees, then I will keep them to the end. Give insight and I'll keep your law with all my heart to it attend.

Psalm 119, page 159, verses 33 to 40, to God's praise. Amen. I'll keep your law with all my heart to it attend.

Take me in your commandment's hand, for then, O Lord, turn my eyes from worthless things.

In life according to your word. To be your servant, keep your pledge, so that you may be dear Lord.

[16:00] In earth from me the shame I've left, your laws and sound in uprightness.

O how I long for your defeat.

Please serve me in your righteousness. Now, a reading of Scripture this evening is from the letter to the Hebrews from chapter 1, the beginning of chapter 1, and down as far as verse 4 of chapter 2.

So that's the letter to the Hebrews from the beginning of the letter through to chapter 2. Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

[17:41] for to which of the angels did God ever say, You are my Son, today I have begotten you, or again, I will be to Him a father and He shall be to me a son.

And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, Let all God's angels worship Him. Of the angels, He says, He makes His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire, but of the Son, He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.

And You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain. They will all wear out like a garment, like a robe You will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed.

But You are the same, and Your years will have no end. And to which of the angels has He ever said, Sit at my right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet?

[ 18 : 55 ] Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.

Amen, and may God once again bless this portion of His Word to us. Before we come back to look at certain parts of that passage, let's sing again, this time in Psalm 68, Psalm 68 in the Scottish Psalter on page 303, and singing verses 18 to 20.

The tune this time is Sheffield. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious led captive captivity.

[ 20 : 16 ] Thou hast received gifts for men for such as did rebel, yea, even for them, that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell. Blessed be the Lord, who is to us of our salvation God, who daily with His benefits as plenteously doth load.

He of salvation is the God who is our God most strong, and unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong. These verses thou hast, O Lord, most glorious.

Thou hast, O Lord, He is the Lord, O Lord, But through Picis, thehu, the Shen, thei, thei, thei from the Lord, and through the Word, he is the Lord, who is a Father, who is one through covenant SAY, who is the Lord, and unto his grace and back He is the Lord, who you great, have any love, who we do, as may God bless you and shall come to hisitalry, and through the word, both through the Lord, and through the blood, For men, for such us did repel.

Yea, in for them God called the Lord, In his scope and might dwell.

He the Lord, who is to us, Of our salvation, Lord, Who daily with his benefits Us plenched us lead the throne.

[ 22 : 16 ] The all salvation is the God, Who is our God most strong.

And unto God the Lord from death He issues to be loved.

Now please turn with me to Hebrews chapter 2. And tonight we're going to look at the first four verses as we read them earlier.

Hebrews chapter 2 at the beginning. Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, While God also bore witness by signs and wonders and wonders and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

[ 23 : 34 ] Well, this is one of the exhortation passages that you find at various junctures throughout the epistle to the Hebrews.

The epistle is largely about the person of Jesus as the high priest of God's people, and the functions that he has and had as high priest during his time on earth, particularly leading to his death, but now his intercession as it continues in heaven for his people.

And these sometimes are by way of warning and sometimes by way of appeal, as you find them in the various places throughout the epistles where they are located.

Now, the Bible sometimes uses an argument from what is deemed to be the lesser to that which is the greater in order to present appeals to us as this passage itself does.

Because if you look at this passage, the first verses 2 to 4 here, you'll find the message declared by angels, this is referring to Mount Sinai, when the law was delivered through Moses, if the message delivered by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, and that's compared to the coming of Jesus Christ himself and the revelation that God brought in the coming of Jesus.

[ 25 : 03 ] So, the facts that you find described in reference to Sinai are compared and contrasted with the facts that are applicable to the coming of Christ, or to the coming of the Savior who was promised all through the Old Testament.

And what it's saying is that Sinai, great though it was, remarkable though it was, amazing in many ways though it was, is still the lesser thing, if you like, compared to the revelation, what happened in the coming of Jesus, in his entry into the world, in his death, his ministry, his resurrection, and so on.

That is the greater. That is surpassing what happened in the days of the Old Testament and here at Sinai in particular. And so, the appeal that you have in these verses, an appeal or warning you might say as well, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

Now, it doesn't mean that what God revealed in the Old Testament wasn't really salvation, and that Sinai, Mount Sinai, the giving of the law, had nothing to do with salvation at all.

That wouldn't be right for us to conclude, but it does mean that what happened in Christ surpasses that. It's a greater revelation. It's a more complete revelation. It's a revelation of grace particularly, though grace is not absent from the Sinai incident or the Old Testament.

[ 26 : 26 ] Grace is much more and more fully revealed and emphasized in the New Testament and in the coming of Christ himself particularly. As John, remember, put it in his opening chapter of his gospel, The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ or in Jesus Christ.

And so, the appeal that you have here, the argument that you have here, is really an argument from the lesser to the greater. If neglect, if the disobedience of rejecting what happened at Sinai led to certain consequences, how much more will it be the case?

If this greater revelation is neglected by us, how much more will it be the case that we shall not escape the retribution that is due to us for that reason?

That's the way the argument goes. And as we'll see, it's directed to us so that we would close in all the more closely with what is in this revelation in Christ and in Christ himself, that we would ensure that this is what we are clinging to, what our trust is in, that he is indeed the basis of all our hopes for time and for eternity.

So, we're going to look at two things from these verses, not looking at every detail, but first of all, God's declaration of salvation to us, to human beings, but to us as well particularly.

[ 27 : 59 ] And secondly, God's exhortation to what is called here, much closer attention in the opening words of the text. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention.

See, he's not saying we must pay close attention, that's part of it, but what he's saying is we must pay much closer attention. Closer than what?

Closer than even what happened in Moses' time on Mount Sinai. It doesn't mean they weren't required to pay attention closely, but it means we, because of the more complete and the more wonderful revelation God has given us in Christ, therefore, we must pay much closer attention.

So, God's declaration of salvation is really, as we said, a contrast between Sinai and Jesus. Now, look at verse 2. Since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution.

He talks here about the message that God delivered on Mount Sinai, but it's saying here it was delivered by angels. How does he... There's no mention of angels in the specific passages in Exodus that describe Mount Sinai, but there are in other passages of the Bible that describe that as well.

[ 29 : 24 ] For example, Deuteronomy 33 and verse 2 describes the Lord as appearing with thousands of his hosts, of the angels.

At that particular time, Mount Sinai was associated with God descending, accompanied by his retinue of angels. Psalm 68 and verse 17, you'll find the same emphasis.

Acts 7 and Stephen's declaration there, verse 53, Galatians 3 verse 19. If you look up these passages, you'll see that they all give us information about the revelation of God on Mount Sinai or through what happened on Mount Sinai, and angels are associated in these passages with that revelation.

And that itself is a remarkable thing. Here is what the writer here is doing. He's talking, first of all, of this message declared by angels, and it proved to be reliable.

Of course, it proved to be reliable. It was God's revelation of himself and of his will for Israel, of his law to Israel. How could it be otherwise than reliable?

[ 30 : 33 ] But what he's doing, you see, is comparing it, and we'll move to that in a minute, with what happened and what is the case in Jesus. If that was reliable at Mount Sinai, then what does it say about the coming of Christ, the Son of God himself?

That that is worthy of even closer attention on our part. The greatness of Sinai is such that there are few incidents in the Old Testament, if any, that are actually more important in the history of God's people in the Old Testament than what happened at Mount Sinai.

All the writers go back to it. You'll find it throughout all the prophets or most of the prophets in the Old Testament. Going back to this definitive event where the law was given to Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses.

And yet, here is a greater revelation. The revelation of Mount Sinai in which angels were involved. You might think, surely nothing can actually surpass that.

But then you see, you go back to the beginning of Hebrews here. What do we read? That the coming of Jesus surpasses it. Here is what God did. He spoke to our fathers by the prophets long ago at many times in many ways.

[ 31 : 51 ] But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. There is the greater revelation. There is what surpasses the Old Testament and Mount Sinai even.

In the person of Jesus, you have God's definitive Word to us. He has spoken to us by His Son. Jesus is God's declaration to us in these last days.

The New Testament days. The days between the coming of Jesus Himself and the end of the world. Whenever you think about Jesus, what do you think about?

What is your main thought? What comes into your mind when you read about Jesus in the Gospels or in the epistles? What is especially emphasized in the Bible about Jesus Himself?

That He is God's pinnacle of revelation to us. That's what. Of course, there's a lot more than that. It's more than revelation to us. There is provision for our sin. There is atonement.

[ 32 : 54 ] There's all of that. But let's confine it to what the passage is saying. This is in the last days how God has spoken to us by His Son. When you think of Jesus, when you read about Jesus, when you think of your own life in relation to Jesus, are you hearing God speaking to you?

Are you hearing God saying, This is how far I have gone in my concern to speak into your soul and into your need and to provide for you against your sin and against your lostness.

I have sent my own Son, my eternal Son. I have sent Him, the second person of the Trinity that God is. I have sent Him, and He is my definitive Word to you.

He is my Word above all other words to you. He is the Word made flesh. He has spoken to us by His Son.

And He says that that was also attested. He began, it says in chapter 2 here, It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard.

[ 34 : 05 ] In other words, there's a process. The Lord spoke, and then the apostles received a message from God, which was given to writing eventually. And now we have the complete Bible.

God has put all that together to us. That's your great advantage tonight, that you have the Word of God, that you have God's speech in writing. This reliable Word, as reliable as anything they heard on Mount Sinai, as reliable as anything that actually came physically from the mouth of Jesus while He was in this world.

Friends, tonight, what do we have in our Bibles? What do we have in this book? What am I preaching from in this pulpit tonight? I have the very Word of God.

I have God's speaking to me. I have God's revelation in Jesus Christ set out for me in written form. I have as accurate a portrayal of God there as anywhere else.

That's our privilege. That's what your Bible must mean to you. It's such an advance on what happened at Sinai.

[ 35 : 17 ] And that has added privilege to our position in Providence. You know, if you are back in Sinai and seeing what happened on Mount Sinai and the delivery of the law through Moses and the Mount of Sinai ablaze and trembling with the presence of God, you might think that surely cannot be surpassed as a revelation from God, as a theophany, as the presence of God coming down into this world, into that particular location.

And here is the writer to the Hebrews saying, that's the lesser compared to the greater. It's not insignificant, but it's not as significant as the coming of the Son, as the incarnation of the Son of God, as the Son of God taking flesh, taking human nature, as the Son of God living a human life in this world, coming to die the death of the cross, coming to be raised from the dead and ascended to glory.

That's the greater revelation. I remember in my home village of Tong when television first came to the island.

And we were fascinated as children. It was then in my early teens. Well, maybe even less than that, probably late primary school. But there was, to begin with, just one television, and certainly in that part of the village it was in the post office.

And the people who owned the post office had this television, this small box on which there was, of course, a black and white image. And we were told, this is an amazing thing. You can actually see people from different parts, and you can see them actually on the television they're speaking, and you can actually hear live broadcasts on it.

[ 37 : 02 ] And I was so excited going to see this thing for the first time. And I was really disappointed. Why? Because the picture was really as if people were just throwing hailstones at a screen.

It was all just sort of smudgy, and you could make out an image, and you could hear the voice, and all the rest of it. It was very difficult, really, to make out any clear perception of who it was, or what kind of person they were, something like that.

That was just a snowy picture. And it was very often described in those days as very snowy. What's your television picture like? Oh, it's very snowy. I can't make it out very easily. You compare that to the televisions you get nowadays.

You have all of these fancy descriptions, 4K, OLED, QLED. I have no idea what they mean, but it describes the quality of the image, the quality of what is beamed into your home.

And here, as the writer to the Hebrews said, in a sense, you have a progression from what was itself an amazing revelation on Mount Sinai, but to something much greater, even more so, in the person of the Son of God coming into the world.

[ 38 : 17 ] And that's how God is speaking to us tonight, through His Son. You could not get a clearer picture of God than you have in Jesus Christ.

That's what it says, isn't it, the beginning of this very epistle. He is His Son, has spoken to us, through whom He created the world.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature. Ask the question, what is God like?

And you have to go to Jesus, and there's your answer. Somebody asks you, can you tell me what God is like? You have never seen God. Can you tell me what He's like? How do you know what He's like?

How do you know you're actually telling me something reliable when you describe God to me? Well, you go to Jesus, and you say, well, this is what Jesus is like. This is what the Bible describes, the Word of God, describing Jesus as the exact imprint of God.

[ 39 : 19 ] God. And that is God's message, surpassing the message of Sinai. And that's how the argument now progresses, as we'll see, to God's exhortation to a much closer attention.

Now, we've described, I hope, how He means we must pay much closer attention.

Because the revelation that's come in Jesus surpasses, is above that of Sinai, it follows that the attention we give to the greater has to be much closer.

Because it's more definitive, it's more accurate, it's more full, and therefore, we must pay the more closer, the much closer attention to that. Because sometimes, we often, in fact, get used to things, don't we?

And our attention, our attention really, in many ways, decreases the more used we get to something. Whether it's a voice or somebody speaking to us or something we become familiar with and our use of it.

[ 40 : 28 ] I mean, I remember back to 1967, was it? When the first heart and lung transplants were being performed by a surgeon in South Africa, especially in South Africa.

And that then made news, of course, all over the world. Where this man had actually performed and gone through a long operation where he had given a new heart heart and lungs to this patient.

And that made worldwide headlines. And even from that time onwards, for a while, every such operation as it happened caught the attention of the world. And this was an amazing thing.

And of course, it was an amazing thing. But you don't hear it mentioned nowadays. It's almost routine. I don't know if the medical people here will actually correct me on that.

But in a sense, it's more routine than it was then when the first heart-lung operations were performed. We've become used to it. It's something that we've become so familiar with.  
[ 41 : 34 ] We don't necessarily pay the same attention to it as we once did when it was new. The argument that the writer has here is that we must not actually let that happen with regard to the gospel, with regard to the revelation we have of Jesus in the gospel.

We must never become so familiar with it and so familiar with hearing it that we actually don't pay the close attention to it, the more close attention to it that he's saying to us here. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, to the gospel itself, to the message of Christ as the Savior of sinners.

You could actually put it this way, I think. You pay. The idea here is that you pay attention in a way that's commensurate with the worth of a thing, the value of a thing.

So, the meaning really here of paying closer attention carries with it the idea of paying close attention to somebody because of its value, because it is so valuable.

[ 42 : 43 ] If you go back to the gospel of Matthew, one of the images, the parables there in Matthew, the kingdom of God, you remembered, I'm sure, very well, Matthew chapter 13 and verse 44, a couple of verses on from there.

The kingdom is described in the following terms. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then, in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

In both cases, the treasure that was discovered, that was come across, the treasure in the field, the pearl of great price. In both cases, it was recognized to be the best of the best, the most valuable you could get.

And so, the pearl merchant sold all that he had. He didn't need any other pearls. He didn't need to go looking for any other pearls. He had found the most valuable one. That's what the kingdom of God is like because it's about Jesus.

[ 43 : 56 ] It's about the Savior. It's about what God has revealed in the person of His Son, that He has spoken to us by His Son. Well, it raises the question tonight for me, and it raises the question for you.

How valuable is Jesus to you? What worth do you place upon Him? As you realize this is God's definitive word to you in Christ, that God is speaking to you out of who Christ is and what Christ has done, what worth do you place upon Him?

Is He the most valuable thing you know? Is He the most valuable person in your own experience? Because that's how we must pay much closer attention because of the value of it.

Lest, He says, we should let it, lest we should drift away from it. Now, I think some grammarians will tell us that a better translation would be something more like the AV, actually, in this instance.

Lest, we could say that it literally means lest we let them leak out or leak away from us. Lest we let them drift, or here it's let we drift away from it.

[ 45 : 19 ] It's really the idea of this drifting away from us. This message of the gospel, these details about Jesus, the speech of God in Jesus Christ Himself.

We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we allow it to leak away from us, allow it to drift away from us, or, you, AV, lest we should let it slip.

Because, you see, if you let this drift away from you, and sadly, many people who are not unfamiliar with the gospel, nevertheless, let these things drift away from them. The things of salvation, the things that are in God's revelation in Jesus Christ, the provision that He's made in Christ, they let them drift away from them.

They leak out of their lives. And, of course, what happens with that is that they themselves drift away with them. You let the gospel drift out of your life, inevitably, you're going to drift away from God in doing that.

the two things fit together. I've got a garden wheelbarrow at home at the Mans. It's a bit amusing, but it has a very leaky tire.

[ 46 : 34 ] And every time I go to use it, usually for mowing the grass and carrying the grass to where it's placed in the compost heap, I have to pump up this tire every time I go and use the wheelbarrow.

And I say to myself, every time I come to do that, I really need to get this mended, this repaired, so I don't have to keep doing this all the time. But then the next time I go to it, it's flat again.

I've got to pump it up again before I can use it. And so it goes on and it goes on. And one of these days, okay, I'll have to just get around to mending it. But, you know, this is really what the writer here is saying, that just like that tire, I allow the air in it to just drift out all too quickly.

So he's saying, how shall we escape if we let these things drift out of our lives? If we let these things to do with God's salvation, if we let Jesus drift out of our life?

Therefore, we must pay the closer attention in case we allow this to happen. now then, is the Lord's day for me, is the Lord's day for you, just a pumping up day?

[ 47 : 49 ] Is it just a day when you, as it were, pump up your soul with certain truths that you find in the Bible, but then all too easily just let them escape and leak away for the rest of the week?

Well, you see, if it is, you're in trouble. Because the more we let these things of salvation, of this revelation that you have in Jesus Christ, leak out of our souls, drift away from us, the more likely it is that we will somehow drift away with them and drift away along with them.

Don't allow that to happen. Don't let the Lord's day just be a pumping up moment for you and then let the tire of your soul go flat over the rest of the week.

Get it repaired. Get it renewed. Seek God to give you a new heart. A renewed soul.

A soul that doesn't need pumping up every so often, although it needs the truth of God still to be channeled into it to keep it in good condition. And you see, that's such an important issue because he goes on to say, how shall we escape if we neglect such great salvation?

[ 49 : 15 ] This is the neglect. letting these things drift away from us and ourselves drifting inevitably away with them. Because I can be in a pulpit and still let the Word of God drift away from myself personally.

I need to do more than just stand in a pulpit and be able to exegete or declare what the Word of God means in any particular passage of it.

I have a responsibility to my own soul and I cannot rely on the fact that I'm a preacher of the Gospel to actually have security for eternity. I need to actually have my own soul in the condition that God requires of me and so do you.

That's the neglect that the passage is talking about. Neglecting, letting this drift away and ourselves drifting away with it. Because the consequences are not neutral, they're not insignificant, they're not harmless.

how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? And it's great not just in comparison with the revelation at Sinai compared to Jesus and the Gospel.

[ 50 : 36 ] It's great in its very nature. It's great salvation. It's salvation that is so great there's no way you can adequately describe it. How great is it for the Son of God to come into the world, to give Himself to die on the cross and rise from the dead?

How great is that? Why has He come? What is it all about? Salvation. It's great salvation.

And it's all the more serious if we neglect that salvation, that revelation, compared to anything else that's gone before it. How shall we escape?

escape? But then the question, escape from what? How shall we escape? He doesn't say, how shall we escape from such and such? Well, the passage actually answers it because let's go back to the comparison that He's making between Sinai and the coming of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. He's saying here, the message was declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received at just retribution.

[ 51 : 50 ] That's what we need to actually keep in mind. How shall we escape at just retribution? How shall we escape the judgment of God? How can we escape God treating seriously our neglect of the Gospel if we continue to neglect it?

And of course, the answer to the question is, we shall not. We shall not. The answer to the question is obvious. It's one of those questions that really answers itself.

How shall we escape if we neglect such great salvation? In other words, he's saying, if they did not escape back then when they neglected or despised or were disobedient to this word that came to them from God in those times, how shall we escape if we neglect the great salvation that's come to us in Jesus Christ?

Think of the way John himself put it in his Gospel. We mentioned at the beginning of his Gospel but also in his dealing with Nicodemus.

If you remember in chapter 3 there of John's Gospel, a famous passage, for God so loved the world, God did not send a son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

[ 53 : 17 ] Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment, this is the condemnation. The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.

Are you afraid to bring your deeds into the presence of God? Into the light of God's scrutiny? Well, I am in myself. So what do I do if I realize that God scrutinizes my heart every moment of every day and I have to bring my actions and thoughts before God and say, Lord, I know that you know all of these things.

Where is my concern going to be removed? When I turn to Jesus and realize that he has paid the price, of all my defects and all my sins and all my shortcomings, that I present him to God and say, Lord, this is who I trust in.

[ 54 : 49 ] This is where I want you to see me and to measure me and to judge me, not in myself, not in my works, because I'm afraid to come before you in myself.

Without Jesus, I'll be exposed to your condemnation. But if I come with him, if I come and I have possession of him, if he is my savior, if I put my faith in him, if I put my trust in him, if I've accepted him for who he is, if I've said to God about this greater revelation, Lord, this I willingly accept, then I'm not going to be condemned in time or in eternity, and if I don't come with Jesus in my possession, I will be.

That's the argument that God is presenting to you and to me tonight. So what do we say in response to this great question?

Well, as we said, the answer is there is no escaping if we just simply come without Christ, without acceptance of his provision for us.

But two things. What is the purpose of this great question? We know the answer to the question is we shall not escape if this is so. But what is the purpose of this question for you and for me tonight?

[ 56 : 21 ] Well, two things and I close with this. First of all, that we will esteem the grace of God in the gospel. That you and I will esteem the grace of God.

What is the grace of God? It's God's undeserved favor to us as sinners. It's God not marking out iniquity against us but providing Jesus as a Savior.

It's God providing righteousness in Him that I can never produce myself. It's God saying there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

That's what's commended. That's what you need to esteem. The grace of God in the gospel which far surpasses the law itself at Sinai.

And secondly not just to esteem the grace of God in the gospel but rather if we really do that seriously we will accept the salvation of God in this gospel.

[ 57 : 34 ] We will accept Jesus Himself because that's the way the argument is loaded in our favor. That instead of ending up condemned by disobedience to what this word is saying to us through accepting of Christ through acceptance of Christ you and I will come to be received by God as we receive His salvation in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Jesus is everything. Everything we need everything that's been provided for our need it's in Him.

And that's really essentially the bottom line the argument of the passage more than anything else.

How can I escape the condemnation of God if I neglect to receive Christ as my Savior? The answer is you will not.

But on the other hand the question is loaded in our favor accept Him and there is no condemnation now or ever more.

So there is the value of Christ for us and we must never become so familiar with it that we lose sight of its significance or fail to hear the sound of God's voice saying this is my Son whom I love hear Him.

[ 59 : 08 ] Let's pray. eternal God we give thanks tonight for the way in which you sent your only beloved into this world.

We thank you for the purpose for which he came that he came not to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. Lord we are the world in our natural state and it is for our likes that you came into this world.

You came to redeem us from sin from our lostness from hell from all that we deserve for our iniquity. Lord help us tonight not only to be thankful but thankful in a way that cleaves to you and a way that continues to draw out hope from you and help us every day that goes by Lord to realize the greatness of what you have done in this great salvation.

Be with us now then we pray and forgive our sin for Jesus sake. Amen. We're going to now conclude our service by singing in Psalm 85 that's on page 113 verses 8 to 13 and the tune is Nettleton I looked at the presenter when he gave me the tunes earlier and when he said Nettleton I had to look at him and well what is that Nettleton is the tune come thou found of every blessing that's how we know the tune more familiarly but the presenter has given us the proper name which is Nettleton let's sing verses 8 to 13 I will hear what God the Lord says to his saints he offers peace but his people must not wander and return to foolishness so these verses 8 to 13 of Psalm 85 two Son, at once again, His goy May be seen with Him around Love and truth are fed together Righteousness and peace and race

[ 62 : 13 ] Righteousness we start from heaven, from the earth's name's faithfulness.

What is good the Lord will give us, and our land is truth will be.

Righteousness will go before him, and his royal make me fair.

And now 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 evermore. Amen.

Maori T