

Seek the Lord - Or Else!

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[0 : 00] But I wish to extend a very happy and blessed year throughout 2022. We do have very sad news in the congregation this morning.

Little Olivia MacLeod from Elbost, John and Dean's daughter, passed away last night. And of course she hasn't been well and has been at the heart of our prayers and indeed love as a congregation.

But do remember the family at this time. Take your time going through the news bulletin. It's all there. You'll find everything that's needed over the next wee while.

So just take your time reading through it. We're going to sing from Psalm number 40. That's our first singing. It's from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm number 40. Psalm 40.

And this is from the Scottish Psalter. And we sing verses 1 to 4. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

[1 : 09] At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay. And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

Put a new song in my mouth, our God, to magnify. Many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely. Oh, blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lie.

Psalm 41 to 4. I waited for the Lord my God. I waited for the Lord my God.

And patiently did bear. And patiently did bear. A gland to me he did incline.

My voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit.

[2 : 31] And from the mighty clay. And on a rock he set my feet.

He set my feet. Establishing my way. He put a new song in my mouth.

Our God to magnify. Many shall see it and shall fear.

And on the Lord rely. O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord rely.

Respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lie.

[4:13]

Let us bow in prayer. our lord our god as we bow before you today we give thanks that we come to our god who is ready to hear our cry and just as we sang there that that is the experience of so many of us here that you took us from a fearful pit and mighty clay and you set our feet upon a rock and you established our way and you put a new song in our mouth we give thanks lord for that new song that you have caused your people to sing and although sometimes we sing it with all our heart and we sing it with joy and sing it with power that at other times lord that that song is not so strong but it is still there and even although it might be very weak it's still there because that is part of what has happened to us when our heart has been changed to see you to believe in you to trust you to follow you grant us your grace today as we wait upon you and as we're here in the first sunday of a new year lord we give thanks for all that you've done for us even as we reflect over the past yes even in the sore things even in the brokenness even in the hurts and in the pains we still have so much to be thankful for lord help us as the little chorus says to count our blessings and to name them one by one and it will amaze us and surprise us just what the lord has done for so often lord we can get bogged down and in the difficulties and the sorrows and sometimes we miss out on just what it is you have done for us lord oh god we pray that we might focus upon you that it might be the great desire of our life the great thrust that pushes us forward day by day as an ever increasing desire to know you and to become more and like yourself more like your son the lord jesus christ we give thanks oh lord that this is a great purpose that you have for us that you conform us to the image of christ and we pray lord that there will be a willingness and a readiness within us so that we will seek the lord with all our heart and we give thanks for the great promise that if we truly seek we will find and that we will continue to find you help us to remember that seeking is not something that we simply do when first we want to become a christian but that seeking becomes an integral part of our christian life we never stop seeking the lord seeking to know more of you to delve into the hidden treasures that belong to you you are the god who has promised to feed us with the finest of the wheat you are the god who has promised that even in the drought and even in the famine that you will feed your people and that you will give them water to drink and we pray that we might have our souls filled so that we will have that spiritual thirst quenched and a spiritual hunger with our appetites filled oh lord grant us your grace then as we wait upon you and as we wait upon you not just here in your courts or whether it is online but that we might be in the spirit and attitude of waiting upon you every day of our lives and we're told that they that wait upon the lord will renew their strength we're told that those who wait upon the lord shall not be put to shame and so we pray that waiting indeed will be part and partial of our christian life we pray to bless every single home here today whether that is virtual or here in your presence in the house and we ask that you will bless every family with health and strength and that you will bless us throughout this year guiding us and showing us a way to go we do not know the way ourselves

every day we tend to think we know the way and yet so often the the events and circumstances of the day so change that we discover things happen that we weren't anticipating and we weren't prepared for and so we need to be able to lean upon you and depend upon you grant us that wisdom that we don't have ourselves and indeed what we pray for ourselves we pray for for all we pray for our nation we pray for our leaders oh lord deliver them from being absorbed with self and their own maybe self-importance and self-will and self-wisdom and that they might look to you because your wisdom transcends any human wisdom it is a true wisdom and so we ask that that might be the wisdom that guides and leads we pray lord that you will bless those who hurt today we remember john and dean down in melbost we ask lord that you will bless them as they mourn the passing of little olivia and how she was so covered in love all her life lord we give thanks for the amazing resilience that she displayed in the face of being so unwell really all her days and we give thanks lord for all the care and love that was poured upon her we ask lord for those who mourn the passing of the sister that they will indeed be blessed because they've been so supportive of their little sister we give thanks for them and we pray lord for john's mom and for dean's dad as they mourn the passing of a a granddaughter lord we pray for all the family at this time and ask that you will be with them not only in the days ahead but at all the days in front of them pray for all who know something of what it is to to to experience the pain of losing a child and at this time which is so much a family get together time we know there are many hearts that are broken many hearts that are hurting oh lord draw close to everyone who knows the pain and the sorrow that that can bring and that that does bring lord we pray for all who mourn we remember the family of the late uh angus mcdonald we pray especially for the family as they mourn his passing as well and we pray for margaret mccloud who mourns the passing of her brother donald and we pray lord for all today all the families there as they mourn together oh lord our god we give thanks that you are a comforting god and that you're able to reach in what we can't reach and you're able to give what we can't give and so we ask oh lord that you will indeed bless every broken heart and that you will strengthen every weak passion lord our god we pray for those who are ill we ask your blessing to be upon them we remember those who are in hospital and ask lord that it might please you to to raise them up and we we do think of the likes of duncan mcclain and we think of annie mary mcleod and bethesda lord there are there are so many lord who are ill at this time and ask that your healing hand will be upon them oh lord you are the great physician we pray that you will guide us then in our worship bless our young people lord we give thanks for them precious lives and we pray that you will give wisdom to parents who teach them and to the all the involvement of our church whether it's with the creche or the tweenies or the sunday school the youth fellowship and the youth club and campaigners and all the various groups that that have such an impact upon these precious lives give thanks lord for all who have given their time towards this and ask that you will bless them lord help us now as we wait upon you and cleanse as we

pray from our every sin in jesus name we ask it amen well just a wee word to the young folk as sunday school is not on and there's some of you here which is lovely to see and i believe there'll be some watching online as well last tuesday when i was going to put the bins out it was a lovely morning it's wee bit we bit frosty early on and the i was putting the rubbish into the bins and taking them to the road and my hands were wet and from because it had been frosty and the it was sort of thawing the frost had thawed and as i was just going to the road i turned round and the moon was still there although it was daylight it was you could still see very clearly the moon but what really caught my attention was a jet plane was traveling through the sky you could see the tail of smoke behind it and it was just coming to go under the moon and i thought wow what a brilliant photo so i went went to get the my phone out of my pocket and i was in a hurry to get it because you could don't it was only going to get a couple of seconds really to get it and it's one of these touch screens and i put my thumb on it for the you put your thumb to press the thumb id but i think because my thumb was dirty and wet it wouldn't work so then i was typing in the passcode but i was in such a hurry i got it wrong and then i had to press cancel and do it again and then of course by the time that happened the jet was way over there and the moon was still where it was and i would say i missed it and it's one of these photos i was saying probably never get again maybe maybe there'll be one this week again i don't know but it was just one of these moments i thought that's a beautiful photo and you know there's a lot of things in life that we we miss there are some things in life that we miss and it doesn't really matter maybe you missed your favorite tv program and you come in but today you can catch up again or maybe you're late for your dinner which you shouldn't be but you can still get it it's not it's not it's no big deal there are other things if you miss it is a big deal supposing you were going to go to glasgow to some you had some appointment or something important and you ended up missing the plane you had no other chance of getting now that would be a big deal and there's quite a lot of things in life like that if we miss them we say that's that's really bad but you know the biggest thing the biggest deal of all that we can miss out is in missing on jesus because to have jesus is the greatest blessing that you can ever have for your life to have jesus as your friend to have jesus as your lord to have jesus as your savior there's nobody like him there's nothing like it to having jesus but you know the problem is because jesus is always there a lot of people think you know what i'll leave it till later on i'll leave it for some other time just because you think i'll see i'll maybe ask jesus to be my lord next week or i'll leave it till next year because he's there but you know the bible never ever ever says that to us bible always says today it's today now is the day of salvation today if you hear my voice so please don't put off this is the most important thing you can do and here

you are at the beginning of another year say to yourself whatever i do or whatever i don't do this year i am going to seek jesus to be my lord and my savior don't miss out because jesus is the best you can ever have let's say the lord's prayer our father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come i 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 and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever amen we're going to read god's word now in second chronicles second chronicles and chapter 14 and into chapter 15 second chronicles chapter 14 abijah slept with his fathers and they buried him in the city of david and asa his son reigned in his place in his days the land had rest for 10 years and asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the lord his god he took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the asherim and commanded judah to seek the lord the god of their fathers and to keep the law and the commandment he also took out all the city out of all the cities of judah the high places and the incense altars and the kingdom had rest under him he built fortified cities in judah for the land at rest he had no war in these years for the lord gave him peace and he said to judah let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers gates and bars the land is still ours because we have sought the lord our god we have sought him and he has given us peace and he has given us peace on every side so they built and prospered and asa had an army of 300 000 from judah armed with large shields and spears and 280 000 men from benjamin and carried shields and drew bows all these were mighty men of valor sirah the ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots and came as far as maresha and asa went out to meet him and they drew up their lines in battle in the valley of zephathath at maresha and asa cried to the lord his god oh lord there is none like you to help between the mighty and the weak help us oh lord our god for we rely on you and in your name we have come against this multitude oh lord you are our god let not man prevail against you so the lord defeated the ethiopians before asa and before judah and the ethiopians fled asa and the people who were with him pursued them as far as gear and the ethiopians fell until none remained alive for they were broken before the lord and his army the men of judah carried away very much spoil and they attacked all the cities around gear for the fear of the lord was upon them they plundered all the cities for there was much plunder in them and they struck down the tents of those who had livestock and carried away sheep in abundance and camels then they returned to

jerusalem the spirit of god came upon asariah the son of oded and he went out to meet asa and said to him hear me asa and all judah and benjamin the lord is with you while you are with him if you seek him he will be found by you but if you forsake him he will forsake you for a long time israel was without the true god and without a teaching priest and without law but when in their distress they turned to the lord the god of israel and sought him he was found by them in those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the land they were broken in pieces nation was crushed by nation and city by city for god troubled them with every sort of distress but you take courage do not let your hands be weak for your work shall be rewarded as soon as i heard these words the prophecy of azariah the son of oded he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of judah and benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of ephraim and he repaired the altar of the lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the lord and he gathered all judah and benjamin and those from ephraim manasseh and simeon who were residing with them for great numbers had deserted to them from israel when they saw that the lord his god was with them they were gathered at jerusalem in the third month of the 15th year of the reign of asa they sacrificed to the lord on that day from the spoil that they had brought seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep and they entered into a covenant to seek the lord the god of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul but that whoever would not seek the lord the god of israel should be put to death with a young or old man or woman they swore an oath to the lord with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with horns and all judah rejoiced over the oath for they had sworn with all their heart and sought him with their whole desire and he was found by them and the lord gave them rest all around amen and may god bless to us this reading of his own holy word we're going to sing again from psalm 27 this is sing psalms psalm number 27 find that on page 31 we sing verses 1 to 4 psalm 27 and sing psalms verses 1 to 4 the lord the lord's my savior and my light who will make me dismayed the lord's the stronghold of my life why should i be afraid when evildoers threaten me to take my life away my adversaries and my foes will stumble in that day although an army hems me in my heart will feel no dread the war against me should arise i will lift up my head verses 1 to 4 the lord's my savior and my light the lord's my savior and my light who will make me dismayed the lord's the stronghold of my life why should i be afraid why should i be afraid when evildoers threaten me to take my life away my adversaries my adversity

[24 : 32] my adversity my adversity And my foes will stumble in the day.

Although an army heads me in, My front will feed no dread.

Though war against me should arise, I will lift up my head.

One thing I'll plead before the Lord, And it I'll seek away, That I may come within the waters, And dwell there all my days, That on the beauty of the Lord, I constantly may gaze, And in His heart may seek to know direction,

In His ways. Let's turn to the section of God's Word that we read in 2 Chronicles.

[27 : 05] And we read chapters 14 and most of chapter 15. And I want us to focus, maybe, Although I want us to look in a general way at what we read.

It tells us in verse 7 of chapter 14, And he said to Judah, Let us build these cities, And surround them with walls and towers, Gates and bars.

The land is still ours, Because we have sought the Lord our God. We have sought Him, And He has given us peace on every side. And then we read of the strength of Asa's army, When everything was counted.

But then in verse 9, We read of how Zerah the Ethiopian came up with an army, It says of a million men and 300 chariots. Now some would say that sometimes, When it has the likes of gives a million, Whether it is a million, Or whether it is standing for a number that can't be numbered, That it was such an innumerable army.

This is what Zindigaden had just an absolutely massive army. And Asa, of course, Was overwhelmed by facing such an opposition. And then we read these wonderful words in verse 11, And Asa cried to the Lord his God, O Lord, There is none like you to help, Between the mighty and the weak.

[28 : 29] Help us, O Lord our God, For we rely on you, And in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God, Let not man prevail against you.

It's an absolutely wonderful prayer. Now as you see here, This man, Asa, was a good man. You tend to find that the writers of Kings and Chronicles, That they put all the kings into one of two categories.

That they either did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, Or they did that which was good and right in the sight of the Lord. All the kings, That seems to be what's put about them.

It summarized their life, their reign. That doesn't mean that every single thing that they did was good. Not that every single thing that they did was right in the sight of the Lord.

If we were to read right through the history of Asa, We would find that, Like everybody else, He had his sins, He had his faults. And in fact, He had glaring sins.

[29 : 37] And one of them was that he, Despite this amazing trust that we have, In the Lord, And in this verse 11, And where his whole being, His whole heart, His everything trusted the Lord, That didn't follow in every area of his life.

Because we find him, Later on, If we go to chapter 16 and so on, Keep on reading, He made a pact with the Syrians. And he took money from the temple, Gold and silver from the temple, And sent it to the king of Syria, In order that the king of Syria would come and help him against Israel.

And God was displeased with that. And God sent word to Asa, And he said, Because you haven't trusted me. And because you've gone to somebody else, And taken the gold and silver from the temple, To pay that man, The peace that you're looking for, The peace that I've given you, Is going to go.

And Judah lost that peace, That God had given, That God-given peace. Because they forsook God. And of course, We'll see that as we go along. That was a warning that the prophet gave him, Asariah in chapter 15.

And when Asa was coming back, From battle, In verse 2, We have these wonderful words, Where he says, The Lord is with you, While you are with him.

[30 : 59] If you seek him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake him, He will forsake you. Solemn words, Wonderful words, Challenging words.

So, Asa was proof of that. And indeed, You read later on, That he got a disease in his feet. And he wouldn't turn to the Lord. He trusted in doctors.

Now, Of course, We look to one another for help. Of course, We go to doctors, When we're not well. But, What was happened here was, Asa had kind of blanked God out. And he was putting all, He had this, This was his weakness, Was his reliance on other people, Rather than on trusting in the Lord.

So, But despite that, Despite these failings, Despite these things, He was still a good man. The main thrust of his life, Was one which, Wanted the Lord.

He was a man of faith. And he was a man who, Made the nation turn to the Lord. And he, He broke down the, The altars, And the idols that were there.

[32 : 10] So he was a good man. And that's, You know, There's, We all fall into, One of two categories, In this world. It might seem surprising, But according to scripture, We're either godly, Or ungodly.

Now we often tend to think of, Ungodly people, As being really wicked. People who are so opposed to God. But to be ungodly, Is simply not to have God. To, Kind of, No matter you might give an outward, Respect to God.

But you still, You do not want God, Coming in the passion of Jesus Christ, Into your life. So a passion who, Is out with God, Who does not have God, Is ungodly.

A passion who has the Lord, Is godly. That, That really, Is so often what you'll find, That running through in the Psalms, And particularly in the Old Testament. So, Asa was, As we see, He was a good man.

And, He was somebody who, Made, Or wanted the nation, To seek the Lord. That's what we find, That, In verse 7, And he said to Judah, Let us build these cities, And surround them with walls, And towers, Gates, And bars, The land is still ours, Because, We have sought the Lord.

[33 : 30] And you'll find, That there's a lot of reference, In the Old Testament, To this, Seeking the Lord. And, That is absolutely essential, For our lives.

And, So often we tend to think, Of somebody seeking the Lord, As somebody who, Isn't a Christian, But has begun to get, Interested in the Christian faith.

And is beginning to want, The Lord Jesus. And maybe somebody, Who has started, Coming to the prayer meeting, And starting, He's reading their Bible, In a way they'd never done so before, And praying in a way, That they had never done before.

And you can see, This person is seeking the Lord. And that's a wonderful thing, And so they are. But we never stop, Seeking the Lord. You today, The oldest Christian in here today, You're still seeking the Lord.

It's something we do. We seek his face. We seek his presence. We seek his favor. We seek him, Wanting to know more, And more, And more of him.

[34 : 31] Like the apostle said, That I might know him. How do we know him? By seeking him. So this is something, That we will always do. That's what we're doing just now.

When we came here today, We came with a desire, Of seeking the Lord. Seeking that we might know him, Find him, Discover more about him. And that's the beauty of the Lord, That we've come to discover, Is that we want to know more, And more, And more about him.

It's part of what will make, Glory the wonderful place it is. There will be an eternal discovery, Of the greatness, The majesty, And the glory, Of God.

So here's this man, Asa, And he was, As we say, He was a good man. He was a man of faith. And of course, Faith is integral, To everything that we are, In the Christian life.

And when we have faith, It is inevitable, But that faith will be tested. There's a faith, That doesn't want to be tested. It's kind of, It's a sort of a, The faith that just says, I just want to be left alone.

[35 : 39] Okay, I believe in Jesus. That's it. I don't want any hassles, Any bother in my life. And that's the end of that. But that's, That's not the kind of faith, That we find, In the scripture.

Because faith, The very nature of faith, Is such, That it is, It is tested. And true faith, Is a faith that clings, When there's, Everything around you is crumbling.

You've been there, Where there's nowhere else to go. Where your life has turned upside down. You felt broken. And everything that was, Foundational to your life, Has been broken.

And you say, There's nowhere else to go. But you go, Just to the Lord. You have to cling there. Sometimes you're clinging in darkness. Sometimes you're clinging in a way, And you don't know how you're clinging.

But you're still there. You're hanging on. And that is, That is real faith. It's a faith that, The faith that sometimes it's, Just looking and trusting, And believing when there's nothing, And nobody else around.

[36 : 47] Remember, Faith is like a muscle. It's often talked of in that way. And you and I know that, That muscle doesn't grow, In an armchair, But in the gym.

It's by resistance. And similarly, In life, Faith doesn't grow simply by, Reading books. You say, Well, you know what? I'm going to make my faith grow, And I'm going to read loads of books.

Now, of course, There's one book that's essential, To the growth of faith. And that's the Bible. Faith and, God's word and prayer, Are essential, To our growth, And development in the faith.

But it's God's word and prayer, Along with life, The activity of life. So that faith is involved, In all that life is.

In all our relationships, In all its challenges, In all that happens in work, In our leisure time, In all the things, Of that make-up our day, In all the providences, In all the experiences.

[37 : 49] Because faith isn't something, That we just, It's not a hat, Or a coat, That you put on for Sunday, When you go to church, And say, Oh, well, Here's a bit of faith now, I'm going to believe in God, And trust in God, And then when you close the Bible, Say, Well, That's the end of the faith.

No, Faith is, Faith is who you are, In your relationship with God, And it's at the very heart of your life, It's a heartbeat of who you are, Faith is a pulsating movement of your life, Towards God, And carries you on as you go, And, But as we say, Faith has to be tested, And faith is often tested, Sometimes at the most unexpected times, That's exactly what happened with this man, Asa, Because we tend to think, That if we're very zealous, And if we're very obedient to what God is saying, Then that our life will be filled with blessing, And everything will run very smoothly, Now there's no doubt whatever, That God will bless us, When we are obedient to him, But sometimes, There are also testings, There will be blessings,

But there's also going to be testings, And quite often, There are testings, Coming, Right after times, Of obedience to God, Take for instance, Paul and Silas, They were determined to go another way, But God said, No, I want you to go, You know, The Macedonian call, And go to Philippi, And they went to Philippi, It wasn't where they were wanting to go, But they went in obedience, To what they believed God was showing them, What happened?

They got beaten up, And ended up in prison, Now that was a trial to their faith, And yet, It was in that prison, That God was going to work, It was the start of a wonderful church, Ministers going through the letter, To the Philippians tonight, And it was a church, That loved the apostle Paul, And Paul loved that church, But it's beginning, It was my, It was dark, And it was difficult, But, Because, But their faith was tested, And here is exactly the same, Here's this man, Asa, And he has, He has worked this kind of reform, Within the land, And broken down, The idols, And done so much like this, And built up the cities, And there was this period of reform, Where he was making the people turn back to God, And there was a, A sort of a, You'd almost talk of a, A kind of a revival, Towards the way of God,

Within the land, And you'd say to Yeshua, Oh, Bound to be a great time of blessing now, What happens? This, Massive army from Ethiopia, Comes up, Against Judah, And against Asa, Now that, Is a test to faith, When you've, Worked for God, And honoured God, And been zealous for God, And you're expecting, In return, Great blessing, But what happens?

[41:04] The enemy, And we shouldn't be surprised, Because when we, Are obedient to God, And zealous for God, Be absolutely sure, The kingdom of darkness, Takes note, And Satan hates, When his kingdom, Is, When people are a threat, To his kingdom, And, Cast a blow against his kingdom, And that's what Asa had done, So Satan's making sure, You're not going to get away, With this, And we know that, The king, The ruler of the kingdom, Of darkness, Is a fearful enemy, But the wonderful thing, For the Christian is, That Satan, Only has limits, That God, Will put a hedge, Around his people, And will only, Allow Satan, To go so far, And no further, That's what he did, With Job, He allowed, Satan, Permission, To hurt Job,

But there was, There was a limit to it, He couldn't take Job's life, Satan did a lot of damage, Read the book of Job, And you'll see what happened, But we know that, At the end, God blessed, Job, Through this, And of course, All that took place, In Job's life, Was ultimately, For Job's good, Job came out, Out of it, A glowing, Believer, At the end of it all, And so God, Allows these testings, To come, And it's, It's worth asking ourselves, How do we react, When these things, Come into our life, When all these, Testings come, And you, They're so unexpected, When, When everything goes wrong, And you're saying, Lord, This isn't fair, I followed you, For 20, 30, 40 years, Not expecting this, Just now, How do we react, Because it's important, To discover, Because so often, So often we can get, Bitters,

We can get angry, We can say this, We can say that, And it's, I'm quite sure, The Lord isn't surprised, At times when we react, But you know, There comes a growing acceptance, That's what grace does, Grace is a wonderful way of, Maybe initially, After the explosion, Of maybe there can be, Anger, And frustration, And all sort of emotion, Giving way, But then there comes in this, Where we've been given, The grace, To accept, And very often, It's after that, Then God brings again, The blessing, Well, This is what happened, In Asa's life, And we see this, Great cry of faith, And we read it there, Of where, Asa cries to the Lord, And he says, There's none like you, To help, Between the mighty, And the weak, Help us, O Lord, Our God, For we rely on you, Can I ask you, To make that, Can I ask myself, To make that my prayer, Your prayer, This year, As you go forward, Just saying to the Lord,

These very words, Lord, Our God, Help us, For we rely, On you, And in your name, We come against this multitude, Remember as a Christian, There's a multitude, Opposed to you, A powerful multitude, And only the Lord, Will enable you, To go forward, Against this, And so, We find this great, Prayer of faith, And so we, We read that the Lord, Gave Asa, He heard his prayer, He answered his prayer, And again, There's this, Emphasis in this chapter, That if we seek the Lord, That he will be found, Of us, And he was found, And so, There's this wonderful, Victory given, And then we find, That the prophet, Comes to Asa, As he's coming back, From the victory, And he says, To him, The Lord is with you, While you are with him, What does it mean, That the Lord is with you, What does it mean, For you and for me, When we can say, Well the Lord is with us,

Well I think, It's when we're conscious, Of the Lord, In God's presence, Wherever we are, Wherever we go, It's like having, Psalm 139, Sort of embedded, Into our consciousness, In our sitting down, In our rising up, That the Lord is there, In our going to bed at night, In our travels, In our work, In wherever we are, Whatever we do, That there is no place, On this earth, Anywhere, That we can be, But the Lord is with us, And you know, If you're a Christian, That's the most wonderful thing, In the world to know, That the Lord is with you, That you are, Never ever, Ever on your own, At any place, At any point, In any circumstance, And the most wonderful thing, Is when we're conscious, Of that, Sometimes we aren't, Sometimes we don't have, A felt sense, Of the Lord's presence, Sometimes it's simply, By bare faith alone, That we are aware of this, But sometimes we're aware,

[46:09] Of him being with us, And these are wonderful times, And let us seek, That we'll become more, And more, And more aware, Of his presence, Remember Moses, Where he didn't want to go up, When God at one point, The Israelites were so rebellious, He said, You know, That's it, And God, Moses said, Lord, If you don't go up with us, I don't want to go up, I can't bear the thought, Of going up, To the land of promise, Unless you're with us, Is that your thinking today?

As you look out, Into another year, Are you saying to yourself, Lord, I can't, I don't want, To go through, 2022 on my own, I need you, I need you every step, You know, It's a wonderful thing, If you've come to that place, Or that point, And if you haven't, You don't know what you're missing, You don't know who you're missing, Because, Having the Lord with you, Every day, And every night, In every circumstances, In every circumstance, Good or bad, Is the most wonderful blessing, That you can ever, Ever have, Having the Lord with you, Is having him, As we meet here just now, Having him in his word, Having him in the sacraments, Which, We were hoping, Might have next week, But we're hoping that, We'll have by February, But in all the things, In this word, And prayer, And the sacrament, That the Lord is with us, That we're conscious, That we hear his word, Speaking right into our heart, It's having the Lord with us,

In providence, Having a sense of him, And as life unfolds, That he's there with us, In every single bit of it, And then it says, While you be with him, What does that mean, For the likes of you and me?

It means very simply, Seeking to know the Lord, More and more, As we've said this already, But you and I know that, The more we seek the Lord, The more we find him, And the more we find of him, The more we want to seek him, Seeking him means, Wanting to know his will, But more than that, To do his will, See there's a big difference, Between knowing what God's will is, And doing what God's will is, You know when you and I, Read the Bible, We find there, What God's will is, And sometimes, If we're brutally honest, We say, I don't really want to do that today, That's not the way, That I want to live today, I want a different day, So really we're saying to the Lord, Lord I don't want to do your will today, We're maybe not as blatant as that, We're maybe not as courageous, Or as foolish before God, As to say that, But deep down in our heart,

That's actually what we're saying, Lord, Today, In these circumstances before me, Just now, I'm going to put your will aside, I want to do my own thing, I want to do my own will, Because we're very self-willed, So the important thing, Is not only finding, What God's will is, But seeking for the grace, To do God's will, And being with him, Means living in dependence upon him, Every single day, And you know, It's the most wonderful thing, And can I say just, As we come to conclude, Because it can be a wee bit, Sometimes baffling, As people read this, In verse 2 there, Where the prophet goes out, And he says to Asa, Hear me, Asa and all Judah, The Lord is with you, While you're with him, If you seek him, He will be found by you, But if you forsake him, He will forsake you, For a long time, Israel was without the true God, That's not talking about, This particular moment, What the prophet is doing is, He's reminding Asa,

[49:59] Of what it was like way back, That there was a long time, If you go back to say, For instance, The time of the judges, There was a, Do you know what it said, In the, Everybody did, What was right in their own eyes, Everybody did what they wanted, If it was right for you, It's right for you, What might be right for you, Is not right for the other person, So people just did, Whatever they wanted, Isn't that not, Kind of like today, If you were to find, What's a philosophy for today, It's everybody did, What they felt like doing, But they had abandoned God, They turned their back upon God, And see what happened, When they turned their back upon God, When they were without, A teaching priest, And without the law, They, Eventually of course, In their distress, They turned to the Lord, And he was found, But in those times, There was no peace, There was great disturbances, Afflicted all, The inhabitants of the land, They were broken in pieces,

And they, They had every, Sort of distress, See, That's what happens, To a, To a people, To a nation, If we abandon the Lord, If we put God, Out of the picture, Not just at a personal level, But it's also through, At a national level, If we seek the Lord, He will be found of us, And he will grant us, His grace, His wisdom, His guidance, National blessing, If we turn our back upon God, God's going to turn our back upon us, His back upon us, And there'll be no peace, And there'll be all kinds of disturbances, And there'll be distress in the land, And is that not kind of almost a picture, Of where we're at today, And it wasn't until the nation of Israel, Turned again to the Lord, In their distress, Because they had reached the end of themselves, They had reached a point, Where there was nowhere else to go,

They cried to the Lord, God heard them, And he delivered them, And you know, I sometimes wonder, Do we have to go down, A lot more yet, Before we'll turn to the Lord, We're not, We would never presume to know, Exactly what the Lord is doing with us, Because he is Lord, And sovereign over all, But there's no question, Whatever that, Nationally, We've turned our back on him, And so it's absolutely vital, That personally, Individually, We turn to seek the Lord, But also nationally, Let us pray, That we will as a nation, Once again, Turn to seek the Lord, Because in doing so, Blessing will come, By continuing to turn our back upon the Lord, It will be continued, Unrest, Distress, Disturbance, Let us pray, Lord our God, We ask that you will bless us, We give thanks that you are the God, That we can come to, The God whose word,

We are able to read, And we pray that we might have understanding hearts, As we read it, That you will bless us, And open our ears to your truth, And our hearts to receive it, We pray that you will bless, All the young folk that are here today, We give thanks for them, Bless them, In their young lives, And watch over them, Protect them, Lead them in the right way, Watch over us now, And take us to our home safely, And forgive us our every sin, In Jesus name we ask it, Amen.

We are going to conclude again, Singing from Psalm 27, Psalm 27, We are going to sing from verse 11, Psalm 27 from verse 11, This is from the Scottish Psalter, O Lord instruct me in thy way, To me I later be, In a plain path, Because of those, That hatred bear to me, Give me not to mine enemies will, For witnesses that lie, Against me risen are, And such as breathe out cruelty, I fainted had, Unless that I believed, Had to see, The Lord's own goodness in the land, Of them that living be, Wait on the Lord, And be thou strong, And he shall strength afford, Unto thine heart, Yea, do thou wait, I say upon the Lord, Verses 11 to the end, Psalm 27, O Lord instruct me in thy way, O Lord instruct me in thy way,

[54:44] To meet thy leader, In a plain path, In a plain path, Because of those, That hatred bear to me, Give me not to my enemies will, For witnesses that lie, Against me risen, And such as breathe, A cruelty, I fainted,

I fainted, Unless that I believed, With God to see, The Lord's own goodness in the land, Of them that living be, Wait on the Lord, And be thou strong, And he shall help afford, Unto thine heart, Yea, do thou wait, I sing upon the Lord,

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.

Amen. Amen.