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[0 : 00] Hello good evening and welcome to our service this evening. It's a privilege to be able to gather together this evening on this Lord's Day as we open up God's Word and we would seek his guidance and we would seek his blessing upon our evening just now. So before we begin, before we sing, I'll just open us up with a word of prayer as we seek God's face this evening.

Our Heavenly Father, Lord, we give you thanks that we have an opportunity again this Lord's Day evening to be able to gather together, to be able to gather together in your most precious name, Lord. We ask that you would reveal yourself to us this evening, Lord. We look to you and we know that you are a gloriously gracious and loving God. You are our perfect creator and we give thanks that when we look to you we see a loving God. We see a loving God who sent his only son to die on the cross for us and we pray that we would be reminded of that this very evening. Each and every day let us be reminded of that and as we looked at the previous Lord's Day, we looked over the Easter weekend at the death and the resurrection of your son and we pray that we would not be forgetful of that glorious gift that was given to us and that we would be ready to share the faith that we have. Those of us that have a faith and those of us that don't have a faith, that we would have yourself illuminated to us this evening as we open up your word just now. So go before us just now, Lord. Be with us as we pray, be with us as we explore your word and be with us as we praise your most holy name as well, Lord. So be with us just now and forgive us for all of our sins in Christ's most precious name we pray. Amen. Well we'll begin our public worship this evening by singing to God's praise in Psalm 1. It's a psalm that we're going to look at as well this evening but we'll begin by singing the whole psalm, the first six verses and only six verses of Psalm 1.

That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night. He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river which in his season yields his fruit and his leaf fadeth never. And all he doth shall prosper well, the wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro. In judgment therefore shall not stand such as ungodly are, nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear. For why the way of godly men unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.

And we'll sing these verses to God's praise in Psalm 1. That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men nor stands in sinner's way. Nor sitteth in the scornors' chair but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night. He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river which in his season yields his fruit and his leaf fadeth never. And all he doth shall prosper well, the wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro. In judgment therefore shall not stand such as ungodly are. nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear. For why the way of godly men unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.

[6 : 12] Let us join together again in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we again give thanks to you as we praise your most holy name.

We thank you, Lord, that as we've already prayed, that you are a loving God, that you are a just God, that you're a God that is near to us. You're not a distant God. You're a God that we can turn to in every situation.

No matter where we find ourselves in our lives, we are able to turn to you knowing that you are a God that not only hears our prayers, but you are a God that answers those prayers.

Although we may struggle with the answers and the timing of the answers, we ought to remember that you are indeed perfect. Your timings are perfect. Everything that you do is indeed perfect.

And we ought to be reminded of that and remember and give thanks that it is indeed you that is the one that's sovereign over each and every one of us. We give you thanks, Lord, for your word. We thank you that we have this word so readily available to us, that we're able to turn to that word, that we're able to open up that word and to see yourself illuminated in that, Lord, as we see each and every page points to you, points to the cross, and it points us to the salvation plan from the beginning of time, from before the very earth that we walk on was created.

[7 : 48] We know that you had a plan of salvation, Lord, and that emanates from the love that you have for us. None of us are deserving of that salvation plan. None of us are deserving of the forgiveness of our sins.

We have all sinned. Many have sinned more than others, but we all fall short, each and every one of us. From the beginning, at the fall of our father and first mother and Adam and Eve, Lord, we look to them and we ought not to blame them, for each and every one of us has committed our own sins. There was only one who walked this earth who was perfect, and that is indeed your son. We ask, Lord, that you would reveal yourself to us this evening, that you would make yourself known to us, that we would see your face and that we would be able to see your plans for us, that we would have this word speak to us, that it would penetrate into our hearts, and that it would speak to each and every one of us.

Whether or not we are close to you or whether or not we are distant from you, we ask that you would use this word, Lord, that you would use a weak vessel such as I to be able to use that word, to use your perfect word, and the Holy Spirit would indeed work through me, Lord.

We give you thanks that we have a wonderful congregation where we're able to gather together, Lord, as we did so this morning. We are so thankful that we are able to come into your house, Lord, and that you have provided for us a place to worship and to praise your name.

[9 : 17] We give you thanks that we can once again meet together in person. We long for the day where we are able to meet as we did before, with each and every seat used, and a clamour for more seating, Lord.

And we look forward to the days where we are able to praise together. We are able to sing your praises as a congregation, as we sing praises up to heaven, Lord.

And we know that those praises are warmly received, Lord, and we are so thankful that you are indeed listening to those as well, Lord. And where two or three are gathered, you are with us indeed.

And although we are not gathered in person, and we gather online this evening, Lord, we are promised that you are with us, and we pray that you would reveal yourself to us anew. We pray for those, Lord, who do not listen to your word, who did not come to church this morning, or not tuning in this evening, and have made a concerted and conscious effort not to come to the means of grace.

Lord, we pray for them specifically, and ask that you would make yourself known to them, that they would be reminded of the fragility of life, that they would be reminded of their sins, that they would repent of their sins, and that they would seek forgiveness from a God that loves them, and seeks to have them in his bosom.

[10 : 34] We pray, Lord, that they would be reminded of their sins, and that they would indeed cry out for mercy, that this very evening, this very moment, would be the moment that they seek your face, and that they seek to have you be the ruler of their life, that they ask you to enter into their life, and to lead them, and direct them in the way that you wish for them to go, Lord.

For we seek to see your will done on earth here as it is in heaven, Lord. Lord, lead us, guide us, and direct us in all that we do, and we ask that you would continually be with us, no matter where we find ourselves, no matter how distant we find ourselves from you, Lord.

We know that you are a God that will hear our prayers, Lord, and we pray that you would indeed this evening. We pray for those this very evening who are struggling at the moment, whether it be through grief, whether it be through loneliness, or isolation, or through illness.

We pray that you would be with them in particular, Lord, that you would make yourself known to them, that they would be comforted by you. We know that you are indeed the great physician. You are the wonderful counselor and the prince of peace, Lord, and we should come to you knowing that you are these things.

You are these things in your entirety, Lord. You're not made up of a sum of attributes. You are each and every of these glorious attributes in their entirety, Lord, and we ask that we would be

encouraged to continually come to you and to seek your face in your word and on our knees in prayer.

[12:06] We ask that you'll be with us this evening, Lord, that you'll reveal yourself to us again in this word, that we'll be able to learn more about who you are and grow in a greater understanding of who you are, that we would meditate on your law, on your word, day and night.

So go before us just now, Lord. Be with the other congregations as they preach your word, Lord. Be with every congregation that preaches Christ crucified and preaches your truth.

We ask that you'll be with them this evening. We pray for vacant congregations and ask that you would lead them and that you would set it upon the hearts of young men to continue to come into the ministry, Lord, to apply, to join your call, Lord.

And we ask that you would indeed call many more young men to that role, Lord, and that we would be able to see these vacant congregations filled once more and that we would see their pews and their seats filled again, Lord.

So go before us just now, Lord. Be with us and surround us with a wall of fire and go before us in all that we do in Christ's most precious name and for the forgiveness of our many, many sins.

[13:11] Amen. Well, we're going to turn to the psalm that we sang. If you could turn in your Bibles to Psalm 1. We're just going to read this psalm.

This is the psalm that we're going to look at this evening. So we'll ask for God's blessing as we open up his word and we read into it just now. Psalm 1.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yield its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

[14:22] Amen. And may the Lord bless the reading of his own holy word to us just now. We're going to sing. We're going to sing another psalm just now. Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

And we'll sing the first eight verses of Psalm 119. Psalm 119. Blessed are they that undefiled and straight are in the way, who in the Lord's most holy law do walk and do not stray.

Blessed are they who to observe his statutes are inclined, and who do seek the living God with their whole heart and mind. Such in his ways do walk, and they do no iniquity.

Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts carefully. O that thy statutes to observe, that wouldst my ways direct, then shall I not be shamed when I thy precepts all respect.

Then with integrity of heart, thee will I praise and bless, and when I the judgments all have learned of thy pure righteousness. That I will keep thy statutes all, firmly resolved have I.

[15:33] O do not then, most gracious God, forsake me utterly. And we'll sing these verses. Psalm 119, verses 1 to 8.

And we'll sing these verses to God's praise. Blessed are they that undefiled, And straight are in the way, Who in the Lord's most holy law, Do walk and do not stray.

Blessed are they who to observe His statutes are inclined, And who do seek the living God, With their whole heart and mind, Such in his ways do walk, And they do know iniquity, Thou hast commanded us To keep thy precepts carefully, O that thy statutes do observe,

Thou wouldst my ways direct, Then shall I not be shamed, When I thy precepts all respect.

Then with integrity of heart, The will I praise and bless, When I, the judgment soul, Have learned of thy pure righteousness, That I will keep thy statutes all, Firmly resolved have I, O do not the most gracious God, Forsake me utterly.

[18:38] Now if you could turn back in your Bibles, To the psalm which we read earlier, Psalm 1, If we could read Psalm 1, We're not going to read the whole psalm, We're going to look at the first two verses, Of Psalm 1, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stands in the way of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of scoffers, But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And on his law he meditates day and night.

Now you may have noticed in verse 1 there, It says he walks not in the counsel of the wicked, Your translation may be in the counsel of the ungodly, And that's the word that I want us to focus on this evening, When we're considering this passage, It's the ungodly.

I was looking at the news recently, And there was an article about being who you want to be, And the question that they were asking was, Whether it is truly possible, Can you be what you want to be, Can you be anything that you want to be, Is that even possible?

And it was a really long article, But interestingly there was no reference of God, That will probably be of little surprise to you, But we live in a world that prioritises self, We are encouraged to be who we want to be, You go and do what you want, Our children in our schools are encouraged to do the same, Parents are in fact discouraged, From allowing reality and truth to be adopted in the lives of their children, And in particularly God's truth, We are told happiness and health is found in the world, Even wealth, Having money and lots of nice material things, Will bring you happiness, I'm sure you can cast your mind to somebody, Possibly in your own family, Possibly even a celebrity, You may be able to cast your mind to somebody, Who has both health and wealth, But has voiced their lack of happiness, There is something missing in their lives, Their minds and their happiness are unravelling, And let's remember there are many that have wealth, But have also lost their health,

They may be in the final days of their life, And the millions, the billions, However much money or however many lovely things they had, They're no longer important, They're no longer relevant, Because they're nearing the end, And that's the problem with the world, We're told enjoy today, You only live once, Reach for the stars and you'll get all you want, That's the world's counsel, It's not scripture, And it's not God's counsel, We all have some measure of health, And some wealth, And we ought to be thankful, For anything that God has given us, We ought not to look to other people, And ask for what they want, And be envious, We should be thankful for all that we have, But health and wealth, That's not where we find blessing, We see here in this psalm, Where we find blessing, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked or ungodly, Nor stands in the way of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of scoffers, It hit me as I was reading this, As I was studying this passage, It really did hit me that,

[21 : 50] We're starting off this glorious book of psalms, The psalms that we turn to so regularly, We're starting off in a negative, Verse 1 starts off in the negative, It's not starting off as a positive, This great book that the Holy Spirit inspired the pen of the writer, The first words are not for comfort, They're not for praise, They're not for worship, But they begin with a negative, One may be excused for thinking that the start of this great book would have been positive, It would have been possibly like chapter, Like verse 2, Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law, You would have expected potentially that to be the start of the psalm, But no, We're told here that blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel, Nor stands in the way of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of scoffers, So we ought to ask ourselves why, We're told here of what the God-fearing man is, And the fear of the Lord is indeed the beginning of wisdom,

You might think that this would have started off by saying, Blessed is the man who delights in the law of God, But that's not the case, That's not the way it was inspired, And that's not the way it was written, So we maybe ask, Why does it begin this way?

So, To maybe start off that explanation, I want us to look at Genesis, I'd like you to go to Genesis chapter 3 in your Bibles, Genesis chapter 3, And we're going to read just the first seven verses of Genesis chapter 3, So Genesis chapter 3, verses 1 to 7, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made, He said to the woman, Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, But God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, Neither shall you touch it, Lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, For God knows that when you eat of it, Your eyes will be opened, And you will be like God, Knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, And that it was a delight to the eyes, And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, She took of its fruit and ate, And she also gave some to her husband, Who was with her, And he ate.

[24 : 15] Then the eyes of both were opened, And they knew that they were naked, And they sewed fig leaves together, And made themselves loincloths. We see there that the serpent had deceived Eve.

This fruit is good for you, This fruit is not bad for you, This will do you good. And the problem was that Eve listened, And she was tempted. So unlike Adam and Eve, There must be a no when we're

presented with sin.

And that's why we start here with a negative, There has to be a no to sin, And a yes to God. The psalm highlights this for us, It's not just about living a life of positive action, Going to church, Going to the prayer meeting, Having Bible studies, Giving generously, There's also a time where we have to say no, And we have to say no to sin.

We live in an age, Where we're not able to criticise others. You may have heard of the cancel culture, As soon as somebody criticises somebody, For acts that they're doing, Which may be contrary to God's law, They are desires to cancel those individuals, And to have them removed from social media, And to be castigated across all media platforms, And that's just the world that we live in.

And there's many of us, Many Christians, Indeed as well, That would think, What will that person think of if I reprove them, Or what will this person think of if I criticise or rebuke them, And we ought not to think of that, Because it's done out of love.

[25 : 45] We do see indeed in contemporary Christianity, Many churches that portray that they're preaching God's word, But what they're really wanting to do is, Preach a false Christianity, And a Christianity that says, Can't we all just get along?

Can we not all just get along? Churches, Different denominations, Different religions, Can we not all just get along, Rather than criticising each other, And have a life with no conflict?

I will do what I want in my life, And you do what you want to do in your life, And we'll all just get along, But that's not God's truth, Or God's Christianity. We must be ready to tell others, That this may be how you define your Christianity, But we are governed by God's word, And we ought to say no to that.

To show God's love doesn't just mean we approve, And go along with all that people have to say, No it requires us to reprove, And to rebuke, And to call on repentance. That's the love that we should show, And that's why Psalm 1 starts this way, We ought to be showing that love that God has, For those around us that we know, Are going in the wrong way.

So we see, Blessed is the man, Who has the grace to say no to much, That confronts him and tempts him. Now that's a distinguishing mark, Of a spiritually healthy Christian, Is your ability to say no, To certain things.

[27 : 09] Let's look again at Psalm 1, And the characteristics of this man. Now there are three, In verse 1 particularly, There are three aspects, That expand upon one another, And there are progression in sin.

I'll read verse 1 again, Blessed is the man, Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the way of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of scoffers. We're seeing a progression, We're walking, We see the walking, We see standing, And we see sitting.

Now we've spoken already, About the negative here, The fact that this psalm, Starts off in a negative, But do you see the threefold negative there, We're told, Not, Nor, And nor, That has to be part of, Our Christian life, We have to have not, Nor, And nor, In our lives, We have to be pushing back, And rebuking, The world, As we see in our own country, That it turns further, And further away from God, We ought to be standing up, And saying no, To the sin that we see around us, If you're to live, A healthy Christian life, We ought to have both, Negatives and positives, In how we approach, Our life, Some Christians just live on all negatives, It's everything that they don't do, They never do anything positive, Or they just focus on the positives, There's no negatives in their lives, But that's not the Christian life, We have a life, That has plenty of both negatives, And positives, Relatively trivial example,

I work in Stornoway, So I drive most days up to Stornoway, In my car, I've got an accelerator and a brake, I don't just go in, Straight away expecting to use my accelerator, And to drive on, And not have to brake, And not think about slowing down, We have to have both, There's a balance, It's the same even for, For example, Football, We've not had the chance to be able to see, The Harris football team recently, Due to the pandemic, But all football, You see a goalkeeper, There's a person in goals, Protecting the goals, There's a defensive line, Seeking to stop goals coming in, You don't just go and attack, Because you're, You have to be wary, Of potentially losing a goal, So there's a balance of both positive, And negative and everything, And we have to be reminded of that, If you begin to listen to the counsel of the ungodly, Then rest assured, It's a dangerous place for us to be in, When we consider what that looks like, What sort of things does it mean,

When it refers to the counsel of the ungodly, Walking in the counsel of the ungodly, Or the wicked, Whichever translation you have, It's the same as we look to Eve, It's about listening to a word of temptation, If you're listening to that word of temptation, We saw with Eve, That she was tempted by it, She succumbed to that temptation, She opened up her ears, And she opened up, She was receptive to the counsel of the wicked, Or the ungodly, It could look in your own life, To something along the lines of, Maybe something as simple as evolution, Somebody could be telling you in the workplace, At school, Wherever it is, You're not really convinced, That God only made the world in six days, Are you?

[30 : 23] Science has proven otherwise, Never mind those ancient manuscripts, Or the evidence that you have, Just look at the science, It just can't be true, And if you start to open up your ears, And be receptive to that, And being tempted into those thoughts, We need to be mindful of that, Being tempted into these things, Are what this psalm is telling us not to do, And it's even widely, Maybe not as specific as that, But it's widely referring to secular philosophy, Worldly ideologies, It's referring to the godless view, That the world has, Where man is at the centre, Our own feelings determine who we are, We determine who we are, Our morality is determined within ourselves, That is the counsel of the wicked, Where it's all about you, We are at the centre of our own little universe, We run our own agenda, And that's the agenda of the world, God however says that, The blessed man does not, Walk in the counsel of the ungodly, The Christian should not be open minded, To the counsel of the ungodly or wicked,

He's not open to the secular agenda, In education, In the media or in politics, He refuses to buy into, The godless thinking of this world, We often hear prayers, In our own prayer meeting, Or in church, That ask God to surround people, With a wall of fire, You'll often hear, People ask for a wall of fire, To be surrounded by those, That may be under attack, And we ought to be guarded, Against the counsel of the ungodly, In the exact same way, If you begin to listen, To the counsel of the ungodly, Then rest assured, You will indeed, Continue to progress in your sin, As we saw, We saw walking, We saw standing and sitting, Soon you will no longer be walking, In the counsel of the ungodly, But you will be standing, In the way of sinners, Standing shows us, That there's a lingering, There's almost fellowship there, With the sinner, And enjoying what they enjoy, There's a downward progression here, From walking, Now to standing,

You may then convince yourself, That the counsel of the ungodly, Is something you can't live without, Some of the views, Or some of the things, That people do, That are contrary to God's word, They may be appealing to you, And you think, I really can't live without this, And it's a dangerous place, To find ourselves in, It may even apply to those, Potentially in our own congregation, Potentially in other churches, You may come to church on a Sunday, But where are you for the rest of the week, Are you walking in the counsel of the ungodly, Monday through Saturday, Are you standing in the way of the sinners, Monday through Saturday, You're more than happy to give God, Your Sunday morning, And your Sunday evening, But the rest of the time is yours, And you can be happy within that, You can be certainly happy, Between Monday and Saturday, You become like the sinner, You walk like the sinner, You talk like the sinner, You'll start to act, Like the sinner, You're now standing, In the way of the sinner, You maybe no longer stand out,

In the crowd, If you're a Christian, You tell a group of friends, That you've maybe been with for a while, Or colleagues that you've been with for a while, That you're a Christian, And they respond, Really? I would never have known, You should have said, I didn't know, It's no longer evident, That you belong to God, And it's that downward progression, Of sin, And where does it lead?

Well we've seen walking, We've seen standing, And now you'll find yourself, Sitting in the seat of the scoffers, He's come around the table, The Christian, That has descended so much into their sin, Has come around the table with them, And he's now allied to them, He's slowly being sucked into sin, If it's not refused, At the first level, At the worldly council, Then it's a dangerous place, To find ourselves in, And these scoffers refuse to accept God, And refuse his perfect ways, We need to refuse those, Who refuse God, We're to be in the world, But not of the world, As the well-known saying goes, It won't be long before you're laughing, At how you used to think, Did I really used to think, The world was created in six days?

[34 : 37] You're now scoffing, And you're now mocking God, And we need to be mindful of that, You're now sitting at the seat of the scoffers, And you mock the things you once believed, You're now sitting like the Jews, At the foot of the cross, Who turned their back on him, And the truths he told, One now is an enemy of the truth, And an enemy of God, As we heard from David last week,

We saw in the passage that we read, That there were those that, That wanted no part of Jesus, They wanted nothing to do with him, And they turned their back on him, And our own country, Has turned their back on God, We see no reference, To a need for prayer, During one of the most difficult situations, We've had to go in as a country, In a generation, In multiple generations, Yet we see no desire for prayer, We see no, Or very little, Thought for God, And for who he is, And to seek his help, So where did it start?

Where did all of this start, When we see somebody, Sitting around the scoffers, And being part of that, Where does it start? Well it began, When they sought counsel, From the ungodly, As soon as they entered, Into that counsel of the ungodly, As Eve did, We see what happened with them, And it continued to progress, And the ramifications, Are severely damaging, And deadly, So what about you and me?

Will we be ones, To rebuke, And to say no, To the ungodly things, In this world? Starting with our own sins, When you see others, Going in the way of the world, Will you walk with them, Or will you say no, To walking in the counsel, Of the ungodly?

And it's a question, I ask myself, Monday to Friday, None of us, Not one of us listening, Is perfect, And we ought to remind ourselves, Of that each and every day, Do you have the courage, To say no?

Are you able to say no, To the crowd, And no to the world? Can you stand alone for God, And all that it means, To stand for him? Friends, It comes down to those, Whose approval means most to you, God and his word, Or the world and its ways, That's as simple as that, Whose approval, Do you, Love the most, Or what means most to you, God and his word, Or the world and its ways, I hope it's God's, And that he will say of you, Blessed is the man, Who walks not in the counsel, Of the wicked or ungodly, He won't listen to those, In the world, But will listen to God, And I pray that that's, Firstly in my own life, I pray that that's the case, And I pray that for each and every one, Of us listening this evening, Now we've explored the start of the psalm, In verse one, With the negative, And the kind of temporary happiness, That is found with the ungodliness, Of the world, But in verse two, We start to move into the kind of, Positive aspect,

[37 : 37] Of the blessed man, And it's not just about, Thou shalt not, Thou shalt not, Thou shalt not, That's not the life of the Christian, So what do we do, Where should we turn now, Look at verse two of our psalm, Starts with but, So it's in contrast to, To that which we have already read, But his delight, Is in the law of the Lord, And on his law he meditates, Day and night, The psalmist is quite clear here, That it's not just about, Applying yourself, In keeping the law, And seeking, To stick to the ten commandments, Or stick to God's law, No there's delight, In God's law, It's not just about, Rules and following a law, And making sure that you don't, Deviate from that law, No there's delight, His delight, Is in the law, Of the Lord, And I ask you, I ask myself as well, Do you, Do I, Delight, In the law of the Lord, The word here, For delight, Illustrates a strong desire,

Even a longing, A longing for, It's a very strong word, It's not just a, A flippant use of the word, They take great pleasure, In God's law, Or God's word, So, So what is the law, That's the next question, What is the law, And, And the word here is, Is Torah, So it really refers here, To the entirety, Of the written, Word of God, Everything that had been written, To this point, And everything that would be, Subsequently written, In scripture, What Moses brought down, From Mount Sinai, Was more than just, The ten commandments, It was the law of God, And it was his word, As well, We have this first psalm, Here showing us, The prime focus, Of the Christian, Should be in God's word, The word of God, That gives us, The knowledge of God, And it points us, Towards the son of God, If you can maybe, Just turn, To first Peter, We're just going to, Quickly look at, A little bit of what, What that means, First Peter chapter one, So first Peter chapter one,

Verse twenty three, Since you have been born again, Not of perishable seed, But of imperishable seed, Through the living, And abiding, Word of God, Strong Christians, Have a strong desire, For the word of God, There's now a way, For sinners to enter, Into fellowship with God, And to be cleansed, And renewed, They delight in his law, This is the counsel, Of the word, And not of the world, One of the commentators, That I was looking to, Said that to delight, In God's law, Is like a man, Falling in love, So, Maybe to explore, A little bit on that, What is true of the man, Falling in love, Does he only think, Of her a couple of minutes a day, Maybe one or two minutes, In the morning, A minute in the evening, He only has a little bit, Of time throughout the day, He's very busy, He's got lots on, Is that true of the man in love, There's plenty going on in the day, I can afford a couple of minutes,

Here and there, No, What's true is, That he can't get her out of his mind, He can't stop thinking about her, Friends beginning, Begin to notice, Friends, Sorry, Begin to notice, That he talks a lot about her, He can barely even mention her name, Without them noticing, He all of a sudden, Seems to spend a lot of time together, As we fall in love, That person's name and character, Is on our mind often, Maybe I'll send a quick message, Or, You'll be on the phone, You may be on the phone, For a number of hours, And it maybe only feels like, Five or ten minutes has gone by, That's what it's like, To delight in God's law, You don't just read it occasionally, You don't just pray every couple of days, You meditate upon it, Day and night, You should take the word of God with you, Wherever you go, And keep it, At the forefront of your mind, You go to work, You go to school, You're reminded how, God's law and God's word, Teaches you to conduct yourself, Teaches you how to interact with colleagues, Teaches you how to interact with, Other families and friends and neighbours, You're in the shop, You're in traffic, You should be continually recalling, In your mind, In God's word, With how we should live our lives, Is that you?

[41 : 58] Is it me? Honestly I think if we, Look deep within ourselves, Probably not even too deeply, We all significantly fall short, Of this, But we ought to be delighting, In God's law, Because that's where we will find, Great blessing, Indeed even within our own congregation, We are so wonderfully blessed, To have such godly men, In our Kirk session, And you know just, In having a short conversation, Conversation with them, That they are continually, Bringing God's law, To the forefront of their minds, Even in conversation, Even in how they interact, At the door, No longer able to have a handshake, But you can tell, The way that you're welcomed, Into God's house, That they have, They delight, In God's law, Even you look at the renovation, Of this very building, It's empty at the moment, But you look at the renovation, Of this very building, That the Lord, Graciously provided to us, And these men, Our session, Our Kirk session, Worked immensely hard,

In a way to glorify God, They were continually looking to God, In all that they did, In their love for both the congregation, And indeed, Their love for God, And the question I ask is, Is that you tonight?

Are you that person, Who continually looks, To God, Takes delight in his word, Reads the word, Meditates upon it, And enjoys hearing that word, I hope it is, And I pray that it is, Indeed you this evening, Now we're not even able, To go into one another's house, Obviously with the pandemic, At the moment, But, Think how much we can learn, From the houses, That we did used to go into, Where you saw a worn bible, On the side of a chair, Or on a table, Or on a coffee table, It's well used, The owner of that bible, Is well exercised, In God's word, And takes pure delight, When they open it, And absorb the words, That they read, That's why when we hear their prayers, They often pray for young ones, They'll pray for, The children, We see a lot of our, Older generation, Praying for the younger ones, And it's because they know, The difficulties in life, They know what it's like, And they want to see you blessed, As this psalm has indicated, By not walking with the ungodly, But by delighting, In God's word,

Just look at the second part, Of verse two there, And on his law, He meditates, Day and night, Now we go to talk about this word, Meditate, It's a very interesting word, And, It means literally to mutter, I was looking up the translation, And it's to mutter, Or to groan, There's almost a, A low noise to it, Where you're muttering, Or you're meditating, And contemplating, The word of God, And that's what we should do, With the word of God, We open it, We read it, We study it, We almost, Absorb and devour, That word, You almost chew on it, To get the nutrients, Out of that word, Like an animal would, We don't let it just go in, One ear and out of the other, We want to retain it, And meditate upon it, So what do we need before, Therefore sorry, To meditate on God's word, There's a couple of, There's a couple of aspects, I was thinking, That we need to consider, We need to be in a church, That teaches, The word of God, Now we are so blessed,

To have a wonderfully faithful, Minister in David, That preaches Christ crucified, So diligently, And so faithfully, This last year, Even in this pandemic, You may have, Potentially broadened your, Horizons, And picked up some other, Verse, Sermons sorry, From other places, From other countries, From other churches, On our own island, On the mainland, You may have, Kind of broadened out, To access those services, But we need to be reminded, That we ought to be, Associated to our church, We need to be, Members of our church, Where we are, Saved Christians, And that's where we, Will hear the word of God, And we need to be, Careful about what we do, Listen to, And be thankful, For the, The diligent word, Which we hear, In our own congregation,

Secondly, You need to be, In the word personally, It's good to come, Corporately, To hear God's word, And to listen to God's word, But we need to be, In God's word, In our own time, Much like the reference, To delighting in God's word, Around the love of a man,

[46 : 16] For a woman, Where he doesn't just, Set aside a couple of moments, In the day, We have to give, Proper time, To be in God's word, In order for us, To delight in that, Even getting a reading plan, Simply working your way, Through a book, In the bible, Whether you're working your way, Through the whole bible, We ought to be, Exercising ourselves, Continually, In our daily devotions, In God's word, I was reading, We see a lot of people, That as I said earlier, Find, Find their authenticity, Within themselves, So they won't use the word, They won't listen to the word, They won't come to church, They'll take counsel, From the world, And that'll ultimately, Determine who they're going to be, But I was listening to, A lecture by Dr.

Carl Truman, At the ETS recently, And he noted, Just at the very end, I'm just going to share the words, That he said at the very end, About the Christian, And their identity, And it's a reminder, As to, To where we ought, To find our identity, And it's not within self, So he concluded, His lecture by saying, The Christian's identity, Does not lie in moving inward, To establish, Who the authentic person is, It relies on them, Looking outward to the church, Around them, And to God, To establish who they are, And how do they turn to God, To establish who they are, We read God's word, And we pray into that word, So we see there, That's where we find our authenticity, That's where we find who we are, It's not in the world, It's not in the counsel of the world, It's in the counsel of God, And God alone, So these two verses, They're unequivocal in explaining, Who the blessed man is, I urge you to make right with God, Seek his face, And his direction, In your own life, This is not a psalm that says,

If the Christian delights, In the law of the Lord, Then he will be happy, If the Christian delights, In the law of the Lord, He will have wealth, And if the Christian delights, In the law of the world, He will be, Wonderfully, Healthy, No, This is about your eternal, Destination, Today, Is the day of salvation, All the material things, Of this world, Are so temporary, And fleeting, And will perish, As you perish, The truly happy person, Guides his life, By God's instruction, Rather than the advice, Of those who reject, God's instruction, I want to share the words, Of William Plumer, It's one of the commentaries, That I was looking at, The end of my preparation, And I'm just going to read, The words that Plumer says, On the book of Psalms, And particularly in Psalm 1, He says, In all our study of God's word, We must have faith, This grace of the spirit, Is of the greatest importance, Without it, We always go astray, Live in darkness, And are made miserable, By the stings, Inflicted by our own minds, Nothing greater, Can be said of faith, Than that it is the only thing, Which can bid defiance, To the accusations, Of the conscience, This it does, By beholding the Lamb of God, That taketh away, The sin of the world, Christ Jesus, Is the only hope, Of perishing sinners, And that's something, That should give each one of us hope, We have a hope, It's not just about, A negative, Aspect of the psalm, And that it's, Don't do this, And don't do that, We have a hope, You might be, Walking, You might be sitting, You might be, Standing, With the sinners, But we have a hope here, We ought to be reminded, Of this hope, To the believer, We have a God, That loves us, And are reminded, Of that when we look, To the cross, Whether you find yourself, Walking in the counsel, Of the ungodly, Standing, In the way of sinners, Or sitting, In the seat of scoffers, There is still hope for you, To turn away, From the counsel of this world, Turn back to the Lord, And delight in him, Once more, Just remember the first catechism, Man's chief end, Is to glorify God, And to enjoy him forever, The emphasis is on that word, Enjoy, We have to enjoy him forever, Much like the delight in his word, There is enjoyment, In glorifying God, To those that are maybe, Not yet Christians, God, Also loves you, We need to remember, That the pleasures, And temptations, Of this world, Are ever so temporary, True blessing, Is found in Christ, And in him alone, And what do you have to do, To access that, You have to repent, And ask for forgiveness, You need to repent, Of your sins, And ask that the Lord, Would indeed forgive them, You ask him to enter, Into your life today, And I want to take those,

[51 : 06] That are, Not yet Christians, To the last verse, Of Psalm 1, The psalm which we read, Last verse in Psalm 6, And verse 6, Sorry, It says, For the Lord knows, The way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked, Will perish, Where can you find out, More about this saviour, And grow in your knowledge of him, In his word, We need to be delighting, In his word, So I encourage you friends, To be diligent, In the reading of God's word, Pray into your reading, Of God's word, And ask that he would, Reveal himself to you, And if you've not yet done so, Ask him to enter into your life,

To save you, From a lost eternity, We should be delighting, In God's word, And for those that do not, For those that are currently, Seeking counsel from the, From the world, And from the ungodly, We have a hope, And that hope is in the cross, We look to the cross, And we see a saviour, We see him who died,

For us, For each and every one of us, Him who knew no sin, Who became sin, For us, Remember that, And I pray, Friends, That you will indeed, Turn to him, That you will ask him, To enter into your life, And that you will indeed, Be able to see the blessing, As we saw in Psalm 1 there, That man hath perfect blessedness, Who walketh not astray, And we pray that we would delight, In God's word again, Each and every day, And remember to say no, To sin, And yes, To God, We'll conclude in a short word of prayer, Lord God, We give you thanks for this word, Lord, We thank you for this psalm, That speaks to us, And although, We see what, We ought not to do, The blessed man, Ought not to do, Lord, We are, Reminded of the hope, The hope of, The sending of your only son, Lord, We are so thankful, For you sending him, Who died, For each and every one of us, His, Blood that was shed for us, For all of our sins,

Everyone listening, To this this evening, Has sins that were forgiven, At the cross, Should they, Seek that forgiveness, And ask for it, Lord, And we, We ask that we would continually, Be reminded of that, We thank you, Lord, That our delight, Is indeed in the law, Of the Lord, Lord, And we pray that, As we open your word, As we turn to your word, Each and every day, That you would illuminate it to us, That we would take delight in it, That we would have the confidence, And the courage, And the opportunities even, And the boldness to say, No to sin, To reprove, And to restore, Our brothers, As well, Lord, And when we see, Others that are, Progressing in their sin, That we would have the, The confident love, That you share, To be able to bring them back, And to bring them back to you, To say no, To the world, And yes to God, Lord, So be with us just now, As we conclude, In singing your praises, Lord, And all that we ask, Is in the name of Christ, Our Saviour, Amen.

So we will conclude, Our service this evening, By listening to the hymn, Mission Praise 1350, Mission Praise 1350, Speak, O Lord, As we come to you, To receive the food, Of your holy word, Take your truth, Plant it deep in us, Shape and fashion us, In your likeness, That the light of Christ, May be seen today, In our acts of love, And our deeds of faith, Speak, O Lord, And fulfil in us, All your purposes, For your glory, And we will sing, To the end of, Mission Praise 1350, To God's praise, Speak, O Lord, As we come to you, To receive the food of your holy word, Take your truth, Plant it deep in us, Shape and fashion us, In your likeness, That the light of Christ, Might be seen today, In our acts of love, And our deeds of faith, Speak, O Lord, And fulfil in us, All your purposes, All your glory, Teach us, Lord, Full obedience, Holy reverence, True humility, Test our thoughts,

[56 : 17] And our attitudes, In the radiance, Of your purity, Cause our faith to rise, Cause our eyes to see, Your majestic love, And authority, Words of power, That can never fail, Let their truth prevail, Over unbelief, Speak, O Lord, And renew our minds, Help us grasp the heights, Of your plans for us, Truths unchanged, From the thorn of time,

That will echo down, Through eternity, And by grace, We'll stand on your promises, And by faith, We'll walk, As you walk with us, Speak, O Lord, Till your church is built, And the earth is filled, With your glory, While we have one, Without breaking forward, By faith, The earth is filled, For you will find, With ■■■ ■■■.

Thank you.

And we'll conclude with the final two verses of the book of Jude. Thank you.