

Four Short Prayers

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[0 : 0 0] Let us now worship God, and we'll do so singing to his praise from Psalm 139, Scottish Psalter, page 432. Psalm 139, page 432.

O Lord, thou hast me searched unknown. Thou knowest my sitting down and rising up. Yea, all my thoughts are far to thee are known.

My footsteps and my lying down thou compassed always. Thou also most entirely art acquainted with all my ways. For in my tongue before I speak not any word can be. But altogether, O Lord, it is well known to thee.

Behind, before thou hast me set and laid on me thine hand. Such knowledge is too strange for me, too high to understand. 1 to 6 of Psalm 139. O Lord, thou hast me searched unknown.

Amen. O Lord, thou hast me searched and known. Thou rules my sitting down.

[1 : 3 0] And rising up, yea, all my thoughts. A fire to thee are known.

My footsteps and my lying down. Thou compassed always. Thou also most entirely art.

And with all my ways. And with all my ways. For in my tongue before I speak not any word can be.

But all together, O Lord, it is well known to thee.

Be all mine. Behind, before thou hast me set and laid on me thy hand.

[3 : 2 0] Such knowledge is too strange for me. Too high to understand.

Let us bow in prayer. Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, our God, as we bow in your presence, we give thanks that we worship the God who has searched us and known us.

The God who knows who are sitting down and rising up. That there is nothing about us that has ever been or ever will be. But it is well known to you.

And we give thanks, Lord, for that all-encompassing presence. And we give thanks, Lord, for that infinite knowledge that you possess of us. And rather than being something that indeed scares us, it is something indeed that encourages us.

We give thanks, O Lord, that as you do so in Jesus Christ, that it is the most wonderful blessing that any person can know and receive in this world.

[4 : 3 7] This world is a scary place in many ways. It is a world where the forces and powers of darkness so often reveal themselves.

Although there is often a veneer, a coating over these forces. Every so often that veneer is removed. And we see it for what it really is. And so we give thanks for your encompassing presence.

And we know that nothing will touch us but what is granted by your own permission. We give thanks, Lord, for how we read in your word, even of job, that Satan couldn't do anything to him until you gave permission.

Because Satan's complaint was you have built a hedge around him and all that he has. And, Lord, we give thanks for the way you look after your people. And we pray, Lord, that we might indeed know you as a great shepherd.

And that we might know you're leading, you're guiding, and you're providing in protection every day. And that we might know the journey that we're on is a journey where your goodness and mercy accompanies us.

[5 : 51] And that we will all dwell in your house forever. We pray for any tonight who do not know the good shepherd, who know about him, but they don't know him personally.

Lord, we pray that whatever is hindering, whatever is holding back, whatever forces of unbelief, whatever maybe obstacles are in the way, pray, Lord, to take these away.

And that they will see the way of salvation so clearly. And that they will be given the faith to call to you and to cry out to you and to depend upon you.

Oh, Lord, we give thanks for, in many ways, the simplicity of faith. And yet we marvel at the complexity of the way that that way of salvation has been won and provided.

Help us, Lord, to bow before you in adoration for who you are and for what you have done. We pray that the spirit of praise might be very much part of our lives.

[6 : 52] Because so, Lord, there might be many things that happen in the world we live in, that don't fill us with joy and happiness. Yet we know that we can always praise the living and through God.

Because you are worthy of all praise and honor and glory. And we're told that whoever praises you glorifies you. So we pray that we might be in the habit to do so every day and every night.

We ask, Lord, that you will bless us as a congregation. We pray to bless James and Don and the family. And ask, Lord, that you will undertake for them and continue to bless them.

And we give thanks for the ministry here. And we pray, Lord, in light of the congregational meeting on Wednesday, we ask, Lord, that your guidance and your grace will be known.

And that the congregation will be able to move forward. And that the path, everything will be clear. And that another assistant will soon be here.

[7 : 56] Lord, we pray for all the congregations of our presbytery. And ask, Lord, to encourage them. We give thanks, Lord, that your word is proclaimed week in, week out.

And we pray, Lord, for your people who sometimes are weary. Because we live in a day where there are so many difficulties. Lord, as we face up to all that is happening and all that lies ahead of us, we realize that life is full of challenges.

As we came out of COVID, and although there are still so many cases of COVID, but as we came out from the lockdown, we thought that we had left so much of the problems behind.

But we realize that there are so many problems facing us of financial difficulties and economic restraints. And a world where we, so much that we maybe took for granted, we find that it's not going to be like that in the foreseeable future.

Grant wisdom to our leaders in all in authority. Oh, Lord, may they turn to you. Because man's wisdom won't take us very far. But we pray that it might be the wisdom from God that will be implanted into their hearts, that they will look to you, that they will recognize that they're looking to you.

[9 : 19] And even although you may guide them, Lord, at times, and we believe you are guiding, we ask, Lord, that they may be able to recognize that, and that they do not think that it is only their own wisdom.

We need to hear what your word says to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding. And that in all our ways, we are to acknowledge you, and so you will guide our path.

We ask, Lord, that you will bless those who are sick at this time and laid aside. And we know that there are so many cases of COVID. And we ask, Lord, for your healing hand to be upon all such.

And all who are laid aside with various illnesses. And we pray for those who are being weakened under illness. And as old age also plays its own part in weakening.

We ask, Lord, that you will be near to your people and keep them safe. Give thanks for all our young people, and they live in a very day full of challenges. Lord, bless them.

[10 : 20] Give thanks for all the work that's done in this congregation. And ask, Lord, that that work will be owned and blessed by you. And that souls, young souls, will be given to you.

That they will grow up to know you and to love you and to serve you. Watch over us as we wait upon you and grant us your grace in all that we do. Bless all the work that is done in this congregation.

There are so many willing workers. So many people who do things often behind the scenes. We ask, Lord, that you will encourage them. We pray that you will encourage your people.

And that you will strengthen our faith. And that you will grant us a greater ray of hope. And that you will fill our hearts with love as we interact with people.

We pray that this congregation may indeed be a shining beacon within the community. We ask, Lord, that more and more people will come to church. That there will be a growing interest within our community.

[11 : 17] And, Lord, that we pray that your spirit will work. We cannot do it, but you can. And we ask that we might have a spirit of prayer. That you will open the windows of heaven. And that you will indeed come down in power.

Oh, Lord, we pray for our world. And we pray in particular for Ukraine. Oh, Lord, it's so hard to imagine what is going on. And we pray that in all the agonies and distress with people's lives in this last month have been turned from ordinary lives into utter upheaval and pain and destruction and chaos.

Oh, Lord, we pray that you will remove the oppressor from them. And indeed we pray for all those in Russia who are protesting. And there are so many people who see, although there is so much propaganda and so many false reports being given to the Russian people.

We know that there are many who know what is happening and are indeed protesting with fear of their lives. Protect them, we pray. But, Lord, we pray that you will overturn the powers of darkness that are being unleashed.

And that you will, in a wonderful way, grant peace and bring restoration to a broken country. And so many have been separated and loved ones have been taken apart.

[12 : 40] And, oh, Lord, our hearts go out to them and for them. Pray that your blessing upon every effort that is made to help in whatever way, in humanitarian ways and in prayerful ways and in financial ways, in all the different ways.

We ask, oh, Lord, to help them and be with all the oppressed areas of this world. We long for the day when indeed it will be full of the glory of God.

Watch over us and take away our sin, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. And we're going to read God's word now and we're going to have four short readings. And our first reading is in Matthew chapter 14.

Matthew chapter 14. And we're going to read from verse 22.

Matthew 14 at verse 22. Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

[13 : 47] And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. But the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

And in the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified and said, It is a ghost.

And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid. And Peter answered them, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.

He said, Come. So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me.

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt? And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

[14 : 54] And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, Truly, you are the Son of God. Now let us turn to Psalm 139. Psalm 139.

In the book of Psalms. Psalm 139. O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in behind and before and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

[15 : 55] If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in shoal, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me and the light about me be night, even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is bright as a day, for darkness is as light with you.

For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works.

My soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in the secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them. The days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

[17 : 05] How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

O that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! They speak against you with malicious intent. Your enemies take your name in vain.

Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred.

I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me.

And lead me in the way everlasting. Then again, if we can turn to Exodus. This time, looking at Exodus chapter 33.

[18 : 05] I'm reading from verse 12. Exodus 33, and from verse 12.

Moses said to the Lord, See, you say to me, bring up this people. But you have not let me know whom you will send with me.

Yet you have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight. Now, therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please, show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

Consider, too, that this nation is your people. And he said, My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. And he said to him, If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?

[19 : 21] The Lord said to Moses, This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name. Moses said, Please show me your glory.

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you my name, the Lord. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

But he said, You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock.

And while my glory passes, but I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen. And then finally, our last reading is in Isaiah, the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 6.

[20 : 33] Isaiah chapter 6. Reading from the beginning.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and a train on his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings, with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

And one called to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then one of the seraphims flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips.

[21 : 53] Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I.

Send me. And he said, Go. And say to the people. And so on. Amen. And may God bless to us these readings of his own holy word.

We're going to sing again to God's praise from Psalm 138 in sing-sams. Psalm 138 in sing-sams.

We're going to sing verses 3 to the end. Psalm 138 from verse 3 to the end. The very day I called to you, you gave an answer to my plea.

You made me bold within myself. With new resolve you strengthen me. O Lord, let all earth's kings give praise. When from your mouth they hear your word, let them extol the ways of God, for great's the glory of the Lord.

- [23 : 01] Although the Lord God dwells on high, the lowly person he protects. Whereas the proud and haughty one he knows afar off and rejects. Although I walk a troubled path, your tender care preserves my life.
- You raise your hand against my foes. Your right hand saves me from their strife. The Lord will certainly fulfill for me the purpose he commands.
- Your love endures forever, Lord. Preserve the works of your own hands. Verses 3 to the end, Psalm 138. Sing Psalms, page 179. The very day I called to you.
- You gave an answer to my plea. You made me bold within myself. The very day I called to you.
- You gave an answer to my plea. You made me bold within myself.
- [24 : 14] With new resolve you strengthened me. O Lord, let all earth's kings give praise, When from your mouth they hear your word, Let them extol the ways of God, For place the glory of the Lord.
- Lord, let all earth's on high, The lowly person we protest, Where as the proud and haughty one, He knows how far off country chairs.
- The lowly person we protest, Although I walk a troubled path, Your tender care deserves my life, You raise your hand against my foes, Your right hand saves me from their strife.
- The Lord will certainly fulfill, For need the purpose he commands, Your love and grace forever, Lord.
- Preserve the words of your own hands. All right.
- [27 : 10] We read four sections from God's word. And tonight, very simply, we're going to do, I know there's a sermon in each one, But there were four little prayers that we read in our readings tonight.
- And I'm going to look very simply at these four prayers. They're only two, three words long. But they're the kind of prayers that I'm sure we all at one time or another, That we've prayed, or if we haven't, We certainly should have prayed.
- And the first of these is what we read, We'll just go through in the order in which we read, Is in Matthew's Gospel. And it's Peter's prayer from Matthew chapter 14, Where he cries very simply in verse 30, Lord, save me.
- Now, I'm quite sure that this is the first cry, That you, tonight, here as a Christian, Will have cried to the Lord, Where you really, really prayed.
- One of the great blessings, I'm sure, For all of us, I would love to say, But I would say, certainly for most of us, Is that we're brought up saying our prayers.
- [28 : 29] And we can't put too much a price on that. If you here tonight, if you're a young person, And you've been taught to say your prayer from the earliest, That is a great, one of the greatest blessings, That could ever be given to you in life.
- Because it sets a pattern for life. But you know, as we go on in life, Sometimes, sadly, we maybe drift away.
- But the time comes when we come to realize How important it is to have the Lord. Because, you know, people can be sitting in church, You can sit in church year in, year out.
- And somehow, the reality of what is being said passes you by. You know that Jesus Christ has died for sinners.
- But somehow, you're kind of resting in this kind of abstract way In which you think, well, Jesus has died for sinners, So I'll be safe. But the thing is, we have to come into a personal relationship with Jesus.

[29 : 36] We have to come by faith to accept Him, to lay hold upon Him. And when we come to be aware of that, When we come to realize, I need Jesus, We will cry this, and we will say, Lord, save me.

It's an incredibly simple prayer, But it's also a powerful prayer. And you know this is a prayer that the Lord loves to answer.

Because those who truly cry to the Lord to be saved, Will be saved. Because Jesus says that. Seek, and you shall find. Ask, and it will be given you.

Knock, and it will be opened to you. So we have the Lord's guarantee of an answer in this. And that's exactly what happened in a sense in Peter's life.

Because we see that Peter was in great distress when he called that. And that is true for those who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 42] There is a distress within the heart and within the soul. And you know the wonderful thing is this, That once Jesus saves you, He saves you forever. You can't be safe in Christ, And then fall out of His hand, out of His grasp.

He tells us that. No one can pluck them out of my hand. No one can pluck them out of the Father's hand. It's the most wonderful, it's the most secure place in the whole wide world.

If your hand is in the hand of the Savior. Having said that, that doesn't mean that once we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Then that everything, every day, runs really smoothly.

You and I know it doesn't. Life is full of ups and downs. And it's along, when we go along these kind of journeys, Kind of journeys where we find our life up and down.

We discover that we need to often cry or pray this prayer. You see, when we journey by faith, when our faith is vibrant, Then it changes life.

[31 : 59] We're able to see things in a really good way. If tonight, you're full of faith. And your vision of Jesus is really clear.

That there's nothing really between you and Jesus. It's a clear vision. Then your walk tonight is a great walk. But you know, far too often, we allow things to get in the way.

And so often, as we journey through life, we find that we're not walking in the way that we should. That our faith isn't as vibrant as it should be.

Our faith, of course, doesn't rest in faith. Faith is not resting in faith. Faith is resting in Jesus. And like Peter, there are times that our faith wobbles.

And there are times that we begin to sink. And times we feel we're going down. So what happened? Well, we know the story and we've preached on this before. But just to refresh our mind.

[33 : 04] What happened to Peter? Well, two glaring things. First of all, when the Lord commanded Peter to come to him, we know that Peter began to walk on the water.

And his focus was on Jesus. That's all that took up his whole focus was upon the Lord Jesus Christ as he walked. But then we know what happened.

He began to look around him. And when he saw the surge of the sea, because there was a storm. And when he saw just these heaving breakers, no doubt he said to himself, what am I doing?

I'm doing the impossible. I can't walk here. Because while he was focused upon Jesus, he was walking. But the moment his eyes were taken off Jesus, he began to sink.

And you know, that's what happens to you and to me so often as well. Because we far too often take our eyes off Jesus. And you know, one of the great problems, the great mistakes that we so often make, and it's human nature.

[34 : 16] Because when we start out in the Christian faith, and faith is so new, and it's so exciting. And our trust in the Lord is so great, and we're always talking to the Lord. And then sometimes a complacency takes over.

And we become used to where we are. And somehow, we don't actually say it, but our deceitful heart is kind of saying it. It's kind of saying, I'll take over from now.

I'm actually getting on so well in this Christian walk. I think I can do this myself. We're not actually saying that to ourselves. But in a sense, that's kind of the attitude within our own heart.

Somehow, we begin to think that we have something to do in this. That we are playing our part. That it's ourselves that are taking us along like this. It's not.

Every step we take is by grace. Everything has been by grace. And once we lose sight of that, then, as sure as Peter began to think, we'll begin to think as well.

[35 : 17] And so we have to, just like Peter, say, Lord, save me. And then again, the other thing that happened with Peter is that he obviously lost the sound of Christ's voice saying, come.

Because when Jesus said to Peter, come, there was power in the words. Wonder-working power, as it says. There's power in the word of God. And Peter heard that word.

And through that word, he was enabled to do what he couldn't do naturally. And as long as the words of Christ were ringing in his ear, and he was holding to these words by faith, he was able to walk.

But again, as we said, just as by sight, the sound of what he was hearing, and the roar of the wind, and the surge of the sea, and all that, his senses of sight and sound completely distracted him.

And he began to sink. And it's the same with you and me. Because, you know, the problem of what happened with Peter is that the surroundings, all the surroundings became bigger than Christ when his eyes were taken off Jesus.

[36 : 35] And far too often, that's what happens with you and me as well. As we journey through life, the problems, the issues, the difficulties, the troubles, the trials, all these things that come our way, which they will, if our faith is not right, these troubles are often bigger than Christ in our view.

They're obscuring Christ. We're not seeing Jesus. We're focused on the difficulties. We're focused on the troubles. We're focused on the trials.

We're focused on these things. Well, if we are, it's inevitable, but we're going to sink. And so, maybe tonight, I don't know where you are, your situation, maybe tonight you're sinking.

Because life for you, you're saying to yourself, I can't get out of the bit. I'm bogged down here. And I just never seem to be getting out. Maybe, maybe you need to be crying out like Peter, Lord, save me.

I'm not where I should be. I need your deliverance. I know that I'm a Christian. I know that I'm safe in you. But I'm not walking the way I should because I'm not focused on you the way I should.

[37 : 50] There are so many things that are distracting me. This way and that way and the next. And yes, I'm looking at you, but I'm looking at the other things as well. And you know this, we can't walk properly that way.

A divided mind, it just doesn't work. And so, it's imperative that like Peter, we say, Lord, save me. So, these are the great words that Peter cried.

And of course, we know how Jesus took him by the hand and he brought him back into the boat. Then the next, where we're going is to Psalm 139.

We're just moving very, very quickly. And as I say, there's a sermon in each of these. But I just wanted to look tonight very briefly at these. And in this psalm, we have this probably one of the most awesome psalms that David ever composed.

Because David has become overwhelmed in his heart at the immensity of God. He's beginning to try and reflect on God's knowledge.

[39 : 03] And it's just way beyond him. Because he realizes that God knows his every thought. He knows every motive behind everything that he does.

He realizes that God's knowledge is such that there's nowhere in this world he can go. But that God won't see him. And he's aware that the presence of God is everywhere.

Even in hell. Because God's justice and God's judgment is safe. There is no place, not just on this earth, but anywhere in this universe, that we can be free from the all-seeing eye of God.

And so as David is reflecting upon these things, and he's thinking about himself and of how he was made, of how he was formed. And these are wonderful words that we see as David is reflecting on just how in many ways insignificant he is in the presence of God.

And yet of how precious he is in the presence of God. Because when he begins to think upon the wonder of the human frame, of how intricately wonderful that he was woven in his mother's womb.

[40 : 21] He just, he can't get over. He's just, as it were, blown away by it. Just this intricate working and just how minute the working of God is in bringing him together.

And bringing him to be who he is. And yet, when he measures it against the immensity of this universe, and above, way beyond that, the immensity of God, it's like it's all too much for him.

And that's why he says, such knowledge is too strange for me. It's too high to understand. And I'm sure you and I have often said that as well. And in light, excuse me, in light, in light of all this, David says to the Lord, Lord, search me, O Lord, search me.

Now, he began the psalm by saying that, O Lord, you have searched me and known me. David knows that. But David is now saying at the end in verse 23, search me, O God, and know my heart.

You see, David was a great man of God. And David wanted to be the best that he could for God. He wanted to be a great ambassador.

[41 : 39] Long before Paul said, we are ambassadors for Christ. David's great aim was to be an ambassador for the Lord in this world. And he was a wonderful ambassador, a man after God's own heart.

But David was very aware of who he really was. And all that was lurking away in the depths of his heart. Of course, some of that came to the fore in David's life.

And it disturbed him no end. Remember, Psalm 51 and Psalm 32 are great examples of where David is facing up to really who he is. Against thee, thee only have I sinned.

Where David sees the enormity of his sin. And he realizes that he was conceived in sin. That his whole being is wrong. And it's actually quite a frightening discovery.

Because, you know, one of the things that we don't really want to do is go into serious soul searching. To dig down deep. Because, you know, the moment that we dig down deep, and if we do so against, in the light of God's word, it becomes very, very uncomfortable.

[42 : 55] Because hidden away there, there are things in our heart, there are lusts and sins, that we might be very well aware of, but we want them to be concealed.

But they're not concealed by God. And there might be many things that we're not even aware of. Because the reason why sometimes we do, or say sinful things, or act in sinful ways, is not because of something very obvious, but something very hidden.

Something very sinister. That lies way down below. And David says, I really need, Lord, for you to search me. And to try me.

And he's really wanting that the Lord would dig deep down in him. And bring out, and bring up to the surface. So that he may see these things, and deal with them.

And you know, that's something you and I need to do as well. And that's why I say it's not comfortable, it's not easy. It can be quite distressing. Because you know, there are times we can journey along, and we can think about this and that, and we might say, I'm not doing too badly as a Christian.

[44 : 08] Once the Spirit of God really flashes into our soul, and reveals to us just something of who we are. Any complacency that we had, any back patting that we might have done to ourselves, will stop right away.

And like I say, I was just going to look at in a moment, and say, oh, woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man, or I am a woman, of unclean lips. That's our discovery. And it's difficult sometimes, to deal with these things.

And that's the beauty, where we can, there's only one way of dealing with it. It's not like an ostrich, burying our head in the sand. But it's openly confessing, before the Lord.

Say, Lord, I've sinned. This is who I am. And if we want to make progress in the Christian life, and want to be good ambassadors for the Lord, then we have to deal with these things, however painful and however uncomfortable.

We're told in the scripture to mortify, to put to death. You know what? We don't want to. That's what makes this so difficult. We all want to cling, to these things, don't we?

[45 : 21] We want to hold on, and we say to the Lord, Lord, I'm prepared to deal with most of it, but there are wee compartments in my life. I want that for myself. Lord, will you leave that with me?

I don't want you to go down in there. The Lord says, no. I want you to deal with everything. And that's really what David is saying. Lord, this is serious business.

Search me, and try me. And as I say, this is the way, the only, actually the only way forward. And then we come to the third prayer, and this is again, now is another great man of God.

It's Moses. And Moses says in Exodus chapter 33, Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways.

Show me. Now this prayer came at a time when, you know the story, when Israel was at a crisis. It should have been one of the supreme moments, because remember, Moses had gone to get the Ten Commandments, and it was a special time, as God was in covenant relationship with his people, and they did the most awful thing.

[46 : 40] Remember how they made the golden calf, and they fell down and worshipped it. At the time when they should have been on their knees, glorifying God, they're glorifying this golden calf that they made.

And God, of course, was consumed with anger, and he said to Moses, you know this, I'm going to destroy this people, and I will make of you a nation.

And it's here, there are many times we see the wonder of Moses, his humility. And we see the Christ-likeness of Moses, because he is very often looked on as a type of Christ.

And he's saying, no, Lord, no. Because if you read through the whole thing, you'll find that he's saying, no, Lord, for your glory and honor, you cannot destroy these.

These are your people. You've given promises to them. What would people say if they're gone? And even although, what an honor it would be for Moses. Can you put yourself in that place?

[47 : 42] And God is saying, I'm going to make a nation of you. Moses says, no, Lord, no, no, no. Your name, your honor was all that mattered to Moses.

And he's there as an intercessor, as it were, between the Israelites and between God. And the Lord had said that he wasn't going to go up, okay, he said, the Lord is saying, you can go up to the promised, but I'm not going to go with you.

And Moses says, I don't want to go. If your presence is not with, I don't want to go. And we can understand exactly what Moses is saying, because can you imagine as a Christian, if the Lord said, you know what, at the end of the day, I'm going to save you.

I'll take you home to glory. But from now on, you're on your own. You'll make your own way home. You'd say, Lord, no, I can't. That would be awful. You and I would have to say, Lord, that's impossible.

We can't do it. Because we depend every day on the Lord. And Moses is saying, I don't want to take the people up on my own. You've got to.

[48 : 51] And then he says to the Lord, show me the way. Show me. And we can understand this prayer of Moses. And you know, you and I are so often in life, as we journey through life, and we face its challenges and difficulties, and we come to crossroads, and so often, we're not too sure what to do.

How often we've said to the Lord, Lord, show me. Show me the right way. Show me the way to go. Show me what to do. Show me the correct thing to do.

And we're looking to the Lord, trusting in his wisdom, in his guidance. Show me thy ways, O Lord. Thy path, so teach thou me. And do thou lead me in thy truth.

Therein my teacher be. Again, as David said, following on from the great man Moses, show me. Later on, Moses was going to say to the Lord, show me your glory.

And again, surely as a Christian, that's something that we would all, it's part of what we look forward to in heaven, is being in the immediate presence of the glory of the Lord.

[49 : 58] But we would love to see some of it here, wouldn't we? Show me your glory, Lord. And so we find this very simple, but very profound and powerful prayer.

And then the last prayer is in Isaiah chapter 6. And again, we know the incident so well, because there Isaiah has just been given this amazing insight into the glory of the Lord.

Just as Moses had actually prayed for it, Isaiah was given this vision of the Lord. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

You've got to remember that in a sense, that this world displays the glory of God. The heavens do. People say, there are people who call themselves atheists.

The Bible actually called them fools. But there are people who say there is no God. Well, the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies teach of his handiwork.

[51 : 04] It's all around. And in order to reach a state of atheism, a person has to suppress the truth. Well, Isaiah was given this wonderful vision of the glory of the Lord.

And when he saw that, his whole being, as it were, crumbled before the presence of the Lord. Woe is me, for I am lost. I am a man of unclean lips.

I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. You know, sometimes we can appear almost flippant in the presence of God.

If we were given a glimpse of his glory, if we were even given just a little insight into who he was, it would change everything. Flippancy would go in a moment.

There would be a reverence in us. Because every time that the Lord ever displayed anything of his glory, the reaction of people is quite extraordinary.

[52 : 09] Well, Isaiah was given a glimpse of this. And the Lord asked the question, who shall I send with my message? And who will go for us?

And Isaiah says, send me. I love that. Send me. Because so often, is it not, I'm not being critical of anybody.

I've looked at myself just as much as him. But is it not so often, when we're challenged by things that we ought maybe should be doing for the Lord, we begin to think in our mind and say, oh, well, he'll do that or she'll do that.

I can think of people who'll do that. And sometimes we're almost saying, not me, Lord. But here's Isaiah saying, send me. You know, we should ask for the grace to be willing, to be used by the Lord wherever we are.

Because, you know, the wonderful thing is that as a Christian, you have access to people that nobody else has. You have opportunities that nobody else has. Ask the Lord to send you out into these places of opportunity so that you'll be a witness for him, that you will bring his light and his love and his grace into whatever situation you are, that you might be willing to be used by the Lord.

[53 : 37] Maybe the Lord is speaking to somebody very personally tonight here. Maybe somebody's being challenged. Maybe in the quietness of your own heart, you're saying, Lord, send me.

Well, Isaiah was willing to be sent. Are you, am I willing, to do whatever the Lord would have us do? Four lovely little prayers.

May these prayers be our prayers. Save me. Search me. Show me.

Send me. May these prayers be part of your life and my life. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray to bless us tonight. And we give thanks as we just look very briefly at four little prayers in your word.

Lord, we pray that the fullness of what these prayers actually mean might be a reality within our own lives.

[54 : 44] We pray that you will bless us and take us to our home safely. Bless all our families, all our loved ones. Do us all good, we pray. We need you. We need you at every step, at every turn.

And we ask that your grace and mercy and peace may indwell us and surround us all the days of our life. Forgive us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from, sing psalms in Psalm 130.

Psalm 130 and sing psalms. That's on page 173.

Lord, from the depths I call to you. Lord, hear me from on high. I give attention and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry.

Lord, in your presence who shall stand if you our sins record. But yet forgiveness is with you that we may fear you, Lord. I wait, my soul waits for the Lord.

[55 : 47] My hope is in his word. More than the watchman waits for dawn, my soul waits for the Lord. O Israel, put your hope in God, for mercy is with him and full redemption.

From their sins, his people he'll redeem. Psalm 130, the whole psalm. Lord, from the depths I call to you. Lord, hear me from on high.

And give attention to my voice When I for mercy cry.

Lord, in your presence who shall stand If you are sinless reward.

But yet forgiveness is with you But we may fear you, Lord.

[57 : 23] I wait, my soul waits for the Lord.

My hope is in his word. More than the watchman waits for dawn, My soul waits for the Lord.

O Israel, dear dear Lord. Oh, his shepherd, dear open God.

For mercy is with him, and full redemption from their sins, his people will bring.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.