

# Friday Evening English

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Date: 26 August 2016

Preacher: Rev Iain Thomson

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you very much for your warm welcome. It's a pleasure to be here with you again and a great blessing to worship the Lord together as we gather in this way.

Let's commence by singing to God's praise in Psalm 23. So we have it in the Psalter, that's page 229. We're going to sing together with our familiar words to us and an affirmation of faith by the psalmist and we'll join together in praise of God and sing in these words.

The Lord is the Lord, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness even for his own name's sake.

He though I walk in death's dark veil, yet will I fear none ill, for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes, and my head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be. Let's lift our voices in praise to God. We're standing to sing these words together, the whole of Psalm 23 as we have it on page 229.

[ 1 : 30 ] The Lord's my shepherd, I.

The Lord's my shepherd, I.

My soul he doth restore again, and he to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness.

He'll find his own name's sake.

For thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. With me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still.

[ 3 : 24 ] My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. My table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still.

my table thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. I am one of my openings, and thy rod and staff may comfort still. Essence of my foes, my head thou does with oil anoint, And my cup overflows, goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me, and in the south forevermore My dwelling place shall be Let's unite our hearts and gather into prayer. Let's pray together.

Amen. Gracious and most holy God, we bless and praise your holy name, That it is our providence tonight to be gathered with your people, And to be singing your praise.

We bless you, Lord, for the stillness of these moments, In which we become so conscious of your presence, And the blessing through the ministry of your own Holy Spirit.

[ 5 : 35 ] And even, how Lord, it is your great desire and pleasure For your people to meet together, And to worship your holy name. We take upon our lips the sacrifice of our praise.

We bring words before you That are so familiar to us, That are part of our very identity, And who we are. We come before you, Lord, With the same words that the psalmist Sung and prayed before you.

Affirming his faith in his great shepherd, The one who led him by the still waters, And the green pastures. And yet he was a man who found many difficulties and hardships in life.

Often he felt persecuted, And often he saw enemies rise up against him. And yet even this psalm records these things, In the presence of his foes, He furnished a table for him, And even in death's dark valley.

It was comfort, Through your staff and your rod, Your very presence with him, Through all the days of his life. And we bless you, Lord, In the moments where we feel our own experience, Speaking against us, That we can turn to you, And know that you never leave us, And you never forsake us, Regardless of the difficulties that we face, And the obstacles in our path, The situations that humble us, And bring us on our knees, Before a holy God.

[ 7 : 20 ] These are the situations, In which we grow, In the knowledge of our own limitation, And in the knowledge and the sufficiency, Of a sovereign and majestic God, Who is with us, And who is with us, In the midst of every experience, Shaping and molding us, And teaching us the greater realities, Of the kingdom of God, And the way of the servant, Who washed the feet of his disciples, And left an example for us.

Help us then, Oh Lord, To use our own experience, To encourage one another, To prefer one another, To minister in love, To each other, To fulfill the law of God, And not only this, But that we would witness, To our watching world, Of everything that we have found precious, About Christ, And we pray Lord, That you would grant to us, To realize the great wonder, Of your purpose for this world, The psalmist knew these things, When he cried, Let the nations praise you, Let the people praise you, And we pray that you would send forth laborers, For the harvest, For the harvest is plentiful, And the laborers are few, So we thank you, And bless you, That you have furnished your church, For those, Who are willing to serve, Willing to make sacrifice, Of personal gain, To invest their lives, In serving the bride, The church of Jesus Christ, We pray for your servants here, We pray that you would encourage them, And bless them, In their work, That they would know, That their labor is not in vain, That they would find even these days, Of fellowship, And communion, An encouragement to their own souls, And an encouragement to the people of God, We thank you that you have other people, In this place, In this town, In this island, And every desire we have for ourselves, We pray for them also, That your church would increase, And grow, And that your people would be blessed, And that many would come, And seek the Lord for themselves, We thank you that you are a covenant God, And that you remember families, We pray Lord for the young, In our churches, And in our communities, And we thank you for everyone, In their youth, Who bears the yoke, We pray that you would encourage them, For our own saviour, Told us not to forbid the children, But to let them come, And we pray Lord, That you would protect them, In the midst of a hostile environment, Where there is a war waging, All around us, Which we ourselves, Pay the scars off, We pray Lord, That you would equip them, With the full armour of God, And that you would raise up, A generation for yourself, That would know the Lord, We pray that you would bless us, As we gather together, We pray for those, Who are unable to be with us, Those who are, Serving in their own place, And station of work, Those who are unwell, Those in hospital, Or in homes, We pray that you would bless them, Where they are, And that we ourselves, Would be mindful of them, In the midst of their own providence, And we pray that you would bless this town,

And our islands, And our nation, We pray Lord, That you would grant, Genuine repentance, In our midst, And in our day, That we would find the joy of the Lord, And follow our saviour, Jesus Christ, And that we ourselves, Would engage in self-denial, And cross-bearing, We pray too Lord, For those, Who are afflicted, Even in the last few days, We see, The natural occurrence, Of earthquakes, And the devastation, That has been felt, Even in Italy, And we pray Lord, In our nation, That has often been hard, To the gospel, That they would find, In their pain and suffering, The opportunity to find, The one who will bring, Comfort to his people, And tenderly abide, We pray for areas of, War, And we're so conscious Lord, Of the refugee crisis, And we pray that you would help us, Not to have hard hearts, But that we ourselves, Would embrace, The calling of our generation,

[ 12 : 04 ] Be near to us, As a people we pray, In these times, And even Lord, As we come to you, That we would have engaged, Fully, In this spiritual discipline, Of self examination, That we would engage, In repentance of our sin, And fully laying hold of Christ, Knowing him, Loving him, And embracing the opportunities, To remember, That he died for our sins, Bless each one of us, Then we pray, And encourage, Your people here, And all we ask is, In Christ's name, Amen, Amen, Let's continue, In our praise of God, From Psalm 16, And this time, From Sing Psalms, So if you turn to page 17, In the blue psalm book, We'll pick up, At verse 6, And to the end of the psalm, Psalm 16, At verse 6, In Sing Psalms, The land allotted me, Is in a pleasant sight,

Surely my inheritance, To me, Is a delight, I'll praise the Lord, My God, Whose counsel guides my choice, And even in the night, My heart, Who calls instructions, Voice, Before me, Constantly, I set the Lord alone, Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown, So on to the end of the psalm, This is verses 6 to 11, Of Psalm 16, And Sing Psalms, We'll stand to praise God, Amen, The land allotted me, Is in a pleasant sight, And surely my inheritance, Who turns to be, Is a delight, I'll praise the Lord, My God, His counsel guides my choice, And even in the night, My heart recalls its actuous voice, Before me, Before me, Because I'm free, I said, The Lord can know, Because he is at my right hand,

Thy God, Thy God, Behold, Behold, Behold, Behold, Before me, My heart is glad, My time with joy will sing, My body to fill «I'll be ■ you compatibility, I will do end, So early death to stay The way you live

You're the only one To see the tombs decay You have withdrawn to me The path of life divine Blessed shall I know At your right hand Joy brought your face The will shine We're going to read together the word of God as we have it in the gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark and chapter 15.

[ 17 : 16 ] And we'll pick up the reading at verse 15. Mark chapter 15 and reading from verse 15. Let us hear the word of God.

So Pilate wishing to satisfy the crowd released for them Barabbas and having scourged Jesus and having scourged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified and the soldiers led him away inside the palace that is the governor's headquarters and they called together the whole battalion and they clothed him in a purple cloak twisting together a crown of thorns they put it and they began to salute him hail king of the Jews and they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him and when they had mocked him they stripped him of the purple cloak put his own clothes and put his own clothes on him and they led him out to crucify him and they compelled a passerby

Simon of Cyrene who was coming in from the country the father of Alexander and Rufus to carry his cross and they brought him to the place called Golgotha which means place of a skull and they offered him wine mixed with myrrh but he did not take it and they crucified him divided his garments among them casting lots for them to decide what each should take and it was the third hour when they crucified him and the inscription of the charge against him read the king of the Jews and with him they crucified two robbers one on his right and one on his left and those who passed by derided him wagging their heads and saying you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days save yourself and come down from the cross so also the chief priests the scribes mocked him to one another saying he saved others he cannot save himself let the Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe those who were crucified with him also reviled him now when the sixth hour had come there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour and at the ninth hour

Jesus cried out with a loud voice Eloi Eloi lemma sabachthani which means my God my God why have you forsaken me and some of the bystanders hearing it said behold he is calling Elijah some ran and filled a sponge with sour wine put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying wait let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down and Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last and the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last he said truly this man was the son of God there were also women looking on from a distance among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the younger and of

Joseph and Salome when he was in Galilee they followed him and ministered to him and there was also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem and when the evening had come since it was the day of preparation that is the day before the Sabbath Joseph of Arimathea our respected member of the council who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died and summoning the centurion he asked him whether he was already dead and when he learned from the centurion that he was dead he granted the corpse to Joseph and Joseph bought a linen shroud and taking him down wrapped him in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock and they rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb

[ 22 : 30 ] Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid Amen may the Lord bless the reading of his own word to us let's continue in our praise of God from Psalm 118 at

verse 5 this is Sing Psalms so this is page 155 of the blue psalm book we sing from verse 5 to verse 14 Psalm 118 and Sing Psalms verse 5 I cried in anguish to the Lord he answered me and set me free the Lord is with me I'll not fear what harm can people do to me in verse 8 it's better far to trust the Lord than look for help to man's defence it's better far to trust the Lord than in a prince of confidence we're singing Psalm 118 and we're singing verses 5 to 14 and again we'll stand to sing praise to God

I cried in anguish to the Lord he answered me and set me free the Lord is with me now I'll not fear what harm can be they'll do to me the Lord is with me constantly he lives to all forgives me I live in fire

I will not mean to be afraid it's better far to trust the Lord and in a prince what harm can be Aha platform

He lives to be He lives to be in the wrathins who is in God's I faith I know In God's lorig■■ they call They end me On every side In God's great day I stood them all They changed me life A swarm of bees But like a heap Of thorns of him They very quickly Made their end

I stood them in The Lord's great name I was to die But dearly fell The Lord himself Gave help to me He is my soul And so shall spend The Lord gave me The victory Seeking the Lord's blessing Let's turn back together to the passage That we read in Mark's Gospel

[ 27 : 39 ] This is Mark chapter 15 And we may read again Verse 43 Mark chapter 15 and verse 43 Joseph of Arimathea A respected member of the council He was also himself looking for the kingdom of God Took courage And went to Pilate And asked for the body Of Jesus Joseph took courage And went to Pilate And asked him For the body Of Jesus It is of course our great privilege Blessing to gather together In worship And especially

As a congregation Remembers The death of the Lord In the Lord's Supper And it's a great blessing For a congregation To gather And to meet in this way And of course It is the will of the Lord That we do this That we remember The Lord's death together Until he comes again It becomes a great source Of encouragement For our faith As we do this And we demonstrate Our communion and fellowship Not just with the Lord But with one another too And remembering the Lord's death Is central to our faith It is central to the life Of the congregation And the message Of the Christian church It is the central truth On which we live And of which our faith Is founded upon The death and resurrection Of our Saviour At the very heart

Of the Gospel Is the message of Calvary Is our Lord and Saviour Crucified at Golgotha On Calvary's cross But it isn't just The central message Of the Gospel It is central to our own Relationship with the Lord And we come this weekend To seek our own Encouragements But we come also Realising that this is A welcome opportunity We gather this evening To prepare for this And to anticipate That time of blessing together Where we visibly participate In these great realities Of our faith And what we are coming to do Is to honour the Lord's death That is what we all seek to do In our own way And together also And I wanted us Just on this evening And just for a few moments here As we gather together To reflect

On how Joseph of Arimathea Honoured the death Of Jesus And we are coming here Very much In the great aspect Of where we are In the crucifixion And especially In verses At the end of the chapter From verse 42 What we have is The aftermath And preparing us In chapter 16 For the resurrection And what we have In the immediate aftermath Is the need for burial And of course You will be quite aware That in these areas Burial was something That happened immediately And we are quite aware Of it when we come To Acts And we come to Ananias and Zephira And see there How Ananias was buried Even before Zephira Knew about it That it was immediate We ourselves Are conscious too That when there is A bereavement Then this is automatically The first thing That a family does They go about The business

Of arranging the burial And yet it has Even greater urgency In this culture And in the climate Of which they were living in And so a burial Had to be arranged Immediately And so we are coming here Where Joseph Arranges the burial Of Jesus And to see that It is in this way That he honours The death of Jesus We see how he responds To the death Of Jesus We are coming To remember The death of Jesus Too And I hope That we can take Some encouragement Here From the way That Joseph Honours Jesus' death And the way Joseph Takes courage And also takes His opportunities And so first of all Let's look At the honour That Joseph Here Displays To Jesus And what we have Essentially In the immediate context In the situation They are in

[ 32 : 42 ] Is that Joseph Here Is arranging The burial Of somebody Who has been Condemned The guilty Verdict Has been said It has been said By two different Trials A religious Trial Before the high Priests And the Jewish Rulers And then on To Pilate Where Pilate Himself Is put under A certain Degree of pressure In order to come To the same Verdict This guilty Verdict And in this Guilty verdict There is no Room for appeal That Jesus Himself is Immediately taken Away Following the Torment And abuse Of the soldiers And their Mocking and Derision of him He is led Away To this place In verse 22 The place Of the skull Called Gotha And he is There a Condemned Man Taken away To be Crucified By the Roman Soldiers The sentence

There that Is been Executed Upon him As he is Nailed to The cross And as he Himself Suffers That great Anguish And pain And torment At Calvary And the Whole situation Is filled With the Reality of The shame And humiliation That is Involved In many Senses We see This Spiritually That the Lord Himself Embraced The cross And the Shame That was Involved In it He humbled Himself To death Even the Death on The cross But even In the Context of Those around Him A condemned Man There at The side Of the road People walking Past Deriding And mocking Him There with All the Pain And the Anguish And agony The condemnation That he Himself Embraced And which Was placed Upon him And all The humiliation And shame And when it

Comes to the Point where We read Together in Verse 39 He breathes His last Often we Think the Shame is Over Yet the Reality in The Roman Judicial World is The shame Was not Over Because the Body of The condemned Person still Belonged to The state Still belonged To the Roman Authorities And it was up To them to Do as they Wished with The body And it was Up to the Soldiers to Dispose of The body And it was Disposed of In many Different ways And often The shame Itself Was exaggerated All the more In the way That the body Was disposed Of Thrown at The side Of the Road Or left Crucified On the Cross For the Birds of Prey To pick Or even In places Like Jerusalem You remember That the Refuse of

Jerusalem Was taken Outside the City And was Burnt in This place Called Gineh And it Was of Course Used by The Lord As a Picture of Hell This Unending Fire And sometimes The Roman Soldiers Would even Just throw These bodies There onto That fire The humiliation And shame Being added To But on Occasions Somebody Would make A plea For the Body It was a Very difficult Thing to Do With the Sentence of Condemnation Still so Strong And so Powerful But often A member Of the Family Would come To the Roman Governor And ask And plead To take The body And to Give the Appropriate Burial Rather than A crude Disposal And so This is what Joseph does In verse 43 He comes To Pilate And he Asks him For the Body

Of Jesus And We are Reminded Of course In Isaiah 53 And verse 9 We are Reminded That it Is the Will Of the Father That he Would make His grave With the Rich And that We understand There that It was the Appointment Of God That Jesus Would be Buried That it Was central To the Great Reality Of the Resurrection That Jesus Would be Buried And that He would Rise Again Part of The Great Promise And so Here we Have the Great Statements And realities Of scripture And prophecies Reminding us That it is At this Point The Humiliation Is over As Paul Says He humbled Himself To death Death On the Cross And this Is the Divine Plan And the Father's Will That this Man would Be moved To come To Pilate

[ 37 : 44 ] And to Ask For the Body And For Ourselves To We Come to Joseph And prior To this We have No word Of Joseph And yet When we Come to This Point In the Great Gospel Narrative All four Gospel Writers Tell us That this Happens And that It is Joseph Of Armethea That himself Takes the Initiative And so We are Told by John In chapter 19 That we Haven't Heard Of Joseph Because Joseph Was a Secret Disciple He had Kept His Faith Secret And it Is at This Point He is Introduced To us At this Point We see His Intervention We see Him Taking That Initiative Where Nobody Else Comes For The Body Of Jesus Joseph Comes This

Moment And he Comes The Governor And all Around him Amongst the Disciples Is this Sense Of Fear And Shock And Brokenness And Dispersion Isn't It Now We Expect Peter To Stand There Isn't It Now That We Expect One Of These Disciples Who Were So Close To Him And Walk With Him And Were With Him For All This Time To Speak Now And The Women Who Were Close To The Cross And Who Were First At The Tomb They Had No Plea To Make No Standing Before The Great Roman Governor And It Is At This Point That We Meet With Joseph Of Arimathea A Man Who Is Able To Come And Approach Pilot A Man Of Influence A Man Who Will Be Able To Receive The Right Response

From The Roman Governor We're Told Of Course He's From Arimathea This Is Of Rama In The Old Testament The Home Of Samuel We're Told We're Told We're Told We're Told By Matthew In Chapter 27 That He's A Member Of The Council The Gospel Writers Remind Us Of This Is A Man As Part Of The Sanhedrin An Influence Amongst The Community An Influence Even Amongst The Religious Community That He's A Religious Man We're Told Of This Again He Waited For The Kingdom Of God I Wonder What That Sanhedrin Was Like I Wonder How Difficult It Was For Him And For Nicodemus When The Plot Against Jesus Developed And Joseph In The Midst Of It All Keeping His

Faith Secret It's Amazing The Difficult Places We End Up When We Keep Our Faith Secret The Uncomfortable Situations The Conversations We Would Rather Not Be Part Of And I Don't Just Mean Somebody Who Has Never Professed Their Faith We All Know What This Is Like So We're Engaging In Different Relationships When We Keep Silent About Our Faith Often We Find Ourselves In Situations That Are Terribly Uncomfortable And Where We Are Failing To Be Bold For The Lord And To Be Challenging People About What They're Saying In The Reality Of The Hostile Environment In Which We Live In That We're To Make Our Faith Public And Known At Every Opportunity And Every Situation This Joseph Is Somebody Who Is Respected Despite His Position Of Power And His Wealth Because Often These Very Things Can Corrupt People Yet He Doesn't Allow This To Happen People Respect Him Because He Has That Integrity And Faithfulness In His Life We're Told Here In Verse 43 He Is Looking Or Waiting For The Kingdom Of God He's Been Waiting For The Lord His God He Has Been Waiting For The Fulfillment Of The Promises And He Found What He Was Looking For He Found Jesus And Joseph He Uses His Influence He Is Moved Here By His Conviction That Jesus Needs An Appropriate Burial He Needs To Be Respected He Needs To Be Honored In This Way In His Death He Needs To Stand Up At This Moment He's Moved By Conviction But He's Moved Also

[ 42 : 47 ] By God In The Reality That He Has Been Set On This Path Moving Towards The Governor's Headquarters Moving Towards This Plea In The Reality That God Has Moved Him In The Reality That He Can No Longer Be Silent In The Reality That God Is In This Moment And Nothing Can Stop This Regardless Of What He Is Exposed To From Pilate Or Others He Needs To Go Here He Needs To Seek To Honor The Death Of His Savior And Nobody Is Going To Put Him Off Nobody Is Going To Stop Him Because God Is Compelling Him To Move Compelling Him At This Very Moment And What He Wants To Arrange Is A Burial For Jesus In Verse 46 When He's Granted Here The Corpse To Joseph Then Joseph Goes And He Takes The Linen Shroud

Takes Him Down And Wraps Him And He Lays Him In The Tomb It Is All About The Burial Of Jesus Where Joseph Failed To Honor Jesus In Life Now He Wants To Honor Him In Death There Were Opportunities That He Let Go By Times Where He Knew He Should Have Spoken Up He Should Have Said Something And He Let Them Go Opportunities After Opportunities But This Is The Opportunity He Will Not Let Pass Because He Knows That God Is Compelling Him And He Needs To Do The Right Thing He Needs To Honor The Death Of His Savior We're Told Of Of The Surprise Of Pilate In Verse 44 And Pilate Questions In Centurion Quite Probably The Same Centurion In Verse 39 That Is Struck In

This Great Or To Say Of Jesus Truly This Man Was The Son Of God And Pilate Has A Conference For The Centurion The Centurion Says The Man Is Dead And So Pilate Grants The Body And It's Estimated Here That Joseph Has A One To Two Hour Window The Sabbath Is Fast Approaching The Opportunity For Preparation Before The Sabbath Is Almost Over The Sabbath Begins At 6 PM And It Is High Day This Is The Greatest Sabbath Of The Whole Year This Is The Passover And So He Engages Himself Immediately To Do This Immediately To Commit Himself To This Task To Give The Honorable Burial To His Lord And Savior And With Care And Love He Engages In This In Verse 46 He

He Bought A Linen Shroud Taking Him Down Wrapped Him In The Linen Shroud Laid Him In A Tomb That Had Been Cut Out Of The Rock This Is The Picture Of His Own Devotion We See In John's Gospel In Chapter 19 That Involved In This To Is Nicodemus Nicodemus Who Had Come To Jesus But I Came Bringing A Mixture Of Myrrh And Aloe About 75 Pounds In Weight They Demonstrate Now Their Devotion To The Lord They Had Pains To Take Great Care To Honour Him And I Suppose In Many Respects We Read This Along With John Chapter 12 Where Mary Announce Jesus And Jesus Defends Her And He Says Leave Her Alone And She's Done This For The Day Of My Burial Another

Example Of Devotion And Love And Care In Honouring The Death Of Jesus And They Engage Themselves Carefully To This Task Lovingly And Dutifully That Their Lord Has Died And They Must Take Him To The Tomb We We're All Of Course Very Familiar Sadly With Funerals And Grief And Its Process And The Process Too Of Burial And Of A Funeral Service And We Feel Often We Go To A Funeral Service And There Are Many People There And We Think That This Is A Good Thing The Demonstration Of Their Respect And Care And Devotion And Their Sympathy For A Mourning Family There Are Two People Here There Are Just Two People At The

[ 47 : 47 ] Burial Of The Son Of God The Innocent Lamb Of God Just Two People At This Burial And They Take Him To A New Tomb Unused They Take Him Here The Wonderful Picture Of Their Love And Respect When No One Else Was Willing To Do This They Stood In This Place And They Showed Their Honor To Their Savior That Died For Them And I Suppose We Ask Ourselves How Do We Honor Him What Are We Doing For Jesus And For The Way That He Suffered And Died For Us This Is Our Opportunity Even Here This Weekend As We Come To The Symbols The Signs The Bread And The Wine To

Remember That He Died For Our Sins And He Asks Us To Remember His Death Till He Comes Again And Not Just That Here Joseph Is Showing Honor But He Is Also Taking Courage Because To Display Our Faith And To Demonstrate It And For It No Longer To Be Secret We Will Face Many Obstacles And Difficulties There Will Be Many Challenges For Us In The Way There Will Be Hostility And Opposition To Our Faith And To Be Making Our Faith Public And To Be Telling Other People And To Demonstrate It It Requires Boldness Commitment A Devotion To Our Love In Verse 43 We're Told That He Took Courage This Is What We Need To Do To Be Bold For Our Lord And He Has To Take Courage Because He's Going To Face Pilate

He's Going To Face This Man An Imposing Authorative Figure In Jerusalem He's Got To Go And Stand Before This Great Powerful Man The Picture Of The Symbol Of The Whole Of The Might Of The Roman Empire And He's Got To Stand There And Stand On The Side Of A Condemned Man Stand On The Side Of The One Who Was Sentenced To Death And To Be Crucified And Pilate Here Is An Imposing Figure And Joseph Needs To Take Courage To Do This And This Is The Moment That He Reveals His Commitment And His Devotion To His Lord Even Though There Might Be Questions Is He In On This Conspiracy Is This Somebody Who Should Also Be Sentenced Is This Man A Threat Is Is This Man Part Of The Group Who Follow The King Of The Jews

It's Amazing Isn't It How Our Faith Is Often Opposed By Authority By People Who Appear To Us To Be So Powerful And Mighty And Frightening And We're Called To Take Courage Faith Causes To Take Courage And At This Point Joseph Finds That Courage He Finds That Boldness He Finds The Thing That Had Been Missing For So Long So Scared Of Revealing What He Felt For Jesus So Scared That People Would Know That He Too Was A Christian But It Is At This Moment That The Secret Is Revealed That There Is No More Mystery Or Questioning About Joseph And Where He Stands This Is The Time This Is The Moment And This Is The Great Revelation Of

Where He Stands This Is Of Course The Reality Of What A Secret Or Mystery Is It Is Just For A Moment That Time It Doesn't Stay Secret Forever The Mystery Is Eventually Revealed And Here In Standing Before The Lord He Stops Holding Back He Stops Holding Himself Back Isn't It True That We're Often Our Greatest Obstacle David Says I'll Not Fear What Man Can Do To Me I'm Fearing God God How Often We're Not Like That How Often Man Looks So Big And So Powerful And What Have We Done To God When The Reality Is That He Is Almighty And All Powerful And That He'll Meet Us At Our Every Challenge And Our Every Situation That He Won't Leave Us Or Forsake

[ 52 : 49 ] Us You Remember What Was Said Of Esther And The Great Challenge And Crisis That Came Into The Life Of The Jewish People For Such A Time As This What Was Being Said Is This Is Your Opportunity This Is Your Time This Is Your Moment And This Is Joseph's Moment His Moment To Meet Pilate But He Knows When He Me Me Meet Pilate That Is Not The End Of It Everybody Is Going To Know The Whole World Is Going To Know That Is What It Feels Like Isn't It It Feels Like The Whole World Is Watching Us And It Is It Is And When He Reveals His Faith He Is Placing Himself Under Public Scrutiny And The Danger That Is Before Him

What He Needs To Take Courage In And For Is The Reality Of An Environment That Is Hostile To Jesus This Is A Dark Day This Is A Dark Day The Day They Crucified My Lord Who's Standing With Joseph It's Just Him And Nicodemus There Where Are The Disciples They Fled They've Gone One Of Them Even Betrayed Jesus The Rest Of Them Are Denying Him They've Run Away They've

Scattered Word And Now This Is The Moment That He's Facing Up to The Scrutiny Of The Watching Word The People In His Community The People In His Workplace The People In His Family All Watching Him Now Exposed To Their Ridicule Their Hostility And Their Mocking And Their Abuse Just What They Did To Jesus And For Joseph There Is A Great Challenge Here In Terms Of His Reputation Because He May Have Decided In His Own Mind It's Okay For The Fishermen To Go With Him It's Okay For Tax Collectors And All Of These People That The Religious Authorities Call Sinners The People That Are Is Is From The Religious Community It's Okay For Them But I'm Putting Everything On The Line Here I've Got A Lot To Lose Here I've Got A Lot Of People Expecting A Lot Of Things From Me I'm Involved With Different People And In Different Circles I'm Under A Greater Challenge In Terms Of My Reputation And The Hostility That I'm Facing And They're All Going To Know That I Walk With Jesus That This Is My Lord And The Scrutiny That Our Walk Is Under Is The Same Scrutiny Of A Watching World And When We're Silent Our Silence Hides Us But It Leaves Us Uncomfortable Just Like Joseph And Nicodemus And Sanhedrin They're Wanting Jesus Crucified And Joseph And Nicodemus Are There Watching These Things Powerless To Stop It Yet Silent Against It The Great Discomfort They Must Have Felt Yet The Reality Is We're Being Called To Courage Not Silence We're Being Called To Make Our Faith Public To Tell People And To Share And To Be Motivated In The Same Manner He Was Motivated In The Burial Of Jesus It Is Love And Devotion That Is Driving Him It Is Because He Loves His Savior And

He Is Willing To Face The Hostility Of The Whole World Because He Loves This Lord God Why Should We Fear Man Why Should We Fear What They Say Of Us Why Should We Fear Their Ridicule And Their Mocking And Their Hostility The Lord Is With Us The Lord Is My Shepherd I Will Not Want And There Is A Sense Here Of How Opportunities Must Be Taken For Such A Time As This This Is Joseph's Time The Present Time And The Present Circumstance The Opportunities Are There Before Him He Is Able Himself To Go To Pilate Not Everybody Can Do This He Has A Tomb There That He Is Able To Use He Has Influence Means He Is Able To Do All These Things And Most Of All He Is Absolutely Compelled By

[ 57 : 53 ] God This Is Joseph's Time This Is His Opportunity And He Cannot Remain Silent Any Longer And You Know It Is The Most Unlikely Of Times Never Did The Church Look So Weak Never Did The Cause Look So Weak Everybody Else Who Is Supposed To Be Part Of This Their Courage Has Failed Them They Have Come Short There Is Nobody There And They Are All Mocking And Jeering At Jesus As He Is Dying On The Cross And The Only One Who Shows So Many Kindness Is A Criminal The Christ Remember Me Where Are The Disciples How Weak This Church Is The Great Darkness Of This Moment And This Is The Moment Of Joseph's

Courage This Is His Great Opportunity And He Comes To Pilate And He Says This Is What I Want I Want The Body Of My Lord I Want To Honor My Lord Death Though Nobody Else Would Stand With Me Though I Be All On My Own Though This Day So Dark Give Me My Lord Don't Withhold My Lord From Me Give Me His Body That I Could Honor His Death This Is The Moment Where Faith Needs To Be Displayed As We Come To The Reality Of What His Death Means What It Means To Us Jesus Died For Our Sins Is This Not Our Moment And Our Opportunity Joseph Wouldn't Let It Pass By Nor Should We Let Any Opportunity To Make Public Our Faith Pass Us By Let Seize Every Opportunity Let Seize Every Time That We Can Gather Together To Remember His Death Let Seize Every Conversation That We Can And To Tell Them This Is My Lord And Not Keep Our Faith Secret Or Silent But To Honor His Death And To Take Courage And To Display All That He Means To Us And What His Death Means To Us May The Lord Bless Our Thoughts Together Let's Pray Together Gracious And Most Holy God We Come Before You And Humble Confession Of All The Opportunities We Let

Pass By Often It Feels Like On A Daily Or Weekly Basis We Let So Many Opportunities Of Sharing Our Faith Go Without A Word But We Thank You For This Wonderful Opportunity That Not Only We Would Do It On Our Own But We Do It In The Gathering Of Your People Seeking To Honor The Death Of Our Saviour That We Would Be Silent No More But That We Would Keep Affirming All That Our Saviour Means To Us In The Great Commitment And Courage Of Our Faith That You Would Grant To Us We Pray Then That You Would Stir Us Up In These Great Things Encourage Us In Our Faith And All The Challenges And Obstacles We Meet Help Us To Know That You Are There To Help Us To Bless Us And To Encourage Us Forgive Us Then Our Sins In Jesus Name Amen Let's Continue In Our Praise Of God In Psalm 40 The Familiar Words

In Page 259 This Is In The Psalter Psalm 40 We Sing From Verse 1 To The End Of The Verse Marked 5 I Waited For The Lord My God And Patiently Did Bear At Length To Me He Did Incline My Voice And Cry To Hear He Took Me From A Fearful Pit And From The Miry Clay And On A Rock He Set My Feet Establishing My Way He Put A New Song In My Mouth Our God To Magnify Many Shall See It And Fear And On The Lord We Lie We Sing To The End Of The Verse Marked Five This Is Psalm Forty Verses One To Five The Praise Of God The Wicked For The Lord My God And Vicious It Will At When

[ 62 : 56 ] To Be Hidden In Kind My Voice I Do Hear He Took Me From The Faith Old Path And Round The My Clay And On Not Rock He Set My Will Establish My Way He Put A New Song In My Mouth A God To Mc

In High Many Shall See And Shall Live And On The Lord Re Live O Blessed Is The Man Who's Dressed On The Lord Revised Respect Divine Bright Massage A Sturbed Sighted Lives O O Lord My God Full Many Are

The Wonders Come Thou Thou Hurricane Volt Men Thy Gra Pfarrie Flare Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. Amen.