

Daniel 5

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 December 1991

Preacher: Rev Murdo Alex Macleod

[0 : 00] Let us read God's Word in the Old Testament in the book of the prophet Daniel, chapter 5.

The prophecy of Daniel, chapter 5. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem, and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines drank in there.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

[1 : 42] Then the king's countenance was changed and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed and his knees smoked one against another.

Then the king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers. Then the king spake and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing and show me the interpretation thereof shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then came in all the king's wise men, but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house.

And the queen spake and said, O king, live forever. Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed. There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.

[2 : 59] And in the days of thy father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him, whom the king Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, the king, I say thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayer.

For as much as an excellent spirit and knowledge and understanding, interpreting of dreams and showing of hard sentences and dissolving of doubts, were found in the name Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar.

Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king, and the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that, Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

I have even heard of thee that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But they could not show the interpretation of the thing, and I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts. Now if thou canst read the writing and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

[4 : 32] Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another. Yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

O thou king, the most high God, gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor. And for the majesty that he gave him, all nations, all people, nations, and

languages, trembled and feared before him, whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.

But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses.

They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointed over it whomsoever he will. And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this. But hast lifted thyself up against the Lord of heaven.

[5 : 57] And they have brought the vessels of this house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them. And thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know.

And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the power to the hand sent from him, and this writing was written, and this is the writing that was written, Many, many, tekel ufarsin.

This is the interpretation of the thing, many, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel, thou art weighed, and the balances are not found wanting. Paris, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the meats and perseians.

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night, was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain, and Darius the Midian, took the kingdom, being about three score, and two years old.

[7 : 15] May the Lord bless to us that reading. Let us turn to the chapter we read, the book of Daniel, chapter 5, and take us to the connecting link, verse 27.

Daniel, chapter 5, verse 27. Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

following through our studies in this book, we noticed that during the 70-year exile of the Jews in Babylon, that God sought to destroy the delusion of the heathen Babylonian nation, that the God of Israel was just another God, a local, limited, and tribal deity.

It was necessary for God, therefore, to shatter this delusion, and to prove to them that he was indeed the living and the true God, before whom the gods of the heathen and their gods were vain, empty delusions.

And the three miracles which are recorded for us in this book, the miracle of the deliverance from the fiery furnace, the miracle of Daniel's preservation in the lion's den, and this miracle, which is known as the miracle of the writing on the wall, these miracles were performed by God to show and to prove to him, to them, and indeed to the Jews, his omnipotence.

[9 : 21] The man who saw this writing on the wall and who was devastated as a result of it is referred to here as Belshazzar.

And we are told at the end of the chapter that that very night he was put to death and Darius, the king of the Medes, took the kingdom of Babylon.

Now, of course, some of you may know that there are many people who dispute the historicity here, who wonder about the historical figure Belshazzar and who also wonder about the Babylon being taken that very night by the Medes.

But that need not occasion any problems to us regarding the authenticity and the historicity of this chapter, indeed of this book, because it is established by scholars that such a person as Belshazzar existed and though he may not have been a king in the sense in which Nebuchadnezzar was king, an absolute monarch, there is no reason why he shouldn't have exercised a rule as a delegated, a rule delegated to him, authority delegated to him, so that to all intents and purposes he did reign as king in Babylon.

There is no problem there whatsoever. Concerning the this night in which he lost his life, there is no reason why the last chapter of this verse shouldn't be really the first chapter of the next, it shouldn't be the first verse of the next chapter.

[11 : 18] There is no problem whatsoever with the historical accuracy of these events. Belshazzar, as Daniel tells us, was very different to the man referred to as his father.

He was either his father naturally or as this often happened, his predecessor referred to in this way as his father Nebuchadnezzar.

The point of the recorded incident to the history for us here is that Belshazzar was in full possession of the facts concerning Nebuchadnezzar's conversion to God through that most trying experience which he had had which we looked at last Sabbath evening.

And it that's a point that is being made here that this man who was unnerved by the fingers writing on the wall was the man who knew all about the power of God in the life of Nebuchadnezzar and no doubt knew far more about God's dealings with this people than he knew from the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar.

I want to look with you this evening at one or two things connected with this chapter and seek as we go along perhaps after I've looked through the chapter to make some application of the teachings in this chapter.

[13:00] You will notice first of all that the chapter records for us the occasion on which this miracle took place. That's recorded for us in the first day five chapters first day four verses of this chapter.

It happened really during what one referred to as a drinking bout when people were engaged in this drunken orgy.

It was common for kings in those days to hold from time to time banquets. We know that from time to time that is held on state occasions at the close of state occasions in our own country.

In those days it was quite common for the king and his chief and trusted advisors to hold this banquet at which they would be seated at what we would call today the top table a raised dais or platform and from that they would overlook the assembled number.

The meal was very often followed by this drinking bout this drunken orgy during which as this chapter tells us the wine flowed freely.

[14:20] And you will notice and this is important for our application of what we have in this chapter that this was the immediate occasion of the wickedness that followed.

In short they got drunk. Whilst he tasted the wine when he began to feel the effects of the wine when he began when he became intoxicated when he began to feel merry when he just got drunk it was then that Belshazzar lost all sense of decency and sought to desecrate the temple vessels. The desecration being aggravated by the fact that as they drank from these vessels so they sang songs of praise to their heathen gods.

And the whole sorry episode surely shows us that this man Belshazzar was presiding over a decadent society which had become increasingly permissive and undisciplined surrounded by these rakes they drank themselves drunk with God's chosen vessels the vessels which they had taken from Jerusalem when they had destroyed it they had plundered the temple taken away the vessels the various cups and goblets and other things plates silver and gold that were used in the temple in Jerusalem they had been housed in the temples built to their own gods but this night Belshazzar was feeling so good that he decided that he would take these vessels from the temple of the idols and use them to drink wine out of them to their hearts content and as they drank so they sang songs to their own gods of course you know that there's nothing unusual in a sense in that from time to time you hear drunken louts sometimes walking up and down our own streets oblivious to all that is around them and the more drunk they are so as we see in a minute the bolder they become the more ready they are to sing their own silly songs in which they are praising their own gods the things that take up their own mind and their own attentions be the rangers or Celtic songs or whatever and very often this is done using the name of God curshing the name of the almighty and robbing him as it were with her heels into the very dust of the street upon which they cared to walk well that was the occasion on which this miracle happened and the sin that aggravated the position was that this man who was in charge of this drunken orgy as Daniel tells him later on ought to have known better when Daniel was called in to him by the queen to on the at the investigation of the queen rather whether she was Nebuchadnezzar's wife or not and this man's mother we're not very sure but anyway she knew sufficient about this man to tell

[18:12] Belshazzar that he was able to interpret this miracle he was able to explain this writing on the wall we don't know whether the writing was in Hebrew or not we don't know why the magicians from Babylon couldn't explain away couldn't explain this intervention this miraculous intervention again there's nothing new there you remember that when god intervenes in the lives of people that there are many people who fail to interpret god's intervention but she knew that this man Daniel to whom god had given this divine gift of interpreting prophecies and explaining things like this was in the kingdom so you better send for him because if you're that troubled about what you've seen this

is the man who will solve your problem so daniel was brought in and as he was brought in he preached a very powerful and a very forthright and a very direct sermon to

Belshazzar and what he tells Belshazzar is this you know he said you ought to know better behaving as you are you remember that you know the story of Nebuchadnezzar conversion though you are Nebuchadnezzar you don't have the power that he had as an absolute monarch he could exalt and debas he could put to death he could keep alive that man was an autocrat that man had complete power now he says you may not have that power but at least you know what God did in that man's life and something else you like Nebuchadnezzar your being in this world is totally dependent upon God in him as the book of Acts puts it we live move and have our be but you he says the

God in whose hand thy breath is and in whose ways are all thy ways thou hast not glorified were it not for God you wouldn't be here were it not for God you wouldn't be able to take a step in this world and yet dependent as you are upon him you have failed to glorify him and therefore he lays it on the line for this man that he had sinned against the knowledge that he possessed of what God God had done in life of another and also he sinned against the life that he had that he was dependent for all that he had upon God his life was lived without reference to God at all now again this is a story of many a life God is relegated God is forgotten God doesn't matter and yet it is God who has given each one of us being in this world

God determined when you should be born where you should be born and God has also determined when you will leave this world he is sovereign in all his ways and you live and depends upon him and yet you care to live without glorifying him without reference to him this is a story of many alive but the sin as it were that broke the camel's back was this sin of sacrilege now these vessels as I said to you had been taken from Jerusalem and placed in the temple of the idols but why should this man have been punished so severely just because he was drinking out of the vessels that were set apart for God's purpose well that's exactly the point these vessels had been set apart by God for the worship of God they were for a special use they were holy they were consecrated they were to be used exclusively in and for his service in the temple in other words as the old testament tells us his name was upon them and this act of belshatser was just an act of defiance an act of presumption an act of arrogant daring when despising the

God of Israel being disrespectful to him when he was drunk he decided to take this course of action it was a sign that he believed that this God whose vessels he was abusing and whose name he was insulting had now in Babylon no reality and no power he counted them out he didn't matter and that was the particular sin that brought this judgment upon this man he despised God knowingly and deliberately and the fourth thing that we notice is this the effect that the miracle had upon him when he saw the writing on the wall now it seems that in those days the walls of these banquet halls were painted probably in a colour that you and

[23 : 52] I would describe today as brilliant white and any writing on them was easily seen and what he saw here was a wrist just this part of the hand from the wrist down to the finger the tips of the fingers this hand writing on the wall he saw this miracle now my friend don't discount that there's no point at shrugging your shoulder and laughing this kind of thing out of coat if you listen to stories from people who have been drunk and particularly stories from people who have been under the interest of drugs you know that people very often have hallucinations they see things and what they see is as real to them as the people who are with them now if you believe the stories that they tell you about that why should you disbelieve that

God can supernaturally enter into the life of an individual like he did here and can show this man could show this man as he did a hand the fingers of which were writing on the wall these verses these words many many tekem ufarsin and confronted as he was with proof and evidence of the supernatural with such startling suddenness he was devastated he was shattered even in his drunken state and as I said earlier there are people here tonight who could testify to you that when they were drunk or when they were in the interest of drugs they saw things that really shattered them struck the fear of death into their very bones this man what we're told here is that his colour changed the colour drained out of his face his knees began to knock he was so afraid he was so unnerved the man who a minute before he was now reduced to a quivering wreck and here you have the pitiful spectacle of a man who had just minutes before defied the almighty have you ever seen people like this have you ever been like this it's often the case that when people are confronted with the powers of an unseen world been said that

God has the means of access to the conscience of men the hand that wrote it did not record in any way his sin or his guilt that's the strange thing the hand didn't write you've used the verses of God in a way that you shouldn't the hand didn't record what he had done but this is the thing that the very appearance of the hand and the very writing of the hand affected him in such a way that his conscience began to accuse him and something happened that made him feel guilty a story of the man alive you see when you've done something wrong it doesn't need a policeman or someone else to come to you to tell you what you've done wrong it doesn't need that all it needs is for you to see something or to hear something that will remind you that you did wrong and then you begin to feel guilty and your conscience begins to accuse you and that's what happened to Belshazzar and when Daniel was brought in before him Daniel explained very very forthrightly without pulling any punches he explained to him what he had seen it means this he said the time of your kingdom's judgment has now come in short the time of this kingdom is up your number is up tackle it just means this that you don't measure up to God's expectations to God's demands you are weighed in the balances and found wanting you fasten it just means that your kingdom is going to be destroyed and there's going to be a struggle for your kingdom between the Medes and the Persian and again this is a story of life this is a story of human history this is a story of this world history moves on in

God's hand to its predetermined end and nothing can thwart its purposes it's a story of that which is written in the history of this world that national sins will be met with national judgment and national punishment it happened to Egypt it happened to the Canaanites it happened to Babylon it happened to the Persian Empire it happened to the Roman Empire it happened to Nazi Germany it happened to the USSR it will happen to any country that persecutes terrorizes dominated citizens God has a moral order in this universe and you and I as psalm 73 as the psalmist said though you and I may find it difficult to understand why should this be allowed to go on let us always remember that time appointed by

[30:07] God in the history of every such kingdom and dominion and government when he will act and no matter how strong it may seem to be how powerful how all powerful God will act and God will show that he reigns and so what happened in the experience of this man is something which happens in the experience of all nations as a representative of the nations the other thing is this before I come to apply particularly that night we read Bel Shadser the king of the Chaldeans was slain now we're not told how but he lost his life perhaps he was murdered we're not told but that very day that he had sinned so grievously against God he had sinned away the grace of

God and any hope that he had of being saved by the power of his grace he had resisted to the very end he had thought that he was all powerful his position was unassailable impregnable but God acted and he lost his life consequence at all the Lord says the book of Samuel is a God of knowledge by him actions are weighed he does what he wills now the question I want to ask in applying this is this how does God see your life tonight there are one or two things I want to say to you and if for a minute or two I tend to major well it is relevant not only in this chapter but it is relevant also in our own day you know that

I think you would surely agree with the statement that men fail to meet God's demands upon them when they allow themselves to be dominated by anything but I'm going home in just now on people whose lives are very often dominated by drink now my friend it is no secret what drink does it accelerates the process of deterioration in one's character through it and with it people go further and further into sin as they drift into that habit they can begin to trifle with God and the things of God until eventually they don't care what they do they don't care where they go and they don't care where they're seen and the this leads to a hardening of their heart not only to hardening of the arteries but it leads to a hardening spiritually of their hearts and as the heart becomes harder to things of

God so people become bolder and sin till they cease to care about things that would once have moved them and cease to be ashamed and blush at what would once have shocked them this is how things like that affect a person's character there is a downward spiral in his life and he gets worse and worse and worse are you tonight weighed in God's balances and phone wanting is it true is it true of you that there is a group of your life in such a way that you're on this downward spiral and there is a deterioration in your character secondly this deterioration of character very often leads people to adopt a spirit of insolence and defiance very often drink breaks down the barriers of restraint there is a restraining influence on people naturally but when people begin to drink all the

restraints are thrown off and men become bold and this is what we speak of for example as Dutch courage you know that some of you may be wanted before you go to a place or do a thing you need some

Dutch courage so you take some drink and when you take drink you're free and you're bold enough to do what you want and what you like and together with that boldness there is often associated a spirit of hostility and especially when you're confronted with the things of God I'll tell you something that if I'm walking on the street and I've got my collar on and I come across someone or people who are drunk I very often cover try to cover the fact that I'm wearing a clerical collar because it does one of a clerical collar does one of two things to a drunk man it attracts them so that he begins to speak to you about religion or else it draws them so that they begin to despise very often with hostility and with the most uncouth language all the things that you represent and that you hold dear in this world for some reason or other the hidden depths as someone puts it of iniquity are stirred up by the a drunk man being faced with the truth about

[36 : 48] God well when Belshazzar was confronted with the truth he was devastated and he was shattered because he realized that he had done something that he shouldn't have done his conscience we read here began to accuse him he was troubled in his mind and you know the hostility the aggro the reaction of people to the things of God stems from the very fact that they brought face to face with this reality that they aren't what they ought to be they haven't done what they ought to have done they haven't been to church for ages they've never read the Bible for years they've misused all the gifts that God gave to them you like that tonight look at all the gifts that God has given you look at the vessels in your life over which God has written holiness unto the

Lord this is mine this is what you should use for my service to glorify me the service of the sanctuary when are you last in church perhaps it's near the end of the year and very often people will put an appearance before the end of year in the same way as people put an appearance before the communion is the best attended Sabbath in this church believe it or not and in many other churches why should that be perhaps you aren't making the use that you ought to do to make of the things that God has given you I'm sure you haven't if you're honest with yourself I hope that you haven't stood back and said how dare you say that to me because if you know anything about your own heart you will acknowledge that you're not making use of the things that God has given you to the extent to which you ought to glorify him what about every Lord's day what about the Bible what about

Christian fellowship what about the Lord's day these things that God has given you that you may come to know him but maybe you don't bother to look at it like God are you weighed in the balances and found wanting oh I know that if you're full of your own self import full of your own pride I know that the hackers are up already you won't want to put yourself in the balances probably because your conscience is accusing you that if you weren't there God would find you wanting people through drink third become very careless it is a cause of innumerable human tragedies through it men lose their livelihood through it marriages break up through it spouses and children are abused and suffer violence both physical and verbal through it pedestrians and motorists lose their lives as a result of it

I'm sure that most manslaughter and murders are committed in our land it is at the heart of all of most of our social disorders at football matches wherever the gatherings may be in our towns and in our streets and people turn a blind eye to the fact that the bible constantly warns us on this issue it made Noah and Lot shameful and shameless in their family life it made Ahasuerus at first Mary then cruel and finally stupid in his treatment of his beautiful wife and here was this man at the very moment that God was giving him his final warning he was drunk this was far more important to him than anything else in life

I said earlier God mattered no longer he was relegated out the window counted out and if God should come to you tonight where would he find you how are you in this balance you and your relationship with God you and all that God demands of you what is it that comes first and foremost in your life is he out the window and if he is and should he come to where are you in the balances where will he find you are you there and found wanting before I close there are other things concerning which God's assessment of us is brought to bear upon us connection with the use that we make of what God has appointed as I said earlier that we should use for his glory and no benefit the life that he has given you what have you done with it the days that he has given you in this world what have you done with them the talents with which he has enriched your life how have you used

them what is the ground of your acceptance before God is it your own goodness you are put in these balances tonight as you stand before him oh I wish that you people here in [42 : 56] Stornoway as you read the word of God would take stock of this the many of you who have been churchgoers from the day that you can remember and who still adopt this attitude maybe that you are as good as anybody else full of your own self righteousness your own religion your own privileges your own upbringing your own memories what is all that doing for you you are just putting these things with you into balance before God you're saying Lord this is me the spirit of the fallacy I'm not like that passion I never did that I never went there perhaps you've said since I started you drink I've never tasted that drop in my life I know but you may still be priding yourself in the fact that you are what you are and who you are and when you're placed in the balances that goes for nothing my friend unless there is with you there

Christ and his finished work Christ and his righteousness Christ and all that he has done as you stand before him can you say tonight in all honesty and sincerity nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross I cling what about the Bible you have gathering dust in your bookshelf gathering dust maybe beside your bed maybe it's inside your cabinet when did you last read it and as you read it do you understand it those of you claim to know the God of the Bible do you really know him is he yours the prayers that you utter are they your own or someone else's is your attitude to God and your relationship with him born of the spirit of God working in your heart is it do we have an experimental consequence at all the Lord says the book of Samuel is a God of knowledge by him actions are weighed he does what he wills now the question I want to ask in applying this is this how do you how does God see your life tonight there are one or two things I want to say to you and if for a minute or two I tend to major upon the evil of drink well it is relevant not only in this chapter but it is relevant also in our own day you know that

I think you would surely agree with the statement that men fail to meet God's demands upon them when they allow themselves to be dominated by anything but I'm going to home interest now on people whose lives are very often dominated by drink now my friend it is no secret what drink does it accelerates the process of deterioration in one's character through it and with it people go further and further into sin as they drift into that habit they can begin to trifle with God and the things of God until eventually they don't care what they do they don't care where they go and they don't care where their sin and the this this leads to a hardening of their heart not only to hardening of the arteries but it leads to a hardening spiritually of their hearts and as the heart becomes harder for the things of

God so people become bolder in sin till they cease to care about things that would once have moved them and cease to be ashamed and blush at what would once have shocked them this is how things like that affect a person's character there is a downward spiral in his life and he gets worse and worse and worse are you tonight weighed in God's balances and phone wanting is it true of you that there is anything in your life that has a group of your life in such a way that you're on this downward spiral and there is a deterioration in your character secondly this deterioration of character very often leads people to adopt a spirit of insolence and defiance very often drink breaks down the barriers of restraint there is a restraining influence on people naturally but when people begin to drink all the restraints are thrown off and men become bald and this is what we speak of for example as

[49 : 03] Dutch courage you know that some of you may be wanted before you go to a place or do a thing you need some Dutch courage so you take some drink and when you take drink you're free and you're bold enough to do what you want and what you like and together with that boldness there is often associated a spirit of hostility and especially when you're confronted with the things of God I'll tell you something that if I'm walking on the street and I've got my collar on and I come across someone or people who are drunk I very often cover try to cover the fact that I'm wearing a clerical collar because it does one of a clerical collar does one of two things to a drunk man it attracts him so he begins to speak to you about religion or else it draws them so that they begin to despise very often with hostility and with the most uncouth language all the things that you represent and that you hold dear in this world for some reason or other the hidden depths as someone puts it of iniquity are stirred up by the a drunk man being faced with the truth about

God well when Belshazzar was confronted with the truth he was devastated and he was shattered because he realized that he had done something that he shouldn't have done his conscience began to accuse him he was troubled in his mind and you know the hostility the aggro the reaction of

people to the things of God stems from the very fact that they are brought face to face with this reality that they aren't what they ought to be they haven't done what they ought to have done they haven't been to church for ages they have never read the Bible for years they have misused all the gifts that God gave you look at all the gifts that

God has given you look at the vessels in your life over which God has written holiness unto the Lord this is mine this is what you should use for my service and to glorify me the service of the sanctuary when were you last in church perhaps it's near the end of the year and very often people would put an appearance before the end of the the same way as people in appearance before the communion is the best attended sabbath in this church believe it or not and in many other churches why should that be perhaps you aren't making the use that you ought to do to make of the things that God has given you I'm sure you haven't if you're honest with yourself I hope that you haven't stood back and said how dare you your own heart you will acknowledge that you're not making use of the things that God has given you to the extent to which you ought to glorify him what about every Lord's day what about the Bible what about Christian fellowship what about the Lord's day these things that God has given you that you may come to know him but maybe you don't bother to look at it like that are you weighed in the balances and found wanting oh I know that if you're full of your own self import full of your own pride I know that the hackers are up already you won't want to put yourself in the balances probably because your conscience accusing you that if you weren't there God would find you wanting people through drink third become very careless it is a cause of innumerable human tragedies through it men lose their livelihood through it marriages break up through it spouses and children are abused and suffer violence both physical and verbal through it pedestrians and motorists lose their lives as a result of it

I'm sure that most manslaughter and murders are committed in our land it is the heart of all of most of our social disorders at football matches wherever the gatherings may be in our towns and in our streets and people turn a blind eye to the fact that the Bible constantly warns us on this issue it made Noah and Lot shameful and shameless in their family life it made Ahasuerus at first Mary then cruel and finally stupid in his treatment of his beautiful wife and here was this man at the very moment that God was giving him his final warning he was drunk this was far more important to him than anything else in life

[55 : 09] I said earlier God mattered no longer he was relegated out the window counted out and if God should come to you tonight where would he find you how are you in this balance you and your relationship with God you and all that God demands of you what is it that comes first and foremost in your life is he out the window and if he is and should he come to wear you in the balances where will he find you are you there and found wanting before I close there are other things concerning which God's assessment of us is brought to bear upon us connection with the use that we make of what God has appointed as I said earlier that we should use for his glory and no benefit the life that he has given you what have you done with it the days that he has given you in this world what have you done with them the talents with which he has enriched your life how have you used them what is the ground of your acceptance before

God is it your own goodness you are put in these balances tonight as you stand before him oh I wish that you people here in Stornoway as you read the word of God would take stock of this the many of you who have been church goers from the day that you can remember and who still adopt this attitude maybe that you're as good as anybody else full of your own self righteousness your own religion your own privileges your own upbringing memories what is all that doing for you you are just putting these things with you into balance before God you're saying Lord this is me the spirit of the fallacy I'm not like that person I never did that I never went there perhaps you've said since I started you drink I've never tasted that drop in my life

I know but you may still be priding yourself in the fact that you are what you are and who you are and when you're placed in the balances that goes for nothing my friend unless there is with you there Christ and his finished work Christ and his righteousness Christ and all that he has done as you stand before him can you say tonight in all honesty and sincerity nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross I cling what about the Bible you have gathering dust in your book gathering dust maybe behind beside your bed maybe it's inside your cabinet when did you last read it and as you read it do you understand it those of you claim to know the

God of the Bible do you really know him is he yours the prayers that you utter are they your own or someone else's you know is your attitude to God and your relationship with him born of the spirit of

God working in your heart is it do we have an experimental knowledge of this God and this Savior is he ours or you know that he someone else's you know that that person is saved you know the power of his grace in that person's life I know but do you know the same power in your own life as you are placed in these balances can you take with you into what Paul said when he spoke about the power of God the power he says that worketh in us the power that works in me the profession that you make in this world is it true or is it false is it real is it genuine is there something backing it up your weight in this balance the balance of temptation when you face them and who doesn't do we do we do we do we resist them or do we take them and fall readily into them the providences through which we pass in this world do we use them or do we not this is a great question a question that

John Newton asked himself confronted with all these things am I his or am I not and as we read in Matthew 25 of the great judgment day of Christ when we shall all stand before him the great question for you and for me is this not only do we know him but does he know us and as God place each one of us tonight in the balance of his own infallible assessment how do you stand how do you come out of this assessment do you have the assurance in your heart this night that should he come he will find you on his side or are you afraid my friend that should he come you are not on his side at all may

[61 : 34] God grant that each one of us be numbered with him let us pray Lord our God have mercy upon our souls and bless us with a sense of our dependence upon thyself with a sense of our need of thy mercy and thy forgiveness and thy favour bless the word of thy grace to our hearts and grant that we would carry with us from the service the desire to be thine and the desire to follow thee and the desire to love thee watch over each one of us and go before us and forgive us for Christ's sake Amen