

Every Step Planned

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

- [0 : 01] I want to extend a very warm welcome to everybody this evening on behalf of Stornway Free Church and we pray that we will know God's blessing as we seek to worship him.
- And we're going to begin by singing and again there are pre-recorded singings from services prior to lockdown just the last singing so we have some of these singings available. So we're going to sing from Psalm 78 and sing Psalms, Psalm 78 from the beginning verses 1 to 6.
- Wonders he has done, laws for Israel he made, statutes firm to be obeyed. And so on, verses 1 to 6 of Psalm 78.
- O my people, hear my teaching, Parables I will unfold.
- Give attention as I attend, dark and hidden things of old.
- [1 : 29] Things that we have heard and known, by our fathers they were shown.
- We will tell them to our children, generations yet to come.
- We will show the Lord's great power and the wonders he has done.
- We will tell them to our children, and we will tell them to our families to tell.
- So the coming generation, not yet for good know them well.
- [2 : 50] And their children in their turn, God's commands and laws would learn.
- Let us now bow in prayer. Lord our God, as we bow before you this evening, we acknowledge you as the God of heaven and earth.
- You are our maker. You are our sustainer. You are our governor. You are our guide. You are the one, Lord, who directs the path that we take.
- And we give thanks that it is so, and we give thanks, Lord, that we are able to acknowledge you in all our ways. We have to confess, Lord, that sometimes our ways are ways of sin. And yet even we have to say, Lord, that even in our ways of sin, we still acknowledge you, because that's how we are as Christians.
- And so even in our sin, we're saying, Lord, have mercy upon me, because we grieve in our own heart. That is the awful thing of sin, that we love it and we hate it at the one time.
- [4 : 01] Like the apostle said, the good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. And so often that gets us down, but we give thanks that there is redemption and forgiveness and pardon with you.
- And so we ask, Lord, that as we seek to worship you today, that we will come with truly repentant spirits, acknowledging our sin before you. Our sin is ever before you.
- But we give thanks that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. And the amazing thing is that the sins may be called for and looked for, but when they are dealt with in Christ, then they are cast from your sight.
- And the amazing thing is that as you deliver us from a pit of corruption, so you cast our sins behind your back. What an amazing thought and an amazing concept.

In many ways, it's difficult for us to fully understand, but we give thanks for the faith that lays hold upon these truths and that they go down deep into our being. We give thanks, Lord, for your grace, which enables us to go forward day by day.

[5 : 12] An enabling grace, a strengthening grace, an upholding grace. And we pray that the sufficiency of your grace may prove just to be that in our experience, sufficient for us.

That is what your word declares. My grace is sufficient for you. And we pray that all of us may discover the truth and the reality of that.

And we pray, especially for those who are in most need today. And we know that there are so many differing circumstances and trials and problems that people face.

Sometimes these problems, in relation to some of the greatest problems in the world, might appear very small. And yet, they're important and they're relative to the particular situation that we find ourselves in.

So day by day, we confront things that maybe try us and things that we find that are difficult. But we pray that we don't try and go through them on our own, but that we will look to you.

[6 : 12] Forgive us, Lord, for our self-centeredness and our independent spirit, that we are determined to do things our way and in our strength. Help us then, Lord, to more and more to lean upon you and to walk with you in a way that is worthy.

We pray then that you will help us as we wait upon you, that you will bless this worship into our souls and that it will do us good. We pray that you will incline our hearts and our minds to the Word of God and that the Word of God will be the only room to direct us, knowing it is the only way to glorify and to enjoy you.

Lord, help us to enjoy you. There are so many people today, when they think of God, they do not think in terms of enjoyment. But, Lord, we have to confess, even as Christians, that there are times that we don't put the word enjoyment in the way that we should.

But we are told, indeed, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. So grant us the grace, Lord, and the capacity to enjoy you more and more every day.

That we will find an increased joy, an increased contentment, an increased satisfaction in you and in you alone. Watch over us then, we pray, and do us good.

[7 : 36] Bless those who mourn. Death has been amongst us this last while and there are so many broken hearts. And so we commit every broken heart into your care. We pray that you will tenderly nourish and bind up the broken hearted.

We ask, Lord, that you will be with those who are trying to piece life together, who've gone through difficult times. And right now, their world, I say, no, it is still upside down.

Lord, may you bring meaning and purpose. And if there are any who are searching for you, and yet they haven't been able to find you, we pray that even before tonight closes, that the light of the gospel may flood into their hearts, that they may see enough of you, that they might be granted the faith to lay hold upon you, to say, my Lord, my Lord and my God.

And so we pray that you will be with everybody this evening and tonight. We pray, Lord, to bless us nationally and internationally. And again, as we face all the uncertainty, particularly that COVID brings, with regard to the illness and with regard to the pressures on NHS and our carers, with regard to the sorrows and traumas that it brings into families and homes, Lord, we pray that you will help us.

And we plead that our leaders will turn to look to you, because it seems to be that it's a one name that is never mentioned.

[9 : 07] We never hear anybody of our leaders, maybe there are, maybe you just haven't heard, but saying that we should look to the God of heaven. Oh, Lord, our God, we pray that you will grant them courage to say that and that you will grant them the spirit to realise that you are the God of heaven and earth and that you hold all things in your hand.

And so we pray for us, we pray for our islands, as we're aware of more cases arising. And that, of course, causes a level of anxiety.

We pray that these cases will be contained and that nobody will become too seriously ill as a result of it. And we ask, Lord, for your healing hand upon all patients at this time.

We pray for all with other illnesses. And we know that through COVID, it is having a major impact upon others who are waiting for operations and treatments and all these things.

And so we ask, Lord, that doors will be opened and that you will make a way through in all this. Lord, our God, we ask that you will bless our young people. Again, such a challenge for them and for parents and homeschooling and to new areas and avenues of life for this last number of...

[10 : 23] Indeed, almost this last year of our own. We pray that you will bless our Sunday school teachers. Again, we give thanks for them and for all the work that they do and for the abilities you've given to them.

We pray that you'll bless parents and children alike. And we pray that you will be with each and every congregation within our trespass. Again, remember the congregation in Garibust and ask, Lord, that you will bless the congregation there and that you will be with Ian Thompson and Connie, as I say, beginning a new ministry.

And ask, Lord, that you will be with them in the whole community of Point and that you will bless them and the work there. And we ask that you will guide us and keep us and uphold us and watch over us in all that we're about and that you will do us good.

Bless your word now to us and have mercy upon us and cleanse us, we pray, from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Just going to say a wee word to the young folk, any who might be looking in.

I am here beside me and I have to watch not to make too much of a mess or I'll get shot. I don't want to be dropping sawdust all over the place here. But I have here a wee bit of a log, not a full log from a tree, not a branch or down to the stump of it or whatever.

[11 : 54] It's just a bit of a log and you put the logs in the fire and such like. Now, I am no expert at logs. I can't tell you an awful lot about them. But the one thing that I think we all know is that if you look at a log there, you will see lines.

You'll see these lines running along. And if you looked at a tree, if you saw where a tree had been cut down and looked at the stump that's left there, the big circle of a stump, and you would see loads and loads of circles, loads of circles starting in and working all the way out.

And these circles that this is, not because this has been cut into bits, but you can see the lines which would be part of a big circle. And these circles, apparently, every year that a tree grows, there is a new line comes in so that you're able to tell how old a tree is.

When you would cut down a tree, and I'm no expert and I may be wrong, but I am sure I read some of that in the first five years of the life of the tree that there are no circles.

But after five years, every year, there's a circle and another line there and another line so that if you cut down a tree and you say you saw 12, or supposing you saw 10 lines or 20 circles in it going out round and round and round right to the outside, you'd be able to say well, if there's no circles for the first five years, no lines, first five years, and there's 20 here, then this tree is 25.

[13 : 38] It's kind of the age of it. But a lot of people can tell what the tree is by looking at the bark of the what's on the outside and they'll be able to tell you whether it's hardwood or softwood, like whether it's a fir tree or a silver birch.

And again, experts would be even able to tell you looking at the lines of the tree, whether it was a really good year or a not so good year because apparently the lines, if they would see a lot of rain and warmth and such like, the lines between the line of one year to the line of the next year might be a little bigger.

And they also experts are able to tell by looking at the tree, the log of whether that was a tree that grew in a valley or whether it was a tree that grew on a hill.

I haven't a clue here, but experts can tell you, they can even tell you what is the main direction of the wind, which like for ourselves here, probably the main wind that comes would be sort of southwest.

I think we get probably a southwest wind, probably more than any of the other winds throughout the whole year. And so people, experts, will be able to say the prevailing, the main wind that comes is a southwesterly direction.

[15 : 02] So it's amazing what you can tell from a tree and you can tell so much because by the lines inside of the tree. But you know, it's not only trees that grow and have lines on them, so do we.

And I don't just mean the lines on my forehead and such like, because the older you get, there's more lines and lines down in your eyes, like crow lines they call them.

It's not just that that we're talking about, but when we grow, it's not just our body and all that, our character grows.

and we're either getting better or we're getting worse. And it's very important to understand that the older a person gets who's turning their back upon Jesus and doesn't want to know anything about Jesus, that they become harder.

The lines in their heart, the lines in their mind, and sometimes even the lines of sin in their face become harder and harder.

[16 : 10] You look sometimes, it's not always true, but sometimes you look at people and their face is a face and you'd say, that's a hard face. It's almost like there's a mark of the hardness of the life that they've lived.

It's written all over their face. Every picture tells a story and often a face can tell a story. But the thing is that the more that we look to Jesus and ask Jesus to rule our lives, the more we will become like Jesus and the more the lines of Jesus will grow into our character, into our personality, into our lives, so that they will be like the lines of love and gentleness and goodness and caring, that these are the sort of things that should become more and more evident so that not just experts but people will be able to look at a person's life and as they watch that person and as they listen to that person they'll be able to say, you know this, I think that's a person who spends time with Jesus because the way they live and how they act and what they do and what they say is kind of what you would find the word of God saying.

So you ask the Lord to help you when you're young, that you'll give your life to Jesus and that the lines of Jesus' love will be the lines that will show themselves into your life and that day by day you become more and more like Jesus in this world.

Let's say the Lord's prayer. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory forever. Amen. Now, two readings from God's word.

[18 : 20] First of all, I want us to read in the book of Leviticus. Leviticus and chapter 19, Leviticus chapter 19 and at verse 9.

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard.

you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner. I am the Lord your God. You shall not steal, you shall not deal falsely, you shall not lie to one another, you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God.

I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbour or robbing, the wages of a higher servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord. You shall do no injustice in court, you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbour.

[19 : 46] You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbour. I am the Lord. Then we go to the book of Ruth, Ruth chapter 2, Ruth chapter 2, and we're going to read the first 11 verses there.

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, let me go to the field and gleaned among the ears of grain after him, in whose sight I shall find favour.

And she said to her, go, my daughter. So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and he said to the reapers, the Lord be with you. And they answered, the Lord bless you. Then Boaz said to the young man who was in charge of the reapers, whose young woman is this?

And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, she is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.

[21 : 07] So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest. Then Boaz said to Ruth, now listen my daughter, do not go to glean in another field, or leave this one, but keep close to my young women.

Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink what the young men have drawn.

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me since I am a foreigner? But Boaz answered her, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and have you left your father and mother and your native land, and came to a people that you did not know, before.

Amen, and may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. And I want us this morning to particularly focus, while we're looking at this first part of the chapter, particularly at verse three.

so she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimele.

[22 : 36] Boaz, now the reading of this chapter is really a sermon on its own without me having to say anything about it. It's actually a quite wonderful story, and we remember how Naomi left Moab, we saw that in the previous time in chapter one, how Naomi left Moab, and when she left Moab, she left behind three graves, the grave of her husband and the graves of her two sons as well.

The journey into Moab had not been a good experience for her, however, there was one blessing that came out of it, and that was her daughter-in-law Ruth. We read about how Ruth made a decision to stay with Naomi.

Remember the two girls, Orpah and Ruth? Orpah chose to go back to her own culture, to her own ways, to her own people, to her own gods. Ruth made a determined choice that she was finished with Moab, and that she had cast in her everything to Naomi and to Naomi's God.

She was now going to follow the living and through God. And we believe she did this because God was working in her heart. And it's one of the great evidences, we said that one of the great evidences of a change taking place in a person's life is that they love God and they love the people of God.

Because you are brought into a family. God's people become your people. All of a sudden people that you it's not that you say it's been done with the people I knew before.

[24 : 13] But you enter into new circles because you become a family. It's very hard to explain it until you actually become a Christian and begin to identify with other people.

And that's one of the things we're finding really hard just now with the whole area of lockdown. we miss being together. Because there's something wonderful about being together in the family of God.

So as we say God has been busy at work in this family. Now Naomi didn't think that. She actually thought that God had abandoned her.

God had forgotten all about her. Don't call me Naomi anymore. Naomi means pleasant. Call me Mara which means bitter. she thought God was totally against her. But you see when God works in us and God is working doing things in our lives it's not always going to be pleasant for us because God has a purpose at the end for what he really wants what's going to be for the best for us.

God has a goal for you and for me. And the journey along to reaching that goal and achieving that goal can sometimes involve difficult things and hard things and very often God has to change us before we are ready to receive his blessings.

[25 : 36] A great example of that is the Israelites who mentioned that I think on Wednesday night. God could have taken the Israelites from Egypt into the promised land in no time but they weren't ready to go there.

If God had taken them straight into the land of Canaan into the land of promise the blessing would have turned out a curse. They were so riddled still with idolatry and with the ways of Egypt that they were not ready to inherit the blessing.

And that's often true with you and with me as well. God has blessings for us but he says I got to do work in your life. Got to do work in my life. Because if I gave you what you're looking for just now and hoping for just now, it wouldn't be for your ultimate good.

And so God has to change us. And change is difficult. I read some and I think it's very true. God's purpose in providence is not to make us comfortable but to make us conformable.

Not to make us comfortable in this world but make us conformable so that we will conform to his way and his will. Now Ruth and Naomi at this time had no idea that they were at the very heart of God's eternal plan and purpose.

[26 : 57] So chapter one tells us that they arrived back in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. And now we find Ruth at the beginning of chapter two and she's saying to her mother-in-law look I'm going to go out and I'm going to try and do what I can.

It was barley harvest time they were harvesting the reapers were out and so Ruth is saying I'm going out to glean in the fields. And that was a very important thing to do because as we know there were no stated benefits or any such thing like that.

Now however God had made provision in his law for the poor and for the widows. And that's what we read about in Leviticus in chapter 19.

And it's really nice what it says here. Remember when you reap the harvest of your land you shall not reap your field right up to the edge neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.

So they weren't to when they were reaping they were to leave some of the corn or the wheat or the barley whatever it was they weren't to go right to the edge.

[28 : 08] That was to be for the poor and for the widows. And when they dropped stuff when they were gathering the sheaves and there was the crop some of it would be falling down they weren't to go and pick it up they were to leave that for the widows and for the poor who were going to be following behind.

So this was God's provision for those who didn't have. And God is really concerned about justice in this world and about social justice.

And when you go through the prophets you will find that God's judgment yes number one is always against idolatry but following on you will find that God's judgment is so often where there is injustice and where there is the exploitation of the poor and in fact even that little part that we read there in Leviticus shows that God wants everything to be done decently in a right way so that everybody is looked after everybody is cared for.

Social justice matters to God and it's something that should matter to the Christian as well. So Ruth goes out in accordance to God's law in order to glean.

And I don't think we should miss the fact that there's an element of faith in what Ruth is doing because this is what God's word said that this is what the widows and the poor fatherless and such like were to go and they were to do.

[29 : 39] So Ruth is going out in accordance to what God's word says and that's faith. That's what faith does. Faith isn't just reading God's word or hearing God's word or even just knowing God's word.

Faith is doing God's word. So in order to live by faith we read and we hear what God's word says and we apply that to our life to our heart and we seek to do it.

So that's how faith without works is dead. And so Ruth goes to work. And again I think there's a very important lesson here for us because sometimes a Christian might say well you know I'm going to wait for God to work.

I'm going to wait for God. I feel God has a purpose for me in life but I don't really know what it is. But you know what I'm just going to hang about here and wait to do. I'm not going to do anything.

I'm just going to wait. But when you go to the Bible you will often find that that's not when God tells people or shows people what to do.

[30 : 46] Moses was called to be a leader of God's people while he was tending the sheep. So was David. He was tending the sheep. Amos was called as a prophet of the Lord while he was ploughing.

we find Peter and James and John and Andrew. They were called while they were mending their nets. You see they were involved, they were working, they were already doing. I think that's an important lesson for us to learn.

Whatever is there for us do it but God will catch up with us in whatever it is that we're doing. So off Ruth goes and I'm sure from a human level she's filled with apprehension.

New people, new land, knew everything. She would have felt very vulnerable. However, she trusted the Lord that God would look after her and it would appear that there would be massive stretches of fields out there and people, different people owned different portions of the field.

Now, Ruth went and she saw the people are gleaning here and she picks a particular part and says I'm going to go and I'm going to start gleaning there.

[32 : 03] And this is what I love in verse 3. So she went out and gleaned in the field after the reapers and she happened. I love that. She happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.

Now, from a human point of view you'd say she just happened. Wow, she just chanced. Wow, that was luck. Ruth, you struggled lucky today.

That's what the world would say. No, she didn't strike it lucky. God, God silently directed her where to go.

And it's not luck. You know, when we look back over our lives, it's amazing the amount of things, the turns, the twists that we've taken. And we might not have thought much of it at the time.

We just did it. It just happened. It was just by chance. No, it wasn't. From our point of view, it may have been, but God was carefully directing us in the particular direction in which we go.

[33 : 11] And you look back over your life, and it is full of these twists and turns. And that is why it is so important to acknowledge God in all our ways. Because if we do, then he's promised to direct our paths.

So if we live our life based on his word, seeking to honour him in his word, then we can count on him, directing our paths, making these choices without actually realising it.

And we're turning this way in life, and we're turning that way. Some days as we look back we say, you know, I made a wrong choice there. But you know, God actually overrules everything within our lives.

But having said that, it is vital, it's important that we seek the Lord, that he will show us the particular way to go. But God is in control, it's not chance.

And now we meet this man Boaz, and we're told he's a good man, he's a worthy man. He was worthy, a worthy man, probably in character, in wealth, in precision, in prestige.

[34 : 18] In fact, he was kind of the man in Bethlehem that a lot of people would have looked up to. And I love the way that Boaz greets the workers, and he says, the Lord be with you.

And then you notice in the next verse that right away, Boaz catches sight of Ruth amongst all the women. And basically he says to his foreman, who's that?

Who's that woman there? Now, I don't know, but I tend to think that Ruth was a very beautiful woman. And this might be pure speculation, but somehow I think she was.

She certainly was beautiful in character and in disposition and in godliness and Christ likeness, which is the most important beauty of all.

Because physical beauty, while incredibly beautiful and attractive, remember, can often be just skin deep. Sometimes it's not, but sometimes it's only skin deep.

[35 : 24] Remember how the Bible puts it beautifully. It says, charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. That's true beauty.

But I tend to think that Ruth was also a beautiful woman. Beautiful, yes, in character, which is most important, but also beautiful in looks. And part of what makes me think that is, her great grandson David was known for his being so beautiful and handsome.

So it's quite possible the gene, the Ruth gene, was passed down. So a physical attractiveness, which was in David, could very well have come.

I'm speculating, but something makes me think along these lines. Anyway, Boaz's head was turned when he saw Ruth. Who's that? And so here is what I believe is the beginning of a wonderful relationship, although there's a long way to go yet.

And the foreman says to Boaz, that's a woman that came back with Naomi, you know, the Moabite woman. And he basically says, I'll tell you something about her, she's some worker.

[36 : 39] Because he said, since she came here early in the morning, she hasn't stopped apart from one little rest. So Boaz goes over to her and welcomes her and he tells her and he says to her, listen, don't go anywhere else.

See all these other fields, forget them. You stay here. And in fact, you will be, I guarantee you, you're safe. I've spoken to the men, nobody is to touch you.

And that must have been just music to Ruth's ears because she was absolutely so vulnerable. But here's this man who's in charge of this huge field and he's saying, I've got strict instructions, nobody touches you.

And more than that, he says, see when you're thirsty, see the vessel say, the men go and they draw water, you go and you go and help yourself from the water.

So I'm sure Ruth, her heart would have been dancing at that. And I'm sure her knowledge of God had come that she would have been thanking God. Thank you, Lord, for the protection that you've given me here.

[37 : 44] Thank you for the provision that you've given me in the water and these things. And it's really, it's an amazing story. And Boaz then goes on to tell Ruth and he says, I've heard so much about you.

And he praises Ruth because he said, everybody is really talking about how good you have been to your mother-in-law and how you left your own people, your own father and mother's house and your own land and everything and came here to be with your mother-in-law.

And it was a, you can see that it actually really touched Boaz's heart. But the wonder of it is, Ruth had no idea that this man, Boaz, was very closely related to her father-in-law.

He was of the same family, the same line. Because Elimelech, who was Naomi's husband, this man Boaz was very closely connected to them.

So Ruth has all of a sudden come in unknown to herself, into the ideal family. It's quite, quite, it's amazing.

[38 : 59] But I know that it's very early days here, but I believe that it's love at first sight with regard to Boaz. And you know, something, when you read it through the story of Ruth, it makes you think of Abraham.

Remember when the servant went away down to, the servant went to get a wife for Isaac. And he was, can you imagine you're sent off by your boss, go and find a wife for my son.

Whoa, that's quite a task. But what did the servant do? The right thing. He said, Lord, you've got to help me here. And he gave the whole matter to God.

And remember how Rebecca appeared in the scene and of how everything opened up and Rebecca became the obvious one. And the questioners asked, will you go with this man?

And she said, I will go. And when the servant was recounting the tale of the story, remember what he said, I being in the way, the Lord led me.

[40 : 03] Isn't that lovely? I being in the way, the Lord led me. And that is how God will lead us in the right way. I being in the way. What way? The way of God.

As we said earlier, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths. You know, people often ask, I used to ask it, still do, but particularly when I was younger and I became a Christian, I want to know God's will.

How do I know God's will for different situations and things? The most important thing of all is, you do, and I do, what God has already shown us, his revealed will.

The secret will of God belongs to him. But you know, it's as we do his revealed will, his secret will, will open up to us. And when I mean the secret will, it's like the things of the job we should take or the place we should go or the person that we might marry or all these million and one sort of things.

But God will direct us in the right way. If we are keeping to his revealed will the secret things that belong to him, he will guide us in the right path.

[41 : 15] That's what he does. I bring in the way the Lord led me. So you make sure that you're walking in God's way. You leave the rest to the Lord. Yes, pray to him and ask him, Lord, guide me in this.

Make known to me the right way to go because I want to do your will and way. The Lord says, I love that. That's what the Lord says, I love that prayer. But you make sure you're walking in my way and then I'll show you the way to go.

And so we find that the Lord is working here. This whole story is showing us the Lord busy at work. And God is, you know, the Bible shows us different things about the way that God works.

God works with his people. For instance, in Mark's gospel it tells us this, they went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them. Isn't that wonderful?

So when you work, when you're working with the Lord, you're doing what God wants you to do, but you're depending upon his power so that wherever we go, whatever we say, whatever we do, and we're doing the work for the Lord, he's with us.

[42 : 23] And in fact, he's empowering us, he's enabling, he's with us. Wonderful. So God works with us, but God, we're told in the scripture, also works in us.

For it is God who works in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. So God is inclining our heart in particular ways, he's inclining us towards holiness, and he's creating a growing thirst within us, he's working in us.

So he works with us, he works in us, and he works for us. Because again, we're told in scripture that God is working all things together for good. So that even the difficult things and the painful things, everything that seems sometimes to be against you, God is actually working that for your ultimate good and for his glory.

So remember that every day God works with us, God works in us, and God works for us. And can I say in conclusion, if you're outside the kingdom today, if you're outside Christ, you don't have that going on in your life.

You don't have God working with you, God working in you, and God working for you. God, and I can't think of a better way to travel through this world than having God with us, and in us, and for us.

[43 : 48] God be for us. Who can be against us? Christ in you, the hope of glory. With God, all things are possible.

Remember the with, the in, and the for. God, you make sure that you have the living and true God as your God, so that you'll be able to look back over life and say, when God was with me, and God was in me, and God is in me, and God is for me.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray that you will bless us, bless your word to our souls, help us to follow you with all our heart, and take away from us our sin, in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm 126, Psalm 126 in the Scottish Psalter, when Zion's bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody, and so on to the last verse, that man who bearing precious seed and going forth doth mourn, he doubtless bringing back his sheaves rejoicing shall return.

The whole Psalm 126 God turned back, and Zion's bondage God turned back, and Zion's bondage God turned back, us men that came were we, they filled with laughter, was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

[45 : 29] They muck the heathen, said the Lord, great things for them have brought.

The Lord hath done great things for us, whence joy to us is brought.

God as streams of water in the sand our bondage or recall, who sowed tears are reaped in time, of joy enjoy they shall.

return. That man who bailed in precious seed, in going forth that born, he that blessed bringing back his sheath, rejoicing shall return.

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 forever more. Amen.

[46 : 59] Thank you very much for joining with us this evening and pray that God will bless the rest of your evening and indeed this week to you all. God love you to know .

You are you . habe .