

Faith and the Danger of Finishing Badly

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 95 in the Scottish! It's on page 357 and we're singing at verse number 6. Psalm 95 at verse number 6 and we're going to sing to the end of the psalm.

O come and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all and on our knees before the Lord our maker let us fall. We stand to sing from verse 6 to the end of the psalm.

Our maker let us fall. For he's our God, the people we, of his own pasture and hand, and of his hand, the sheep, today if he is born.

Then harden not your hearts as in the provocation, as in the desert on the day, of the temptation.

When me, your father, stepped and grew, and did my working see, He lived for the space of forty years, the traits that beeth me.

[2 : 4 2] I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, I said, But to my rest they should not go Let us bow our heads in prayer. Let us pray.

Almighty and most gracious God, we rejoice in you this evening as the only true and living God. As we come to worship you, we give thanks to you that you are the sovereign God who rules and who reigns in every aspect of this world in which we live.

We give thanks to you that you are the God of the storm and the God of the calm, and that whatever changes take place around us that affect our everyday lives, that you are the God who sits on your throne and to seize everything from the beginning to the end and to direct the course of this world for the glory of your name, to fulfill your purposes and to save your people.

And we are thankful to you for your word that once more we sing as we begin this time of worship, a word that reminds us of the history of your people, a word that reminds us of their waywardness and their falling away from the paths that you set out for them.

We pray you, O Lord our God, to help us to hear these words and to give thanks to you that you are the great shepherd of your people and that you call those who do go astray, that you claim them for yourself anew, that you bring them back, that you heal them and that you restore them, and that you give them once more that sense of spiritual health and well-being, living as the children of God in this dark world in which we live.

[5 : 0 7] And we pray, O Lord our God, that we may sense always such a shepherding hand upon our lives, guiding us and steering us, supplying our need, giving us comfort in the trials and the sufferings of this life, and giving us a sense of believing and understanding that everything that takes place in the lives of your people works together for their good in accordance with your purpose.

We pray your blessing to be upon all of us as we do worship you together here. We pray for your blessing to be upon those who are joining us online as well. We give thanks to you for the many different ways in which the gospel reaches the hearts and minds of people in this world today and this evening.

And we pray that your Holy Spirit, that breath of life, that alone will bring about change, will make your word the living word in the hearts and minds of all who do here, and so that we may see and know and see evidence of your work going on in this world in which we live.

As we reflect on the wider Christian community in our own nation and across the nations of the earth, we do give thanks to you that you are the God who is working, the God who is building your church.

And we pray that you help us to be aware of such encouragements, help us to be aware of your great work in the midst of different corners of our own land and the different nations of the earth.

[6 : 49] And help us to be encouraged in our hearts that you are indeed building your church. And as we reflect on your word and see the different ways in which your people turned their backs upon you and you turned your backs upon them, help us to be encouraged, O Lord, because of the fact that you are working and that you continue to build and to save those who are lost.

Continue to build up your children into the maturity of faith and giving all of your people to grow in appreciation of the preciousness of your grace, of the supreme cost of their salvation and rejoicing and marvelling day by day in the gift of your Son and in every way in which the riches that come to us as your people are because of the poverty that he endured.

And help us, O Lord our God, to truly sense that we are rich in the grace of God and help us, therefore, to ensure that day by day our treasure is in heaven where Christ is.

We pray for your blessing to be upon the homes of our congregation. We pray that you will remember all of your people, remember all of those who are in need this evening. We pray for your comforting presence for those who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones and to have that sense of emptiness in their hearts and that sense of emptiness in their homes.

We pray you that you will draw near to them, that you will comfort them with your gracious presence, that you will give peace to them and strength to them and give them to lift up their heads in the knowledge that you are their God, the God who promises to be present with your people in every situation and in every trial of life.

[8 : 42] We pray also for those who are unwell and especially those who are seriously ill. We ask for your blessing to be upon them in the midst of the trauma that comes into people's lives through serious illness.

Help them, O Lord our God, to cope with such trauma, to cope with such change in their lives and even in the storms of the trauma of serious illness.

May they sense that inner peace, the knowledge that you are with them, your gracious hand upon them, giving strength to them each day to face whatever each day brings to them and to do so in the strength of our God to know your grace and the sufficiency you offered.

Bless them in their illnesses, bless them in their treatment that they receive and may you grant your healing hand to be upon them and to may you give to them and to all of their families a sense of your love and your presence with them, carrying them through such trials in life and giving them together strength day by day in the knowledge that God is a refuge and their strength and in straits a present aid.

we pray for your blessing to be upon the church to which we belong, that you will bless our witness, that you will bless the ministry of the gospel, that you will bless all of our congregations and all of our ministers and all of our people, that you will bless the seminary in Edinburgh, that you will bless those who are training for ministry, pray that you will bless those who are already working in their studies and we do pray that you will also call others to yourself to serve you and to serve you in the gospel across our land and beyond.

[10 : 28] We are thankful to you that you are the God who does indeed prepare workers for the harvest which is yours and we pray that you will lay your claims on the hearts and minds of men here and elsewhere even this evening to lay upon their shoulders the burden of your calling and to give them a sense of their need to respond in obedience to your claims upon them and to may they be truly equipped and gifted and prepared by you to be mighty instruments in your hand in the preaching of your word and in the advancement of your kingdom in the days that are to come.

Have mercy upon us we do pray and we pray for ourselves we pray for the wider church across the world blessing upon her ministry blessing upon your people that you will give to us all across the world lives that are honouring to you that are faithful to the gospel and lives that are lived in this world where there are so many distractions so many things to take our minds away from you so many things to invade our thinking and to displace the glory of your truth we pray that you will help us oh lord god in these days to know your protection and to know what it is to remain in your paths and to walk in your truth as you have called us so to be help us to be wise in the day in which we live and give to us that wisdom day by day to understand to know to put your word into practice and to know what it is to have your strength in our hearts day by day to continue to live faithfully as you have called us to be as your people here in this world we pray for your blessing upon the parts of the world tonight and you where there is conflict and strife and war there is so much destruction of innocent life lord our god we do pray that you will stretch out your hand and that you will bless those who are in leadership in these parts of the world and elsewhere those who have influence on these parts of the world we do pray oh lord our god for your hand to be upon them that they may have the wisdom to lead to these parts of the world to a peace that will be maintained in the future a peace which will be embraced by all involved and a peace which will show your peace as the god who is the god of peace who lays your hand upon the hearts of kings and of leaders and who directs them and turns them around to follow in your paths we pray for your intervention we pray for peace to be restored and we pray for your people to continue to have strength and grace to remain faithful to you in the midst of such suffering and also in the midst of persecution bless your people we do pray and to make your own name great in this world in which we live we pray by your blessing to be upon your word to us this evening as we share in it together once more may you guide us and help us and bless us in our reading and in your study offered and as we reflect on our being here and reflect upon the ministry of your word we do pray for your blessing to be upon your servant round

Calamurdo at this time of holiday at this time may you grant him to be strengthened and to be refreshed and to return in the strength of your grace to continue his work of ministry here in our congregation be with himself and with his family and bless your servant and call him a clear as well as responsibility for the congregation also at this time we pray for strength and grace and blessing upon him in his own congregation and his home and in his family and in his work with the congregation here so bless them and bless us all and hear our prayer and go before us having mercy upon us for we pray these things for Jesus sake amen it's not going to turn to praise God this time from sing psalms psalm number 56 on page 73 psalm 56 at verse number 9 and sing it to the end of the psalm psalm 56 at verse 9 when I call on you to help me then my foes will turn aside this is how

I will be certain that my God is on my side from verse 9 to the end of the psalm to God's praise when I call on you to help me then my foes will turn aside this is I will be certain that my God is on my side in the Lord his word I honor in my God I praise his word I will I will trust and not be fearful what can man do to the Lord I have taken vows before you to my

God I will be true sacrifices! of thanksgiving! I will gladly give to you for you kept my feet from stumbling and from death you set me free so that I may walk before you and the light of life receive me I turn again now to hear the word of God from the New Testament from the letter to Hebrews and chapter number 3 Hebrews chapter 3 I'm going to read the whole of this chapter Hebrews 3 let us hear the word of

[17 : 08] God therefore holy brothers you who share in a heavenly calling consider Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession who was faithful to him who appointed him just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house for Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than a house itself for every house is built by someone but the builder of all things house as a servant to testify to the things that were to be spoken later but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son and we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope therefore as the Holy Spirit says today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion on the day of resting in the wilderness where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years therefore

I was provoked with that generation and said they always go astray in their heart they have not known my ways as I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest take care brothers lest there have been in any of you an evil unbelieving today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin for we share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end as it is said today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion for who were those who heard and yet rebelled was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses and with whom was he provoked for forty years was it not with those who sinned whose bodies fell in the wilderness and to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest but to those who are disobedient so we say that they were unable to enter because of unbelief

I mean this God's word we trust they were blessed to us that reading from it we turn to praise God this time in the Scottish Psalter and in Psalm number 37 Psalm 37 on page 254 and we're singing at verse 23 Psalm 37 at verse 23 a good man's footsteps by the Lord are ordered aright and in the way wherein he walks he greatly doth delight we stand to sing from verse 23 to the verse mark 30 to God's praise a good man's footsteps by the Lord and ordered aright and in the way wherein he walks!

he greatly doth delight! although he fall yet shall he not be cast down utterly because the Lord with his own hand up hand up also!

might! he he I have been young and never old yet have I never seen!

[21 : 21] the just man left! he is ever merciful and blessed his seed is blessed therefore!

he is many days depart from evil good dwell forever more!

For God loves and his sins! not in days not in many days they are kept ever but God all shall be the sinner's grace the just inherited shall belong and ever in his heart and ever in it dwell the just man's mouth doth wisdom speak his tongue doth judgment tell hell let's turn together now to the end to Hebrews and chapter number three and we can read once more at verse number 12

Hebrews 3 at verse 12 take care brothers lest there be in any of you an evil and believing heart leading you to fall away from the living God but exhort one another every day as long as it is called today that enough you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin for we share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence for him to the end and so on and so on i guess when we reflect on this letter and think of the hearers of it we can think of our people who faced perhaps the same difficulties as we do ourselves the same challenges in the world in which we live of course they lived in a different age to us in the sense of science and technology and all of the other advancements nevertheless the crisis that they faced in life were similar to our own and when we do read the letter there are three particular crises that we can see highlighted and the first of these is that there is a hearing crisis they are not good at listening to what God has to say to them and that causes great difficulties for them there is a hearing crisis secondly there is a faith crisis their faith is at times it seems ready to begin to fail they are not hearing well they are not hearing well and because of that their faith is in trouble and the third aspect of the crisis is that there is a worship crisis they are falling back into the religion the worship practice of the Old Testament and losing sight of where they should be and i guess these three things will impact our own lives from time to time we are not hearing well our faith is stuttering and trembling and our worship may not be the way that God wants our worship to be and the writer's response to that is to highlight for them the significance and the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ that's how the letter begins

Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God the express imprint of his nature he is the son of God and the work that the son of God has taken on is explained through the letter to the beginning of the letter and in the chapters that do follow that's the answer to all of their problems that they do understand the passion and work of Jesus alongside of that we can see two other things that are mingled in that whole purpose in showing the importance of the Lord Jesus the emphasis on faith itself and how that faith works and along with that we see list five times in this letter warning passages key passages that highlight to them the danger that they are in because of the crisis and because they fail to appreciate the importance of the passion and work of the Lord Jesus and when we come into this chapter this evening we are looking at the second of these warning passages and we do want to look at the words especially in verses 12 to 14 and see what the writer has to say to the hearers and see what these words have to say to ourselves as the word of God together this evening and we want to think of these verses under the title faith and the danger of finishing badly you want to think first of all that we see regard in the passage that is to say there are things that they need to consider carefully and that's how verse 12 begins take care now if

[27 : 40] I hear anybody saying that to me I think immediately the person that is saying this is interested in my well-being it usually comes from somebody who is concerned for me somebody who has love for me in a particular way they want me to take care and when the writer is saying that he wants first of all to address them as who they are it's really important that the person who is going to ask me to take care about something that he recognizes who I am first of all he is addressing them here as those brothers in the Lord at the beginning of the chapter they are holy brothers and they are set apart by God himself in the life of the church of God in the place where these people lived that's where they belong they are the people of God that's who we are ourselves together this evening we are under the banner of the gospel we are under the ministry of the word of God we are the people of God and when he is addressing them there is a particular characteristic that he draws attention to at the beginning of the chapter the kind of people and especially the direction of their lives there are people in verse 1 who share in a heavenly calling they are doing something together they are participating in something together and it is not so much a thing as a journey they are sharing a journey together it is a heavenly calling and we hear the words of Paul in Philippians chapter 3 and he is being driven by this sense of the upward heavenly call of Jesus Christ

God's claims upon him and he gives the image of a journey on which he has embarked from a particular time in his life and a journey that carries him nearer and nearer to where Jesus is and that's the image that we have here they are sharing in a heavenly calling they are going in the direction of the people of God they know what the outcome is we see it in chapter 11 as those who have faith they desire a better country even a heavenly one in this world in this world they are exiles and strangers they know that this world is not their home they are on a journey together and they have the hope and the expectation that when that journey ends they will be in heaven where Jesus is at God's right hand and where God is gathering his church and tonight that's the hope that we share in ourselves we are participating in the same thing we are on the same journey and to a greater or lesser degree this evening we are here because heaven is a place to which God is calling his people and to which he is gathering them and we are journeying on those who are around us because they are going to that place we are sharing that moment with them we are on a journey with them we don't think of our life in the church of Jesus Christ as simply events dotted along life's way it includes that but they are events on our journey and tonight we are going forward on that journey together a step closer, a step further to where we expect to be the journey and it is to these people on that journey that the writer asks them to take care to consider something keenly to see something and to let what they see impact upon their thinking in such a way as to impact on their lives and to take care and what they are to take care of and to consider is that there is something they want to avoid and surely anybody who has got or interests in view if there are things in life that should be avoided the person who loves us most will make sure that they will make us aware of the things that we want to avoid and what is the danger for those who are on this journey to heaven to be where Jesus is the danger is that there be in any of you an evil heart an evil unbelieving heart believing heart it's all about what our heart is really we are driven by we make these decisions in life and we journey on in the light of that makes us who we are but here is what they are to be concerned about another movement that could take place it's a movement that could take them away from the direction of travel and the destination to which they are going and when you think of the people of God the particular evil that they are guilty of is turning their backs upon God forsaking me the living God says God says God in Jeremiah chapter 2 that was the first great evil

they forsook him they turned away from him and the turning away here is is the evil unbelieving heart the heart that reaches the point of stopping to believe and when we understand that these people are not we are looking at people we are looking at people and considering people who are moved from a position of to a position of it is not as if they were always characterized by unbelief!

this is something that they are to be aware of that could come in something that could develop in their lives the heart of unbelief and for us together this evening as we think of that journey here is one of the greatest dangers in life that we can go from a life of believing to a life of unbelief and perhaps you are saying to me surely that's not possible God tells us that's what he highlights in these chapters about the people of the Old Testament it can surely happen and God wants us to to consider such a development taking place in our own lives that there is that side road that we are going away from the main direction of travel and it is a side road that is bringing us to a place of unbelief in God there is a loving concern who is writing on behalf of a loving God and he is asking them to take care about this great danger and the danger is the outcome it's the unbelieving heart it's the unbelieving heart in falling away from the living it's place of standing it's to be removed from one place it's to lose their status and be given a new status it's the unbelieving heart of unbelief that takes them where they are a journey a journey that they did not expect to be on a journey of departing from God a journey that leaves them departing from the way to the rest that is set before and that falling away is exactly that that they fall away from the prospect and the destination of being in heaven where

Christ is heart is it a possibility that kind of development this evening we may ask come from because of the kind of individuals we are because of our culture that there may be blind spots in our lives and these blind spots leave us making mistakes from time to time and going down a road that we should not be on and never intended on being on perhaps their developments because of the busyness of life that they take over our thinking perhaps their developments simply because of the world around us the developments that take us down this road and there's a book written by

[37 : 52] Susan Scott it's called Fierce Conversations having conversations that ensure that we have a successful career and life and so on and so forth and there's a sentence in that book which says this our lives succeed or fail gradually then suddenly one conversation at a time and you see what she's saying there's the gradual from our belief of faith and it's one conversation at a time influences that bear upon our thinking and step by step we go gradually we go gradually away and we don't realize that we have gone away until suddenly there is that drop and there is that fall life and all of its influences faith and all of the external influences and all of the external pressures and every way tonight we need to take good heed to regard the danger of unbelief and losing not just our sense of direction but losing our sense of God and of Christ in our lives the regard secondly we want to think of the responsibility in verse 13 we read but exhort every day as long as it is is called today that none of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin every day exhort one another it's the responsibility that they had for each other it's the responsibility that you and I have for one another and for everybody it is the responsibility that arises from being part part of the church of Jesus Christ in the world we are the body of Christ we are members of his body we are united in him we have a responsibility for one another and to one another exhort one another every day it's the image of coming alongside somebody to help them it's paracallio paracallio that's what it means come alongside to help

Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit the paracallios the helper would come and be with them come alongside them when he's no longer there the writer wants them to come alongside other people to come alongside to help them and to help them in the crisis the crisis that they are facing to be an influence for good to show that the love that comes with your exhortation is a love that works through the people of God to the rest of the people of God it's a love that comes from the loving heart of God himself that filters through and that should touch your life from my life that should touch the life of the next person from your life it's a love that filters through that comes to help and of course for us to do that we need to have some knowledge of the person who needs help and very often when there is this kind of development in anyone's life it begins to become obvious if you or I tonight were going to start drifting from our faith then eyes would see that the people of God who are alert to the church of Jesus will recognize that and instead of reflecting upon that the exhortation here is for the person to go and help that person who is in need because the time is short every day as long as it is called today and today the Bible is

God's favorable time it's the day of salvation we are in the world for a limited amount of time we know that the world will come that this day which is the day of salvation will be overtaken by the day of the Lord when Jesus will return and then the opportunity to help anyone will be lost there is an urgency on two counts there is the urgency because of the person who has the need and there is the urgency because of the limited time available to us the responsibility the responsibility that God gives to be sensitive to the needs of others to recognize those who are around us to see changes in their lives that suggest certain things to us and to come alongside them and to encourage and to help

I quoted that verse from the the book Fierce Conversation the next sentence goes while no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career a business a marriage or a life any single conversation can there are conversations which influence our lives or thinking that lead us away from the Lord Jesus the crisis is there but it is through conversations from the people of God and the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ it is through these conversations that we are brought back and placed back in the groove and walking continuing our journey with the people of God it's a conversation it includes prayer it includes sharing the gospel but it's your responsibility and mine to ensure we help through our conversation to ensure that anyone in danger may be rescued from it because we don't want to see anyone falling into a state of unbelief and forsaking their God and their Savior the responsibility and the conversation is important because the second half of that verse that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin something that's rock hard it doesn't hear anything

God said to the people in the Old Testament and the book of Ezekiel Ezekiel that his work would be to take away the heart of stone doesn't feel anything doesn't receive anything doesn't respond to anything he will take away that heart of stone and give a living heart a heart that is pumping with with his own love and with his grace and here there is the image of of going back to that sense of hardness that the person who loved the gospel who loved to hear the word of God whose heart responded positively to that word can reach the stage in life where the heart has once more become hardened the gospel is dry the minister had nothing to say to me there is no attraction in the message of Jesus Christ it's anyone else's fault and my heart becomes harder and harder and I go on my way continuing to reject the gospel which I previously loved and arriving at that place because of the deceitfulness of sin in other words the person who has been distracted from following the proper path on the journey to heaven that person has taken a conscious decision this person that has gone down that path has not done so against their will they have been deceived into thinking that the path that they are following is the right path they wouldn't be on it otherwise if we allow ourselves to to think of the kind of person the person that is on this path they are happy to be journeying on it they don't see their lives as having changed in any way they continue to be satisfied in the life that they are living they are deceived into thinking that the path that they are on is still the right path they are persuaded because of the wrong conversations and the wrong information that floods their minds that floods their minds and they continue on their way and that makes the conversation even more important your conversation with them and mine because with the blessing of God and with the help of the Spirit of God we must prayerfully persuade the person who is on that path that they are on the wrong path and it takes God to to switch something in their minds to help them realize where they ought to be because they are there firmly persuaded that they are still okay when we have done wrong and we realize it it's bad enough doing the wrong but if we realize we have done the wrong then there is hope there is light there but when we have done the wrong and we don't understand that we have done the wrong and are persuaded that we have done the right thing then that's challenging and ultimately only God can turn the person around but God does it through his people

[48 : 48] God sent Nathan to David God uses his people to bring his people back the exhortation what a wonderful powerful witness it would be of all of us this evening we are able to show God's love to any who are in need and to any who may be distracted by this world and to need to be restored to faithfulness what a blessing that we could help them how honoring to God that we are showing his love to them as part of his process of recovery don't let's forget let's forget our responsibility your conversation can change a person can change the path that they are taking and can change their path for the good the regard the responsibility and finally the reassurance he has addressed them as those who are on their journey and now in verse 14 he reminds them of why they are on that journey for the explanation in we are not on this journey simply simply or because we know that it has a good ending we are not on this journey heaven is a great place we are on this journey because we share in Christ!

because the day came and in the mercy of God when Jesus Christ met with us and when we sensed the call of God upon our lives when we woke up God's choice of us as we referred to this morning when we came to to sense and to feel in our hearts all of the love of God through the passion of Jesus Christ to me and my lostness arrested along life's way come to participate to share in Christ the Christ the Christ who is in the pages of this the Christ who is in the pages of the whole of the New Testament the one who was rich for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich the unsearchable riches the connection the live link that brings me into this relationship with the Lord Jesus the love of God and the peace of God and knowing God and knowing that through all of these things that he who has begun that work will bring it on to the day of Christ why tonight are we here?

why are we on this journey? why do we expect to be in heaven and the people of God? only because Christ came into our lives and in the day of our conversion the day of our new birth the day when life was changed forever we came to know the Lord Jesus I know I know whom I have believed says Paul the one who came to to help us in our need and had the gospel conversation with us when our minds were open to the truths of salvation he spoke to us the living word of God and he changed us forever written Jeremiah and Ezekiel writing his laws in our hearts engraving them on our minds never to be erased we share in Christ and the reassurance tonight comes to you if you go to a time in your life or to a stage in your life when that great change took place a change that gave you

Christ in you that because he lives you shall live also and united to him that you will be united with him in the glory which he now enjoys the moment the conversation the new beginning the intervention of God the new life through faith in Christ Jesus the reassurance the that we ask ourselves do we know that moment do we know that stage do we know that time do we know what it means to begin our walk to heaven with Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit of God and the reassurance is conditional we share in Christ if indeed we hold our religion our confidence firm to the end there was a danger the there was a danger the reassurance for us this evening is lay hold tightly on Jesus Christ as our Savior to hold him firmly in our to embrace him when it comes to

When it comes to holding Jesus fast in our hands, we cannot juggle any balls. We can try and juggle balls in life and we can never keep a firm hold of any of them.

[55 : 34] They're all over the place and no matter how much we master juggling the balls, they're still all over the place. We cannot use that image when it comes to our faith in Jesus.

We have to throw everything else away so that our hands, the hands with which we embrace him, so that they're empty and that we use all of our strength and all of our energy in embracing the Lord Jesus and in holding him firm in our lives.

That will ensure what the writer is saying here. We hold fast our original confidence firm to the end.

There's a firm foundation that there's the reality of being part of the foundation which is Christ himself. There is that sense of the firmness and the steadfastness that comes into our lives by laying hold firmly upon Jesus Christ.

and that's our greatest need this evening as we come to our close. We may have our blind spots. We may be tempted by the busyness of life.

[56 : 51] We may be tempted by the pressures of the world around us and the age and the society in which we live. Our responsibility. the urgency is that we keep hold firmly of Jesus Christ.

To go from this time of worship together and to sense in our hearts the sheer importance of ensuring that our grip upon the Lord Jesus is always strong.

And we know that it is his grip that keeps us safe. Nevertheless, our grasp of him is key to the relationship.

It's key to us living the life that he calls us to live and is certainly key to us arriving at last to the place that he has prepared for us.

There is the regard then. There's the responsibility and there's the reassurance. And let us journey on along life's way together. Having your conversations.

[58 : 05] Encouraging each other. Building each other up. And ensuring that we don't fall into this trap. And I close with the words of a hymn called Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord.

And it summarizes what we want to take with us from God's Word as we leave or serve us this evening. Long as my life shall last, teach me thy way.

Wherever my lot be cast, teach me thy way. Until the race is run, until the journey is done, until the crown is won, teach me thy way.

Let's ensure we get the crown. Let's ensure we finish our course. And let's ensure that at last we shall be summoned in to the everlasting joy of our God.

The place where Christ is in glory awaiting for his faithful people. May God bless his Word to us. Let us pray. Most gracious God, we give thanks to you for your grace and for your love and for the way in which your love will not let us go.

[59 : 13] We are conscious of the different ways in life in which our hearts become called to your Word and we sometimes lose our way as we journey on through life.

We are thankful to you that you are the God who lays hold of us and who restores and does recover. Bless your Word to us tonight. Help us to live in constant awareness of the dangers that surround us in life.

Help us to be constantly aware of the need of walking closely with you. Help us to be aware of the needs of those who are around us that together we may be built up in the faith and strengthened and encouraged as we share this journey together.

So bless your Word as we pray and hear us for we ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Our closing psalm is psalm number 28 and sing psalms.

Psalm 28 it's on page 33 and we're singing at verse number 5 down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 28 at verse 5 on page 33.

[60 : 26] Because the Lord's works they despise and treat his actions with disdain and just as he will tear them down and never build them up again. We stand to sing from verse 5 to verse 9 and after the benediction I'll go to the main door.

Amen. Because the Lord's works they despise and treat his actions with disdain injustice he will tear them down and never build them up again.

praise to the Lord for he has served the plea for mercy which I made my heart uplifted lifted leaps for joy my thanks to him I gladly sing the Lord God is his people's strength a saving fortress fortress for his king

Lord Savior be a your own flock be pleased to heritage to bless be their good shepherd glory forever in your faithfulness the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore Amen your voy!