

And so we thank you for that precious truth that we have, a truth that may bring rejection to us as a people, may bring mockery, may bring persecution, but yet a truth, O Lord, that we hold dear to, for there is nothing in this world that compares to knowing Christ Jesus as our Lord.

And so help us, Lord, as we are your people here, to hold fast to your truth, to hear your voice through it, instructing us, building us up, challenging us and rebuking us as that is required, but all the time building us up in the faith.

And we pray for those who are maybe hearing your voice calling, but not understanding it, that they would have understanding, have understanding of the one who is speaking, the one who is calling, the one who is saying, come to me and I will give you rest.

We know, Lord, that even as your word goes out, whether it's here or far and wide, there are so many who are deaf, who do not listen, who do not want to listen to your word.

[9 : 12] But we thank you that we are reminded that you have a power with you, the Holy Spirit, the one that you have poured out into this world, the one who brings us to yourself, the one who this evening throughout this place and all places where your word goes out is ministering in a powerful way.

And we pray, Lord, for the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to open ears, to hear the word of God. And so we do pray, Lord, that you will bless all the proclamation of your word today, the ministry of it, near and far, to all ends of the earth.

We thank you that your word goes out far and wide. And we do thank you too, Lord, that your word reminds us of the privilege of prayer, the privilege of coming to you in that way, calling upon your name, coming just with the words of our hearts and pouring out our hearts to you.

We thank you that as we are gathered here just now that you hear every prayer offered up, even the groanings of our hearts are not, they're all known unto you.

And we thank you that nothing is hidden from you in that way. And even before we open our mouths, Lord, you know the words that we will speak. And so we come to you this night anew.

[10 : 35] We come thankful, thankful that you hear us and that you listen to us, that you answer our prayers. And we pray, Lord, that you will help us to pray in that way that your will would be done.

We so often come thinking we know the answer to all our problems, that we know what we need and how things should be done. But your answer is maybe so often different to what we might have wanted.

or what we might have expected. The answers are not always easy for us. But we thank you that your ways are greater than ours, that your understanding of our needs is so much more than even we think we know ourselves.

And so, Lord, guide us in our prayers to ask what is right according to your grace and to your mercy. And we do pray for one another, Lord. We thank you that that is a great privilege we enjoy, to be able to remember one another in all our different needs.

We thank you that we can remember those unable to be with us for a great many reasons. We thank you that you are with people near and far who are going through difficulties and trials of different kinds.

[11 : 49] We thank you that we can commit them to you in prayer, knowing that you are near to them, knowing that they can call upon you themselves as well. And even if they feel unable, that there are many people praying for them, those who are unwell, those who are confined to their homes, those who are struggling in different ways.

Oh, Lord, you know each one of us and we thank you that together, as we offer up our prayers, that we can commit them to you. And we do know, Lord, the struggles in this world are so many.

We are such a fragile people. We are so easily tempted and let us stray. We are weak in ourselves in so many ways. But we thank you that you are able to give strength.

And we pray, Lord, for those who feel a particular weakness just now, for you to be their strength and their help. We remember your world as well, oh Lord.

We pray for our nation at this time. We pray, Lord, for those who govern us and rule over us in different ways. Remember our royal family.

[12 : 58] We continue to pray for them, for our king, as he continues to go through treatment at this time. Lord, may your hand be upon him for good. may you restore him in health and be with his family at this time too in all their different needs.

Lord, give them your wisdom. Give them your strength. Give them your presence, oh Lord, to know that they are but feeble in themselves, but that you are a God who is full of mercy.

Lord, watch over them, watch over our prime minister and first minister and the governments. We pray, Lord, for wisdom and guidance in these days.

We know, Lord, that our world is just in such dire straits at this time with so much grief and anguish all around us, so much fear and worry.

Lord, we pray, have mercy upon us and come in your power, Lord. Revive us, restore us, we pray. Hear your praying people throughout the world, Lord, those who are persecuted for their faith, those who are in many parts of the world unknown by many and heard of by many and yet known unto you, Lord.

[14:17] We pray for your mercy and your grace upon us. We pray, Lord, for ourselves as a people here in the week ahead. Go before us in it, Lord, lead us, encourage us and strengthen us day by day.

Pray for our fellowship this evening and thank you for Donnie who will be with us. We thank you for his life and testimony of your grace to him and through him to many others as well.

We pray for him and his family, Lord, bless him and be with him. Use him even this evening as he comes to minister to us, to encourage us and to build us up. May you bless him and be with him in that.

So go before us, Lord, in all things as we commit ourselves into your hands now, as we open up your word and your truth, as we sing your praise, may we do all for your glory as we thank you for all your precious gifts to us.

May we be ever thankful and ever praise your name. And we ask all, acknowledging all our sin as we fall short so often, Lord, have mercy we pray, cleanse us anew and we ask all these things in Jesus' precious name.

[15:28] Amen. We can sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 138 in the Singed Psalms version, page 179.

Psalm 138. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 6, page 179.

The tune is Rockingham. I'll praise you, Lord, with all my heart before you, the gods. I'll sing your praise. I'll bow towards your holy place and bless your holy name always.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 6 to God's praise. Amen. I'll praise you, Lord, with all my heart Before the Lord and Savior's place I vow to watch your holy place And bless your holy name away I wish you for your faithfulness And for your God and love, O Lord

For over all things you have raised Your holy name and faithful word The very day I call to hear You give an answer to my need You lead me whole within myself With beauty so you strengthen me O Lord let all that kings embrace

[18:22] When from your love they hear your word Let there may stone the ways of God Are raised and lowly of the Lord Although the Lord God dwells on high The holy person he protects Where else the blood that Lord be upon He knows the heart of the hand he cares

We're going to read together in the Old Testament And in 1 Samuel 1 Samuel chapter 3 You'll find this around page 274 Of the church Bibles 1 Samuel chapter 3 And we can read the whole of this chapter Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord Under Eli And the word of the Lord was rare in those days There was no frequent vision At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim So that he could not see Was lying down in his own place The lamp of God had not yet gone out And Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord Where the ark of God was Then the Lord called Samuel

And he said, Here I am And ran to Eli and said, Here I am For you called me But he said, I did not call Lie down again So he went and lay down And the Lord called again Samuel And Samuel arose And went to Eli And said, Here I am For you called me But he said, I did not call you My son, lie down again Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord And the word of the Lord Had not yet been revealed to him And the Lord called Samuel again The third time And he arose and went to Eli And said, Here I am For you called me Then Eli perceived That the Lord was calling the young man Therefore Eli said to Samuel Go, lie down And if he calls you You shall say Speak, Lord For your servant hears

So Samuel went And lay down in his place The Lord came and stood calling As at other times Samuel, Samuel And Samuel said Speak For your servant hears Then the Lord said to Samuel Behold, I am about to do A thing in Israel At which the two ears Of everyone who hears It will tingle

On that day I will fulfill against Eli All that I have spoken Concerning his house From beginning to end And I declare to him And I declare to him that I am about To punish his house forever For the iniquity that he knew Because his sons were blaspheming God And he did not restrain them Therefore I swear to the house of Eli That the iniquity of Eli's house Shall not be atoned for By sacrifice or offering forever Samuel lay until morning Then he opened the doors Of the house of the Lord And Samuel was afraid To tell the vision to Eli But Eli called Samuel And said Samuel, my son And when And he said Here I am And Eli said What was it That he told you?

[22 : 56] Do not hide it from me May God do so to you And more also If you hide anything from me Of all that he told you So Samuel told him everything And hid nothing from him And he said It is the Lord Let him do what seems good to him And Samuel grew And the Lord was with him And let none of his words Fall to the ground And all Israel From Dan to Beersheba Knew that Samuel was established As a prophet of the Lord And the Lord appeared again At Shiloh For the Lord revealed himself To Samuel at Shiloh By the word of the Lord Amen And may God bless that reading From his word We'll sing again Before we turn back To this passage In Psalm 130 In the Scottish Psalter Page 421 Psalm 130

We'll sing the whole of this psalm We'll sing the whole of this psalm We'll sing the whole of this psalm To thee I cry Lord from the depths To thee I cry And to my supplications voice Give an attentive ear We'll sing the whole of this psalm Psalm 130 To God's praise Lord from the depths To thee I cry Lord from the depths To thee I cry Thy voice for you Thou hear Unto my supplications Lord Give an attentive ear

Lord who shall stand If the Lord Choose my name For iniquity And yet will be For inlessness But be here The giving us thee I pray for God Lord from the preparers On my soul My soul Thou hath My soul Thou hath My own LI dec Whether My soul Thou hath May Yes Lord For match For Lord the Lord. I say more than they have to watch the glory might to see.

Let Israel open the Lord. I , And from all his lilies, the Israel shall redeem.

[27 : 26] We turn back to our reading in 1 Samuel, chapter 3. 1 Samuel, chapter 3. We'll be looking at the whole of this chapter.

We'll just read at the beginning again at verse 1. Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

There was no frequent vision. The word of the Lord was rare in those days. It may sound quite strange to us to read in God's word itself, to read of a time when God had blessed his people so much and been with them through so much, as we're reading here in 1 Samuel, to read these words.

It says the word of the Lord was rare in those days. There was no frequent vision. Because what does it mean when something is rare or scarce?

We hear it used in so many different ways. We hear it used quite often these days, things that are becoming more rare or scarce. We hear it about resources that are becoming scarce.

[28 : 47] We hear it about jewels or things that are worth a lot of money becoming more rare. Or animals or birds become rare to be seen in different places.

There are times when we hear these words used. And what it means is that there's something going on, as it were, behind the scenes that is causing them to become rare.

And very often it's because, in the instances of a resource, a jewel or animals, that it's something that's very often of great value to people.

People use these resources. They want these resources. And they become rare because they become so popular. Now, we're not here to speak about animal rights or anything like that.

But it's interesting when you look at some of the things that are written and said about the world in which we live. And things are becoming scarce and rare. One animal protection website puts it like this.

[29 : 50] All we have to do is to do exactly what we have been doing.

We are in the middle of a major mass extinction event. In our willful pursuit of excess, we are pushing the other species off a cliff into non-existence.

That's talking about the animal kingdom and the devastation that's being caused by our pursuit of excess.

But can we not think about how that would apply to the gospel as well? And especially as we look at this passage together this evening, when you see this word used in verse 1, the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

Why is it that we see it in our own day today?

[31 : 04] Could we not say, today, the word of the Lord is rare? Why is that? Well, as that website said, that if we want to see animals perishing and going extinct, what we have to do is just exactly what we have been doing.

What we see right in our own eyes, as it were, is what we see in the scriptures as well. It's exactly what was taking place in the days of this young man Samuel and Eli, who had been ministering in the temple with him.

Hannah, Samuel's faithful mother, who you read of at the beginning of this book, who gave birth to Samuel in a miraculous way, and how she devoted Samuel to the service of the Lord.

There was good people, but on the whole, it was a generation that was doing what was right in their own eyes. The word of the Lord was rare because it was being rejected and just pushed away.

In the days of the judges, the time of the judges, that's this period here. With Samuel, we have the book of Judges just before this, and it says in the book of Judges chapter 21, verse 25, in those days there was no king in Israel.

[32 : 34] And then it goes on to say, everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

And isn't that the kind of world in which we live today? A world where the word of God is rare. We don't need it.

We don't want it. We don't see how precious it is because we just do what is right in our own eyes. We all have our own opinions. Friends, we all have our own ideas, and no one can tell me how to live my life otherwise.

And especially not the word of God. And what's the result of doing what is right in our own eyes? What's the result?

What's the consequences? Well, we see it time and again throughout Scripture, and we see it in our own day as well. The chaos that ensues.

[33 : 37] The moral decline that comes. The things that were once held precious are no longer precious. Things like the sanctity of life.

Things like looking after people all around us. It all becomes about me. And number one. And the result is the word of the Lord becomes rare.

Rarely do we hear it spoken publicly. Rarely do we hear it mentioned as something that is so important for us. Rarely do we hear a call for prayer.

Rarely do we hear the word of God. And for it to become rare is to keep doing as we are doing. Doing exactly what we think is right in our own eyes.

But sometimes we need change. And today, just like in Samuel's day, we need change. Change in the sense of not pushing God's word away, but actually coming to listen to what he's saying.

[34 : 54] The word of the Lord was rare. But thankfully, the word of the Lord was there. And God was about to call in a powerful way.

I want us to see three things from this chapter. Three things that we can think of for our own day as well. And the first is just this, the word was rare.

The second thing is, the word was calling. And the third thing is, the word was not wasted. The word was rare.

The word was calling. And the word was not wasted. And that's what we see about this young man, Samuel. And how God used him in the midst of everything that was going on to be faithful to God's word.

And to pray that we as a people would have that courage of Samuel too, that faithfulness of Samuel to listen to God, to hear God, and to do as the Lord is asking.

[36 : 09] So let's see first of all how the word of the Lord was rare. Hannah gave birth to Samuel. But we ask, what kind of world did she bring Samuel into?

Well, as you read through the book of Judges and as you read in the early chapters of Samuel here and the book surrounding it, this time period was a period when God was being shunned and rejected.

The amazing things that he had done for his people were being forgotten. forgotten. New leaders, new rulers were coming in and the old were being forgotten.

And with them was all that the Lord had done. The ways that he had led them out of Egypt through the wilderness into the promised land. The way that he had been with them throughout and blessed them in so many ways.

The warnings that he gave to them of not forgetting the Lord had become a reality. they had started to forget the Lord and just, as Judges says, do what was right in their own eyes.

[37 : 20] We forget God at our peril. It was a time of spiritual neglect. It was a time of just God's word just being pushed away subtly maybe at first, gently and slowly, but more and more it was just getting pushed out of society.

All of these things were taking place in these days just as they are in our own day. God's word just subtly pushed out little by little.

But what's coming in is what's important as well. It's the decline in society. The way people are treated. You see it with Eli the priest here who had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

They were turned away from God and just doing everything immoral in life. And Eli was not saying anything to them. It's almost as you look at Eli's life, he's old now, he's become blind as we've read here and he's just so discouraged by what he's seeing.

It's almost like he's lost heart, he's lost hope. And as we'll see later, what comes from God's word almost doesn't surprise him. But this is the kind of society that they were living in just decline all around them.

[38 : 43] There were no great preachers, there were no great prophets. So that as we see God calling Samuel in this chapter, it's a time when God hasn't really spoken.

The word of the Lord was rare, it says in verse 1, and there was no frequent vision. God had left them to their own devices.

God had just given them over to their own heart's desire at this point. What kind of world had Hannah brought Samuel into?

A very similar world to the one in which we live in ourselves. but that challenges us to ask a question. What kind of world do we want to leave for our children?

Or our grandchildren? Or great-grandchildren? What kind of world do we want them to have? Not just in an environmental sense, as we see so much being said of today, but when it comes to the word of God.

[39 : 55] Because it's often asked in the terms of the greed of mankind. What kind of world are we leaving our children and our grandchildren? How we're destroying so much of this world through greed and how the climate is changing and all of these things that come to the fore.

But the word of the Lord is rare. it's not being heard in the sense of what are we leaving for our grandchildren? So what needs to change?

Just this week there was the world's richest people list produced. Elon Musk had been at the top number one position for some time now, but he's moved down to number two.

He's been replaced by Jeff Bezos as the director, the main man in Amazon as the world's richest person. And you look at the value of these people and it just fills you with a sense of horror. 200 billion dollars, Jeff Bezos. 198 billion dollars, Elon Musk. These figures are just crazy.

[41 : 14] and you think to yourself, what needs to change in our world is that the rich don't just continue getting richer, but that this is somehow shared throughout our world, that there is the need recognized all around us and that people are taken care of.

We see that as something that would need to change. change. But what about the sense of the word of God being rare? What needs to change for that?

Well, again, it's a heart change. It's not about giving away all our possessions in that sense, but recognizing what is precious and what is important.

There was an old Christian man who knew he didn't have long to live and he wanted to put everything in order before he would pass away. And he came to the point where he was able to say, I've now dealt with everything that I own.

All my property is to be shared out through the family. But he said, there's one more thing I wish I could give them, and that is faith in Jesus Christ.

[42 : 33] Everything that he had, his greatest desire was that he could give his children faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in the Christ that he knew himself.

And he said, if they had that, and I had not given them a single penny, they would have been rich. And if they had not that, and I had given them all the wealth in the world, they would be poor indeed.

Our hearts need to change. The word of the Lord was rare in Samuel's day. It needed a change of heart among the people.

And in our day, it needs a change of heart as well. To see what is precious, to see what is important. We can mourn the lack of the word in people's lives or in public places today.

And we should. We mourn over it. But we can also make the most of the opportunities that we have. We have the word of God.

[43 : 47] And when you look at verse three here, although the word of the Lord was rare, in verse three it says, the lamp of God had not yet gone out.

God had not removed the lamp stand from their midst. Something you see reflected in the book of Revelation as it speaks to the churches there.

The lamp stand being removed. It's like God taking everything away from us. But here we read, the lamp of God had not yet gone out. And praise God today, the lamp of God has not gone out.

light. The word of the Lord is rare, but there is still that light. When you look at the church down through the generations, you think of the New Testament and the book of Romans.

It's so similar to this time of Samuel. Again, God gave them over to the desires of their own hearts, it says in Romans chapter one.

[44 : 49] Why? Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie. They pushed the word of God out. You see it down through the centuries in the 16th century, the time of the Reformation.

It was a dark time. The word of the Lord was rare. And what was the motto in the 16th century at that time of Reformation? After darkness, light.

The lamp of God had not gone out. And that's true for ourselves today as well. The word is rare, but we praise God the lamp has not gone out.

And that's what God is about to remind the people of here in Samuel's day. Samuel would become a prophet who would speak God's word to the people.

The commentator Dale Ralph Davis commenting on this passage, he has a play on words that's very clever. He says this, God's people find no profit without a prophet.

[46 : 00] And God is about to profitably profit them. What's he saying there? No profit in the sense of no gain.

God's people find no profit, no gain, without a prophet, one who speaks the word of God. but God is about to profitably, i.e.

Samuel would be the prophet who will speak, profit them. He will give them gain. He will give them the word of God. And that's what we have for our own day as well.

We have no profit without the word of God. And the only way to profit is through the word of God. and the word of the Lord stands forever.

The word was rare, but the lamp had not gone out. And so the second thing we see is the word of God was calling.

[47 : 08] About to lose something, what do we do? We have to do something differently. And in the midst of the deafening silence, of the absence of God here in 1 Samuel, God is about to call.

God is about to speak. And what needs to happen then? What needs to happen when God does call? We need to listen.

We need to listen. And we need to recognize who it is that is speaking. God is calling. And what's interesting here is that when the Lord called Samuel three times, he didn't recognize it was God.

He ran to Samuel and said, here I am. And Samuel said, I didn't call you, just go back. How did he recognize the voice of God calling?

Well, it just shows us what had come, become of the temple. It was a place where God was not worshipped, where God was not heard.

[48 : 22] So he didn't recognize the voice of God. He thought it was Samuel calling him. Two things of interest to us here. One is Samuel himself.

You read in verse seven, after the second time that he'd called, now Samuel did not yet know the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

He didn't understand. He didn't know the word of the Lord. Even though he'd been around it for so long, he still didn't know it.

And I think there's a warning to ourselves there as well. Whatever age and stage we're at, whether we're young, middle-aged or old, how often we can be around the word of God.

How often we can hear the word of God and yet still not understand. We can just let it flow past us, go away from us.

[49 : 23] But there's also a challenge to ourselves as believers too. How do we deal with a world in which the word of God is rare? What are our expectations?

What are our assumptions? Christians? When we speak to people around us, we so often think they'll know what the Bible is. They'll know when I speak to them about the word of God.

If I tell them to read in the book of Matthew or Mark or Luke or John, we assume they'll know. When we speak of characters in the scriptures, whether it's Samuel, whether it's David, whether it's Paul, Noah, Ruth, whoever, we expect they'll know.

Even when we speak of God and Jesus, we think they will know who we're speaking about. We assume they know. And this may come as a shock, but there are people around us who do not know, who do not know what the word of God is, who do not know who Paul or Noah or Samuel, who they were or what they mean.

And sadly, people who hear the word God and who hear the word Jesus and think of it only as a swear word. That's all they know of these names.

[50 : 54] We think these people cannot exist in our own midst. They do. And so there's a challenge there for us. how do we deal with a world in which the word of the Lord is rare?

Well, like Samuel here, like Eli, was to come back to the word of God, to look at the word of God, to study the word of God, to be able to share the word of God in an informed and an instructed way.

just this past Wednesday at our Bible study in the hall next door, we started a study, six steps to speaking about Jesus. And one of the questions I asked at the start was, hands up if you want to be able to speak to people about Jesus.

and of course we all do. But if you ask who feels able to speak about Jesus, we so often feel that we can't.

And so that challenges us. If we want to be a light in our community, a people who witness in our community, are we learning from the word of God?

[52 : 17] Are we trusting the word of God? Are we listening to the word of God ourselves? Samuel was young.

But it doesn't matter what age we are. We cannot just assume that people will have a knowledge of everything that the Bible teaches. So we need to learn together.

The word of the Lord is rare. Today, people don't know it. And so we have to teach it and come around it in a way that people can understand.

But what else do we notice here? Well, we see that Samuel was called by God by name. And this is something that should thrill us.

this is something that we should marvel at because God today knows our name. He knows your name.

[53 : 22] He knows my name. And what he does is he still calls us. God knows your name. He knows you personally. Maybe tonight you say, but he's not calling me.

I haven't heard God call out my name. Samuel here we read of, he heard, he heard someone who he thought initially was Eli saying, Samuel.

but it was God. But I haven't heard God calling me by name. But he does. And you ask, well, how? Well, he calls you through his word. He speaks to each of us here this night by his word. In John, the gospel of John, Jesus reminds us of this.

He says, my sheep hear my voice. And I know them. And they follow me because they hear my voice. And I give them eternal life.

[54 : 29] And they will never perish. And no one will snatch them out of my hand. The word of God calls you. And what is it saying tonight?

It is saying to come. To come and hear what I have to say. To come and hear what the word of God is telling you.

It is talking about a world that is perishing. A world that is in chaos. Days when people are doing right in their own eyes. That's Samuel's day.

That's our day. The word of God is relevant. The word of God is speaking. And as God's word speaks, what is it telling us?

It's telling us to respond. To come and listen to what God has to say. Samuel was young.
[55 : 29] Eli was old. But he knew what Samuel had to do. He said Eli recognized that the Lord was calling Samuel.

Excuse me. In verse 8 he said, the third time he had been called, here I am for you called me. Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the young man.

Therefore Eli said to Samuel, go and lie down and if he calls you shall say, speak Lord for your servant hears. He has the wisdom to guide Samuel. And that's what we need to do as well, to guide people, to listen to God and to understand how God is calling and how God is speaking to us in a powerful way.

The word of God is calling tonight. But the question is, are you listening? Are you listening to what the Lord is saying?

the final thing I just want to take from this is the word was not wasted. The word was not wasted. You see it at the end of this chapter in verse 19, but it ties into everything that comes before it.

[56 : 53] Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. He let none of his words fall to the ground.

Nothing was wasted. We often say to ourselves, maybe, what's the point? People aren't listening. But nothing is wasted with God. Is it possible to say no to God? Eli told Samuel to say, here I am. God is calling you and he responded in a positive way. But is it possible to say no to God? If God is calling your name, can you say no?

Of course it is. It happens every time the word of God is preached. People will say no. But that's disobedience.

[57 : 55] because God is calling you, your response should be the same as Samuel. Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

But we say no. I won't listen. I don't want to listen to what God has to say. It's of no interest to me. And you have examples all the way through Scripture where they haven't listened to the voice of God.

Jonah is one great example for us. He was called by God to go to Nineveh to proclaim the word of God there. And he went completely the opposite direction.

But what happened to him? How did he get on running away from God? Did it all go well? No. Of course not. And if you try and run away from God, if you don't listen to him, is it going to end well with you?

No, it's not. That's a stark reality that's made plain as God speaks through Samuel to Eli. And it's almost as if Eli was just waiting and expecting this.

[59 : 12] The message that God had through Samuel to Eli was that his house, his people, were going to be afflicted. They had rejected God, they had shunned God.

And that's the warning to ourselves as well. If we will not listen to God, there are consequences. And the word of God makes clear for us, on the one hand, God calls us to Jesus to come to him, that we might have eternal life.

God will perish. But if we don't listen, what's on the other side of the coin? We will perish. We will perish eternally.

Because we have not listened to the voice of God. Even though we've been hearing it, even though we've been under it, we have said no. And God is saying to us, even tonight again, do you hear my voice?

Do you hear my voice calling you? Will you not listen? God's word is never wasted.

[60 : 29] We are reminded of that in Isaiah 55, where he speaks of the word of God accomplishing every purpose for which he has sent it out. And what's its purpose here tonight?

it's to call you to him. To come to him. And God is speaking. Of that there is no doubt.

Again and again he speaks to us. And you say, but how? How does he speak? Well, he speaks to you through the scriptures. He speaks to you through the word of God.

He calls you to himself. But he speaks to you in another way as well. through providence. Through things that happen in this world. Whether it's to you or to others that are always reminders to us that God is speaking.

That he's reminding us that our time here is short. Whether it's illness or death or tragedies throughout the world. He's speaking to us again and again.

[61 : 39] but are you listening? And that's not just for those who are sitting here maybe no thought of God.

That's to all of us. You see who he was speaking to here in Samuel. He was speaking to Samuel who was ministering in the temple.

Speaking to him who had heard the word of God for many years. and as a reminder to ourselves as a church as a people to awaken to what God is saying.

To awaken to the world in which we're living in. A world where the word of the Lord is rare. Where the people in this world are perishing.

But where we have the lamp of God that has not yet gone out. And that we have this to share with the world.

[62 : 35] Listen to what God is saying. The missionary C.T. Studd he once said this I had known about Jesus dying for me but I had never understood that.

If he had died for me then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption he said means buying back so that if I belong to him either I am a thief and I keep that which isn't mine or else I have to give up everything to God.

When I came to see that Jesus had died for me it didn't seem hard to give up all for him. I said I will do it for your glory.

I will do it for your praise. What a challenge in those words. Being bought back redeemed by God we're not our own.

We don't belong to ourselves we belong to him. He has redeemed us. He has bought us back with a price.

[63 : 51] Christ gave himself for us. It's not for us to say we will do what's right in our own eyes. It's for us to say we will do your will and delight in that.

To be called a thief because we're not giving to Christ what is his and what he deserves. To give our lives to him our all to him as Samuel had been given by his mother for the service of the Lord and as Samuel lived in that service to him listening to the voice of the Lord as he grew in stature and none of the words were wasted through him may it be our prayer to have that obedience to recognize to the call to listen to come to believe and to share the word of God the word is rare but people need it because without it they are perishing and so as we have it let us speak of the wonder of

Christ who would save us let us pray our father in heaven we thank you that even with your word rare in our midst that you are a God who is speaking and help us to hear your voice Lord whatever our circumstances to hear your call to us and to come to you and to live for you and we ask it for Jesus sake Amen Psalm 43 is our final singing in the Sing Psalms version page 54 Psalm 43 we'll sing the last three stanzas from verse 3 the tune is Old 100 send your light forth and your truth let them direct me in your grace and bring me to your holy hill and to your sacred dwelling place we'll sing verse 3 to 5 to

God's praise oh send your life for time to and let thy hand be in your face coming me to your holy hill to your sacred dwelling place bring to God's of the Bible home to God my joy almighty light and

I will praise you with a heart oh God you are my home might why are you the death my heart oh I see And my God is thee.

[68 : 12] After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.