

Serving and Following

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Date: 04 August 2024

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our service singing to God's praise from Psalm 89, verses 13 to 18. Psalm 89, verses 13 to 18. This is from the Scottish Psalter, and the tune is Newington.

Psalm 89, from verse 13. Thou hast an arm that's full of power, thy hand is great in might, and thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. Justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place.

Mercy accompanied with truth shall go before thy face. O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful sound that know. In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go. They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly, and in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high.

Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee, and in thy favour shall our horn and power exalted be. For God is our defence, and he to us doth safety bring. The Holy One of Israel is our Almighty King.

13 to 18 of Psalm 89. 13 to 18 of Psalm 89.

[1 : 44] 13 to 18. This is from the Scottish Psalm 89. 14 to 18. This is from the Scottish Psalm 89.

14 to 19 of June.

In thy name shall all the day rejoice succeedingly, and in thy righteousness shall live exalted beyond high.

Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in me, and in my heaven shall our Lord and Father exalted be.

God is our defense, and he to us thus deeply pray.

[3 : 55] The Holy One of Israel is the Almighty King.

Amen. Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, as we bow before you this evening, we pray that you will help us to worship you in a right way.

We pray that we may be conscious of your power and glory and majesty, that we may realize that this is a special moment for us, where we draw near to the King of glory.

We are so grounded in the here and the now. This world has such a powerful grip and influence upon us, that so often our vision of you is clouded.

There is so much that hides you from us. But we pray that even as we gather here just now, that we may be given a little insight, a little sight of you, in such a way that it will enlighten our minds, that it will lift our hearts, that it will enable us to be more zealous, more committed to you.

[5 : 15] And our desire is to follow you with all our heart. We pray, O Lord, that we might praise you for all that you are. We realize that you are beyond our understanding.

The Word of God reveals so much to us. You have made known so much about yourself to us. And yet our understanding is so limited. There is so little that we're able to fully grasp or understand.

But, Lord, we give thanks that when we come to faith, that our eyes are opened, our understanding is enlightened, and we're able to lay hold on spiritual truths that beforehand were completely such that we couldn't figure them out at all.

We give thanks, Lord, for your patience with us. We give thanks, Lord, for how you look after us, despite who we are and what we are. Despite our sin and our waywardness, our faults and our failings.

And we seek tonight to confess our sin before you. We sin before you so readily, so freely, and so often we are unaware of our sin.

[6 : 31] And yet every so often through your Spirit and the Word, you are revealing to us just what we are and of how far short we are of the glory that you require from us.

And so we pray that you will indeed be merciful to us in our failings and in our sin against you and also our sins against one another.

We pray, Lord, that you'll bless this congregation, particularly at a time of vacancy. We pray that you will guide and lead and direct in the right way and that you will make it abundantly clear the way

in which we are to go.

We give thanks for Calamurdo being with us and we pray for him for all the extra responsibilities and duties that are placed upon him just now. We give thanks for all the extra responsibilities and give thanks for all the extra responsibilities and the rest of us.

For many years to come. We give thanks for all the willing hands and willing helpers. And we're blessed in this congregation with men and women who are so able in so many different ways.

[8 : 04] And we give thanks, Lord, especially just now for the women that do so much. And we give thanks for their zeal and their many great gifts that they've been equipped with.

And we give thanks, Lord, for our leadership of men and we pray your blessing upon them. And we ask that you will guide them and bless them in everything. So we pray for Calamurdo and Joanne and family.

We pray also for our intermoderate, Colin and Aileen and their family. And we pray your blessing upon your church at large. And we give thanks for the news we had this week of Reverend David Ferguson accepting the call to North Uist.

And so we pray for him and Catherine and for Duncan as that will be soon their new place and new sphere of work. And ask that you will undertake for them and bless them and that their ministry will be a fruitful one there.

Lord, we give thanks for the way your word goes out. Whether it is in the gathered assembly like we have here just now.

[9 : 16] Or whether it's on live links. Or whether it is on the airways. Or in whatever way throughout this world. Hundreds of thousands, millions in fact, are hearing your word.

And we pray that millions will come to faith. We pray that today will be a great day in the kingdom of God. And it will be a mighty day where the kingdom of darkness is being hit hard.

Where many souls will come to faith. Where people will come bowing the knee before the Lord.

Seeking that Jesus Christ will be Lord of their lives.

Pray for those who are lonely and struggling. We pray, Lord, for those who are recovering from illness. Or undergoing surgery or treatment.

Pray for those who are unwell, confined to their homes. We ask your blessing on them. Pray for those whose hearts are heavy and sore. Those who know what it is to have lost family.

[10 : 23] To have lost loved ones. It's a pain that lingers on day, week, month, year after year. And so we pray for every broken heart. And ask that you will draw near and grant your grace and your upholding strength.

Lord, we pray that we may then, as we come under your word, know your peace, your presence, your power. Lord, we pray to bless us nationally as well.

We pray for a new government. We pray, Lord, that you will lead us in the right way. We seem to be going further and further and further away from you.

There is a godlessness taking hold of our land that is frightening. And we pray that you will have mercy upon us. In wrath that you will remember mercy.

We pray for the nations of this world, particularly where there is conflict. In the Middle East and in Ukraine and in many other places throughout this world.

[11 : 23] We pray especially for your people that they will be protected. We long for peace. And we pray, Lord, that peace may come. Watch over us then as we wait upon you.

Grant us your grace and take away from us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing again Psalm 26. Psalm 26, verses 1 to 8.

It's on page 30 and sing Psalms. 1 to 8. Declare me innocent, O Lord. I have walked in blameless ways. And I have trusted in the Lord, not wavering all my days.

Test me, O Lord, and try my heart. My inmost thoughts survey. Your love surrounds me. From your truth my feet will never stray. I do not sit with worthless folk.

I shun the hypocrite. I hate the wicked's gatherings. With them I will not sit. I wash my hands in innocence. And blameless is my heart. I go about your altar, Lord.

[12 : 26] The place you set apart. Verses 1 to 8. The tune is in Minver. Psalm 26. Declare me innocent, O Lord. I have walked in blameless ways.

And I have trusted in the Lord, not wavering all my days.

Let me, O Lord, and try my heart. My inmost thoughts survey.

Your love surrounds me from your truth. My feet will never stray.

Do not sit with worthless hope. I shun the hypocrite.

[13:56] I hate the wicked's gatherings. With them I will not sit.

I wash my hands in innocence. And with blessed is my heart.

I go about your altar, Lord. The place you set apart.

Tell of all your awesome deeds. Oh, faith in life, your grace.

Your glory fills. Your dwelling place. I love your hearts always.

[15:17] Your background. Let's turn now to read God's word in John's gospel. John chapter 12. John chapter 12.

And we pick up a reading at verse 12. John chapter 12, and reading from verse 12 through to verse 36.

Verse 36. The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it.

Just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion. Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt. His disciples did not understand these things at first.

[16:20] But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.

The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, You see you are gaining nothing.

Look, the world has gone after him. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

[17:29] Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me.

And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now is my soul troubled.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered.

Others said, An angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world.

[18:28] Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

So the crowd answered him, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?

So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. Going to sing again now in Psalm 63 from the Scottish Psalter.

[19:31] And the tune is Barrow. Psalm 63. It's on page 295. And we're going to sing verses 1 to 8.

Psalm 63. Lord, thee my God I'll early seek, my soul to thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry, parched land wherein no waters be.

That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face. As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place. Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give.

I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with fat my soul shall fill it be. Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight. And when on thee I meditate and watch us of the night. So on to the end of verse 8, Psalm 63, 1 to 8.

[20 : 38] Lord, thee my God I'll early seek. Amen. Lord, thee my God I'll early seek, my soul and thirst for thee.

My flesh longs in a dry, parched land wherein no waters be.

That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face.

As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.

Then better is thy love than life, my earth's weak wish shall appear.

[21 : 49] I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live. He comes with marrow and with fat, my soul shall fill it in thee.

Then shall thy love with joyfulness sing praises unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight.

And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night.

[22 : 56] Then shadow of thy wings of joy, on the night hell has been.

My soul be called, O pardon me, my right hand thou sustain.

Amen. Let's turn again to the chapter we read.

Psalm, John chapter 12. Maybe we could read from verse 20. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

[24 : 01] Jesus answered him, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

And especially these verses 25, Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Now it's interesting that we have here, at the beginning of this section here, of Greeks, wanting to see Jesus. Because there's almost here for us a picture of just about what is to happen.

Jesus came to the Jews, he came to his own, and his own didn't receive him. Not only did they not receive him, they wanted rid of him. And that moment was drawing near, where they were finally going to get him, and in their minds get rid of him.

[25 : 15] And at that very same moment, we have Gentiles coming, and they're wanting to see Jesus. And it's almost giving us a picture of what is about to take place.

The rejection by the Jews of Christ, and the great spread of the gospel, out into the Gentile world. Now, these Greeks who came up, and there was a part, they could assimilate to a certain extent, extent into Jewish worship.

But there were a lot of restrictions, a lot of barriers, and even in the temple, they weren't allowed past the court of the temple. And how thankful we live in a day where there are no restrictions, there are no barriers, because Jesus has broken down all the barriers.

There is now no wall of separation. And it doesn't matter a person's background, it doesn't matter a person's culture, it doesn't matter a person's position in life, it doesn't matter a person's wealth, or it doesn't matter a person's, it doesn't matter anything.

Every person is being invited through the gospel to Jesus Christ. And when a person comes to faith, irrespective of how old they are, or of how young they are, where they are from in the world, they will become one in Christ Jesus.

[26 : 39] And that is the wonderful thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is for the prince as much as for the prisoner. And it is something that we've grown up with, we're used to.

But it was so different back then, in the time when there were all these restrictions. So these Greeks came to Philip. Philip was kind of a, although he was from Bethsaida, was kind of a, almost a Greek, largely a Greek name.

So maybe it was, maybe there were relations that he had that were Greeks. But anyway, they come to Philip. And it's very interesting that Philip goes to Andrew before he goes to Jesus.

And as we mentioned this before, that Andrew always seems to be the go-between of the disciples. He seems to be the approachable one. He seems to be the one that, if people are wanting to, to reach Jesus or speak to Jesus, it tends to be by Andrew.

Remember the time where there was the feeding of the thousands? And it was to Andrew. The boy had the loaves and the fish.

[27 : 50] So Andrew was the one who told Jesus, here's a boy here. He's got the five loaves and the fish. And it's a very important part of our Christian walk to be approachable to people.

We shouldn't put up any barriers. Because if you look at the life of Jesus, he most certainly did not put up any barriers. He was the most welcoming person that ever walked this world.

And he was open to everybody. And so should we. We should always be open and accessible and approachable if we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course it was Andrew who was the one who introduced his brother to Jesus. Because Jesus had spoken to Andrew first and when Andrew had discovered there was the Messiah, he went straight and got his brother.

And you and I know that that's often the hardest thing to do is to witness in our own family, isn't it? It's often easier to witness to people outside, to other people, than to those of your own family.

[29 : 00] But anyway, Andrew, witnessed to Peter and he took Peter along to meet Jesus. Little did Andrew know that day when he brought Peter to meet with Jesus that just a few years later Peter would be preaching and thousands would be converted.

And you see the wonderful link in that chain. You know, we're all part. We all have a part to play.

And it's amazing the threads that run through.

You can trace it in your own life, the threads that run through your own life. When you look back and you see the influence of this person and the influence of that person and what this person was and what this person said and you can look back and all these things, it's like a jigsaw coming together to the place where you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the wonder of it. We've all got our own little part to play. Well, Andrew was somebody who was very much used by the Lord. So Philip and Andrew, they tell Jesus.

And Jesus answered them and he said very simply, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Now, there was nothing at this moment to indicate that that hour had come.

[30 : 23] Because just a little earlier, if we had read, well, we did back there, we find that Jesus, that's what we read, the triumphant, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

It's a moment when the crowd seemed to be embracing Jesus. In fact, the Pharisees say, look, the whole world has gone after him. It seemed to be a high point, a key point in the popularity of Jesus. And yet Jesus says, the hour has come. He was following a heavenly timetable. All along the way, he was keeping exactly to the timetable that his father had given him.

That's why on other occasions in Scripture you will find it saying, his hour had not yet come, but the hour has come. And the hour has come.

And so Jesus is telling them, those there, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And in this he is telling how he is to be seen.

[31 : 26] It is not as a king, he didn't come as a kingly monarch. Oh, he's going to come as a kingly monarch when he comes again. When he came into this world, it wasn't as a kingly monarch.

He didn't journey through this world wearing a crown, but carrying a cross. He didn't come into this world being born in a palace, but in a stable.

And all his journey through this world was a downward kush of shame and humiliation. But all the time he was keeping to the timetable and honoring his father every single step of the way.

And this was a way that the Greeks were going to see Jesus in what he was going to do. You know, there are some people that they look on Jesus and they look at his example in life.

They look at the way he denied himself. And they look at his death as a kind of a martyr's death.

And they hold him up as a martyr. A great man, a martyr.

[32 : 30] A man who lived a life of self-denial. But they're just looking at the human Jesus. They're missing the point. If that's the only Jesus that we have as one who set an example and let us not miss the example that Jesus set, but if that's all we're seeing, then we're missing the main point.

He came in order to die. And as the young people were looking at the substitute, he came as a substitute. And so this was a way that the Greeks were going to be able to see Jesus. And one last thing I would say talking about the Greeks coming to see Jesus. Can I say to anybody in here, and you're saying to yourself, you know, I have wanted to see Jesus for a long time. You might be saying, oh, it comes and it goes, but there's a desire in my heart to become a Christian. And I sit in church, and I pray, and I don't seem to get anywhere. I read my Bible, and I pray, and I don't seem to get anywhere. Well, see what the Greeks did. They went, and they spoke to Philip, and they said, we want to see Jesus. [33 : 41] And I think there's a point there for us. If you're somebody who's seeking and searching, and you're from so far, you haven't found, you can't quite get hold of it.

Speak to a Christian that you know. And you might say to yourself, that's the hardest thing for me to do. What will he say? What will she say? They'll be delighted.

And speak to them in confidence. It's not that they're going to enable you to be a Christian, but it might be just what they say. They might give you that final point. That's something which will encourage you and enable you to see for yourself.

Because at the end of the day, you have to see for yourself and believe yourself. But there's a point we mustn't miss there of the desire to see Jesus, of going to speak to a Christian, to speak to somebody else.

Because they will very likely be able to help you. But Jesus then says that the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

[34 : 50] And of course, the glory of God is revealed. It's the manifestation of His divine majesty. And you know, when we think about the cross, we say, what's the glory in the cross?

All we can think of is shame. There was, it was, anyone who was hanged on a tree, it was shame. It says that in Scripture. It was cursed.

Where's the glory in it? But you and I know that that weekend, that weekend that occurred there in the death, the arrest, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, was the greatest display of God's glory that this world has ever seen.

The creation was an awesome display of the glory of God. In fact, when we look up to the heavens up, it tells us the heavens declare the glory of God.

His handiwork is written all across. the stars speak of the glory of God. The moon, the sun, the whole being, it all speaks of the glory of God. This world and this massive universe, it all speaks.

[36 : 03] But that, that doesn't touch the magnificence of the display of his glory that is found in this weekend when Jesus dies for our sins.

Because the very heartbeat of the salvation of millions is in that weekend there. That is where the great glory of Jesus and the glory of God the Father is seen.

And we're so thankful that we're able to understand this. And Jesus then says, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. And of course, he's speaking here about himself. And you and I know that if you have a grain of wheat and you take it off the shelf and you just put it back on the shelf, it'll never be more than a grain of wheat.

But if you take that grain of wheat and a number of grains of wheat and you put it into the earth, you sow it into the earth, it dies. But from its death, the death, then life comes.

[37 : 18] And that's what Jesus is saying. That's what's going to happen. In order for the Greeks to see me, they have to see my death and what it achieves.

I am like that grain of wheat being deliberately sown into the ground and from it will come the most amazing harvest. If you're a believer tonight, you're part of the harvest that has come from the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Jesus continues to ingather his people. But then at verse 25, Jesus says, whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me and where I am there will my servant be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now, people might find this verse kind of strange because it's saying whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

And in a sense, that almost goes against the grain because the greatest instinct that you and I have is self-preservation, looking after ourselves.

[38 : 35] When we're little children, we have the me first syndrome. We want to be first. Children are, they don't realize it, but by nature, they're very selfish and self-centered.

And I'm not being critical of them. We were all like that. It's me. It's about me. Now, as we grow up and as we develop within culture and within our society and with our peers and so on, we learn to give and to take and all that.

But that me first, it's about me. It's my life. It's about me. It remains. It's part of us. And so, self-preservation is a great instinct within our lives.

We want the best for ourselves. And so, in a sense, we might almost think, well, this is a strange thing what Jesus is saying here about hating our life. Does that mean I've got to go about saying, oh, I hate myself.

Oh, I'm a horrible person. Well, as a Christian, there will be times we will say that. There are times we will grovel. There are times that we will cry out before the Lord and we'll say like the Apostle Paul, oh, wretched man that I am because we're so conscious of our sin and our disobedience and our failures of all that we've done wrong.

[40 : 07] And so, there are times that we honestly hate who we are. But that's not really what it's actually talking about here at this point.

Because what is being said here is the same as Jesus said elsewhere about, he said, whoever was going to follow me has to hate his father and his mother and hate even his own life.

And again, people might find that very strange. What does Jesus mean by that? Well, the word hate here is really it has a comparative force.

And what Jesus is really meaning here is that nothing must come between himself and you and me. He doesn't mean that you are to start hating your father and your mother and your brothers and your sisters and your husband and your wife. Not at all. Indeed, we're commanded to love.

[41 : 14] We're commanded to love. Husbands, love your wives. But what Jesus means is that we aren't to allow anything to come between ourselves and the Lord.

In other words, we're to hang loose to the things of this world. And Jesus goes on and he shows us here how it works out.

He says, whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. And what Jesus is simply talking about here is that there are people and their whole goal in life is about themselves.

And they want to get on and they want to build their own empire. Whether it is a tiny empire or a great big empire. But the world is all that matters for them.

And they want to progress and they want to do well and there's nothing wrong, don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with trying to progress and trying to do well. But it's an exclusion. of Jesus.

[42 : 19] Jesus is in the background or Jesus is not there at all. And people who live only for this world are in for the biggest shock and disappointment possible.

Because you see, whatever the world gives with one hand, it takes straight back with the other. Nothing that we get in this life ever lasts.

And we can't hang on to it. And there are so many of the rich and the famous and they seem to be able to go here, go wherever. There seem to be so few restrictions in life. But you know, the thing is, one day it's all going to come to an end.

I remember reading one of the star famous people and he had been diagnosed with cancer and he was dying. And he said, this is a disaster. I have so loved life.

I have loved living in life. I can't cope. That's, you see, this life was all that he had. And out with all the trappings of life, life was absolutely empty.

[43 : 24] That's why there's so much despair in people's lives. Because there isn't ultimate meaning. Because all these other things are just, they pass with the using.

But Jesus is saying, if we lose our life in him, if we give our life to him, then we gain everything. And you and I know that in life, maybe as we get older, maybe the sparkle in life begins to go and there's various ailments and problems come in and life isn't quite the same.

But you know, for the Christian, the sparkle in Christ never goes. And that's a beauty. That's the joy of it all. And so it is imperative that we learn to die to self and to live for Christ.

And then Jesus says, if anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. Now, we often ask the question, you know when a person is converted, when you, you think back to when you became a Christian, what's one of the first things that you said?

[44 : 36] Lord, what will you have me to do? What do you want me to do? And that's very often the response of grace. Lord, what will I do? Now, we always think of, when we think of serving, we often tend to think of serving in a particular capacity.

ministry, and we might talk of ministry as being a servant of the Lord. Well, there are very, very few when you think of all the millions of Christians who are ministers, who are missionaries. But Jesus shows us here that service and following are inseparably bound.

And the moment you begin to follow Jesus, you have started to serve. And I think it's one of the things that we've got to realize is that our service is our life.

Wherever you've been placed, whether you're still in school, you're serving the Lord there. You might say to yourself, oh, when I get older, when I leave school, when I get older and do things, I'll start serving the Lord.

No, you're serving the Lord where you are. Whether you're in primary school, secondary school, if you love the Lord, you're serving the Lord where you are. That's the beauty of it.

[45 : 55] Whether you're a mother tending to the wee ones, you're serving the Lord there. Whether you're serving teas and coffees, whether you're a mechanic, whether you're a boat builder, whether you're a teacher, you can go through wherever the Lord has placed you.

That's your field of service. Because every single day, you are serving the Lord. And I think we've got to lay hold upon this because often we tend to compartmentalize service and think, well, service is only something that we do when we do it with regard to the church.

Yes, that is part of it. But our whole life is service. And always remember this, that following and service are together. The moment you start following, you have begun to serve the Lord.

every single believer in here tonight is serving the Lord wherever you are at, wherever the Lord has placed you. You serve him in your home, you serve him in your church, you serve him in your work, you serve him in the school, you serve him wherever.

And so we mustn't lose sight of that great truth. And again, the word following is one, it's such a biblical expression, it's one that we use here in our own culture.

[47 : 16] When somebody's converted, we sometimes say, oh did you hear so and so I started following? So biblical. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.

That's what happened in your life as a Christian. You heard through the word the voice of Jesus. You might not be able to explain it, but that's what happened.

And because you know Jesus and I've come to love Jesus, you're following him and you're serving him. And then Jesus says, if anyone serves him he must follow me and where I am, there will my servant be also.

Where is Jesus? Well, primarily he's in the word, he is the word. So when we serve and follow Jesus, we will be much in the word.

Because the word is our guide, it's what feeds us and teaches us and shows us the way to go. Our delight is in the word.

[48 : 22] You're here tonight because you love the Lord. You want to be here. Because why? Because Jesus has promised where two or three are gathered in his name.

He's there. And that's why you want to be here. Because it's the place where Jesus blesses people. it's the place where Jesus has promised to be.

And so it's natural that you want to be there. If you love Jesus, you will be seeking to obey him. And that's what faith does.

Faith lays hold upon the word. Now you might be saying to yourself, you know, my grace seems to be so weak and my hope seems to be so dim.

and my faith seems to be so fragile. And I'm so aware of all my faults. If you could even a strand of faith.

[49 : 18] Faith even like a grain of mustard seed. That faith is sufficient. That is the faith that enables you to follow Jesus. And you want to obey.

When you love someone, you want to do what you know pleases them. You won't spend your life doing things that you know that will aggravate them or annoy them or hurt them. You will try and do what pleases them.

And so it is for the Christian. And how do we know what pleases Jesus? By reading his word. His word tells us. And you say to yourself, how do I know that I love the Lord?

Jesus says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. So that the desire of your life is seeking to obey what the Lord says to us. We follow him as our teacher. That's in the word. We follow him as our guide. We follow him as our lover. We're married to Christ.

[50 : 18] We've taken his name. You know when a bride and groom get married, normally speaking, I know there's the odd exception, but normally speaking, the bride will take the husband's surname.

And when we come to Christ, we are in that union as a bride and a groom. That's the description that scripture takes. And we take his name, Christians. That's what we become. We hold up the name of Christ in this world. Oh, the world doesn't honor the Christian. The world is more likely to laugh and to ridicule the Christian. But we see here there is someone who does honor.

And that is the Father in heaven. Because Jesus tells us here, if anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be.

And if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Isn't that wonderful? Jesus says, and where I am, there will my servant be. You know, we know where Jesus is tonight, and we know that he's present through his spirit here.

[51 : 25] But we know that Jesus is in heaven. And what's Jesus doing in heaven for us tonight? Yes, we know he's interceding on our behalf. But he has gone to prepare a place for us.

Your name is there. Your place is there. It's reserved. And one day Jesus is going to come back. He's going to call for you. And in the meantime he's preparing you for the place he has prepared for you.

Because he wants you, as you've been with him here, following him here, he wants that you will be then with him forever and ever and ever and ever and ever in glory.

And you know you might feel that your service is poor. And I think at the end of the day every Christian feels their service is poor. But you notice what it says?

If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Isn't that beautiful? Every Christian, all of you tonight are following the Lord.

[52 : 25] Remember Lord, I said you're serving him. And in serving him, you're going to get the well done, good and faithful servant when you enter into heaven.

Because the Father is going to honor you because of your love of his Son. And we must always remember that this is how it's going to end.

I hope everybody here tonight is following and serving Jesus. I hope that your soul, I hope that you haven't made the whole goal of your world just to get on.

Yes, by all means it's important to get on, but not at the expense of your soul. Jesus elsewhere says what will profit somebody to gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

Calmerda told a beautiful story today. I'm sure all of you heard it. And I had never heard that before. But the boy who asked his father, is your soul insured?

[53 : 32] Because he said your house is insured, your barns are insured, your car is insured, your own life, you got life insurance. What about your soul?

And that's the question you have to ask yourself tonight. Because there's only one who can insure your soul. And that's Jesus. you make sure then that you are in Jesus, trusting in Jesus.

And the moment you are, you've started to follow, and the moment you've started to follow, you've begun to serve. And we see what the outcome is here. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks that your word tells us how things really are.

This world tells us very differently. And we pray, Lord, that we might be wise to what your word says, that the word of God may regulate and rule our lives.

We pray that we might not lose our way by being caught up in all the world's trappings, but that we may seek to put Jesus first. And the great promise is that if we seek first the kingdom of heaven, seek first the kingdom of righteousness, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, then all the other things will be added to us.

[54 : 49] Help us then to get our priorities right in life. Bless each and every one of us. Take us all home safely, we pray. Cleanse us from our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm number 16. Psalm 16 and sing Psalms from verse 8, the tune is Golden Hill.

Before me constantly I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand I will not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

For you will not allow my soul and death to stay, nor will you leave your Holy One to see the tombs decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

bliss shall I know at your right hand. Joy from your face will shine. 8 to the end, Psalm 16 and sing Psalms before me constantly.

[55 : 54] Amen. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand and not be overthrown.

Therefore my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope and with a need.

Holy One to tend Thank you.

The path of light divine, this shall I know, and your right hand, joy from your face will shine.

I'll go to the door on my left. 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 forevermore. Amen.

[58 : 27] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.