

As we seek to draw near to you. We thank you that you are the God who hears prayer. We thank you that we can come with all our burdens. All our cares. All our prayers.

[6 : 40] And put them before you anew this evening. Reminded that you are the God who cares for us. That you have not forgotten us. That you hear our praying people. And we do ask, O Lord, on this day.

A day when much prayer is offered up. Both publicly and privately. That you would indeed hear your people. That you would hear their cries. That to all ends of the earth.

And we see so much need around us. And we see tragedies in so many different places. And we think again of Spain and Valencia.

And the devastation of the flooding there. And we think of other parts of the world where there is war going on. And has been for some time. Places that we can often maybe forget.

When things go on for so long. That we do pray for the Ukraine and Russia. We pray for the Middle East. We pray for so many parts of the world that we hear very little of.

[7 : 38] And yet, Lord, we know that there are terrible atrocities. That there is persecution against your people. That there is putting down on people.

And seeking to control them in so many parts of the world. But we thank you that you are a God who is active. That you are a God who is able to bring peace. A God who is able to bring relief.

A God who is able to abundantly save. And that is our great prayer, Lord, for so many. Throughout our world this night. That whatever circumstance we might find ourselves in.

Whatever situation your people are in. That that great word, salvation, would be on our lips. For you are the God who saves. You are the God who reminds us that this is.

But a moment in this world for us. Our lives are just like the grass. Which flourishes for a moment.

But is gone in the morning. And yet that reminds us too of the eternity that is before us.

[8 : 37] And only a prepared eternity for us by our Lord. And we can only be ready for it through faith in him. And so may your word be blessed to all ends of the earth.

We do ask for our own particular needs here as a congregation too. And as a community at this time. We do give you thanks, O Lord, that you remember us.

That you have blessed us so often in the past. That we have known great days of your mercy and blessing. That we have known great days of your spirit being poured down upon us.

When you have brought life to so many people. When you have brought that life that is found in Christ. We thank you for the many wonderful stories of revival throughout our islands.

In so many different communities. We thank you that there is still evidence of it to this day of people who were involved in them. Of people who were saved during these great times.

[9 : 36] But we thank you too, Lord, that even in ones or twos. You have been pleased to bless so many different congregations around us. Down through these generations. We thank you that there is a praying people throughout all ends of our communities here.

And tonight as we come before you with so many different needs. And as we think especially of the disruption to our way of life here.

And especially your own day. With the news of Tesco seeking to open on the Lord's Day. We do ask that you will hear your praying people in the midst of this. That you would be pleased to be in the midst of ourselves here.

And many others who are gathered like us. That you would be pleased to meet with us as we seek to meet later this evening. In the APC church as well. We ask, oh Lord, that you will give us a heart to pray humbly before you.

And a spirit and a knowledge that you are with us. That we are to always to pray and never to give up. No matter how bleak a situation can seem.

[10 : 43] How much beyond our efforts it can be. We thank you that with you all things are possible. And so Lord, hear our prayers. And turn our hearts and the hearts of our community.

And many who are blind to you at this time. Turn them towards you. Turn them towards you that they might praise your name. And give glory to you. And find the wisdom that there is in rest.

And the wisdom that there is in worship of your great name. So be with us Lord, we pray. And look down upon us. Remember us in the week ahead, oh Lord, with all that it entails.

We again commit the family of Anne MacDonald to you. Praying for them, Lord, to know your comfort, your blessing with them. As we especially remember the children.

We pray for Norma, Lorna and Donna and Katrina and their families. We commit each one to you. And just pray that in the midst of all the sorrow and sadness they feel just now.

[11 : 41] That the beauty of the gospel and the hope of Christ would be blessed to them. That they would be so aware of your presence today and tomorrow.

And on Tuesday at the funeral as well. And in all the days ahead. That you would surround them and uphold them. And others in our midst, oh Lord, who grieve. We do pray that same prayer for them.

To know your comfort and your blessing. Remember those who are unwell. Those who are in hospital. Those who are confined to their homes. Do draw near to them each one.

May your will be done. And may you look down upon them. That they would know, Lord, that you are near. That you are with them. May you bless your word as it goes out.

We thank you for all the endeavours of the proclamation of your word. Whether it's in Bible studies. In prayer meetings. In worship. In Lord's day by Lord's day. And whatever means we use, Lord, to share the gospel.

[12 : 37] We thank you that there is a promise that it never returns to you empty. But accomplishes great things. And give us patience in prayer as we seek to reach to the lost.

We can sometimes become frustrated and lose patience. But Lord, we know that those who wait in the Lord will renew their strength. And we thank you for that promise. And we do pray, Lord, that you will continue to watch over us.

To keep us. To guide us. And to help us. To all ends. That will be for your glory. So, Lord, bless us as we continue in our worship this evening. Hear our prayers, Lord.

Draw near to us. Bless the singing of your praise. As we thank you for Ian who leads us this evening. Bless our lips. So we might sing praise to you with all our hearts.

Bless the youth fellowship as it meets after the service, too. We pray for all who gather there. And we pray for Ali as he will speak on the great days of the Reformation.

[13 : 36] And what it means. And how we are blessed still by that. And so we ask, O Lord, that in all of these things, we would give glory to you. And that you would hear us. That you would pardon us for all our sin.

And you, as we come before you, seeking cleansing for all our sins. We are reminded this morning in the wonder of baptism. And thankful for the children we saw baptized today.

And their families and as a congregation together. That we would know more of your blessings. And more of your salvation in our midst. We ask it all. Looking to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in all of these things.

For his glory. And for our good. Amen. We are going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 29.

Again, the Scottish Psalter version, page 238. Psalm 29. We are going to sing from verse 1 to verse 5.

[14 : 35] And the tune is Montrose. Give ye unto the Lord, ye sons, that of the mighty be all strength and glory to the Lord with cheerfulness give ye.

And to the Lord the glory give, that to his name is due. And in the beauty of holiness and to Jehovah bow. We'll sing from verse 1 down to verse 5.

To God's praise we stand to sing. Let voy to the singing of singing, Let voy voy voy voy voy! Let voy voy voy voy! voy voy voy! voy voy voy! voy voy voy O Lord, the glory here, and to his here is true, and in the beautiful holiness, and to the whole man I do.

Lord, my son, the waters is the God of majesty, that thunder and thunder, the multitudes of water sitteth thee.

Our full voice is his that comes out from the Lord most high, the voice of that great Lord is full of glorious majesty.

[17 : 07] The voice of the eternal death, asunder cedars day.

Yea, O the Lord doth see her trace, and ever not doth pay.

Amen. We can turn together now to read God's word in the Old Testament, reading in Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 35.

We can read the whole of this chapter together. Isaiah chapter 35. You'll find this around page 719 of the church Bibles.

Isaiah chapter 35, reading from the beginning. The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad.

[18:14] The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who have an anxious heart, Be strong, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance. With the recompense of God, he will come and save you.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water.

[19:14] In the haunts of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

The unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way. Even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it. They shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with singing.

Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Amen, and may God bless that reading from his word. Before we come to look at this chapter together, we're going to sing again in Psalm 57.

[20:14] It's in the Sing Psalms version, page 74. Psalm 57 on page 74.

The tune is Dennis. Sing from verse 1 to verse 5. Have mercy on me, Lord. To you my soul holds fast. Your covering wings will shelter me until the dangers pass.

We'll sing from verse 5, 1 to verse 5, to God's praise, Please, and we stand to sing. Amen. I cry to God most high, to God who answers me, for He fulfills His purposes for me most perfectly.

He sends his help from heaven, and saves me from above.

Rebuke me those who seek my life, God sends His truth and love.

[22:11] I live beside His knees, I dwell with my own soul.

With men who speak with piercing words, a sharp sword is their tongue.

Above the highest chance, O God, exalted me.

And over all the earth below, display Your majesty.

Amen. Amen. We can turn back to our reading in the book of Isaiah, chapter 35.

[23:18] We're going to look through really the whole of this chapter. We can read again at verse 3 and 4. As you read through this whole chapter, it's not a long chapter, just ten verses as we've read through it.

But as you're reading through it, you see so many different settings and situations that just bring a picture before us of all these different things. When you think of the outset of the chapter, it speaks of the wilderness and the dry land and the desert.

It takes you into this place. And then later on, it speaks of the waters, the waters that bring life, the thirsty grounds, springs of water coming up, the haunt of the jackals, the highway that will be there. There's so many different images before us here in this chapter. And they're all reminding us of the hope that there is with the Lord. And it's a hope that the people in Isaiah's day so much needed us will see as we go through this chapter and see its setting.

But when you think of the images that we have before us, you probably have heard the phrase, a picture paints a thousand words. The idea behind it is that no matter how much you try and describe something or say something about a situation or a setting, a picture just gives it so much clarity and so much information that you couldn't maybe even possibly put across in words.

[25:08] The impact of words alone just isn't the same. You think about talking about the devastating floods in Spain. It's hard to try and explain it in words.

But when you see the images of it on the television, it's just become so much more apparent just how devastating it was, how quickly these things happened, how much tragedy it brought into the lives of so many.

And when we read through the Bible, and this is not to be disrespectful to the Word of God in any way, that we just see it as just words. It is the Word of God.

It is the powerful Word of God. But as you're reading through the Bible in a chapter like this, what you see is that we are given these pictures. We are given these vivid images before us.

And all they do is just add to what the Word of God is saying. The image of the desert and the barrenness, it reminds us of sin and the devastation that that brings.

[26 : 09] But then you see as that all changes when the streams in the desert and the waters break forth in the wilderness, they bring life and beauty and growth comes as a reminder to us of how the grace of God is able to bring us to life and to save us.

So there's so many of these situations that we see that just the words alone, when you think of it in the setting and the context, it just adds so much more to us.

Just think of John the Baptist when he saw Jesus coming towards him. He said, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. As he was speaking to the people, it's an image of the people to immediately think back of the days of the Old Testament and the sacrifices that had to be offered for the forgiveness of sin when a lamb was offered up.

And now he's saying, Behold, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Here is the one who has come to give his life for us, that we might have life through him.

And Jesus himself was always using illustrations. Illustrations showing the people, teaching the people so much in parables and giving them scenes and settings that the people could recognize and see and know just what he was talking about.

[27 : 32] The parable of the sower and the seed. And you see there how the seed is scattered. Some falls on good ground. Some falls on rocky ground. Some falls on the path.

Some falls among thorns and thistles. And immediately you have this picture before you. And you can understand just what he's saying. How the good ground, it brings growth.

How when it falls on the path, the birds come and pluck it away. And so it goes on. And Jesus is describing there something we can understand and even see for ourselves today.

The parable of the lost coin and the lost sheep. The broad road and the narrow road. There's so many vivid images that we have in Scripture that just remind us that as the word of God is heard, it is giving us these great illustrations as well that we can understand and help us to understand.

And here in Isaiah in chapter 35, when you see so many of the great promises that God gives to his people, he gives it in these very vivid ways.

[28 : 40] In a way that we can see what it means to trust in him. And we can see just what it means when he's bringing us from that barren place into a place of richness and growth and blessing.

A place where we are safe. A place where, as you see as you come to the end of the chapter, a place where the Lord's redeemed shall walk. The ransom of the Lord shall return.

They shall come to Zion with singing. So we go from the barrenness to the beauty. And the basis of it is the God who is able to save.

Because Isaiah is writing in the midst of judgment upon the nations. We see that in the preceding chapters. And again, very vivid imagery is used there in chapter 34.

In verse 9 and verse 10. Again, there's just a vivid picture there of the devastation, the judgment upon the nations.

[29 : 56] A picture of this burning sulfur, this burning fire that will never go out. And yet, as you come into chapter 35, that changes.

In the midst of this judgment, we see the God who is sovereign. And the way he speaks to his people. And the way he is calling his people to respond to him.

God's sovereignty over everything. But it also has our human responsibility. Do we listen to this word? Do we see the danger that we're in?

The judgment that we are under when we forsake God. And the kind of image of that burning sulfur is just so vivid. And yet the wonder of a place where God will heal and restore his people.

So we take God's sovereignty seriously. We must take our human responsibility seriously as well. And the two go hand in hand. There was a man called R.B.

[31 : 00] Cuyper. He was a lecturer in Calvin Seminary. And during his days there, he used an illustration to distinguish God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

And he said this about them. I liken them to two ropes going through two holes in the ceiling and over a pulley above. Again, you've got this picture before you.

So the rope is going up through the ceiling through two holes and over a pulley. So you have two ropes coming down. And he says, if I wish to support myself, I must cling to them both.

God's sovereignty and our responsibility. We have to hold on to both. Because he says, if I cling only to one and not the other, I go down. So there's that important aspect.

God's sovereignty, which we know. And our responsibility. The two go hand in hand. And that's what we see in this chapter. We see that God is sovereign over all nations.

[32 : 04] God is sovereign over all people. But as people, we have a responsibility to heed him and to listen to him.

And so as we go through this chapter, I want us to look at four things briefly. Four of these very vivid images that we have before us in this chapter where we see, first of all, renewal.

And then we see a rescue. We see revelation. And we see a restriction. And in the midst of all these, you have this gladness and this joy that I say is reminding the people of in the Lord.

So the first thing is renewal. We see that in verse 1 and verse 2. We always have different phases, different stages in life.

We all go through life in our different journeys, in our different ways. You can look at it, for example, as moving from our youth to our adulthood to our old age.

[33 : 09] We have these various stages that we go through in life. We can also look at it in different ways. We have certain times and periods in our lives as well. We have ordinary times where things are just going along as normal day-to-day routines.

Other times we have extraordinary times in our life. We don't have to look back too far to see when that changed so dramatically.

When we think back to the beginning of 2020. Our lives just going along, perhaps in an ordinary way. And then all of a sudden, we started to hear that word COVID.

And then we started to hear the word lockdown. And our lives were changed in an extraordinary way. We went into a period in our lives where we didn't know what was ahead of us.

These dramatic changes can happen just in the blink of an eye. In God's providence, though, he brings us through. But are we thankful for it?

[34 : 11] I mean, as we think of all these years later, as we come to nearly four years after that first started, have we lost the focus of what it actually did in our lives?

Are we just going back to the ordinary day-to-day lives and carrying on as if nothing happened? Or are we living in light of learning lessons on the journey that we're on?

Well, in Isaiah's day, they were so often, as you see, as you read in the book of Isaiah, just going on as if everything was just going to be ordinary and every day. But God was warning them.

He was warning them of a change that was going to come. That their journey was going to start going in a different direction. And it was their choices that was affecting what was happening.

They were not listening to God. They were turning their back on God. And so God was going to bring judgment upon them. The judgment on the nations, as you see in chapter 34.

[35 : 12] A picture of desolation, of destruction, of continued blazes of fire. But then as you come into chapter 35, you begin to see a renewal there.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad. The desert shall rejoice and blossom like a crocus. All of a sudden, in the midst of this devastation, there are signs of life.

And it's like there's a reversal. All the destruction and the judgment on the nations. That God gives his people hope as well.

The Lord gives them here an illustration of something almost completely unexpected. They don't deserve his grace and his mercy. And yet he shows that he will give it.

And what you find there in verse 1 and 2 is this wilderness, this dry place, this barren place, that there's going to be life that comes into it.

[36 : 19] The life shall come into the desert and blossom like the crocus. It's this flower almost that's going to grow in the midst of this harsh situation.

Unexpectedly, it's not a place you would expect to see life, and yet the Lord can bring life into it. If you've ever walked along the coastline, whether it's along the beach or along the cliffs, very often you can see a flower growing in the last place you might expect.

A place where the wind will batter it. Even the waves could sometime reach it, and yet that wee flower might be holding on in the crevice of a rock. It's so unexpected.

It looks so out of place, and yet there is life there we would least expect it. It's that kind of picture that we have here in these first few verses of Isaiah 35.

In the midst of this desert, this dry and barren land, there is this flower that is growing. And what is the Lord saying to the people? What makes the difference here?

[37 : 26] Well, he is saying that there is still hope of life in him. No matter how barren and destructive this world is, what makes all the difference is the presence of God.

Because what is impossible with man is possible with God. And it says, There is such wonderful hope in these words of renewal.

Where even in the world in which we live in today, in all the devastation, in all the heartache, in all the pain that we see around us, there is still hope that the Lord is able to bring life, to bring restoration, and that we would see the glory and the majesty of our Lord and our God.

There is the hope of renewal. We don't lose sight of that hope. That he is the one who is able to abundantly bless.

And the second thing that leads us then is into verse 3 and verse 4. And here we see the idea of God rescuing.

[38 : 44] In the midst of all this devastation and all that's ahead of them, the Lord is the one who is able to rescue. This renewal is accomplished by God rescuing his people.

Strengthen the weak hands. Make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, Be strong. Fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance.

With recompense of God, he will come and save you. He will come and save you. He warns that the days of exile are coming to the people.

Days that are going to be hard. You see that by the weak hands and the feeble knees, those who are anxious. This is the consequence of what's about to come upon them.

The judgment and being brought into captivity by a foreign land is going to leave them downcast. And it's like you see here now, though, a day when the Lord is going to restore.

[39 : 48] It's like the refugees returning home to a war-torn city, a place that just looks full of destruction. And you can imagine their weakness, their helplessness.

They feel weak. They are anxious. But someone comes alongside them and says, don't worry. We're going to rebuild this city.

We're going to rebuild our lives. You think of what's coming in this week ahead when we look to Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday next week.

And yet the images of the wars that people have gone through and the devastation it brought, in so many ways it left an idea of, well, how can life be restored here?

Cities that have been bombed. Places that are just lying in ruin. And yet you see them now and they're rebuilt. There's life going on in these places once again.

[40 : 47] And here we are told that, well, the Lord is able to rebuild. The Lord is able to renew. He will come and save you.

Strengthen the weak hands. Make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of an anxious heart, be strong, fear not. Behold, your God is with you.

He will come and deal with all things, with vengeance and recompense to those who are under that. But for those who are his, he will come and save you.

How often do we need encouragement in life? How often in life does our journey leave us feeling weary and weak hands, feeble knees, anxious hearts?

All of these things could be true for us this evening. It may be true in our life experience just now that life takes its toll on us. Emotions can be all over the place.

[41 : 48] Even spiritually, we can find ourselves one minute close to the Lord and warm with the Lord. In the next minute, we almost feel a coldness and just a drifting away.

But God comes alongside and says, take heart, be strong, fear not. He is able to rebuild. And so often in Scripture, we are reminded of these things.

We are reminded of the glory of our God, the God who has come to rescue us and to keep us. Joshua had these great words spoken to him, be strong and courageous.

Why? Because the Lord was with him. In the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 33, verse 27, 27, it says, the eternal God is your dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Again, there's just this wonderful image of God as the keeper of his people. Underneath are the everlasting arms. Isaiah, in chapter 40, he uses very vivid language there as well.

[42 : 56] He says about the shepherd in verse 11, he will tend his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms. He will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with

young.

There's so much in the word of God that reminds us of the great care of the Lord, that he is with his people. And what an encouragement God gives to us.

And there is the greatest of all, he will come and save you. He will come and save you. And that's the most powerful message that you see throughout Isaiah, that the Lord will come and save his people from their sins.

As we were looking at this morning in the service of baptism, the name of Jesus, how it means he shall save his people from their sins.

He will come and save you. Of course, when you go on in Isaiah, you see the servant songs as it speaks of there, and especially Isaiah chapter 53, where we see how vividly the Lord is presented there as the one who will give his life for his sheep.

[44 : 13] He will come and save you. We live in a day when people are feeble, when people are weak, when people don't know where to turn, when there's so much distress and dismay.

What encouragement can we give? What strength can we give to people when it says strengthen the weak hands, make firm the feeble knees?

What can we say to those around us who are in this situation? Say to those who have an anxious heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God.

Your God who will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God, he will come and save you.

There is the call of our responsibility there to put our trust in the Lord.

God is sovereign over all things, but we are to put our trust in the Lord. Rescue is close. We need to call upon the Lord.

[45 : 22] Then in verse 5 to verse 7, we see this revelation. We see the way the Lord works.

There's a number of different pictures there in verse 5 to verse 7.

You have the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer in the tongue of the mute, sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand shall become a pool, and so it goes on. There is this change that is coming.

There is this revelation that God gives here of just what he does for his people. Those who have been blind, they see.

Those who have been deaf, they hear. Those who are lame, they leap with joy. The Lord brings then waters into the wilderness and streams into the desert.

[46 : 23] He gives life. He gives refreshment here. I don't know if you've ever watched a movie.

Maybe it's a war film or a western. And they're fighting in the desert or they're lost in the desert, in the wilderness.

And the heat and the lack of water is causing them great distress and causing them to start hallucinating. And they suddenly see something they dearly want, something they really want.

And that's like an oasis of water in the desert. It's starting to quench their thirst. And they're moving towards it, but then they realize it's not there. Well, God doesn't tease us in that way.

He doesn't help us to see something, then it's not actually there, or he takes us away from it. He brings us to a place where our thirst is quenched.

For those who are thirsty, Isaiah here gives the Lord's presence as a means of the people being renewed. The waters breaking forth in the wilderness, the streams in the desert, the thirsty ground springs of water.

[47 : 36] There is this hope, this renewal, in all that the Lord is doing for his people. It would be disheartening to look somewhere and see there's actually no help there.

But the Lord is there to help. The Lord is near to all who call upon him. The Lord is there to give refreshment and renewing in a constant supply.

And how can this be? Well, Jesus taught it in the New Testament when he met the woman at the well in John chapter 4. He had that wonderful encounter with her.

And again, he uses that vivid picture. He says, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again when they're drawing water from the well. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Where is this further seen?

[48 : 39] Well, it's seen as well in the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 7, verse 16. It says, never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them, not any scorching heat for the lamb. At the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water.

You have the already and what is still to come. The already that the Lord is there to lead us to this water, to give us life through the living water.

And then eternally, how the Lord will shepherd his people and lead them to springs of living water for eternity. A wonderful hope. A wonderful hope for the Christian there that we should put our trust in him.

He refreshes us along the way. But there's one final thing I want us to see from this passage and that's in verse 8 to verse 10.

[49 : 43] And that is that there are restrictions in place here. A highway shall be there and it shall be called the way of holiness. But it says, the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk in the way. Again, we see the sovereignty of God. God who is preparing a place for his people.

But we see our responsibility as well. It's for us to see that the Lord is calling us. Calling us unclean as we are that we might be cleansed by him.

But if we are not, it says, the unclean will not pass over it. The unclean will not go this way. It is the way of the Lord's people.

The way of those who have put their trust in the Lord. Who have recognized their sin. Who have repented from it. Who have turned to the Lord. And who are trusting in him.

[50 : 51] Still us sinners, imperfect as we are. But we are seeking the way of the Lord. And well, it's for those ways, those who listen to the Lord's command.

And what it says here is that they will be redeemed. They will be redeemed. It's the way of holiness. It's the way that belongs to those who walk in the way.

And it says there at the end of verse 9, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return. These two words remind us again of the power of God.

It's the first time I say I use that term, redeemed, along with ransomed, here. It's those who belong to God. Those who have accepted the Lord as the saviour of their souls.

They are redeemed. They are the one who trusts. A price has been paid. And it's only those who will enter in. The redeemed and the ransomed.

[51 : 58] And you say tonight, well, how can I be redeemed? How can I be ransomed? Well, if you take this forward into the New Testament, you see the Redeemer who came.

The Redeemer, as Ruth, in the book of Ruth, speaks about, the kinsman Redeemer. There is a Redeemer for God's people. And the only Redeemer of God's elect, as the Catechism says, is our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the only Redeemer of His people. And the only way to walk on this highway is to walk by faith in Him.

And if we do so, it says, the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with singing. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

They shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. There is the great hope of the Lord's people.

[53 : 01] Those who are redeemed, those who are ransomed, they shall come home. They shall come home to Sion. They shall come to the Lord with singing, singing an everlasting joy upon their heads.

what a transformation that is. What a wonderful transformation from the devastation and destruction of being under the judgment of God to knowing the beauty of a Redeemer who is Jesus Christ, the one who saves His people from their sins, the one who gives singing an everlasting joy to His people.

Even as He calls them home, that is the great hope for all who are called by Him. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

There is a way. There is a highway prepared for the Lord's people, the way of holiness.

The question is, are you walking on it? Are you walking in this way? A way of healing, a way of restoration, a way of knowing your sins forgiven because we have a Redeemer.

[54 : 25] Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. We see that again in the book of Revelation as well where it speaks of God who will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The God who restores. There is so much in this picture before us this evening. So much of what the Lord has done and is doing for His people.

How He is showing us a way to salvation that He has come to save. How He is able to open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf.

How He is able to give refreshing. How He is able to show us a way, a way to everlasting life that is through faith in the Lord Jesus.

He has come to save. Are you trusting and are you walking in this way? Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven, we do thank You for Your Word and all it says to us.

[55 : 29] We thank You for the beauty of it, of how it brings us to places and situations that remind us of the devastation of sin as we read there in Isaiah chapter 34 of the sulfur and the burning pitch.

And yet, as we come into chapter 35, we are given that wonderful assurance of the hope of Your people. That the wilderness that is barren brings growth.

That the places that are dry, suddenly there is water bursting forth. That there is joy and gladness in the place of sorrow and that this is through the One who has redeemed His people, who has ransomed His people and who is able to give us that everlasting joy that is found in our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.

So we pray that You will help us if we are not on that way to come and walk in the way of Your commands, to heed Your Word, to see Your sovereignty and yet our responsibility to put our trust in You.

Hear our prayers and continue with us as all we ask. We ask for the forgiveness of our sin. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing again in Psalm 107 on page 385 of the Psalm books.

[56 : 50] I'm going to sing from verse 41 down to 43. This is a psalm as we sung at the start that talks about the people of God walking and finding themselves in so many different situations.

There's four different kinds of situations that the Lord shows us here in this psalm. And in every situation what is common is that they call on the Lord in their trouble and the Lord redeems them. The Lord frees them from their trouble as they call on Him. And then at the end of this psalm in verse 41 we read these words Yet setteth he the poor on high from all his miseries and he much like unto a flock doth make him families.

They that are righteous shall rejoice when they the same shall see and as ashamed stop our mouth shall all iniquity who so is wise and will these things observe and them record even they shall understand the love and kindness of the Lord.

So we are to be wise in listening to the word of God and when we are wise we shall understand the love and kindness of the Lord. We'll sing from verse 41 to 43 to God's praise and tune us Eric's statement.

[58 : 23] singing singing Let ever be the good or guide from all his mysteries, and he much like unto a fraud, doth make him families.

The Lord our righteous shall rejoice, when they the same shall see, and as the shameless of our mud shall all iniquity.

It's always wise and will these things observe and every core.

In which shall understand the love and kindness of the Lord.

Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right. 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.

[60 : 09] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.