

Seek the Lord

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Date: 21 April 2024

[0 : 00] begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're singing in Psalm 50, the first version of the Psalm, in Scottish Psalter, page 276 of the Psalm books. Psalm 50, we'll sing from verse 1 to verse 6, and the tune is Malan. The mighty God the Lord hath spoken and did call, the earth from rising of the sun to where he hath his fall, from out of Sion Hill which of excellency and beauty their perfection is God's shine gloriously. We'll sing from verse 1 to 6 to God's praise and we stand to sing.

Amen. The mighty God the Lord hath his fall, from out of Sion Hill which of excellency and beauty and beauty and perfection is God's shine gloriously.

earth from out of Sion Hill which of excellency and beauty and perfection is God's shine gloriously. The mighty God the Lord hath his fall, from out of Sion Hill which of excellency and beauty and perfection is God's shine gloriously.

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[1 : 59] Whoever ████ and ████ give MakeJ Their ████ control of theirs A, some power, from what hook are lowly and Informal to hear partly to the influence of itspertory and a██able and ████ Là their creator we standHere progress upon them earth from Christ to the chorus of Sion Hill the throne and glory and O hearts. our existing wished and anchor m Water solo and hope of him die and Eany kid himself glor reslike. To the heavens pier, reap all the██ rural.

Come to the end, then the Yeti's harbor may childish people come home.

Together let my saints come to the hour deep.

Those that I stand in my shall be are covered and with thee.

And then the devil shall let his righteousness be there.

[3 : 18] Because the Lord in his heavenly sea by whom they judge it are.

Amen. Amen. Amen. I will bow our heads together in a short word of prayer. Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you that as we come together today that yours is a voice that we hear calling to us. That you speak to us through your word.

That you speak to us in a powerful way. Your word reminds us that you are the one who calls his people from the rising of the sun to its setting. And today we thank you that as a church here we are part of a people throughout the world.

All around the world there are people, young and old, who come to worship you. Who come to call upon you. Who come to hear you through your word. And we pray that together we will all hear your word today.

[4 : 25] That you will speak to us. That we will understand more of you. That we will hear the stories of all that you have done for your people from generation to generation.

Whether we are hearing it from the Old Testament or from the New Testament. We thank you that we are reminded of your people from long ago and your people even to this very day who need to hear your voice.

And we thank you for the ways in which your voice changes our lives and helps us day by day to lean upon you and to know you and to be encouraged and strengthened by you.

So together Lord help us to praise you. Help us to worship you with all our hearts. And that we would indeed come seeking you today. And that you would remind us Lord how you have come to seek us.

How you sent your son Jesus Christ. Your saviour for this world. The one who came to seek and to save the lost. And so help us today Lord to know your presence.

[5 : 28] To know your peace. To know your blessing upon us here in the church. And also as the young ones go through to the hall next door as well Lord. Be with us we pray.

And we ask all with forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus name. Amen. Well did you all have a good holiday. You all delighted to be back to school.

Or nursery. Or whatever you're doing. Delighted to be back. Coming back to Sunday school as well I hope. And creche and tweenies. And all of these things. It's nice to get a break.

But then it's nice again to be together once more as we come to worship God. Now I wonder how many of you have played a game. And the game is called hide and seek.

Hands up if you've played the game hide and seek. Yeah there's a few hands going up. I'm sure most people at some point have played the game hide and seek.

[6 : 28] Now I don't know about you but there's a variety of different kinds of ways you can play hide and seek. One way is maybe you would call it the traditional way where someone is it.

And maybe has to count to 50 or 100. While everybody else tries to go and hide somewhere and find the best place to hide. And once the person's finished counting they have to go and try and find the people.

And sometimes it can be very difficult to find people. Other times it can be quite easy if they haven't had time to find a good hiding place. So that's maybe the traditional way of playing hide and seek.

And it can be good fun. Well in our house we've got another version of hide and seek. It's a little bit different where you've got somebody who's it and you're not counting.

But it's another way of playing hide and seek. What you do is you hide the keys, the phone or the glasses or something like that. And you spend half your day trying to find them.

[7 : 28] So it's another way of hide and seek. Maybe you've seen mum and dad playing this game every morning about 10 to 9 when they're meant to be at work at half past 8. It can be good fun if you're watching.

It's not so fun if you're the one who's trying to find these things. But it's always these kinds of things. The phone, the keys and the glasses. These are the things that often go missing.

And you know this if you were to spend 10 minutes every day having to look for something. Whether it's whatever it is. In the TV, remote, your glasses, your keys.

If you're 10 minutes every day looking for something, how long in the year do you think that is you spend looking? Well if you do the maths and take 10 minutes every day for 365 days a year, you spend two and a half days looking for things.

And that just sounds crazy, doesn't it? Two and a half days looking for things that should be so easy. To find. Well there's another thing about hide and seek as well.

[8 : 34] And it's a little bit more serious. And that's what we're going to be thinking about today as we look at Isaiah in the Old Testament. And it's playing hide and seek with God.

Because sometimes we can think that we can go away and hide from God. But there's no hiding place from God. God knows always where we are.

And when you go back to the Old Testament, you've got Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They tried to hide from God. But God came saying, where are you? Not because he didn't know where they were.

He knew exactly where they were. What he was doing was he was calling them out. And that's what God's word does for us. We can try and hide our way from God.

But how long do we spend actually seeking God ourselves? Even if we did ten minutes every day, that would be two and a half days a year seeking God.

[9 : 36] Looking for him and speaking to him and spending time with him. It's not time wasted like looking for keys or glasses or phones or whatever else. It's time well spent.

Coming to God who knows us. Who loves us. And who wants us to trust him. So let us spend time not hiding from God, but seeking God and looking for him, knowing that he is there for us.

Hide and seek is a fun game to play sometimes. But there's a serious side to it as well. When we think of God who gave his son, Jesus, who came to seek and to save us.

So let's seek him with all our hearts. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[10 : 48] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Well, we'll sing again to God's praise now in Psalm 27. This is in the Sing Psalms version, page 32 of the psalm books. Psalm 27.

We're going to sing from verse 4 down to verse 8. Psalm 27. Psalm 27.

Page 32 of the psalm book. Verse 4 to verse 8. The tune is Argyle. One thing I'll plead before the Lord. And this I'll seek always. That I may come within God's house.

And dwell there all my days. We'll sing from verse 4 to 8. To God's praise. And I may listen to verse 5 to 9. Valentine's text. This I may become, but I may say is right now.

[11 : 51] They shall live there all my days. It shall live there all my days.

That I may come with it, God's eyes, and well there all my days.

That of the beauty of the Lord, I come to me again.

And in this heart, may seem to know, thy flesh shall live this way.

For in this dwelling, ye will be, be safe and trouble with.

[13 : 11] Within this dwelling, ye will be, and the Lord, I will be, be safe and trouble with.

My hand will bend, ye lifted high, upon thy hand please.

And in this heaven, I'll sacrifice with showers of joy and grace.

Lord, hear me when I call to you, in mercy, do not seek.

Come see my face, you told my heart, your face, Lord, I will see.

[14 : 43] We're going to read together now God's word in the Old Testament, in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah, the first half of the Bible, Isaiah. We're reading in chapter 55, and you'll find this around page 744.

Isaiah chapter 55, and we're going to read the whole of this chapter together. Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

[16:14] Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace, and the mountains and the hills, before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle, and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

[17:43] Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. We will again join our hearts together in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we are reminded that as we come to hear your voice, we can often forget who it is that's speaking.

We can be confused by the many different voices in this world that call for our attention, the many different things that clamor for our hearts.

You know, as we've been reminded in this passage in Isaiah, when the people gathered together, there were so many things that were going on around them.

But we thank you that just as you spoke to the people then and said, come, seek the Lord, we thank you that you speak to us in that way as well. And we think of even Samuel in the Old Testament, how he didn't understand when he was hearing a voice calling his name.

But when he did understand that you were speaking, he said, speak, Lord, for your servant hears. And we pray, Lord, that we will have ears to hear today, that you will help us to have that prayerful spirit to come and say to you, Lord, speak to us.

[19:07] And we thank you that we're reminded in that psalm that we sung together as well, that the psalmist came calling to you, be merciful and speak, and that you were merciful towards him and said to him, come, seek my face.

And we pray, Lord, today again, just to know these very thoughts, that they would come and speak to our hearts, that we would thank you that you do minister to us in all our different needs, that you are a God who speaks a word in season to us so often, even day by day, Lord, as we come to you prayerfully and through your word, we thank you that you have something to say to us always.

And that through your word, you build us up as a people, that is a word that is powerful and mighty, even as we're reminded in this passage, that it will never return to you empty or void, but accomplish every purpose for which you send it out.

We pray today, Lord, for your mighty word to go out in our midst, in the midst of your people, near and far, throughout the world. May your word bear much fruit, may it have much power by your spirit to speak to many people for how we need it, Lord.

And that we see around us, Lord, all the different ways we need you. We need you to give help and strength on a daily basis. We need you for the very air that we breathe, the things that we take for granted so often, the food that we enjoy, the clean water that we drink, Lord, the beds that we sleep in, the homes that we have.

[20 : 48] We have so much that we just take for granted so often and help us to be more thankful to you. Help us to be more loving to you, to be more generous to you in all our ways, to acknowledge, Lord, that every good and perfect gift is from above, from the one who, with whom there is no, no changing.

You're the same yesterday, today, and forever. And we, Lord, we thank you for that, that in a world that changes so much and so quickly, in our lives that are often changed in a moment, Lord, we thank you that you have that unchanging nature, that you are God and there is no other.

And we thank you that the way is open to you through your son, Jesus Christ, that in him we come, praying in his name, a name above every name, and that we have the promise of your spirit, the comforter who comes alongside.

And so we pray, Lord, that each of us here, and those unable to be with us, those who tune in online, and even those who maybe at this time are laid aside for different reasons, we pray, Lord, for each one to know the nearness of your presence, to know your voice calling, to say, come and seek the Lord.

And we seek you, Lord, for all our different needs, for your comfort towards those who mourn. And we know in our own number, Lord, that there are those who have sore hearts at this time, and the loss of loved ones.

[22 : 24] We know throughout our communities and throughout our island, Lord, that there is much grief and sorrow. And we thank you that your word reminds us that you are a God of much comfort.

And so we pray, Lord, for you to bind up these broken hearts, to give your peace, your presence, your help, and your strength in the midst of all their sorrow and sadness.

Remember those who are unwell as well in hospital and at home. We pray, Lord, that you will surround them with your love and your grace. And may your healing hand be upon them, if that is in accordance with your will.

And we do thank you, Lord, for your church. We thank you for the promise that you are building your church, and for the church as your people here and far and wide.

Encourage us in our prayers. Encourage us in our mission. Encourage us in all that we do in your name, through work with young, middle-aged, and old.

[23 : 26] We pray to know your blessing and your hand upon us for good, to see days of salvation, to see days of your power at work in our midst. We pray for all our homes and our families, and all our different issues going on in life, whatever that might be, Lord, they are already known to you.

Remember our young people, especially as they come to times of exams, both in school and university. Just now, Lord, we pray that you will give strength and help towards each one.

Help them to prepare diligently, and to do their, give their all, to give their best. And above all, Lord, that they would come seeking your face in it, asking help from you, and strength from you for these times.

Remember us, Lord, we pray in our workplaces, in all the different places where we are salt and light, that we can find so challenging at times, where we feel perhaps failures so often.

Give us words to speak. Give us your grace. Give us your love. Oh, Lord, that we would show forth your love, that people would speak and ask of the wonder of Christ, that they would see something of us, of you in us, and that they would ask about you, Lord.

[24:44] And as we have opportunity, Lord, give us the words to speak, or to invite them to church, or to other things that are going on in our church as well, Lord.

We thank you for your spirit that works, and we pray, oh, Lord, you know its power, the power of your Holy Spirit, preparing the way for us, preparing people's hearts, preparing all our lives, and all that lies ahead of us, Lord, that we would do all for your glory, and go forward in confidence in you.

So, Lord, hear our prayers, continue to watch over us, to remember us in all of these things, and to go before us, even in this day, as we continue to worship you this morning, and into the evening as well.

May you be with us, Lord, and bless all that we do in your name. Give us praise on our lips now, Lord, as we turn to sing to you, and help us to rejoice in the gift of song that you give to us, to lift our voices to you in praise.

Bless James as he leads us in it, and we thank you for all who lead us in praise so often, and help us all to join in with united hearts, and glorify your precious name.

[25:56] So, Lord, lead us now, we pray, in all that we do, and pardon us for all our sin. That's all we ask. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Let us again sing to God's praise in Psalm 25, in the Sing Psalms.

We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 9. Psalm 25 at verse 1, the tune is Finart. This psalm again reminds us of just how the Lord is able to direct our paths, and to help us on our way in life.

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. I trust in you continually. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me. Verse 4 says, O Lord, reveal to me your ways and all your paths.

Help me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth. Instruct me in the way to go. We'll sing from verse 1 to 9, to God's praise. Amen.

Amen. Amen. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

[27:14] I trust in you continually. Do not let me be put to you, I'm not going to be good to shame, nor let my foes go over me.

No one who saves his hope in you will never suffer such disgrace.

But those who act with destiny, humiliating shame will face.

Full heart revealed to me your ways, and all your paths will lead to know.

Thy rectum guide me in your truth, and study in the way to hold.

[28:58] You are my Savior and my God. All day I hope with you alone.

Remember, Lord, your love and grace, which from those ages you have shown.

Do not recall my sins of youth, or my reality of evil ways.

Remember me in your great love, for you, O Lord, are good always.

Because the Lord is just and good, He shows His path to all who stray.

[30 : 32] He hurts the meek in what is life, and teaches them His holy way.

We can turn back to a reading in Isaiah chapter 55. Just read again at verse 6. We'll be looking at verse 6 down to the end of the chapter. Isaiah 55 at verse 6.

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Seek the Lord while He may be found.

In that last psalm that we sang, it speaks about seeking direction in our ways from God. And the last verse that we sang, verse 8 and 9 there.

Because the Lord is just and good, He shows His paths to all who stray. God is just. God is good. And He shows His path to all who stray.

[31 : 44] And we are all guilty of straying at times. And we ask the question maybe today, where are you? When you think about your life, when you think about your relationship with the Lord, where are you?

Are you in the right place? Or are you feeling a little lost along the way? Are you lost among all the different voices that are calling for your attention?

The voices that are calling for your time? The voices that are calling for you in life that seem to just take over and overwhelm us at time? Are we hearing the Lord and what He is saying to us?

Because we can often get ourselves off track and not listen to the right voice. There was an incident that happened a number of years ago on the west coast of America, where a pod of whales had been coming by the west coast of America.

But one of the whales in the pod got off track, swam away from the rest, and he ended up swimming into San Francisco Bay. And as he came into the bay, it's a large expanse of water, but he got confused as he was swimming into the bay and got distracted then by all the attention that was being shown towards him, all the different noises that were around him.

[33 : 09] He probably became scared. But instead of turning and swimming back out to sea to where the rest of the pod were, he kept going in the wrong direction. This whale started swimming up the Sacramento River.

And there were many people gathered round to try their best to help this whale. There was people on boats. There were scientists coming in and trying everything they could to try and get this whale back out to sea.

And just nothing was working. The whale just kept swimming in the wrong direction up the river. And people knew that, well, if the whale keeps going, it's going to perish if it carries on in this direction.

Then they came with a thought about trying something that might make him turn round. And that was to put the sound of the pod of whales behind him, playing underwater behind him.

And this sound got the whale's attention. And the boat that had put the sound on the water started making its way back down the river, out through the bay, out towards the sea.

[34 : 16] And the whale kept following the sound because he recognized the sound. And the further it was going out the bay and the closer it was getting to the sea, suddenly the whale sped up and started heading out back towards sea and to rejoin the pod.

Now, in many ways, sometimes, like that whale, we can just get so confused in our environment, so confused in our surroundings, and we find ourselves just on the wrong track.

We've gone the wrong way. We're lost and we're in danger. And maybe we ask ourselves, how have I got here? And how can I find my way back?

How can I find my way back to where I'm meant to be? Well, God is just and good. And he shows his paths to those who stray, as the psalm says.

And God's word speaks to us in that way. It is calling us. We have gone away from God through our sin. We've gone on the wrong path.

[35 : 22] We're on the wrong direction. We're going away from God. But God, by his grace, calls us back. And the prophet Isaiah spoke to the people here in his day, as he speaks to ourselves today, calling the people back to God, back to him, that they might find their way in life, that they might find their way to life, that they might find their way to eternal life.

And we can often think in life that we're not that far off course. We're not that far away from God. But just a little bit off course can be disastrous for us.

If you take, for example, the idea of the world in which we live, and you want to go right round the world, circumnavigate the world, and you want to do it round the equator.

So you're going to start at a point on the equator, maybe go by plane, take off and follow the equator right round and come back to the place you started. It sounds fair enough.

We'll do that. And then you take off. But you're one degree off course. Now, if you look at a compass and you look at one degree, it seems so insignificant.

[36 : 38] It seems so small. Just one degree off course. What difference is that really going to make? Well, if you circumnavigate the globe around the equator and you're one degree off course, by the time you come right round, how far out are you going to be?

You maybe think, oh, it'll just be the odd mile or two, and you'll still be able to see where you're meant to be. Maybe it's 50 or 100 miles. You'll actually be 500 miles off course, just by being one degree out all the way around.

500 miles away from where you're meant to be. The distance between Stornoway and London, that's how far off course you are. And so you think to yourself in life, well, my life isn't that far off course.

Maybe I'm getting a few things wrong, but on the whole, I'm on the right path. But just even one degree out can be disastrous. You're miles away from God when it comes to the end of life.

And we drift further and further away the more we go on. Well, in this passage before us today, God is calling his people who have gone off course.

[37 : 56] And if you look at them, you would see they're not that far off. They're still trying to worship God. They're still having God in their midst, as it were. But yet in their hearts, they're still miles away from God.

And this is disastrous. And you see in the beginning of chapter 55, this is a wonderful passage, this passage. A gospel passage. It's all about the call of God to come to him.

In the first five verses, you see that great invitation to come everyone who thirsts. Come to the waters. As I say, I'm speaking to the people then.

God, speaking to the people then. In the midst of all the voices that you're hearing around you just now. Come to me. Come without money, without price. Come.

Come to me. Incline your ear. Come to me. Hear that you may live. That is the message. They're getting off track, but God is calling them back.

[39 : 01] So there's all these voices calling. But then in verse 6, down to the end, it's the direct voice of God speaking here on the whole.

The first verse is Isaiah. But then we have the voice of the Lord speaking. And Isaiah begins this by saying, Seek the Lord while he may be found.

Call upon him while he is near. And then you have in verse 8, down to the end, God speaking directly and powerfully. And these are the verses that we want to look at today.

Now for some people here, the voice of God might be like the sound of that pod of whales to the whale of course. It might be needed behind us to turn us back in the right direction.

But for others, it may be that it's just a voice that we have to keep listening to that's ahead of us. That's keeping us going in the right direction. But whatever we are, we may have to turn back on the right path or we may have to keep going on the right path.

[40 : 07] But God's voice is for all of us to hear and to heed what he is saying to us. And the first thing we have here before us is that call.

The call to seek. What was spoken in verse 1 to 5 is reiterated then in verse 6 and verse 7. Seek the Lord while he may be found.

Call upon him while he is near. There's an urgency in this call. I say as an urgency to the people here.

He has an urgency to ourselves today. Because this is not seek the Lord in your own time. Seek the Lord when it suits you.

This is seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. And the beauty of these words is that the Lord is not hiding.

[41 : 09] The Lord is inviting. The Lord is speaking. And that's the way he is to us today. He hasn't hidden away from us today. He hasn't abandoned us today.

We'll be thinking more of that this evening, God willing. How God promises never to leave us. But this morning we're thinking more of the coming to him.

And he's not left us. He is calling us. And the implication of the call that Isaiah has here is that there may not always be this chance.

It may not always be possible to seek or to call. And that's the reality that we know all too well in life.

Because these opportunities soon go. Seek the Lord while he may be found. The Lord is there.

[42 : 08] And when is he there? When is he near? It is today. As one of the Psalms says, Today if you hear my voice, then harden not your hearts.

Today is the importance, the urgency of this message. It is not something for later on in life. Today if you are hearing my voice.

It is possible that God may be found tomorrow. It is possible that he may be near tomorrow. But you don't know. You don't know.

The scriptures remind us of that again and again. James in the New Testament. James 4 verse 14. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.

You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. You do not know what you will be like tomorrow. So there is the urgency of this call.

[43 : 13] The call to seek. Many people will feel this call. This tugging of God on their hearts. And put him off. For another time.

Another day. Another occasion. We want to concentrate on the important things in life first. Get everything else in order. Maybe when we have done that.

Then we will come and seek God. But this is reminding us. Seek the Lord while he may be found. While he is speaking to your heart. While he is calling.

That is the time. Don't turn away from him. The urgency here. And I say is leave everything else.

And come to God. To God who is fully able to pardon. At the end of verse 7 there it says to our God. For he will abundantly pardon.

[44:12] There is the urgency again. How can you know forgiveness? How can you know restoration with God? How can you know that right path? That when you are going astray. It is to come. And seek. The Lord. So the call. Is there. To seek. And as we move on then. We see. Really three things. Directly then. From God. Isaiah's voice is being heard. In verse 6 and 7. But then God is speaking directly.

In verse 8. For my thoughts. Are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways. My ways. Declares. The Lord. So they receive. The need. To seek the Lord.

And the Lord. Explains. Why it's so necessary. For us. To seek the Lord. While we can. And at. What is at the heart of it. Is that we are sinners.

[45:07] We are sinners. We cannot. Save ourselves. It is only the Lord. Who can save. And he does. He shows us this. By distinguishing. Between. His thoughts. And our thoughts. And his ways. And our ways. For my thoughts. He says in verse 8. Are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways. My ways. Declares. The Lord. And so. Where is the difference here? How. Are we so different. To God. Well. If you go back. To verse 7. There. Isaiah. Uses the words. Way. And thoughts. As well. Let the wicked. Forsake. His way. And the unrighteous man. His thoughts. Because there is what we are. By nature. The wicked. Forsake. His way. Our ways. Are not the ways. Of God. Our thoughts.

[46:03] Are not. The thoughts. Of God. And we might try and say. But we are good people. That we are. Trying our best. And all of these things. But the reality is. We are never. As good as God. We can never be. Like God. Our ways. Are inclined. To going astray. Our thoughts. Are inclined. To going astray. And therefore. The need is. To come. To God. For he says. My thoughts. Are not your thoughts. Neither. Are your ways. My ways. God. What is. God. Who is. God. Well. God. As we see. In his word. Is describing. Who he is. To us. He is a holy. God. He is a just. God. He is a good. God. As we sang.

[46:56] In Psalm 25. He is everything. That we are not. God. Because our relationship. With him. Has been spoiled. And so. That is why. The call is here. Seek the Lord. Because. We need him. If we see. His holiness. If we see. His beauty.

The difference. Between us. And God. It should shake us up. It should stir us up. In our hearts. To realize. I am never going to be good. And just. And perfect. Perfect. I cannot accomplish.

Any of these things. I cannot. Save myself. But God. Can. And that is. The beauty of it. That is the beauty of God.

Because he has. Given us. Everything that we need. For salvation. We need. God. We need him to live. We need him to move. We need him to be.

[47:53] To have our being. As it is described. Throughout his word. Everything that we have. Is from him. Do we recognize then.

Our need. Of him. Do we think ourselves. Good enough. To achieve everything in life. Our own. Salvation. Our own being.

All of these things. We cannot. But we have one. Who can. As the book of Proverbs. Says.

In chapter three. Trust in the Lord. With all your heart. And lean not. On your own understanding. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. And he.

Will direct your paths. Again. It is about God. Bringing us. Back on track. Back. So we have the need. To see God.

[48 : 49] Because God is so much. Above us. In his ways. And in his thoughts. But then we maybe start to think. Well God is just too far away.

From us. God is too distant. We are too sinful. There is just. Too big of a gap. Between us. That we can never reach him. But then the beauty is.

That he helps us. To seek him. He gives us help. To seek him. And his help is through. His word. And you see that. In verse 10.

And verse 11. Where it speaks about. The rain and the snow. Come down from heaven. And do not return there. But water the earth. Making it bring forth. And sprout.

Giving seed to the sower. And bread to the eater. So shall my word. That goes out from my mouth. It shall not return. To me empty. But shall accomplish.

[49 : 45] That which I purpose. And shall succeed. In the thing. For which I sent it. Here is the wonder. Of who God is. That he doesn't. Stay at a distance.

From us. That we don't have to try. And somehow. Reach up to him. Whose thoughts. Are far above. Ours. Whose ways. Are far above ours. Heaven and earth.

Can seem. So far removed. As he says. In verse 9. The heavens are higher. Than the earth. So are my ways. Higher than yours. There's this distance.

But he has closed. This distance. He has brought. His word. To us. He has sent. His word. Into this world.

And you may not. Think. You can start to think. Well I cannot. Come to God. And you can't. But the Lord. Is serious. About his relationship. To us.

[50 : 41] And so he makes. Provision. For us. He helps us. He sends. His word. He calls us. To turn. To him.

To seek him. While we can. And that word. Brings its power. To enable us. To turn to the Lord. Behind the word. Is the Holy Spirit.

Who works. Us. The wonder. Of who God is. That he came. To us. And God is. So serious. About this. As so often.

We find. In Isaiah. We can see it. Looking ahead. To the New Testament. As well. When we think here. Of the word. Of God. Coming from his mouth.

Coming down. From heaven. As the rain. From heaven. Comes to water. The earth. God sent his son. Into this world. As you read.

[51 : 35] In John. Chapter one. The gospel of John. The word. Became flesh. And dwelt. Among us. From heaven. To earth. God sent.

His son. That he might come. And call us. To himself. Call sinners. To repentance. As his ministry. Begins. As you read. In the gospel. Of Mark.

Jesus's ministry. Begins. With these words. Repent. And believe. The gospel. And behind that word. Repent. Is a change of direction.

Is a turning. Again. To God. Because we've. We've gone astray. And so the word. Came us. To call us. Back to himself. To call the world.

Back to him. And the word. That became flesh. And dwelt among us. Jesus. Our savior. Is the one. Who showed us. That everything.

[52:29] That we couldn't do. To save ourselves. To earn the forgiveness. Of our sins. He did. He has done it. For us. He didn't. Return empty.

To his father. But just like the water. Comes down. From heaven. To earth. And brings forth. Growth. And seed. And bread. All of these things. So the word.

Shall accomplish. That which I purpose. And will succeed. In the thing. For which I sent it. God sent his son. Into this world. That we might have salvation. Through him.

It was done. It was finished. On the cross. He has done all things. That we might come to him. And know that he is able.

To abundantly pardon. Us through him. He has done everything. For us. Today.

[53:25] The word. It will not return. Empty. Or void. What a wonderful promise. Are we listening.

To that word. Are we heeding. The word. When it says. Seek the Lord. While he may be found. Call upon him. While. He is near.

That is the help. Of seeking. Finally. We see here. That there is the rest. In seeking. When you think back.

To the whale. That was in San Francisco Bay. As it made its way. Back out to sea. It started to speed up. It recognized. Where it was going. And who it was going to.

That he was getting back home. Back to where he belonged. Well as you read here. In Isaiah 55. Verse 12 and 13. You have that. Sense of joy.

[54:24] In returning. To the Lord. For you shall go out. In joy. And be led forth. In peace. Every barrier. Every obstacle. That seems to be in the way.

Of coming back. God will deal with it. The mountains. And the hills. Before you. Shall break forth. And singing. The trees of the field. Shall clap their hand.

Everything is made beautiful. Again. Instead of the thorn. Shall come up the cypress. Instead of the briar. Shall come up the myrtle. All of these things.

That show a wilderness. That is barren. Is renewed. Is made new. Is made whole. By coming back. To God. And that was the promise.

That God gave to his people. In Isaiah's day. At a time. When they were wandering away. And going to be brought. Into a foreign land. With a foreign people. Because of their disobedience.

[55:21] But he gives the assurance. That they would know the day. Of rejoicing. As they would return. To him. And that's what it is. For us. As we hear the voice.

Of God. As we hear the voice. As we cry out. To the Lord. For help. For mercy. The Lord says.

Seek. My face. Like the psalmist. That we sang there. Said. Your face Lord. I will seek. And it is in this seeking.

That we find. This peace. Because when we shun God. And go on our own way. We are in the wilderness. We are in the barren place.

We are in the place. Where there is no hope. And no help. For us. But God. By his mercy. Calls. And as he calls. We are to turn.

[56:18] We are to turn. To him. And to find a place. Of rest. With him. But the question.

For us today. Is. Will we come. And seek. Do we see the urgency. Of it for today. Not for tomorrow.

Because tomorrow. Has no guarantee. Again and again. We are reminded. Of that. But do we heed. The voice.

Of God. I saw one of these. Little. Cartoon sketches. Online this week. And it was. Based on this verse.

Isaiah 55. Verse 6. Seek the Lord. While. He may be found. And what was in this sketch. Was six different pictures.

[57 : 15] And that each picture. Had. An image. That spoke. And then a few words. Under. Underneath. And the first. Picture just had. Someone who was obviously.

Young. And maybe still at school. Or just about to leave school. And the. The words underneath were. Too young. To see God. And we can all.

Either. Have that sense. Or have known that sense. In our lives. It's too much ahead of us. In life. Want to enjoy life first. We're too young. To see God. I'll do that.

When I'm older. That was the first one. Too young. To see God. Maybe you're. In that category today. You feel you're young. You feel.

Oh I've got so much. To do in life. So many other things. I want to do first. Well. Take heed. The second picture. Was of someone.

[58 : 10] In a car. That sense of. Independence. And underneath. Were the words. Too independent. To see God. Now you're beginning.

To live life. You're beginning. To feel. A sense of. I'm doing. The things I want to do. I've got things in life. That I want. I'm beginning to have that. Independence. To enjoy life.

Too independent. To see God. The third picture. Was of. A happy couple. Falling in love. Going to get married.

And all of these things. That that brings. And underneath. Were the words. Too happy. To see God. Again. There's just so much. I don't want to spoil.

This relationship. This relationship. By seeking God. Just now. It might upset. My partner. It might upset. My life. Just now. I'll leave it. Too happy.

[59 : 04] To see God. The fourth picture. Was. Of. An individual. And one of these pictures. Two phones. One to each ear. And underneath.

Were the words. Too busy. To see God. A reminder. A reminder. Of how the things. Of this world. Will just overtake us. Joy. Is beginning to go.

Busyness. Is taking over. Life. Is just. Going on. And on. So quickly. Too busy. To see God. I've got no time. To see God.

Well. The fifth one. Then. Was. Of somebody. Lying in bed. Too tired. To see God. Exhausted.

By life. Worn down. By life. Why. Why do I want God now? I'm just too tired. I'm past that.

[60 : 01] And then there was the last one. The sixth one. What do you think that was? Well. It was a picture. Of a gravestone.

And underneath. Were the words. Too late. To see God. And it's a reminder to us. Of our lives.

That pass us by. So quickly. From youth. Too young. To see God. From when we start to feel. Independence in life.

Too independent. To see God. For when we. Find a relationship. And set up a home. Too happy. To see God. For when the things of this world.

Overwhelm us. We're too busy. To see God. For when we're almost done. In this world. And we're exhausted. Of this world. We're too tired.

[60 : 54] To see God. But then. It's too late. To see God. Don't wait. Till it's too late. Today. To see God. Today. Today. Today. Today. Is the time. To see God. He speaks to us. And he says. Seek. The Lord. While. He may be found. Call upon him. While. He is near. There's a challenge. And there's a promise there. The challenge. Is to seek. And to call. All. But the promise is. That he is there. So seek him. While. He may be found. Let us pray. Amen. Our father. In heaven. We. Do thank you. That your word. Is a living word. An active word. A word. That we are reminded.

[61 : 49] That became flesh. And dwelt among us. A word. That has accomplished. All for us. And we pray. Lord. That you would bless it. To all our hearts. Today. That we would be reminded. Of the urgency. Of it. To seek the Lord. While he may be found. And to call upon him. While he is near. And help us Lord. Not to get. Distracted. By so many other things. In this life. That we do ignore you. So help us Lord. We pray. And guide us. In your ways. As we ask it. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude. By singing. In Psalms 77. In the sing Psalms. Page 100. We sing from verse 7. Psalm 77. On page 100. Singing from verse 7. Forever will the Lord reject. And never show his grace. Has he withdrawn his steadfast love. And turned from me his face.

[62 : 54] For all time has his promise failed. Is God no longer kind. There's all these questions. Coming to the psalmist here. But then. In verse 10. And then on my. To my heart. There came this thought. On this. I will rely. The years of their right hand of power. Of him. Who is most high. The tunist. Drathcathro. We sing from verse 7 to 14. To God's praise. Amen. And over. to his face, as neither know this steadfast love but turner from ye in his face. For hope's time as his godless hail is one who other kind, as he in his great boundlessness from passion from this line.

[64 : 33] Then to my heart there give this thought, on this I will rely. The years of the air I can't offer a little high. I will recall the Lord redeemed your words of all my room and meditate on all your hands your mighty deeds have shown. O God most holy are you raised what God compares with you. You are the God of Americans whose power the nations view.

[66 : 19] 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. Amen. Amen. Thank you.