

God's Book of Remembrance

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Well, we're going to begin our worship now. We're singing, first of all, from Psalm 47, in the same psalms version on page 62. I'll sing the whole of that version of the psalm.

All nations, clap your hands and shout. Let joyful cries to God ring out. How awesome is the Lord, most high, great King who rules the earth throughout.

He has subdued beneath our feet the nations who had been our foes, in blessing Jacob, whom he loved, a heritage for those he chose. So Psalm 47, that's verses 1 to 9, these verses to God's praise.

How awesome is the Lord, most high, great King who rules the earth throughout.

He has subdued beneath our feet the nations who have been our foes, in blessing Jacob, whom he loved, a heritage for us he chose.

[1 : 45] God has gone up with shouts of joy, the Lord of it that drowned this sound.

Sing praise, sing praise to God whose hand. To God our King let praise upon.

For God our King let praise upon.

God our King let praise upon.

He is the Lord. Let's call upon the Lord now in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. Lord our God, we give thanks tonight that you are greatly exalted and that we sing your praises to one who is greatly exalted.

[3 : 37] Exalted above all that you have created, exalted above our lives here on earth and all other parts of the great universe. Lord our Lord, we give thanks to God. That you have created the planets, the stars, all that we find, O Lord, in existence.

You preside over them. And so we come before you with awe and with reverence, with respect, with devotion, with worship. For you alone are worthy of our worship.

For you alone are worthy of our worship. And you are worthy of our worship, O Lord. And you have revealed to us so many aspects of your being and of your works, your great acts of redemption, especially that make you worthy of our worship and our praise.

Help us, we pray, to praise you aright. Help us to praise you in a right spirit. A spirit of faith. A spirit of rejoicing in what you have done and in all that you continue to do.

And enable us, Lord, as we come, like the psalmist, to rejoice in those works of God. Help us, we pray, to receive once again the teaching of your word. Lord, so that as we receive that teaching of your word into our very souls, our lives may be affected positively by it.

[4 : 49] We thank you again tonight for your word. We thank you, Lord, that you remembered us in such a way as to bring to us such a great message of hope and of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you that these things have now been recorded over the course of many centuries so that we have that complete record in our own hands. A word that we can truly come to at any time.

A word that we are privileged to know as your word. A word in which we find so much, Lord, that is revealed to us. That is for our benefit and for your glory.

We pray that you would help us to prize your word. Remember us, Lord, we pray, as we handle it in speaking and in hearing in all aspects of our worship.

As we sing your praise. As we anticipate, O Lord, these activities and services in this week to come. O Lord, help us to rely upon yourself.

[5 : 50] And we think especially of those that are applicable to our own congregation here. Lord, we ask that your blessing will accompany all that we seek to do in your name from day to day and week to week.

We give thanks, Lord, for all that takes place, for the many activities. Yet we realize, O Lord, that our lives, though packed with many good things, require that your own Holy Spirit will bless us and bless them to us.

We pray that that will be our case, Lord, in this week to come. We pray that you would bless the services associated with our day of prayer and with our thanksgiving.

Lord, we give thanks for all the good things we receive from your hand. We give thanks for your faithfulness to us. We give thanks for the assurance you give us that you will always be with your people, that you will always be their God and their stay through life.

And we give thanks to the Lord for every aspect of your dealings with us and kindness and providence. And we give thanks for the assurance your word gives us that even along with those things that comfort us and give us great enjoyment, even the very difficulties and pains and travels of life are blessed to your people.

[7 : 11] And so we pray, Lord, for thankfulness and the assurance that your word gives us that all things do work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to his purpose.

We pray that you'd bless us, Lord, as we anticipate the remembrance of your death in the Lord's Supper once again. We ask, Lord, that you would be with us in power and in might.

And we pray that both the word preached and the sacrament itself will be blessed to us. We pray that it might be used, Lord, by you to deepen our relationship with you, our appreciation of you.

We ask, Lord, that as we find your word and sacrament conjoined, that we might be furthered in our faith, furthered in our commitment to you, our love for you, and our respect for your ways.

Remember, we pray, Lord, also as we come together to give thanks on these services of thanksgiving. We pray your blessing for such. We pray for the young ones.

[8 : 21] We ask that you'd bless them in the Presbytery camp. We pray your blessing, O Lord, to be with them. We pray for Marianne and Joanna as they anticipate again running trauma healing courses.

We pray for them. We pray that many will come to benefit from that. We ask, O Lord, that you would encourage them. And we pray that you would use it as a means towards dealing with trauma and crisis in the lives of people.

But we give thanks especially for the fact that you are the great physician. There is none like you, O Lord, in terms of dealing with our need to be healed both in mind and body.

We pray, Lord, for those tonight who have such trauma and difficulty in their lives for various reasons in your providence. We thank you that we thank you that we can come to you at any time and lay our concerns before you.

And we give thanks, O Lord, that you invite us even to come and lay these things in your presence and open up our arms towards you and receive the many promises in your word.

[9 : 29] Lord, that you blesses us, O Lord, that you bless them and bless their friends.

We pray in these difficult times for them that you would, Lord, look upon them in your mercy and grace and provide them with the strength and the wherewithal that they require.

Remember all, O Lord, who are going through treatment at this time and who anticipate that in days to come. We ask that you would graciously use the skills that you have given to people in surgical skills and other ways of dealing with our needs.

Lord, we ask that your own blessing will make us thankful for such provisions and will use these to our betterment. And we pray that you would bless now the world in which we live.

O Lord, we find every day we live accounts of atrocities and violence and accounts of people who are gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed.

[10 : 57] And, Lord, we pray for the power of the gospel to once again come to be known in our land in a much greater way than it is at present. We long for days, Lord, of reviving and quickening power.

We pray that you would maintain us, Lord, and increase our interest in these things and learning from times in the past. When you have visited us, Lord, and we thank you that your word uses this great word, visitation and visiting.

And when you come with your blessing to your people, so you visit them. And you visit them in a way that will be concerned for their well-being.

Visit us, Lord, we pray, as a people, as a nation, as a congregation, as a church. And grant us grace, Lord, as we set these things before you.

We give thanks that you are able to do for us, exceeding abundantly, above all that we are able to ask or even think. Hear us, Lord, we pray now. Continue with us.

[12:01] Pardon our many transgressions and cleanse us freely. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll praise God once again. This time we're singing from Psalm 1, the first psalm in the Psalter, in the Scottish Psalter, on page 200.

That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

We'll sing the whole psalm. Psalm 1, that man hath perfect blessedness. That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, and can't do it, nor stand in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, a place that is divine.

And one God saw and meditates on his holy night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his true, and in his name he fatheth never.

[13:53] And all the gods shall prosper well, the wicked are no soul.

And like the hour unto the jaff which wind thys to and fro, In judgment therefore shall no stand such as ungodly are, nor in his name he fatheth not fear.

Nor in his name he fatheth not fear, nor in his name he fatheth not fear. For wide the way of glory men come to the Lord his throne, where as the way of glory men shall quite be overthrown.

Well, let's turn now to read God's word from the prophecy of Malachi, the last chapter of the last book of the Old Testament.

And the last chapter, sorry, the chapter 3 of Malachi, We'll read just where the division is there in the ESV from chapter 2, verse 17.

[15:36] You have wearied the Lord with your words, but you say, How have we wearied him? By saying, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them.

Or by asking, Where is the God of justice? Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight.

Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like foolish soap.

He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former days. Then I will draw near to you for judgment.

[16:41] I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust against the sojourner.

And do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. For I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes, and have not kept them.

Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

But you say, How shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, How have we robbed you? In your tithes and contributions.

You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you, and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

[17:53] I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil. And your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, How have we spoken against you? You have said, It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge, or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts?

And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evil does not only prosper, but they put God to the test and they escape. Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another.

The Lord paid attention and heard them. And a book of remembrance was written before him, of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession.

And I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

[19 : 13] And again, we pray that the Lord will bless to us this portion of his word. Before we turn to some parts of that chapter, let's sing again in Psalm 34 this time.

Psalm 34, page 247. Psalm 34 in the Scottish Psalter, singing verses 7 to 11. The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.

Oh, taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God his saints, none that him fear shall be with want oppressed. The lion's young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

Oh, children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear. I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear. And these verses 7 to 11 of Psalm 34.

The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.

[20 : 50] Oh, taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed.

Dear God his saints, and that him fear shall be with want oppressed.

The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear.

I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear.

[22 : 20] Now please turn with me to the passage we read in Malachi. Malachi chapter 3, and reading from verse 16. Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another.

The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession.

And I will spare them as a man spares the son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

Well, I'm sure we're all very familiar with books of remembrance. Book of remembrance, these books are usually volumes in which people write their names and maybe comments as well, particularly at times when some tragedy has taken place and people are constrained to go and sign that book of remembrance just to show affinity with those who are suffering.

And so these in various contexts are things we're very familiar with from time to time. And here we have a book of remembrance mentioned as the Lord's Book of Remembrance.

[23 : 45] And the image that you have here of a book of remembrance being written and open before the Lord is an image really that sets out for us the Lord's attentive listening and recording of his people, especially as they're mentioned here as they spoke often with one another.

And the Lord paid attention. And therefore the Book of Remembrance is Malachi's way of describing that God recorded. And God records.

And God of course always in his own mind and his perfect memory and perfect attention is always aware of what's going on. But it's especially here mentioned that he gives this particular attention to his people as they meet together, as they discuss together, as they speak together, and as they actually come to esteem the Lord's name.

So here we have in the Book of Malachi something which is applicable to every age of the church, every age including our own.

And here are many, many aspects of what you might say are wonderful promises from the Lord with regard to how we conduct ourselves and how we would seek to be as these people were in those days.

[25 : 08] Now Malachi's prophecy seems to have been written about the same time as Ezra, Nehemiah, in that period of history where we find many things in Nehemiah and Ezra recorded that

very much mirror what you find in the Book of Malachi as well.

Some of the same conditions, some of the same descriptions, the same problems, same things that the Lord was pointing out. And you find in Malachi that there's a close affinity between Malachi and these books of Nehemiah and Ezra.

In other words, it was a time of, as you go through Malachi, you can see it was a time of disillusionment on the part of the Lord's covenant people. Not just disillusionment, but a time of doubt.

A time indeed of them breaking their covenant relationship with God. Often through the Book of Malachi you find the concept of a covenant mentioned.

And the people themselves in their disobedience and in their casting off a proper view of God had come to break their side of the covenant. And you can see how that is mentioned in various ways throughout the Book of Malachi.

[26 : 23] So in that context of people, even as you've read in this chapter itself tonight, people saying, as the Lord through Malachi disputed with them, disputing really what the Lord was saying to them and calling into question the Lord's own faithfulness in fact.

And really calling into question whether or not it was profitable for them to serve the Lord anymore. Things which really mark other generations of course as well, not least our own.

But in this time of doubt, of challenge, of disillusionment, there are a people mentioned who are different. Those people who feared the Lord spoke with one another.

In other words, in that context of departure from the Lord, of disillusionment, of lack of faith, of accusations against God, here were a people, here were a group of people, here was a remnant if you like, here was a certain number of people.

And we'll see how they're described here. And we'll see how they're described in a way that's very relevant to our own situation as well. Here are a people who were different, who stood out because of the way in which they were distinguished from the others that are mentioned, who are disillusioned and finding accusations against the Lord.

[27 : 48] You see that word, then, at the beginning of the verse, of verse 16, is very important. Then, those who feared the Lord spoke with one another.

In that context, in the way in which they were surrounded by this disillusionment and speaking against the Lord. When you contrast verse 16 with verse 14, You have said, It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge, or of walking as in mourning before the Lord? This was their own accusation against the Lord, against what they saw as God not actually supporting them. Then, those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. And, sometimes, we may not think that the world out there is really taking much notice of us.

But, that's not the case. As we meet even here this evening, as we've met on this Lord's Day, as we seek to sanctify the Lord's Day to the Lord, as we come together to worship the Lord in public worship, that is being noticed maybe not as much as we'd like.

[28 : 57] But, here is something that's saying to us, in the context of our day, in the context of departure from the ways of the Lord, accusations against the Lord, unbelief and atheism, and all of these other things that mark us sadly all too much as a society, as a people, then, in that context, we are called upon to be the people of God.

To be distinct. To be different to the world around us. And, there are two things in these verses that I want to just bring out.

First of all, the Lord's people in conversation. The Lord's people in conversation. Those who feared the Lord, then those who feared the Lord, spoke with one another, or spoke often with one another. And, they're described as those who esteemed His name, those who feared the Lord, and that they spoke with one another. And, the descriptions are really important in the context of Malachi's day, and of our own day as well, of such massive and sad departure from the ways of the Lord.

They are, first of all, a people who feared the Lord. Those who feared the Lord, spoke often one to another. That is the basic requirement of a Christian life.

[30 : 15] Yes, I know that you can say there are so many things that are basic requirements to a Christian life, such as faith in Christ, belief in the Word of God, and what it says to us, acceptance of all of that.

But, the fear of the Lord really stands foundational to the life and the lifestyle of God's people. And, it has been the case in every age. And, it's actually a rather sad thing that this description has not

quite passed out of use, but almost passed out of use.

Because, if you went back forty or fifty or more years ago, you'll find this description far more commonly used than it is nowadays. For the people of God, they are God-fearers.

They are God-fearers. And, the fear of the Lord throughout the Bible is something that stands as a basic element in a godly life.

What is the fear of the Lord? It's not the kind of thing that you find people thinking it is, where they think, well, that's just cringing when you think about God and what God has revealed.

[31 : 21] The fear of the Lord is being afraid of God. The fear of the Lord is just that which you don't want in your life. That's how some people think about it. But, actually, it's the very opposite.

Because, the fear of the Lord is really that kind of attitude and lifestyle that involves reverence for God, obedience to God, love for God, love for His Word, love for His actions, love for Himself and what He does, devotion to Him, concern to honour Him in the presence of others.

That's what characterises the fear of the Lord. And that fear of the Lord is what marked these people, among other things. It's a term of honour to be known as a God-fearer or as God-fearing people.

Yes, I know that the world will always throw that at us as a negative. Oh, these are God-fearers.

You don't want to be a God-fearer. That's just something that takes away much of the joy from your life.

These God-fearers, they're killjoys. You don't want to have that sort of lifestyle. Well, here is the Bible telling us, actually, positively, it's the very opposite. The person that truly fears the Lord is the person that knows what true joy really is.

[32 : 45] There is no true joy apart from your trust in the Lord, your obedience, your love, your devotion to Him, your acceptance of His ways. Then, those who feared the Lord, they spoke with one another.

They were God-fearers. Isn't that your own and my own concern tonight in the face of rampant wickedness and arrogant ungodliness?

That you and I would be known as a God-fearer? A God-fearing person? A person who respects the Lord, the ways of the Lord, the truth of God? Who would stand by those things in such times as in Malachi's day?

A person who respects the Lord, the way of the Lord is the Lord. That we would be known then, that we would be known now as people who are God-fearing people? It's one of the most positive things you can say about someone, that they fear the Lord.

Is that not your own concern? Is that not something you'd want more and more to be true about yourself? Well, they were known as those who feared the Lord.

[33 : 55] And what else were they known as? Those who esteemed His name. Again, it's repeated there, who feared the Lord, the end of verse 16. Who feared the Lord and esteemed His name.

Now, esteemed means not just valued it, but gave it much thought so as to value it. These people, they didn't just think of God now and again.

They didn't just give their minds to thinking about God and who He was and what He had done for them. Just occasionally, this was something that characterized their daily life.

This was something that accompanied their fear of the Lord. Indeed, you can't think of fearing the Lord without consistently thinking upon His name and esteeming His name.

Thinking through the meaning of the name of God. The name of God in the Bible is something that is a summary, if you like, of His attributes or His qualities or His actions.

[34 : 57] God makes a name for Himself by His great acts of creation and redemption. Particularly in redeeming His people.

He makes a name for Himself. He gives Himself a reputation. He builds His reputation, if you like, on His great acts by which He is revealed.

And these people esteemed His name. They prized the works of the Lord. They prized the revelation He had made of Himself to them.

And you remember how that's so much tied by John, for example, in his first chapter of his Gospel. Where you find him mentioning there Jesus, that He came into the world as the light and so on. And in verse 12 of the first chapter, Well, he says, first of all, He was in the world.

[35 : 58] The world was made by Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He

gave the right to become children of God.

To all who received Him, who believed in His name. How He had revealed Himself. How He had revealed Himself. The God revealed in Jesus Christ. You see, the two things that are inseparably tied together.

Believing in the name of God. And you'll find the name of God as also that which they received Jesus and believed in His name.

Two things. Receiving. Believing in His name. In other words, believing in the name of Jesus. Believing in the name of God. It's not a merely intellectual exercise. It's not just something you do as academically, if you like.

You're maybe thinking of theology. And people who love theology and love studying theology. That's not enough to save us. Good though it might be. Indeed, a love for theology itself, while good in itself, could actually lead you away from believing in God in the sense of receiving Christ.

[37 : 17] Because the two things, they go together. They believed in His name, but they received Him. So here again is a question for me and for you tonight.

You believe in Christ. You believe that He came into the world. You believe He died on the cross. You believe He rose again from the dead. You believe because the Bible tells you.

But as you're believing in His name, accompanied by, inseparable from, receiving Him. It's not enough for us in preaching the gospel to ask or to present the truth of the Bible in such a way that says, Do you believe in Christ?

You also have to say along with that, Have you received Christ? Here is God's great gift. Have we received it? Have we said, Thank you, Lord.

I'm glad to make it mine. I'm pleased that it's come to me. And I thank you for it. And I want to hold on to it and put my trust in this Jesus.

[38 : 20] They esteemed His name. They valued. They prized the name of God. The revelation that God had made of Himself. The God who had revealed Himself.

Isn't that what makes us different, friends, tonight? That in our context as well, just as in the days of Malachi, we are a people, surely, who are not ashamed to be known as the God-fearers, who are not ashamed to be known as those who esteem the name of God.

Because when you look out there and listen to what's happening in the world, the one thing that's obvious is that so, so many people despise the name of God rather than esteem it.

And don't think upon the name of God in any other way but to dismiss it. And that's the great challenge for us with the Gospel. That's the world in which we need to reach out with the Gospel. That's the condition of the world.

That's the condition of your soul and mine before we came to know the Lord and came to receive Him. That's what these people were. They were God-fearers.

[39 : 26] They were those who esteemed the name of God. In other words, we could put it this way. How precious is Jesus to us tonight?

How precious is the name of God? How precious is He Himself? How precious is His redemption to us?

How precious is all that He has revealed of Himself to us? Do we esteem that as these people esteemed it? And the third thing is they spoke with one another.

These people who feared the Lord, who esteemed His name, then they spoke with one another. See, they were a small group compared to the majority.

And in that context in which they lived, it was important for them to look after each other, to speak with one another, to speak about the Lord to one another, to speak about the things of their day to one another, to encourage one another in continuing to believe and to serve the Lord.

[40 : 33] They valued this and found it edifying, because that's really built into the whole thrust of meaning in the passage, that then these people who feared the Lord, who esteemed His name, spoke with one another.

They really were saying, this passage is really saying to us, these people were of the view that just could not live without speaking to one another. They could not actually live successfully or profitably without speaking to one another.

You see, we saw very recently a short study on the gathered church, the different aspects of being gathered together, and the importance of different emphases in the Bible about the people of God gathered together and aspects of that gathering.

Well, this is really essentially the same thing. They valued speaking together. They valued gathering together. They valued it because in the context in which they lived, they lived. It was vital to them not only to be the people of God visibly in that society, but actually to encourage one another to go on to persevere, to keep the faith, to be faithful, all of these things.

[41 : 49] In other words, they strengthened one another. When you look through the prophecy of Malachi, as we said, go back to chapter 1, verse 13, and you'll find, but you say, this is God saying to the people, but you say, what a weariness this is.

And you snorted, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence, or as lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering, shall I accept that from your hand, says the Lord.

You see, these people lived at a time when others were saying, ah, well, you know, the things that we don't want to use ourselves, that's good enough for the Lord. The kind of animals that have something wrong with them, we'll keep the best for ourselves, but we can use the rest really in the services of the temple or of whatever, that'll do for the Lord.

And serving the Lord, they find, in terms of what Malachi is drawing their minds to, what a weariness that is, what a weariness the Lord's day is to them, what a weariness the Sabbath is to them.

You and I surely want to be different to that. Count up the number of empty seats here tonight. And place that against those in this town itself, who in their heart of hearts are saying, worshiping the Lord, going to church, what a weariness that is.

[43 : 12] What a waste of time. What a waste of an hour when I could be watching television, or being on the internet, or just having a good time in some other way.

Well, here was Malachi saying, then those who feared the Lord, against those difficulties of his day, and those tendencies and actions of his day, activities of Malachi's day, are saying they spoke to one another.

Don't we really value the privilege we have of speaking about the things of God to one another? Of actually having the time and the facility and the freedom in God's providence to do that.

Value that time, friends. Use it as something which is so precious to you, that you say, as these people were saying, we have to speak to one another, because we're in a context where there's so much opposition to what we believe in, and what we're doing.

And to do that, as Hebrews put it, as we saw one of these studies, don't neglect the assembling of yourselves together as the custom of some is, but encourage one another.

[44 : 32] And so much more as you see the day approaching. We'll see that in a minute, the day of judgment that Malachi spoke of. So here's the first thing, the Lord's people in conversation, the Lord's people who feared the Lord, the Lord's people who esteemed his name, and the Lord's people who spoke to one another.

And then he says that a book of remembrance was written before the Lord, and written by him, and kept before him for those who feared the Lord.

But you see, it says the Lord paid attention and heard them. That's so important in thinking of this book of remembrance, which is an imagery really, because there's no literal book, as you very well know, in heaven.

God doesn't actually write there with a pen things in a book. It's just an image to teach us and to tell us about God paying attention and hearing his people. But how precious that is.

Here is God actually saying, I pay attention to the gatherings of my people. I give attention to their prayers. I give attention to their worship. I give attention to their songs of praise.

[45 : 43] I pay special attention to my people as they speak often to one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them.

In other words, the Lord is really giving a special attention to his people's fellowship, to his people's meetings with one another, his people's love for one another, his people speaking about the things of God to one another.

Here's an amazing thing. Here's a precious thing. As we're here tonight, speaking about the things of God, listening to the Word of God in heaven, God is paying attention.

God is listening in. And not only is he listening in, but he's listening in with a view to marking that by his favour. Are we amazed at that?

Does that not add an element to your worship and praise that as we come together to speak about the things of God, that we speak with one another and speak about the Lord himself, that the Lord

pays attention and hears that.

[46 : 53] And he puts it into his book of remembrance. In other words, he marks it down in his memory. He continues to give regard to it.

What an incentive for us to gather to worship the Lord, that God himself says of it, I'm hearing you. I'm looking in upon you. I'm regarding your talking about me with favour, with delight. He paid attention and heard.

And he, as we said there, he records it, he bears it in mind. A book of remembrance was written before him. And the words before him there are also very important.

Because anything that's before the Lord is always there specifically in his sight. Specifically under his, under his perfect attention.

[47 : 55] He's giving that attention to them. That's what it means this book of remembrance wasn't before him. It's there, as it were, open before his sight. And he's constantly looking in upon it.

Constantly bearing in his own mind his people. And they're speaking with one another. In an age of decadence.

An age of arrogance. An age of opposition against God. An age of ridiculing the Gospel. An age of stating categorically that God does not exist.

That it's a waste of time to think about God. And to think about anything at all. The Bible tells you about serving God. Committing your life to God. And having a lifestyle that seeks to fit in with God's own standard.

Waste of time. This decadence age will tell you. What's the point? I have a life to live. I want to enjoy myself. I want to do things as I please.

[49 : 02] As I think best. Well here are people who lived in that kind of age. Or very similarly anyway. But as they met together. As they spoke with one another.

The Lord was assuring them. I'm listening to you. I'm marking up favorably. What you are actually doing as my people. This book is open.

Before the Lord. And of course there's a lot of challenge in that for us too. But what an encouragement. That in terms of our fellowship together. And our seeking to be faithful to God. And what we do in our daily life. God is taking note. God is marking it down. And tonight surely that's your concern.

Surely that's our concern as a people. That tonight together and individually. We would be marked down in God's book of remembrance. That we would be a people of which God is saying.

[50 : 06] I approve of that. I delight in that. I mark that up. As something that pleases me. He paid attention.

And heard. And he recorded their actions. And thirdly. He promised them security. See he goes on to say. The passage says. They shall be mine.

Says the Lord of hosts. In the day when I make up my treasured possession. And I will spare them. As a man spares his son. Who serves him. Now that reference to.

The day. When I make up my treasured possession. The old translation was. When I make up my jewels. It's a reference. Really going way back to Exodus.

In the way that God described his people. These people that he was taking out. Taking out of Egypt. And on into the promised land. They were his. As the old version puts it.

[51 : 05] His peculiar treasure. Maybe not the best words. Nowadays peculiar. It has different nuances of meaning. But it means a special treasure. That's what the words literally mean.

The special treasure of the Lord. The treasure that he prizes for himself. That is exactly what is meant in this. That they.

When I make up my treasured possession. When I reveal my jewels. When I reveal my people. As my prized possession. As my sparkling riches and jewels.

When I reveal them. When that day comes. When the day of judgment. And brings them out. In the presence of everybody else. Then they will be seen.

That they are mine. They shall be. Mine. Here's Malachi in his day. Facing. People who are saying.

[52 : 00] Well what's the point. Of serving the Lord. Other people who might say. Well. I don't believe he exists. Really. Even if I once did. And in our own day. We find. So much.

That's. That's really just. Gone back. From our confidence. In the word of God. And. So often. We'll say. Are you sure? You don't believe these things anymore.

Look at how. Human knowledge. Has increased. You've got how scientific. Discoveries have increased. Look at all of the technology. That's come in. By which we're able. To be far more advanced.

Than they were certainly. Back in the days of the Old Testament. Even the days of Paul. Paul. But here's the Lord saying. None of that.

Has displaced. This fact. That God has a people. That God. Pays attention. To his people. And that his people.

[52 : 56] Seek to serve him. As God. Fears in this world. And when that day. Of judgment comes. The day. When he makes up. His treasure. Possession. When he brings it out.

Into the open. And says. Look. These are the people. That you despised. To the rest of those. Who are on looking. Sadly. At that day. They will be known.

Then especially. As my treasured. Possession. What does it matter. What does it matter. What the world thinks. About you. What does it matter.

What atheism says. About you. What does it matter. What any powers. That are against the gospel. Thinks of you. What does it matter. When people ridicule.

The Christ. That you want to serve. Well it matters. To a great extent. In many ways. It matters. But. What does it matter. Ultimately. When you know. That God.

[53 : 51] Is actually going to. Bring out his people. In a way that says. These are my jewels. What does it matter. What the world thinks. Of you. If you're amongst. The treasured.

Possession of the Lord. If you belong. To Christ. If he is yours. If you're saved. By faith in him. Through faith in him. All of these things. What does it matter.

At the end of the day. All that matters. Is that we have. The Lord. Jesus Christ. As our Savior. Savior. And that this God. Who's revealed to us.

In Malachi. And throughout the Bible. Is on our side. And says. These are my people. These are the people. I've redeemed. They are my treasured.

Possession. And rejoice tonight. If you're in Christ. You can rightly rejoice. Because whatever happens.

[54 : 46] In the world. Or even whatever happens. To you. Nothing is going to displace that. That great fact. Of being God's treasure. Possession. And of God before us.

As the apostle said. Well who. Ultimately. Can be against us. And I will spare them. He says. The second thing. He's not just saying.

They'll be revealed. As a special treasure. I will spare them. In the judgment. They will not be overwhelmed. The judgment. The judgment. Will not touch them. Condemningly.

I will spare them. How? As a man. Spares his son. Who serves him. In other words. They avoid. The lot. Of those. Who are going to be condemned.

Those who are going to be lost. Those who are going to be damned. Because these are the words. The Bible uses. Christians. But they're not going to be amongst them. They're going to be different then as well.

[55 : 43] And they're going to be seen to be different. Because God is going to spare them. God is not going to bring them into. The condemnation that others will have.

And I will spare them as a man spares his son. In other words. It's not going to be a reluctant sparing. As if God was saying. Well. It's something I have to do. So I'll do it.

When a man spares his own son. He does it out of love. Out of affection. Out of a due regard. For him as his son. And God is saying.

That's how I will spare my people. That's how I protect them. That's how I look after them. That's how I regard them. They are my special treasures.

Pleasure and possession. And when the day of judgment comes. They will be revealed. As people who are spared. By me and my love. As a man spares his son.

[56 : 47] Who serves him. Not reluctantly. But the Lord will delight in doing so. As he has delighted. In saving them.

In the first place. Then once more. You shall see the distinction. Between the righteous and the wicked. Between the one who serves God. And the one who does not.

There will be no doubters at that day. Nobody on that day. Nobody on that day will say. Well I still don't believe you Lord. Still don't believe the Bible. Still don't believe the things I heard in the gospel.

Then you shall return. Is the way it says literally. Which is really an ironic touch. Because the Lord was appealing to these people. To return to him. But he says. Then on that day. On the day when I make up.

My treasured possession. You shall see the distinction. Between the righteous. And the wicked. Please don't wait for that day.

[57 : 54] Don't think that you've got enough time. Don't think that you can afford. To just leave it. And that somehow things will fall into place.

With your soul. Don't leave it until that day dawns. God will bring forth. His treasured possession of his people.

And the distinction then. Between the righteous and the wicked. Will be all too clear. Do something about it now. Do something about it today. That's why you have the gospel.

That's why the loving appeal. Of the gospel. I know that. Our presentation of it. Mine included. May not sometimes. Come across as very loving. But that's what it is.

It's a loving appeal. To you tonight. If you're not in Christ. Receive him. Put your trust in him. Take him as God offers him.

[58 : 55] Become. One of those God fearers. On earth. Esteem his name. Join the company of God's people.

Who speak to each other. Of those things of God. And have your security. In God's book of remembrance. In all that God is for his people.

Because there's no security. Anywhere else. Except in Christ for us. Let's pray. Lord our God. We once again give thanks for your word.

And we give thanks for the way in which your word. Leads us into eternal verities and truths. And we bless you tonight Lord. That we have come once again to touch on the things of eternity.

The things of salvation. The things in which you are presented to us in your word. Lord. As the God and Savior of your people. And Lord we pray that you bless your word to us once again.

[59 : 58] And grant to go before us into the remainder of this week. Hear us now we pray. And pardon our sin. For Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Let's conclude by singing in Psalm 25.

Singing from the Sing Psalms this time. Page 29. And from verse 8 down as far as verse 15. Words that speak about the fear of the Lord in verse 12.

And in verse 14 as well. God's friends are those who fear his name. So from verse 8. Because the Lord is just and good. He shows his paths to all who stray.

He guides the meek in what is right. And teaches them his holy way. So from verse 8 through to verse 15. To God's praise. Because the Lord is just and good.

He shows his paths to all who stray. He guides the meek in what is right.

[61 : 20] And teaches them his holy way. To those who keep his covenant cross.

He shows his love consistently. He shows his love consistently. For you are in sin, O Lord thy God. For you are in sin, O Lord thy God. For you are in sin, O Lord thy God. Who then are those who fear the Lord?

He'll teach to them the chosen way. God's friends are those who fear his name.

God's friends are those who fear his name. God's friends are those who fear his name.

[62 : 48] With them whose covenant he will share My eyes are always on the Lord Feel free my feet from every snare I'll go to the main door after the benediction tonight.

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. Amen.

Amen.