

When God Dealt with a Rising Death Toll

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Date: 19 April 2020

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[0 : 00] Well, a very good evening to you all again, wherever you're watching from. It's a pleasure to bring you this live stream service from a very sunny Stornoway.

We trust that wherever you're watching or tapping into this service, that you'll know again God's blessing, that we'll know as we worship him together around his word. We're going to begin by reading from God's word, and that's from the Gospel of John, and chapter 3, verses 12 to 21. This is the passage where Jesus has his interview with Nicodemus, to whom he reveals, of course, the need to be born again. We're breaking into the conversation at verse 12, where Jesus says earthly things, and you do not believe.

How can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

[1 : 22] 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. The light has come into the world, and people love 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. We pray God will follow with this blessing, our reading of his word.

Let's now engage in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord's name in prayer. Gracious God and our Heavenly Father, we thank you once again that we have this opportunity to be together around your word, to worship you, to sing praise to you, to call upon you in prayer, to engage in all of these elements of worship that your word brings before us and proper for us, to apply to the worship of your name.

We thank you tonight for all the opportunities that you give us, Lord, to worship you, whether it be on our own or together, or even as this medium of live stream shows us, that we can indeed engage together in worship from different places.

[2 : 53] And we thank you for that technology, for the gifts that you have given to human beings, for the way in which you have brought this facility to us in this time of deprivation, of anxiety, and of much, oh Lord, that causes us perplexity.

And we thank you that as we turn to these things, so, Lord, you show us again your goodness to us in providing us with these resources. We thank you especially for the resource of your word, this word that we have read, teaching us about your goodness, your love, your compassion, your judgment, everything that you have been pleased to reveal to us about yourself.

We bless you, oh Lord, our God, that you are perfect, that every aspect of your being is perfect, that you are perfect in the way in which all your attributes relate to each other, in the way you exercise them, in the way that you have controlled history from the beginning of creation, and will do so through to the end of the world.

Oh Lord, our God, help us, we pray tonight, to place ourselves once more, willingly, under the care of your hand. and give us, Lord, at this time of anxiety, as we look out around us and find in so many places in the world that this virus has touched so much devastation, anxiety, loss of life, so much bewilderment and also bereavement and sorrow.

Lord, our God, this world, ever since man fell, has been filled with sorrow, and we give thanks that you understand this, when you became the man of sorrows, to acquaint yourself with our grief, though you knew it as God perfectly, in your own eternal knowledge.

[4 : 47] We thank you, Lord, that you reached down and that you're still reaching down, so as to bring us upwards from the downhill of sin and you make us even princes in your kingdom.

We thank you tonight, Lord, for the preciousness of your Spirit, applying your word to your people, bringing us the knowledge of your name, sanctifying us under your truth, and controlling our lives in such a way as directs us constantly to those things which are clean and holy, and directs us away from those that are sinful and defile us, O Lord.

We pray that you'd bless us then tonight. We ask for every gathering of worship through this or other means, and we pray that your blessing will indeed accompany your word so that it may be effective once again in our experience.

Bless us, we pray, as a congregation of your people. Lord, we thank you that though we have not seen each other physically for so many weeks, nevertheless, Lord, we can distribute our love through the various avenues that are open to us to do so.

We do pray, O Lord, at this time that you would give us a sanctified mind to accept this providence, and to do so in a way that would realise that in your own purpose and the mystery of your will, you have designed it for our good, so that we might indeed come to know you better, and come to realise our own smallness, our inability to control our own lives, our need to cast ourselves upon you.

[6 : 28] We pray for our nation and for all the nations of the world at this time, and we ask, O Lord, that you'd bless those in government over us who are themselves seeking to lead us as a people during these difficult times.

Lord, remember them, we pray. Give them grace and wisdom. Give them direction from your Spirit, whether they acknowledge you openly or not. Lord, we pray for them and ask that you'd give them all that we would seek for them at this difficult, challenging time.

We pray that you'd bless too those who are at the forefront of dealing with this virus, with the illness and with the deaths that occur through it. We pray again for those on the front line of services.

Remember them all, O Lord, in all the different spheres of service that that entails, within hospitals and care homes, within the ambulance, paramedical service, within medical practices, emergency services, every way, O Lord, in which people face the danger and face the difficulties and the challenges of these days.

And we ask, O Lord, that you'd bless all that we commit to you who have tonight to face the death of loved ones who have been taken by this virus and are gone from the scene of time.

[7 : 50] Remember them in your compassion, O Lord. Fill their hearts with your comfort. Direct unto the man of sorrows, the man of Calvary, to the cross where you took the sin of your people and paid its price.

Direct them, we pray, to the sepulcher which you vacated in your resurrection to give hope to sinful human beings like ourselves. We ask, Lord, that you would bring us constantly to face the reality of your triumph over death so that we may share in it.

And come, O Lord, to even at times like these come to be with calmness of mind convinced that Christ is Lord, that we need him at every step of our way.

Remember our children at this time, Lord, as they too find it difficult without school or Sunday school or their usual activities. Be with them, we pray. Grant to those of them who come to watch services online that you'd bless them through that.

We give thanks for those who give of their time to provide lessons for them, for tweenies, for Sunday school, for youth club, for youth fellowship. Lord of God, bless this, we pray, bless them at this time.

[9 : 07] Sanctify their young minds, we pray, and help them to draw important lessons for life from these providences that we face. And so now we ask that you'd continue with us, hear us in this our prayer, and pardon us, cleanse us from all our sin.

For Jesus' sake, Amen. Now, children, I'm going to speak to you tonight. I know there are some children who are watching the evening live streams and services as well, so I thought I'd include a children's talk this evening for you as well.

It's so special that you're actually able to do this and so special to us to know that you're actually taking part in the worship that we're carrying out this way, as well as the normal worship that we used to be so familiar with and we hope we'll be back at not too long in the future.

I'm going to speak tonight about hanging out your lights. If you went back about 500 years to a place like London, any of the large cities really, but London especially has this story attached to it, there will be no streetlights and after it became dark, it would be very difficult to find your way safely about the streets and actually it was quite dangerous because when it became dark, lots of robbers went about the streets, people were afraid actually to go out and so the mayor at the time, about 500 years ago, decided that he would ask the citizens of London to hang a lantern outside of their homes and they had people going about the streets in the different districts, someone with a large bell and he would ring the bell and he would say, citizens, hang out your lights, citizens, hang out your lights and the people were expected then if they could to hang out a lantern outside their house so that it would show up something off the street and make it safer for people to walk about and then a hundred years or so after that, some of the churches beginning with the Bow Church and the steeple actually had a lantern set in the steeple and other churches then copied that so that a lot more light was then available in different places throughout London and that actually gave travellers coming to London a better idea as to how far on they were and where they were in relation to the city and it made it safer for them to actually travel.

So hanging out the lights was important for the citizens of London at that time and if you go forward a wee bit nearer our own time in the middle of the 1800s there was a famous nurse who came to be known as the Lady of the Lamp her name was Florence Nightingale she's actually the person who really gave a foundation to modern nursing if you go back to what she actually did to deal with diseases and especially in the time of the Crimean War she and other nurses went to serve in the Crimean War and it's there that she got the title or the name the Lady of the Lamp or the Lady of the Lamp because she went around soldiers that had been some of them wounded but many of them just dying from disease different diseases and she went about from bed to bed comforting her putting her own life in danger and so she became known as someone who represented great comfort and encouragement to those soldiers the Lady of the Lamp now Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 14 that we are to let our light shine before the world remember that Jesus spoke about his disciples as the light of the world you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house in the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven and that's really what Jesus is saying to us as his disciples to you children as well as to us adults hang out your lights let the world know that you love Jesus and when you love Jesus and show your love for Jesus for God in whatever way we do that it's not just by telling people about him but it's how we live our lives just as Jesus said let your good works let your lifestyle show that you love the Lord and so we can think every day of Jesus saying to us through the Bible hang out your lights hang out your lights so that people will see that you're a Christian that you love the Lord that you love his word that you love his day and especially at times like these when we can't be together nevertheless we can actually phone we can send texts we can tell people various things about the Lord and we can engage in services like this so here's what [14 : 26] Jesus is saying to us hang out your lights make every day a day for showing the light that Jesus has put in your heart so that others will come to know him as well now our second reading tonight is from the Old Testament and it's from the book of Numbers it's a passage that relates to what we read in John 3 a minute ago the book of Numbers chapter 21 and we're going to read from verse 4 to verse 9 it's about the children of Israel at the stage of their journey through the desert on the way to the land of Canaan and from verse 4 we read from Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea to go round the land of Edom and the people became impatient on the way and the people spoke against God and against Moses why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness for there is no food and no water and we loathe this worthless food then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people so that many of the people of Israel died and the people came to Moses and said we have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us so Moses prayed for the people and the Lord said to Moses make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live so Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole and if a serpent bit anyone he would look at the bronze serpent and live just a few thoughts about that passage this evening we'll also take in its relation with John chapter 3 the passage we read there about Jesus

being lifted up there are some

Bible passages that almost give you a ready made sermon and this is one such passage it doesn't mean that we don't have to engage in some mind work and some proper examination of the text in order to try and make a sermon out of it but as you look at this passage it's really just pretty much a God made sermon for us isn't it it's a picture of salvation it's a portrait of salvation on the wall of the Old Testament if you like and Jesus took that portrait and he put it on the wall of the New Testament because in John chapter 3 verse 14 this is what Jesus said to Nicodemus as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the son of man that's Jesus himself be lifted up that whoever believes in him should have eternal life Jesus took the portrait from the Old Testament wall and he attached it in his own person to the wall of the New Testament and he pointed Nicodemus to it Jesus found himself in this passage as he did throughout the whole of the Old Testament and spoke about these passages many of them being fulfilled in himself and so tonight we can look at it and looking at it under the title of When God Dealt With A Rising Death Toe When God Dealt With A Rising Death Toe because that's what you have in the passage here and I want to just look at it under two headings firstly The People's Anguish and then more fully at God's Antidote now The People's Anguish actually came from their circumstances and it all began with their complaining against God that's set out in verses 4 to 6 there where you find the passage telling us that they became impatient on the way and the people spoke against God and against Moses why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness and so on they're complaining against the Lord they had to go around

Edom the district or the country of Edom and you go back to the previous chapter you'll find there in the previous chapter verses 14 to 21 you can check it out later on as to how Israel made an attempt to go through the district or the land of Edom but the Edomite people refused to give them permission to give them a passage through their land so they had to go a long way round and indeed part of that it would really seem like they were actually travelling away from the land of Canaan rather than towards it and that's why they had to go round Edom as they say here as you see here in verse 4 they went out from Mount Hor to go round the land of Edom and of course that's why the people became so grumbly so resentful so much of a protest against God and against Moses and that's why they forgot so soon after seeing the wonderful works of God they soon forgot that and began complaining against him you find in this passage you could use various words to actually describe what they're like they're resentful they really just don't like the fact at all that this is where

God has placed them they're unthankful they've forgotten the goodness of God the wonder of God's love and his mercy and his grace that he'd shown in taking them out of Egypt not only that but they're unbelieving they don't actually believe that God could take them safely through round Adam and still take them through to the land of promise to Canaan and they're rebellious they're actually protesting against God and against Moses the leader that that God gave them and as they come to grumble against God God responds to that by sending these fiery serpents that's one of the things that we need to be aware of and take care against complaining against God because when we're involved in something that's going on for a long time that's difficult that's challenging for us when it challenges our patience when it challenges our faith when it challenges our trust in God our love for God the tendency we might have in ourselves or the devil might tempt us toward complaining against God like that really ever since man fell complaining against

[21 : 13] God's provision complaining against God's wisdom why has he taken us through this route why has he given us this to experience now in our lives and complaining against God friends will always make things more difficult not easier we may feel better to get things off our chest by taking it out on God or against the church or against some of the leaders here like Moses they took it out on him maybe it made them feel better for a little time but it only made things worse because God's response was to send them these serpents and the serpents we find there the Lord sent fiery serpents it seems that that's more to do with colour than anything else although we're not sure why they're called fiery serpents they were probably copper coloured or reddish coloured and the serpent that Moses was instructed by God to make is a bronze serpent again that's probably more copper than bronze corresponding in colour to the serpents that had bitten them anyway the Lord sent fiery serpents you do notice the Lord that sent the fiery serpents they didn't just appear on their own it wasn't something that happened by chance

God actually sent them in response to their complaining in response to the way that they had grumbled so much against him and as he did so he brought them to see sense he brought them to their senses the fiery serpents themselves caused them to have a really deep thinking process about their relationship with God about where they were about what was most important to them in their lives God made them think through this very challenging difficult situation that he had caused amongst them and that's always the case when we are brought into pain into difficulty God is trying us as he tried Israel many times C.S. Lewis wrote a great book on the problem of pain as he called it and in that book you find him saying as follows pain insists upon being attended to God whispers to us in our pleasures speaks in our conscience but he shouts in our pains it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world pain plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul pain that's what God was doing with those people of Israel he was planting the flag of truth he was getting them to think deeply what is most important to me is it the flavor of the foods of Egypt that we once knew or is it the favor of God is it actually coming again to go back to where we were or do we want to progress in the way that God has set out for us there's the challenge for them and this is what God has brought them face to face with in the providence here and isn't it interesting if you look at verse 5 here you see why the people spoke against

God and against Moses and then in verse 7 after many people had died through the poison of the serpents the people came to Moses and said we have sinned pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents for us here is the man that they had actually dismissed the man that they'd spoken against the man that they wanted to have no more to do with if you like because he had led them into this situation in the wilderness and they had come to regret this as they saw it but now that they're in a really difficult situation where do they go?

They go to Moses they go to a man of God they go to someone who is known to them as a man of God they go to someone who can pray to God for them they go to someone they know God has used in the past for their benefit and for their good they hurried to Moses where just a short time before that they had hurried to complain against him we hope that this difficult situation for us too will be a means of turning our minds to the things that are of the greatest importance to turn our minds to God to really think about what is most important to us what is most important to me what is to be given priority in my life is it worldly comforts is it just living life as I used to live it or is it what God is setting out for me as a way that he has chosen a way that he recommends a way that he knows is best for me maybe tonight you've been listening to these online services you've come to realise through this and the providence that we face and the difficulties and the challenges of it that the church is actually for you too that it is in these people of God and in this gospel especially that that is something that your own heart is now drawn towards and that's a great result if that's the case and I hope it will be that for many people that they will come like the people of

[27 : 04] Israel here to reflect in the middle of a real difficulty and a real challenge of how important God is and what they're doing here is really saying we need God we need God to help us now yes they had once used him as just something of almost an idol if you like as they had previously vowed a vow to the Lord the beginning of chapter 1 verse 2 if you will indeed give this people into my hand then I will devote their cities to destruction when they came to the king of Arat who lived in the Negev they're more or less saying they're making a bargain with God if you take us through this if you go as victory then we'll do this in return but that's all gone there's no longer bargaining with God no longer treating God in a way that's some kind of magic charm or turning to him just for the sake of it they need him and they know they need him and they know they can't do without him and God is telling us in this situation we're in this is what

I'm actually announcing to you through this providence you need me you can't properly look after your own life completely certainly not spiritually and so friends tonight I and you are being addressed by God and we're being told in this situation you need me you need me as much as ever before the people's anguish grew out of their disobedience and the rebelliousness but they came to confess their sin they came to see that they needed God that they couldn't go on without him their pain actually worked for their good and secondly I want to look at God's antidote the people's anguish and God's antidote they came to Moses we have sinned they said we have spoken against the Lord and against you pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us so Moses prayed for the people and the

Lord said to Moses make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live three things about that a likeness a lifting up and a looking there's a likeness first of

all in this antidote that God has given against the poison of the serpents there's a likeness because just as it was a serpent that caused the bite and therefore gave rise to this death so it has to be a serpent that they now look to in order to take away and cure them from that poison and there's a correspondence deliberately between the source of the poison and the cure for the poison and remember we read in John chapter 3 as Jesus said as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the son of man be lifted up it was through one human's disobedience Adam that death came upon the whole human race and it has to be through a human being that the cure is effected by God that's why the son of God took human nature our human nature he became one of us he became human so as to take on himself the challenge the task of curing us from the vile poison of sin and Jesus came into the world specifically to do that but not only did he become human he became human so that he would die for his people and indeed he took our sin and our death to himself because that's really exactly what you find in the son of man being lifted up when he was lifted up on the cross

Jesus was dying the death that we deserved not just a physical death but the death that God had against sin the death that is the wages of sin the death that is really nothing less than damnation which is what you and I deserve but what Jesus took to himself you see in order for us to be rescued from this terrible virus of sin worse than any virus that you find in this world I'm not belittling this terrible virus that's going about in saying that by any means but remember the virus of sin is a moral virus it's a virus that's caused us to be at odds with God that's brought the wrath and condemnation of God toward us and upon us and Jesus came to deliver us from that and as he came to deliver us from that he did so by taking our nature a correspondence between the one who is the cure and the one who brought the death in the first place as Romans chapter 5 puts it remember there Paul is dealing with the matter of

Adam and the relation that Adam bears to Jesus he says therefore as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous and that wonderful passage shows the links between Jesus the last Adam and the first Adam the Adam that fell in the Garden of Eden and brought disaster on the human race but we sinned in that too all sinned and come short of the glory of God and this is why it's so amazing that God took it on himself to become human in order to have a likeness a real humanity in which the price of sin was paid for our deliverance there's a likeness then secondly there's a lifting up because here Moses was commanded by

[33 : 25] God to make the serpent and to set it on a pole and Jesus as he found himself in the passage remember in John 3 he says as Moses lifted up the serpent even so must the son of man be lifted up the cross of Jesus is the lifting up it is more than just the cross of Jesus at the time of his death there's the cross of Jesus lifted up in the preaching of the gospel in the teaching of the gospel because that's exactly what is happening when you hear about Jesus and about his death about his being lifted up about who he is what he came into the world for he is lifted up in the preaching of the gospel that's what we're seeking to do even tonight lifting up this Jesus lifting up this Jesus so that you'll see him in the gospel and that you'll see him in the gospel as these people of Israel saw the serpent of bronze and as they looked towards that serpent they were cured that's why we have the gospel the cross of Jesus so central to the gospel the gospel is not really a moral tale the gospel is not primarily something that sets out a wonderful brilliant perfect human life a moral life that in its perfection gives us an example of what a human life should be it is that but it's much more than that it's a sacrifice for sin the cross of Jesus is the death we deserve the death that he took to himself it's far more than just an example to us it's foundational to all our hopes and God is pointing us there tonight lifting up

Jesus in the gospel so that we will look to him and that we will actually be saved so God's antidote there is a likeness secondly there's a lifting up and thirdly there is a looking here's another amazing thing the Lord said put this on a pole and everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live so Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole and if a serpent bit anyone he would look at the bronze serpent and live now it's interesting for a start that Moses was instructed to make this serpent and not just to pray for the people as he did he did that but God said you need to do more than just pray you need to act and so do we as well always need to act along with prayer I mean it's not tonight impossible for people to think well I'm a Christian God's looking after my life and sadly there are some call themselves Christians in the world and think they can do pretty much anything that's God going to look after them anyway we don't need this lockdown we don't need this protection against

this virus these means

God is my protector I'll be okay God is saying you pray and you use sensible means you use the means that God himself through people who know best advise us with regard to this virus and our protection and it's like that throughout the whole of life we need to pray we do pray but we need to act as well God said to Moses yes pray as he prayed for the people the Lord said make this fiery serpent that was to be the means of their salvation and he said whenever anybody was bitten if they looked towards the serpent that person was actually cured that person would live would not and the poison would not actually lead to their death and there are a number of things in that that's very interesting first of the word look that you find in verse nine there in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament if a serpent bit anyone he would look at the bronze serpent and live the word look there means the kind of look that's deliberate that's intent that's careful that's studied it's not just a casual glance towards it as if it's just really only that that's required they had to really look thoughtfully upon this provision that God had made for them they had to look upon it by using their minds as well as their faith they had to look towards it as God's own provision and study it and think about it as they did so and so it is with us in the gospel as well it's interesting isn't it that John 3 and verse 14 which corresponds to this passage says that

Jesus says there to Nicodemus that as Moses lifted up the serpent whosoever believes in the son of man shall not perish but live see what he's doing he's taking the word look in the Old Testament passage and as he's taken that portrait and hung it on the wall of the New Testament in his own person he is saying looking it is equivalent to believing looking actually means believing believing means looking intently looking carefully looking with concern and that's really what is important for us tonight that we come to believe in Jesus what's the alternative well what was the alternative to those people in the Old Testament for someone who was bitten the alternative was death if they didn't look as God instructed through God's kindness and the provision that he had given of this brazen serpent if they didn't follow that means that God had given them they died and so it is with Jesus too whoever says

Jesus believes in the son of man shall not perish but shall have everlasting life shall live the life that God has provided and produced for his people and that is still the stark alternative isn't it friends I have to say to myself tonight the fact that you're preaching the gospel is no guarantee in itself that you will be saved if you haven't looked to Jesus if you haven't come to believe in him to rest upon him to trust in him to entrust your life to him you will not be saved it doesn't matter what else you've achieved and as I say that to myself so the bible is saying it to you tonight and so God is recommending yet again Jesus in his death Jesus in his person as the means of our life our eternal life two things in conclusion

[40 : 26] God's antidote is a likeness there is a lifting up there is a looking there is the cure but notice firstly the cure is for anyone look at verse 9 there Moses made the bronze serpent and set it on a pole and if a serpent bit anyone he would look at the bronze serpent and live and the equivalent to that is in Christ's own words to Nicodemus in the John 3 passage whoever believes in him will not perish but will have everlasting life it's a cure for anyone and everyone who wants it it's there for them remember these people had just so recently complained so grudgingly against God and against Moses and yet here is God providing this cure for them

God didn't turn round and say look you were actually in the forefront of this rebellion and here I am see you coming and coming to think that looking at this serpent is for you yes God is saying it's for you anyone who was bitten by the serpent if they look to the bronze serpent they lived and that's the wonder of Jesus and the beauty of Jesus it's as full and as free as that whoever believes in him will not perish but will have everlasting life second point and the final point is this this likeness this lifting up this looking this cure that's for anyone it's also a cure that's so simple just a look that's all it took if anyone was bitten he would look at the bronze serpent and live how simple is that just to look towards what

God had provided with a look of intent with a proper believing look and they were cured the poison was gone I'm sure there were many people in Israel some at least that would say that was ridiculous but that was completely against human reason how could you possibly believe that such a simple thing as a serpent made of bronze lifted up on a pole looking at it would actually lead to being cured of the poison of the fiery serpent but that's how it was many many sadly in the world tonight despite what God is telling us and shouting at us through this coronavirus and many people that say believing in a man who died over 2,000 years ago on a cross that's ridiculous how can that

possibly do anything for me in the complexity of my life well here's what John Calvin said in his commentary on this passage in Numbers nothing would at first sight appear more unreasonable than that a brazen serpent should be made the sight of which should extirpate the deadly poison but this apparent absurdity was far better suited to render the grace of God conspicuous than if there had been anything natural in the remedy in order therefore that they might perceive themselves to be rescued from death by the mere grace of God alone a mode of preservation was chosen so discordant with human reason as to be almost a subject for laughter and Calvin goes on but it is the peculiar virtue of faith that we should willingly be fools in order that we may learn to be wise only from the mouth of God you see

God's foolishness as Paul describes it in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians the foolishness of the cross is wiser than men and God's weakness is stronger than the power of men and tonight this cross this lifting up God dealing with the rising death toll in Israel as it speaks into our world tonight don't look anywhere else for a solution to your human problem and mine problem of your heart the problem of your sin the problem of your relationship with God the problem of the outcome of eternity for you don't look anywhere else but to Jesus don't look elsewhere because all you need is already in himself may God bless his word to us now we're going to conclude by singing tonight from Psalm 37 that's in the Scottish

[45 : 57] Psalter Psalm 37 if you're using these blue psalm books this is on page 253 and we're going to sing from verse 7 to the end of verse 11 to the tune Grafenberg rest in the Lord and patiently wait for him do not fret for him who prospering in his way success in sin doth get we'll sing down as far as verse 11 rest in the Lord and patiently wait for him do not fret on him who prospering in his way success in sin doth get do thou from anger cease and wrath see thou forsake also fret not thyself in any wise that evil thou shouldst do for those that evil doers shall be cut off and fall but those that wait upon the

Lord the earth inherit shall come for yet a little while and then the wicked shall not be his place thou shalt consider well but if thou shalt not see but by inheritance the earth the meek ones shall possess they also shall delight themselves in unabundant peace thank you again for joining us this evening at this service we trust that you may know God's blessing in the week ahead please continue to stay safe and continue to trust in the Lord continue to help each other through this time of crisis continue to love one another pray for one another to be there for one another and so may God bless you wherever you are in the world this evening let's conclude now with the benediction 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 see you then perché let's pray come 1 o uw dem dem