

# Friday Evening Service

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Date: 02 October 2026

Preacher: Reverend Derek Lamont

[0:00] Good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see everyone, it's good to see people from other congregations as well who are visiting with us and that's always an encouragement and we remember those who are online as well. I'm thankful to know that there are those who we can't see who are joining us as we seek together to worship God. It's great to have Derek with us, Derek Lammond with us over this weekend. I don't remember how many years it's been since you've been here but it's good to have you back.

So Derek will take the service tonight and tomorrow and on Sunday. So we look forward to hearing God's word through him. After the service tonight there's a fellowship at the Manchester which anyone is welcome to come to. Tomorrow the service is at 7 and on Sunday 11 and 6 as usual with a fellowship here in the church at the end of that.

The session opened this morning and we'd be very happy to meet with any who know the Lord, who trust the Lord and want to come to the Lord's Table for the first time or who want to join the Communicant membership of the church here. It was encouraging for us to meet with Agnes Cross this afternoon who has joined us as a Communicant member. So we pray for Agnes and we would encourage any others who are trusting the Lord who have yet professed faith to come forward and to do this as we were commanded and as we were reminded this morning to do this to remember the Lord Jesus. These I think are all the notices so I'll hand over now to Derek thanks David. It's good to be with you all tonight and I can't remember how long it is since I was here but I've got very fond memories of being here and I hope and pray that God will bless our time and the world.

Thanks David. David, it's good to be with you all tonight.

And I can't remember how long it is since I was here, but I've got very fond memories of being here. And I hope and pray that God will bless our time together over the weekend.

[2:09] So let's worship God together this evening. And we're going to start by singing from Psalm 96. In the Sing Psalms, it's actually 96a in the Sing Psalms.

And we're going to sing from verse 7 to verse 13, which is a great call to praise and to worship God. All nations to the Lord ascribe the glory that is due.

Glory and strength ascribe to God and praise His name anew. Psalm 96a from verse 7 to the end of the psalm. To God's praise. O nations to the Lord ascribe, The glory that is due.

Glory and strength ascribe to God and praise His name anew.

In the Lord ascribe, In the Lord ascribe, In the Lord ascribe, With joy and reign, And offering with you.

[3:46] Worship the Lord ascribe, Worship the Lord ascribe, In holy fear, Worship the Lord ascribe, Worship the Lord ascribe, In holy fear, All earth before Him, Till every night the Lord is King, Till every night the Lord is King, His child's King, His child's righteous, The earth, The earth, But God not live, The earth, The earth, The earth, The earth, The people say this truth.

Let heavens rejoice, And earth be glad.

With joy let oceans ring. The fields and all in them will shine, And forest trees will sing.

They all will sing before the Lord, Who comes to judge the earth.

He'll judge the world in righteousness, The people say this truth.

[6:08] Amen. We'll join our hearts in prayer. Let's pray together. Father God, as we come this evening to you in worship and praise, We ask and we pray that you would grant us that sense of your spirit, And that sense of your truth, And that we would worship in dependence on you, And that we would see you for who you are, And remind ourselves of the privilege, And the honor, And the beauty of our Savior, And what it is to be worshipping together.

We confess as we come before you, Our need of cleansing, Of forgiveness, Of renewal, Of transformation, And we confess the things that separate us from you, And that keep us from fellowship with the living God, And we ask that as we come before you, We would be honest and open, With one another, But particularly with God, Knowing that from you there are no secrets, And we can come with no pretense of being anything, Other than you know us to be.

And so we come with recognition, That we fall short of your glory, That we are constantly needing your grace, Your forgiveness, And your empowering strength to be transformed.

And as we come to you honestly in confession, We also have great thanksgiving. We thank you that as we confess our sins, That you are faithful and just, To forgive us our sins, And cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We thank you that your word is true, It is strong, It can never be denied, You can never fail to fulfill your promises.

[8:18] And so we pray that we would have great assurance, And great comfort, And great strength, From knowing who you are, And from trusting in your promises.

And we pray that you would speak to each of us tonight, That we would be prepared for worship over the weekend, This celebratory weekend, And this weekend of celebrating the Lord's Supper, And worshipping together, That it might be a time of refreshing and renewal, And a time when the Holy Spirit works powerfully, In our hearts, In the hearts of those who aren't Christians, Who maybe are searching, Who are investigating Christianity, Who are full of doubt or fear, For all of us, That as we come, We might know, The living God speaking into our hearts and lives.

So we pray for your presence this evening, We pray for your help, We pray for your strength, We pray for the spirit, We pray for our singing, We pray for the word read, For prayers, For the word preached, For our fellowship, That it might be sweet, And it might be refreshing, And renewing for us, And that you would have all the praise, And the glory, We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Now we're going to sing again, To God's praise, And it's the hymn, Hear as love, Vast as the ocean, Which is in Mission Praise 987, And a great hymn, God's grace and love.

So. Heel as love, Vast as the ocean, Loving kindness as a flood, When the bliss of life are ransom, Shared for us, His precious blood, Who is love, And of the memory, Who can cease, To sing his praise, He can never be forgotten, Through our heavens, Eternal days, On one land of crucifixion, Fountains open deep and wide,

[11:00] Through the floodgates of God's mercy, Lord, A vast and gracious sky, Grace and love, Like mighty rivers, For incessant from above, Heaven's peace and perfect justice, Kiss the guilty world in love, It is love that conquered evil, Christ the firstborn from the grave, It was built to be found equal, To the life of Him who sits, In the valley of our darkness, Of His everlasting light, Perfect love and glorious vengeance,

Has repelled their selfish night, As in love beyond no measure, Mocked and slain by hateful men, Lent and race in resurrection, And can never die again, It is love for all the ages, Rake and sun of heavenly sand, Calling home His father's children, Holding forth His worth in hands, Healers love as the heavens, And bless as the scars above, Are the souls that He has ransomed, Precious God, Perceived Son, We are called to feast forever, On a love beyond our time, Glorious Father, Son and Spirit, Now with man and elders wide.

Turn with me for a reading tonight, From the Old Testament, From the Book of Psalms, And Psalm 119.

We're not reading the whole of it, We're just going to read one of the sections, From verse 33 to verse 40. Psalm 119.

[13:52] A great psalm, And it's a psalm really that is all about God's word, And the power and the beauty of God's words. We'll read this section. Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, And I will keep it to the end.

Give me understanding, That I may keep your law, And observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, For I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, And not to selfish gain.

Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things, And give me life in your ways. Confirm to your servant your promise, That you may be feared.

Turn away the reproach that I dread, For your rules are good. Behold, I long for your precepts, And your rules. It's God's word. We give thanks for it, For the freedom and the privilege, To read his word together tonight.

Let's bow our heads again in prayer. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the beauty of your word, And for the beauty of the one that it speaks about.

[15 : 04] And we thank you from Genesis to Revelation, That on each verse, And each page of scripture, Is Jesus Christ. And we rejoice in that. We rejoice in the amazing unity of the Bible, And of the golden thread, That weaves through it all.

The word of salvation, And the word of hope. And we thank you that it's so powerful, And relevant. Those who are going through difficult circumstances, Questions, Confused, Hurting. those who may be struggling with issues of old age or issues of youth or issues of middle age and the battles and the struggles that sometimes hide you from our hearts and from our lives if we let them. We pray that you would bring comfort and strength to us in our walk with you.

We pray for the church here. We thank you for the church here in North Harris and we pray your blessing on all that is done in your name in this gospel community. We thank you for just such an interest in coming to church on a Friday evening which will not be the case in many places throughout Scotland today and we recognize the great need there is for Jesus Christ in Harris, in Lewis, in the highlands, in the mainland, in the urban centers of our cities and towns where so few people know about Jesus Christ.

And we pray your blessing on our cities and our nation and our villages and we pray that the gospel would flourish in confused days, difficult days, dark days, days of oppression. Often for the gospel we think of the difficulties we have to share the gospel in the public square or in the schools or in universities which seem to be hotbeds for ideologies that are far from you.

[17 : 37] And we just pray that in the brokenness of the world in which we live that people would reach out for Jesus Christ, that you would come in power and that you would open people's hearts. And what we ask for most is that we will be ready for that as Christians, that when people seek you and look for you that they will come into Christian communities where they will be loved and disciplined and taught and forgiven and encouraged and built up and guided and given parameters and shown the way and that they would hear the voice of God through your people saying, this is the way, walk in it and that we would be examples and warm and gracious. Nobody will want to come into communities where there's bitterness or division or hatred.

And so we pray that we would be alert to our own hearts and our own needs and our own Christian communities and the witness that we profess constantly to the world. The world is always watching and remind us of that we pray.

So bless this church abundantly. We thank you and pray that many, many more people will come to know Jesus. This beautiful building will not be big enough to hold all the people that are looking to know more about Jesus and to put their trust in him.

And we ask and pray for, again, for the world in which we live with all its power and all its authority and all world leaders that flex their muscles as if they're important and as if they have all the power and all the glory.

We do pray that you would humble them and we pray for the many millions of people under their oversight who are broken and who are taken advantage of.

[19 : 28] And we ask that you would bring relief and hope, especially we pray for places where Christianity is really persecuted, whether it be places in the Middle East or North Korea or China or Pakistan or Syria and many places where we could never meet like this.

And we pray for our brothers and sisters in such places. And we ask that we would support them lovingly and prayerfully. So bless our time around your word this evening and may it be a help to be preparing our hearts for sitting together at the Lord's table on Sunday morning.

And we ask it all with the pardon of all our sins, which can so often create a barrier between ourselves and you. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, before turning to this passage of Psalm 119, we're going to sing once more.

It's a modern hymn called Yet Not I, But Christ in Me. It's again just focusing on the person of Jesus. What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer?

There is no more for heaven now to give. He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom.

[21 : 02] I say fast love, my deep and marvelous peace. To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus.

For my life is holy bound to his. For I've sling and divine, I can sing.

All is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me. The night is hard, but I am not forsaken.

For by my side the Savior he will stay. I live, my love, my love, and I shall be.

For in my need, his power is displayed. For in my need, his power is displayed. To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me.

[22:04] Through the deepest valley he will lead. Oh, the night has been long, and I shall overcome.

Yet not I, but through Christ in me. Oh, faith I tread, I know I am forgiven.

The future should, the price it has been paid. For Jesus bled, and suffered for my pardon.

But he was raised to overthrow the grave. To this I hold, my sin has been defeated.

Jesus now on heaven is like me. Oh, the chains are released. I can sing, I am free.

[23:05] Yet not I, but through Christ in me. With every breath, I long to follow Jesus.

But he has said that he will bring me home. And day by day, I know he will renew me.

Until I stand with joy for the throne. To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus.

All the glory evermore to him. When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat.

Yet not I, but through Christ in me. When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat.

[24:05] Yet not I, but through Christ in me. So we're going to look back this evening at the section that we read together.

It's kind of, it's always really difficult when you go to another place to preach when you get to my age. Because in your own congregation you've got the pulpit exactly the right height.

And things are exactly in the right way. So that I can see things. Because I'm at that stage where I'm not, I'm kind of getting blind. And so I'm going to be screwing my eyes looking down like this. But I can't wear glasses because then I can't see you.

So you'll just have to bear with me when I'm screwing my eyes up. It's not because I'm unhappy or I've got indigestion. It's because I can't see very well. And the pulpit is at a different height.

David's much smaller than me. So we're going to look at this Psalm section this evening for a little while. And I don't know where you are in your spiritual lives.

[25:12] And I don't know where you are in your relationship with the Bible as Christians.

Sometimes we can get to the stage where we get a bit complacent maybe with the Bible.

There's bits we don't understand and we just give up on. Or we somehow don't think it's that important in our day-to-day lives. And we maybe just take things for granted. I hope that's not the case with you.

Sometimes it's even when we don't really think about it. And maybe you could judge that in your own life and I could judge it in mine by how often we open it. And not so much just how often we open it because we can open it and not really take any notice really of what it says.

But how often we are listening for the living God when He speaks through His Word. And how often we are moved and transformed by what He is saying when we do read that Word.

Because we're reminded it's not a manual. It's not a manual really for living. It's not just information. It's not a book of old stories or of fables. It's revelation. And it's important that we always remind ourselves that the Bible is God's revelation.

[26:25] It says living communication with us. All Scripture is God-breathed. And so it's living. It's not a dead Word at all. And Jesus Himself, it was so important.

Jesus Himself is called the Word in John 1, chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. Because the Bible is really Jesus' communication to us and a revelation of Himself.

And if you're a Christian this evening, you believe and you know, as I do, that Christ is in your heart through His Holy Spirit. He's with you. He's living in your life.

And He speaks through His Word to us. It would be strange if in our marriages together, when we're living with our wives or husbands, we never speak to each other. We never communicate.

And it's strange sometimes, isn't it, in our Christian lives that we take for granted that Christ is in us, but we don't really communicate with Him. Or we don't allow Him to mold and transform us and ask Him what He wants us to change.

[27:25] We can be stubbornly resistant. Well, at least I can. I'm not speaking for any of you here. I'm only really speaking for myself. But the psalm here is a really great psalm.

It's the longest chapter in the Bible. And it's all about God's Word, the beauty and the importance of God's Word. It's got 22 stanzas in this chapter.

And there's 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. And each section is entitled with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And each sentence in each stanza begins with that same letter of the

alphabet.

So, if I did a really bad job of this section from verse 33, where each verse would begin with the letter E.

Because it's the A, B, C, D. It's the fifth section of the psalm. And it's entitled the letter E. And every verse within that was given a very poor paraphrase. It could be something like, Educate me in your statutes.

[28 : 29] Enable me to understand. Enable me to stay on your path. Engage my heart in your decrees. Engage my eyes away from worthless things. Elaborate what you have said to your servant.

Erase the disgrace I dread. Energize me for your precepts. Precepts. So, you see, it was done in a way that was memorable. Remember.

Because it was... They didn't have tablets. And they didn't... And they didn't have anything to help... Things were put in such a way that would help them memorize the Old Testament people of God. Memorize. Because it was important. Because it mattered. Because it was significant. And God wanted them to understand. And so, we are Christians.

We're saved by the blood of the Lamb. We're redeemed. If we are Christians this evening. We've been made right with God. God's your shepherd. He's the master craftsman that's wanting to transform your life and my life.

[29 : 36] And mold us to be the people He wants us to be. The people that are like Him. In our own unique, individual way. And He's with you in that.

He's with you this evening. He's in your heart. He's in your life through His Spirit. And He's transforming us. And He uses His Word to do that. We spend a lot of time worrying about the world. And changing the world. And changing other people. And changing our circumstances. And God's saying, I want to change you. From the inside out.

And we need God every day to enable us to do that. And we should probably prioritize more. The reality that God wants to change us.

Rather than change everything around us. And everybody else around us. And so really, for a few minutes, I'm just going to look at a bit of this section. And two articles in this section.

[30 : 41] As prayers, really, for us. That we can pray in our lives. And actually, since I preached this in the summer. We're doing a section on Psalms in the summer.

Down in Leith in Hope Church. And since preaching that, I've found it a really helpful little prayer. Vignette prayer to make. And the first is really in verse 36.

Which says, Incline my heart to your testimonies. And not to selfish gain. And I'm just going to change that. Incline my heart. Because it's the same word as used later on in verse 37.

Turn my heart. Move my heart. Turn my heart. Towards your statutes. Towards your decrees. Towards your instruction. Verse 34.

Towards your commands. In verse 35. And so that is that great prayer. I think for us this evening. To consider and to be praying in our lives.

[31 : 37] Because basically everyone in the world lives by either God's laws. Or their own laws. However they reveal themselves in different ways.

And these are laws of love. That he's given us. His commands. His statutes. Christ summarized them. You know we live with a whole lot of laws today.

Don't we? God only gave us ten. In the ten commandments. And he summarized them. Jesus summarized them in the New Testament. To two. Or maybe three. A new one.

There was two. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength and mind. And love your neighbor as yourself. And in Jesus. I'll add a new commandment to you. Love your enemies. Love your enemies.

And love your neighbor as I have loved you. So we've got that reality. That all of the laws of God. Are focused. In this amazing reality. Of.

[32 : 39] A living. Spiritual relationship of love. With Jesus Christ. So. Reminding ourselves that Christianity is not a code to follow. It's not rules to learn. It's a relationship with the living God.

Governed by simple laws. And. The Savior is the one whose voice we listen to. And who teaches us.

How to live our Christian lives. And it's a whole new way of living. It's a whole new way of living. Where self is dethroned. What a battle that is.

And where Christ is on the throne. And where we put other people. Before ourselves. Our thinking. Our priorities. Turns everything.

Upside down for us. And we are to have our heart turned. God knows that we need our heart turned. Incline our heart. Our hearts are always inclined to the wrong thing.

[33 : 39] To the wrong way. And to the wrong set of attitudes. And to the wrong loves. And he says incline our hearts. To your testimonies not to selfish gain. And we need the Holy Spirit in us.

As we seek to keep the path of his commands. John 14 says that Jesus was going to send his Holy Spirit. To enable us to understand and know and follow. His great laws of love.

So a great prayer is for us to ask God to help me to stay on the path.

Lead me. Verse 35. The one before it. Lead me in the path of your commandments. For I delight in it. And the prayer for us is to stay on the path.

It's to stay on the path. It's easy to drift off it. Transgression. Transgression. Another word for sin in the Old Testament. It's just drifting off the path. It's transgressive.

[34 : 35] You know. Or trespassing. Sorry. It's like trespassing into property that you shouldn't be in. And when we go down the way of sinful selfishness. We're in a place we shouldn't be.

And we shouldn't be there. It's not healthy. It's not good for us. We're in the wrong company. And so the prayer is for us to be in the path of your commandments. And help us to stay in the path.

Now I don't think you've got a 10 pin bowling alley here. I don't know where the nearest 10 pin bowling alley is. But with 10 pin bowling you've got to stay on the track I guess you call it.

Because there's gutters on either side. And anytime I've ever played it. Especially when the kids were younger. Or they could manage to knock the pins down at the far end. But I always end up with my ball in the gutter.

Always went off the path. Couldn't do it properly at all. And we're often like that spiritually. That we fail to stay close to Jesus Christ.

[35 : 33] And allow His grace to knock down the pins of sin and temptation. And we just end up in the gutter. We end up in the gutter. Because we are not following and staying close to Jesus Christ.

And so as part of that prayer we're seeking to walk in the path of His commands. And we're to be reminded of the danger of a divided heart. Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain.

So there's that wrestle isn't it? That battle. We've got quite a few people in Leith where we are. Who are just two doors down from an alcohol recovery centre.

And it's a Christian centre. And they get a lot of Christian input. And a lot of them have had a really tough life. And short or long. Some of them remarkably young for having such a tough life.

And some of them come to Christ. And one of the things we need to tell them when they come to Christ. Is now the battle is just starting. You know because sometimes they're taught that you come to Christ. And you confess His name and you get baptised.

[36 : 40] And everything's great. And you'll be free from your addiction and free from the troubles. But really it's only then that Satan's interested in our lives. And only then that the real battles begin for us.

And that we recognise the divided heart that we battle with in our Christian lives. We become distracted. The title of the sermon was Distraction. It's easy for us to become distracted in our hearts.

I'm going to come back to that towards the end. It's easy to be longing for things that are unhealthy in our lives. To cover a different life. To be discontent with who you are in Jesus Christ.

To prefer shadowy pleasures that are easy and light for us to get engaged with. And it's our heart that is the key to that.

And our relationship with God in our heart. The bits that nobody sees in church. The bits that nobody sees anywhere. The very, your very being. Your very, your thought life.

[37 : 42] What you are on your own. What you are in your own mind. That place. Only you know. And God knows your own heart.

And if we have a closed Bible. It reveals a danger. So I would encourage you. If you're struggling with the Bible and your Bible is closed.

Open it again. Because we're learners. We're always learners. We all have Elplates. The oldest Christian here. And the youngest Christian here. Remains a learner.

We always remain humble before the great teacher. The great shepherd. The great Lord of our lives. And we are those who need to remind ourselves. That if we are not growing. We are regressing in our Christian lives. There's never really a place where we're standing still. And if we take it as a point of pride. That I'm the same as I was 30 years ago as a believer.

[38:47] Then there's something far wrong. Because actually we should be in a completely different place. The closer we become to Jesus Christ. The light. The light of Jesus Christ shines.

In darker corners. That he maybe has left untouched. Up till now. And so the work of healing. And the work of renewal is always going on. And why is it sometimes that's not the case? Why is it we're sometimes content with religiosity? With looking good outside?

With being religious? Going to church? Doing the things that people can see? Why is it that we can be content with that? And why do we let our hearts wander from him? Because heart surgery is radical.

Because God's light is bright. And our hearts are dark. It's serious. It's life changing. It means things. It takes humility. It moves us from our place of comfort sometimes.

[39:47] Where we're prone to believe the lie. And simply. Often. Because we don't want to be turned. We don't want to pay the price. We don't want to carry the cross.

We don't want to be exposed for our failings and our sins. We'd much rather be aware of everyone else's mistakes. And the church's. And the world's. Because that's fine.

It takes the spotlight of our own heart. And yet. We find. God's word constantly drives us. To recognize. What is below the surface.

In our own hearts. In our own lives. So that we fight against liking. Or loving. Our own sins. And being in control. And what's.

More important. Allowing him. To be in control of our lives. So there's a chat. A prayer there for us. Prayer there for me. For sure. And I'm sure for all of us. Turn my. Incline my heart.

[40:45] To your testimonies. And not to selfish gain. Not to have a divided heart. And to allow him. To expose the most. Particularly the motives. And the desires of our heart.

But he also then. Praised a second prayer. Which is kind of similar. It's. I don't think they're mutually exclusive at all. And maybe overlap a little bit. Of what I'm saying. But he also then.

In the next verse. He says. Turn my eyes. From looking at worthless things. And give me life. In your ways. And. Matthew. Six.

Jesus kind of. Highlights this again. In Matthew six. Verse 22. He says. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy. Your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad.

Your whole body. Will be full of darkness. If then. The light in you is darkness. How great. Is that darkness. No. No. No. No. No. No. Can serve two masters. You will hate one. Or love the other.

[41:43] And going on to speak about greed. And the significance of greed. But. Along with our heart. The prayer is. To turn my eyes. And in many ways. What he's saying is.

Our eyes. Reveal. Our hearts. As well. In many ways. And so the two really go together. Whether we're servant hearted.

Or whether there's a selfishness. And we can. There's so many worthless distractions. That can take our eyes off.

Jesus Christ. And we can be looking. And spending our time. In worthless things. I just want to spend a minute or two. Speaking about. That may be. Practically. Where we turn away.

From his spiritual beauty. And his spiritual life. In our lives. We can be distracted. By judging everyone else. By spending our time.

[42:39] As I mentioned earlier. Looking at everyone else. Anything. But my own heart. Judging others. Finding fault. Complaining. Criticizing.

Condemning. Condemning. Coveting. What other people may have. Because that's easier. Isn't it? That comes naturally to us. There's no problems there. It's just relentless.

Temptation in our lives. We can spend our lives. Comparatively. Looking at others. Comparing ourselves. With others. Better than them. We're better than that.

Group of people. And that is what. That is why. In Christ. The family of God. Can be so powerful. Today.

Not just the individual. The family of God. Because we have a radically. Different. Standard of living. That is Christ centered. And that a community of grace.

[43 : 38] In the world. In which we live. Is worth. Its weight in gold. Because we live in a bitter. Divided. Selfish.

Self centered. Standard of living. In which people. Are often. The. Subjects of. People's ire. And people's. Judgment. And yet. If we are a people. Who treat other people. Treat others. Treat one another. And treat others.

The way Jesus treats us. We will be a new community. We are a new community. When we're like that. When we live with patience. And with compassion.

With honesty. And love. With respect. When we seek others good. When we. Move beyond shallow politeness. When we don't gossip.

[44 : 35] When we aren't judgmental. When we have a deep commitment. To other people. And their lives. As Christ has to us. That is. A powerful witness.

In a community. Especially. I guess. In a community like this. Where there's such a real community. And where. People see and know you. Day in. And day out. So we. We have a great standard. But we can be distracted. By judging everyone. We can be distracted. By. By life itself. What our eyes. Focus on. What matters to us. You know. What we look at. And what we're seeing. I'm too busy.

In life. To consider. To consider really. Any depth of relationship. With God. To have any time. For him. Whether it's money. Or success. Or my marriage. Or career. Or children. Or maybe it's all the circumstances.

That are difficult. In my life. They're so difficult. I have no time. For considering. Jesus. And these things. That's a luxury. That I can't afford. God is way down. The pecking order.

[45 : 33] Of our time. Or of our energy. When we make good things. Ultimate things. And dethrone God. In Christ.

From our hearts. Distracted by living. And also distracted. Probably most. Bluntly. And practically. Distracted by entertainment. By this world.

Of entertainment. In which we live. Turn my eyes. From looking. At worthless things. Whether it be sport. Or Netflix. Or scrolling. How many hours. Do we spend scrolling? Facebook.

Instagram. Ex formerly. Twitter. Online games. Whatever it happens to be. Not all these things are bad. But it's about our priorities.

And our time. And what it allows us. What it allows into our heart. The eyes being the window of our heart. And what we let in. To our heart. Distracted.

[46 : 30] By entertainment. And distracted by darkness. Things. Whatever it happens to be. Outward. Or inward. Or destructive lusts. Or sins.

Or addictions. That are worthless. And that keep our eyes from Jesus. So. The prayers are. Turn my heart.

To your laws. And turn my eyes. From looking at worthless things. And that. Can sound very legalistic. And maybe can sound very negative. What's the key to being able to do that?

Well what are we turning? We've seen what we're turning from. But what are we turning to? Well we're turning surely. To the beauty. Of Jesus Christ. Lead me. Verse 35 again.

In the path of your commandments. For I delight in it. For I delight. In it. I delight. In this path. In walking with. And knowing Jesus.

[47 : 26] It's a delight. It's. Not drudgery. It's not. Like medicine. The worse it tastes. That better somehow it must be.

For it's not like that. Our relationship with Christ. Should be one of great beauty. And delight. And pleasure. Because we come to see. His judgments are good. His word is good.

His character is absolutely good. In Christ. We are covered. In his righteousness. Ordinary people. Like you and me. Covered in the righteousness.

Of God. The gospel. In a nutshell. Verse 40. Behold. I long for your precepts. In your righteousness. Give me life. You have life. You have life. In the righteousness of Christ.

As we are covered in as Christians. So you see. It took God. The Son. The Trinity. God the Son. To leave the glories of heaven. And to live.

[48 : 23] On this planet. For 30 years. Living the life we couldn't live. And then went to the cross. To know the brutality. Of separation from his father.

And forsaken us from his father. With your sins. On his shoulder. And my sins. On those shoulders. So he could give us. His righteousness. It's an amazing.

Substitution. It's amazing. Swap. That he gets our sins. That we. Get his righteousness. I used a very. Trite example of this. Recently. Down in Leith. Which was. I asked the people. If they remembered. The multicolored swap shop. Which was a program on. Saturday morning television. But a lot of you here. Are too young. Because it started. I found out today. I was at Kenny Eyes House. That it started. 50 years ago today. But it was just a silly. Saturday morning program. Where children swap their toys. They gave something. [49:24] They didn't want. And they got something. That they did want. And I was saying. Well there's this greatest. Much. Great transaction. Has gone on already. Where Christ.

He's taken. Our darkness. And our broken hearts. And our grubby. Ugly. Sinful. Rebellious hearts. And he's taken all the price for that. And we get in.

In that place. We get his righteousness. Which God looks down on. And sees. As something of. Absolute beauty. And. With that righteousness. We get his company.

We get his strength. We get his Holy Spirit. Isn't he an ordinary? Isn't he an ordinary Christian? It's not such a thing. It's an ordinary Christian. You didn't dwell.

By the Spirit of God. You'll go down to the grave. But you'll not stay there. You'll live with Christ Jesus. And he has promised resurrection life.

[50:22] He's promised support and strength. Through the darkness. He's promised acceptance. And love. And grace. And belonging. And our calling is. Practically. To become students of that truth.

By knowing his word. And loving his word. And recognizing it as a living word. For us. In our lives. If you don't understand it. Maybe some of the young people here. When you read the bits in the Bible. Really struggle to understand it. Never be afraid to ask anyone. There's never such a thing. As a. Too stupid a question. To ask about the Bible. Maybe some of us. Who are older. Are afraid to ask things. About the Bible. And yet we find. Just like. It's a. A diamond. That doesn't matter. Which way you turn it. There's something different. And the light shines on it. And it's. It tells you something more beautiful.

About Jesus Christ. But it's not a highway code. It's not a rule book. But listen. When you read his word. Listen for his voice. Come to him and say. Lord guide me today.

[51:21] Show me what you want me to know. And understand about yours. Show me what I need to learn. About my own heart. And about my own life. Read it. Read it with someone else. Sometimes. Someone who's longer than the road.

Someone who can maybe. Explain things. About how. It has spoken to them. He has spoken to them. Through his word. And you know. Maybe. Even memorize it.

You know. It's a great thing to memorize. I've got a terrible memory. I really. But it's just. I haven't got a terrible memory. I've just got an untrained one. It's not such a thing as a terrible memory. I don't think. It's just untrained.

But it's a great thing. To train your memory. In the word of God. That's why. The psalm was given. In this context. In this way. This structure. So that the people. Of God in the Old Testament. Could memorize it.

And remember it. What a great thing it is. Because then God will bring. Bring up his living word. From your conscience. From your heart. From your memory. When you need it most. And that's the voice you'll hear.

[52:17] Because there's always competing voices. Isn't there? And that's the voice. That you'll hear. When we know. His word. And it is full of. As it says himself. Unsearchable riches. I suspect.

I suspect. I've been a Christian. For. Well I have been a Christian. For over 50 years. And I'm still. Constantly amazed.

By its riches. And by how little. I know of its riches. And how much more there is to know. Of its riches. So I hope that over this weekend.

In a very small way. We'll be able to. Dip our hearts. More and more. Into the word of God. And into the person. Of Jesus Christ. And we will remember him.

At his. Designated supper. And we will be challenged. And provoked. And encouraged. And built up. But much of that will.

[53:12] Depend on. Your prayers. And. Your expectations of God. In his word. And my. Prayers. That God will speak to me.

As well. As to you. And so we do. That. And we close tonight. In dependence on him. And on his word. And believing his promise. That his word.  
 Will not return to him. And it will be a blessing. To us. In the next. Couple of days. So I do crave. And do value. Your prayers. Over this weekend. So. Let's. Pray.  
 This evening. Father God. We do ask. That you. Would come alive. In your word. And through your word. We know there's some bits. That are really difficult. To understand. Some bits.  
 That we don't really. Grasp. And don't see. Their significance. But may we recognize. That all. Points. From the old testament. Forward to Jesus Christ. And from the new testament.  
 [54:06] Back to Jesus Christ. And we pray. That it would become. An active. And living. And sharp. Word to us. Forgive us. When we've blunted it.  
 When we have. Closed off. Our hearts. To you. And when we said. Thus far Lord. And no further. So. Help us to be. Brave.  
 In allowing the light. The glorious. Righteous. Holy. Precious. Light of God. Into our hearts. To expose. What might be there. That might be scary.  
 For us. To deal with. Maybe sins. That have been lurking there. For a long time. That we're. Unwilling to let go of. Attitudes. Motives.  
 Grudges. Bitterness. Whatever it might be. Maybe things. That nobody else knows about. But we know. Keeps us from you. When we accuse you.  
 [55:03] Or when we doubt you. Greatly. And allow ourselves. To remain in that place of doubt. Without dealing with it. Help us Lord. Help us in our weakness. Help us in our poverty.  
 Of spirit often. Help us to grow. And to grow closer to you. Even over this weekend. We pray. May your words. Speak into our hearts. And into our lives. Give us thankfulness.  
 And joy. And peace. And may your spirit. Work most powerfully. In those who are. Searching for you. But have not yet. Put their trust in Jesus. Bring new people to church.  
 Over the weekend. Maybe unexpected people. From the community. May it be a shock. And a joy. And a delight. To see them. And may they be welcomed. Broadly.  
 And warmly. When they come. So we pray for that. And we pray for your blessing. To be honest. We ask it in Jesus precious name. Amen. Well.  
 [55:58] Seems nothing better. Than to close with singing. The words of. This section. Fifth section of Psalm. 119. And the sing Psalms. Teach me oh Lord. The way of your statutes.  
 The great things about the Psalms. Isn't it? They make great praise songs. But also great prayers. And so as we sing. We also pray. This prayer for ourselves. Teach me to follow.  
 Hear thee please. Then I will keep them to the end.  
 Hear it inside. I will keep you raw. With all my heart.  
 To it attend. Lead me in cure. Come and lift my heart.  
 [57:15] For heaven. O Lord. The light I find. In pride my heart.  
 Towards your loss. From selfish gain. Reserve my mind.  
 O turn my eyes. From worthless things.  
 Give life. Give life. A car. Into your heart. To me. Your servant. To me.  
 Your servant. Keep your flesh. So that you may.  
 [58:17] Be fearful. Be fearful. Lord. Remove from me. The shame I dread.  
 Your odds excel. In a brightness. O how I long. For your decrees.  
 Preserve me in. Your righteousness. Your righteousness. Peace be to you all.  
 In love with faith. From God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. With a love incorruptible. Amen.