

## 12.9.21 am

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 12 September 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see some visitors with us as well and you're especially welcome this morning and also we're thankful to have those who are on the live stream but not able to join us as yet. Just one or two intimations to highlight. The first is that the evening service tonight is at 6pm as usual. What's not quite as usual is that we're having a testimony service this evening over the last year or so. As you know we've been having a testimony around about once a month over the last period and so Anthony Latham will be sharing his testimony this evening and sharing a little of God's word with us. So that's at 6 o'clock tonight and be encouraged to come to that service.

A prayer meeting on Zoom at half past seven this coming Wednesday. There's no jam or connect this Friday. Rooted is still under review so those who go to Rooted will get information directly from the leaders. The reason that there's no jam or connect on Friday is that we hope to have the communion weekend over the next coming weekend and you have details of the services that have been on the screen. Friday noon we'll have a Gaelic service and that will be taken by the Reverend Donald Dolan MacDonald and then on Friday evening the service will be taken by Thomas Davis of Carloway.

At 6 o'clock the elders prayer meeting. At 7 o'clock on Saturday we'll have again Thomas taking the service and then on Sunday morning and evening Thomas again will lead worship. I say that conscious that that we're still we're still in a slightly dicey position with COVID and we were hearing today that there's a case on the boat amongst one of the crews so we'll be watching that just carefully over the next few days if we need to step back from having a number of services we can notify that in the course of the week but God willing we'll have the services over the course of the weekend as we come together for the Lord's Supper next Sunday morning at this time. And for any who know the Lord, who love the Lord, who trust the Lord, but haven't yet stepped forward to profess faith in Christ and take communion, be encouraged to do so. Come and speak to me, come and speak to one of the elders.

Remember the words of Jesus. He says do this to remember me. One more thing just to highlight and that is the 26th of September, the last Sunday morning of the month. John Lachey McLeod, he has asked to take the service on that day and he wants to speak to us to share God's word and also speak to us about the work of children for Christ. The team of us went out to Romania two years ago now and we'll get an update on where things are through John Lachey and you'll have a couple of people with them on that day. And that's the 26th of September and there'll be a retiring collection for that work on that day. So if you just have that in your minds, it can allow us to perhaps give to that worthy cause. So these I think are all the intimations and we'll begin this time of worship now and we'll sing to God's praise.

The words will be on the screen in just a moment. Psalm 91. Psalm 91 verses 1 to verse 5. He that doth in the secret place of the Most High reside under the shade of him that is the Almighty shall abide. I of the Lord my God will say he is my refuge still. He is my fortress and my God and in him trust I will. We'll sing verses 1 to 5. We'll stand to sing to God's praise.

[ 4 : 1 4 ] He that doth that in the secret place of the Most High reside under the shade of him that is the Almighty shall abide. The Almighty shall abide. I of the Lord my God will say he is my refuge still.

He is my fortress and my God and in him trust I will. Assuredly he shall be saved and give deliverance from soft to fowl or snare and from the noisome pestilence. His feathers shall the high thy trust under his wings shall be. His faithfulness shall be a shield, a buckler unto thee. Thou shalt not need to be afraid for terror. Thou shalt not need to be afraid for terror.

For terror show the night nor for the arrow that doth fly by day while it is light.

Let's unite their hearts together in prayer. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day, and we thank you for your word, for that psalm that we have sung.

[ 7 : 16 ] And we thank you for the comfort, for the reassurance that we receive as we sing these words. Thou shalt not need to be afraid for terrors of the night, nor for the arrow that doth fly by day while it is light.

And we thank you for the night. And we thank you, Lord, that you are our God. We thank you that you know us. And you know that we are a people who at times do fear various things. You know that we are those who sometimes find ourselves with our eyes open in the early hours of the morning, anxious about one thing and another.

We know that that can be our experience when we are little children struggling to get to sleep at night. And we know that that can be our experience going through the years of life. There are anxieties, there are worries, there are cares that sometimes overwhelm us.

But we thank you that you are our God. And we thank you that you are the God who calls us to come to you. And to find that peace and that shelter, that security that is offered under the shadow of your wings.

[ 8 : 35 ] We thank you for Jesus, your Son, our Savior. And we thank you for the love of God.

We thank you for the love of God. We thank you that in him there is salvation. And as we gather this morning in the name of Jesus, we pray that each of us would know the reality of the presence of Jesus.

The one who said that he will be with us, would even two or three gather together in his name. And we pray, Lord, that we wouldn't just experience that for an hour in this place at this time.

But we ask that that would be our abiding sense throughout life. And we pray that we would know the reality of that as we go from life through death's dark veil into life that is everlasting.

That is offered only in Jesus. So we pray that all of us here would know the forgiveness of sin, the salvation, the eternal life that is offered in Jesus.

[ 10 : 10 ] We pray that none of us would come close to Jesus within the hearing of the voice of Jesus through Scripture and yet not trust him. We'll come to words later in the service where Jesus looks at a city and says, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I would long to gather you in, but you are not willing.

And we pray that there would be none here this morning who remain unwilling to receive Christ. And may each of us be found trusting in him.

And as we think about the communion weekend, we pray for any who are trusting in Jesus, but who are doing so secretly. fearful to step forward.

Perhaps looking at self and seeing our sin and our unworthiness. And yet we thank you at the table, the communion table where we take the bread and we take the wine as a place where we go to say that we know we are unworthy.

But we're trusting in the one who is worthy. And so for any who are trusting, we pray that you would give them the courage to step forward and do what we are called to do.

[ 11 : 28 ] To take the bread, to take the wine. And to do this in obedience to Jesus and to know the blessing of Jesus. We pray, Lord, for those who are sick today.

Some who would desire to be here, but who are struggling with their health. And we commit them to you, Lord. We ask that as they perhaps watch the distance, they would know your presence and that they would know that they are remembered and loved.

As we come together as your people, we pray that you would minister to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for those who are sad today, for those who are grieving.

As a congregation, as we look back over these last days and as we think about Chrissie's passing from time into eternity. We pray for the family and we ask that you would comfort them and that you would strengthen them.

We pray for the staff and the residents in Harris House who miss Chrissie. And those who spent time with her over the years. As we thank you for our life and for our witness.

[ 12 : 39 ] We pray for your comfort for those who grieve. We pray that comfort for those who grieve for loved ones past and past months and years as well.

The pain of grief is something that comes in waves. And we pray for your comfort to be given to each one who is struggling. We pray for those who struggle with addictions.

And to wake up perhaps this morning with a sense of hopelessness. Enable them to look to Jesus. And to know the power that Jesus alone can give to break the habits and the chains that bind us. So hear our prayers Lord. Meet with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Watch over us we pray as we think about the boat and the crew and cases of COVID that we hear.

Ever closer to us we pray for your protection. We thank you for your protection thus far. And we pray for your protection over these days.

[13:53] And we pray for your wisdom to be given to all those that you have put in positions of authority. That you would help each one to make wise decisions at a time when we struggle sometimes to know the right thing to do.

You have said as we acknowledge you you will direct us in our path. You have said that as we seek wisdom you will not withhold it but you will give it to us.

So give us wisdom and protection over these days. And as we are aware of our own weakness and mortality we pray that we would look to Jesus. The one who said I am the resurrection and the life. So hear our prayers. Take away our sin as we confess it. And lead us by your spirit. For we pray these things in Jesus name and for his sake. Amen.

Boys and girls would you like to come forward please. How's everyone today?

[15:10] Okay. Is this a message for us? When your daughter gives you a few bits of paper at the lectern. Usually it means you've forgotten six intimations.

But I don't know exactly what this one's about. Pardon? On the back. Oh. We have an intimation. Sorry. The WFM annual meeting where Anne Allen will speak about being distinct in a hostile culture. Will be streamed live in the church here from 10.30 to 12.30.

That's this coming Saturday morning. All ladies are welcome. So there's an intimation that I've overlooked. So sorry about that. Boys and girls good to see you. Are you well this week? Good. Good. Now I've got a picture for you on the screen. And I think you'll have seen one of these things before. So tell me what's that? A chicken. It's.

[16:09] Yes. There's chickens there. There's chicks there. One, two, three. Four chicks is it? Four chicks. Four or five chicks.

It's quite hard to tell, isn't it? Yeah. And then. So there's four or five chicks. And then there's a what? A chicken. A hen. A hen. Yeah. That's what we would call him. A hen.

Has anybody ever seen a hen in real life? Yeah. Yeah. Where have you seen a hen? Sometimes when you walk over out the west, I think. I think it's at Adam.

Is it you? That's got hens. Somebody over there's got hens. You've seen hens, yeah? So. I'm not seeing all of you probably behind the wee lectern there.

Now tell me this. What can you tell me about hens? Are they wild animals? Yeah? Not wild animals?

[17:08] No? No? They can be at times. They can be wild animals at times. You sound like you're speaking from experience there, Michael. Have you ever witnessed a hen getting wild?

Yes? Yeah? Cameron, have you? Sorry? You had a hen that guarded the shed?

And what were you trying to get in the shed for? I'm trying to get some food for it. There's a whole other sermon on that. You know that? Cameron's, for those who didn't hear that, Cameron had a hen that guarded the shed.

And when he would try to get into the shed to get food for the hen, the hen would peck him to keep him out. We could use that at the end of the sermon, actually. Now, what was I talking about?

Hens. So they can, they're usually quite nice, aren't they? But they can get wild. And what do you think happens if maybe someone or some animal tries to attack chicks?

[18:23] Will the hen just get on with things? It will what? It will charge.

I think we've got a wee video, I think, that we're going to watch. So we're going to watch. Please like some magic we're out on our way. Compassion.

Respect. Empathy. Perfection.

Joy. That's lovely isn't it?

He was watching that. So hens, they're quite nice creatures, but if you decide you're going to try and have a go at their chicks, whether you're an alpaca or whether you're a Labrador, I watched a video with a crow trying to attack chicks.

[19:58] I couldn't even show up because it's so wild, so violent. I'm not a fan of crows after one trying to pick me out west there. But tell you something, the hen had a go at the crow, and the crow

came off very bad.

So anyway, you've seen that with hens. Now what's that got to do with the Bible and passage? Well, today you can ask your folks about this when you go back at lunchtime, but today we're going to be reading a passage, and Jesus comes to this place called Jerusalem, a big city.

He'd been there lots of times before. He went there from when he was a wee boy. And he came to this city, and he looked over the city, and he could see all the people, and he could see that they were in danger.

Because Jesus knew that these people, they had sin in their hearts, but they didn't trust in Jesus. They weren't trusting him.

They weren't believing in him. They didn't love him. And so they didn't have a savior. And Jesus could see they were in danger. And so Jesus says to them, this is what he says, listen. He says, How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers your chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

[ 21 : 25 ] Did you see at the end with the hen, all the chicks came in, and they went under the wings, and they were safe there. And Jesus says, that's what I want to do with all you people in Jerusalem.

I want to keep you safe. But you're not willing. You know, boys and girls, the only place we can be safe forever is where?

Where can we be safe forever? Michael? In heaven, yes. And how do we get to heaven? What? By trusting in God, by coming to Jesus.

And so every time we open up the Bible, every time we have a children's talk, there might be lots of different passages in the Bible, but every chapter really is an invitation where God says to us, I want you to come to me.

We hear Jesus saying, come to me. The Bible's a map to get to heaven. The Bible's a love letter from God to us saying, I love you.

[ 22 : 37 ] The Bible's an invitation where God says to us, if you want to be saved from sin, if you want to be saved from death, if you want to be safe forever, come to me.

And Jesus was so sad when he looked at Jerusalem because he could see they wouldn't come and they were in danger. And boys and girls, I hope that as Jesus looks at us today and the big boys and girls, that we don't make him sad, but that we come to him and let him save us.

Give us that forgiveness of sin and that life that's everlasting. Just as we finish, how did Jesus save us? How did Jesus save us?

Do you know? Yeah, Emily? By dying on the cross. That's right. See, when we looked at the hen, it was chasing away all the danger.

Do you notice how it did it? It always put its own body, the mother hen put her own body between the danger and the chicks. That's what Jesus did for us.

[ 24 : 00 ] His body was broken on the cross. His blood was shed on the cross. He put himself between us and our sin, the danger, the devil, death.

And he saves those who come to him. So, let's pray about that. Let's ask Jesus to save us. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us.

We thank you that you went to the cross to deal with all that we were in danger from. Sin and the devil and death and hell.

we thank you that you went to the cross and your body was broken and your blood was shed so that our sin could be forgiven, so that our hearts could be washed and so that we could have life that's everlasting.

We pray that none of us would be saying today we are not willing to come under the wings of Jesus, but we pray that each of us would come to him. that Lord Jesus, each of us would come to you and know that everlasting life that you alone can give.

[ 25 : 12 ] And we pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for listening, boys and girls, so well. We're going to sing now Mission Praise 582.

582, and it's a hymn. It's an old hymn, and it's a hymn where we are called to hide ourselves in Jesus. Rock of Ages.

Jesus is the rock. Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee. So let's sing this hymn to God's praise. Amen. Rock of Ages, cleft for me.

Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flowed be of sin the devil cure.

Cleanse me from its guilt and power. Not the labour of my hands can fulfil thy laws demands.

[ 26 : 49 ] Could my zeal no rest by no could my tears forever flow.

All for sin could not atone. Thou must save and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling.

naked come to thee for rest helpless loom to thee for grace foul I to the fountain fly wash me saviour or I die while I draw this sleet in breath when mine eyes shall close in death when I soar through tracks unknown see thee on thy judgment throne rock of ages left for me let me hide myself in thee okay boys and girls if you head now to

Sunday school and we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 13 please Luke chapter 13 and we're coming to the end of this chapter and we have Jesus in Galilee he's teaching the disciples he's teaching the crowds he's healing he's calling people to come to him and he then has this approach and this conversation with the

[ 29 : 30 ] Pharisees at the end of the chapter so we're just going to read a few verses at the end of Luke chapter 13 verses 31 to 35 this is God's word at that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him leave this place and go somewhere else Herod wants to kill you he replied go tell that fox I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day I will reach my goal in any case I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem O Jerusalem Jerusalem you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you are not willing look your house is left to you desolate

I tell you you will not see me again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Gaelic from Psalm 37 and we'll sing from verse 7 to verse 9 rest in the Lord and patiently wait for him do not fret for him who prospering in his way success and sin doth get do thou from anger cease and wrath see thou forsake also fret not thyself in any wise that evil thou should do we hear that call and that psalm not to panic not to fret but to trust God and we'll sing these two stanzas to God's praise we remain seated to sing in

Gaelic to first Go off ■■■■■■ 103-5 Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 33 : 42 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

And just as we turn back to it again, let's pray. Thank you. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you for these eyewitness accounts of the life and ministry and death and resurrection of Jesus.

[ 35 : 41 ] We thank you for the conversation. We thank you for the conversation that's recorded for us here in these few verses that we have read. And we pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, our teacher, to guide us and lead us in speaking and thinking and believing and responding to the words that we meditate upon now at this time.

We thank you for the gospel of Jesus. We thank you for the good news about Jesus Christ, that there is salvation. There is life everlasting.

There is hope for today and hope for eternity in him. We thank you for the good news about Jesus.

We thank you for the courage that they demonstrate in the way that they speak so freely about Jesus in school and at home. Help us to be like them in terms of having a childlike faith.

And what we pray for the children and for ourselves in the building here, we pray for the churches around us, that whatever the gospel is preached, that you would be working, Lord.

[ 37 : 16 ] We pray for the churches connected to us today. We thank you for the visitors who are here with us. And we pray that the congregations that they may attend in different places, that they may know your blessing and your hand upon them, where they are today.

And for those visiting with us, we pray for refreshment in this time with us in Harris. So hear our prayers and help us as we look to you. And we pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. I wonder, have you ever been in a place? You've walked into a room. And when you walk into the room, the conversation that you could hear kind of murmuring on behind the door, when you open the door and walk in, it suddenly stops. And everyone looks at you. And it's kind of awkward. And you get that sense that perhaps you're not welcome.

[ 38 : 20 ] I don't know if that's ever happened to anyone here before. Maybe it's just a minister's privilege. But this is something I think probably all of us have experienced in staff rooms or different places over the years.

But Jesus knew all about that. There were many occasions, many towns and villages where Jesus was not welcome.

We've seen that as we've gone through the gospel thus far. And it seems that this place, this region of Galilee that Jesus is now in, in verse 31, was another area that decided Jesus was not welcome. Those in authority had determined that Jesus was not welcome there. And that's clear from the conversation.

So let's look at this short conversation from verse 31 to 35. And we'll look at it under four headings. The first heading comes in the form of a question.

[ 39 : 25 ] We hear this approach to Jesus. We hear the Pharisees as they address Jesus. And we wonder what's the motivation behind it. Is this a subtle threat?

Or are these secret believers you're speaking? So that's the first point. As we listen to this, is this a subtle threat? Or are we dealing with secret believers?

Looking at verse 31, We read these words. At that time, some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, Leave this place and go somewhere else.

Herod wants to kill you. Now, what was the motivation of the Pharisees in this approach to Christ? And what was going on in their minds as they come to Jesus?

Well, we don't know because Luke doesn't tell us. It could have been that this was a veiled, subtle threat to Jesus.

[ 40 : 32 ] There could have been a menacing tone about this. It could have been a polite way of saying to Jesus, Jesus, we don't want you here. And so this is the kind of softly, softly approach, perhaps, to moving Jesus on.

Rather than just saying, please leave, they couch it in softer language and say, it would be safer if you left. Better for you. So it could have been a kind of subtle, polite threat.

Or it could have been that those who came to Jesus, note that it wasn't the Pharisees as a big group.

But Luke says it was some Pharisees. He narrows it. And it could have been that this was a small group of secret believers who were part of the Pharisees.

We know that there were some who secretly were Pharisees. Well, they were Pharisees, but they secretly cared for Jesus.

[ 41 : 39 ] They were drawn to Jesus. And perhaps it was that kind of a person who was coming to Jesus to warn him about Herod's plan to kill him.

We're not sure. We're not told. Subtle threat, maybe. Secret believers. Possibly. But just in passing, can I ask the question, are there any secret believers here?

Are there any people who come to Jesus when no one else is watching? But who don't want to be seen with him? Maybe there's somebody on the camera there that we can't see, but they're watching week by week.

They don't even want to come and sit in a chair for fear of being seen. But they believe in Jesus. Are there any secret believers here?

Those who might fear that to come out on the side of Christ might be damaging to our reputation, might be costly, might cause people to turn away from us.

[ 43 : 12 ] You know, there were some Pharisees like that. We know about Joseph of Arimathea. We know about Nicodemus.

For a period, they were secret believers. But soon they would step forward. After Jesus' body is nailed to a cross, we see these two secret believers step forward and take the body of Jesus down from the cross and place it in their own tomb.

They step forward. They own Christ as Lord. And maybe this communion season, someone will do that. Maybe. Maybe someone here will step forward from the secrecy to profession.

See, faith in Jesus, it must be personal. But it must not be private. If we believe in him, we're to tell people that.

And I think this is actually something that occurs to me as I speak. This is something not just as a challenge for those who haven't yet come to the Lord's table.

[ 44 : 36 ] This is a challenge to the Christians here, those who are professing faith in Christ. Professing faith in Christ is not a case of stepping forward one day, joining the church, taking the bread, taking the wine, and then getting on with life with no evidence and nothing audible from us that we belong to Jesus.

If we belong to Jesus, if we are trusting in him, people should know that. Our friends, our family members should know and hear and see in us and hear from us that Christ is most important in our lives.

You know, we can talk about plans and methods and events that we try to reach out. faith mission drive-ins, faith mission tent missions, useful things, blessed things.

But the most effective way of evangelism is when believing people speak about Christ. when you and I in the shop, on the street, in the workplace, in our homes, stop being so secretive and open up about Christ.

So there's a challenge that is for me and it's for you. If people were asked about us, would they say that we're secret believers?

[ 46 : 19 ] We never hear anything about Jesus from him. We're called to be open. We're called to be audible.

We're called to be out for Christ. So that's the first point. As we look at this conversation, we wonder the motivation behind it. We can't be sure.

It could be a subtle threat. It could be that they were secret believers. But the substance of the conversation is clear. They say to Jesus, it's best that you get out of here.

Herod wants you dead. And then we have the answer, the response from Jesus and in Jesus' answer it highlights the sovereign control of God.

That's the second point. The sovereign control of God. So Jesus, he hears this threat. He's told about this danger.

[ 47 : 21 ] But there's nothing of panic. God the Son does not go into a mode of panic. He, Jesus, God the Son, has that enduring sense of the sovereign control that his Father has over everything.

Jesus replied, verse 32, go tell that fox, I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day I will reach my goal.

And it's a breathtaking response as we think about it. As Jesus speaks, and he doesn't speak behind Herod's back, he speaks through the Pharisees to Herod directly.

He says, go tell him. You can quote me on this. Now, what do we know about Herod? Well, we know that he was the tetrarch who had a legal jurisdiction over this whole area of Galilee.

We know that he was the most powerful man in that place at that time. So, in terms of his character, was Herod the kind of man who was all bark and no bite.

[ 48 : 34 ] Well, no, he wasn't. We can think about John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin. John the Baptist had lost his head. He was beheaded by this Herod.

So, when Herod says, I want this Jesus dead, we can guess that he will use the power that he has to ensure that Jesus is killed.

So, that's the situation that Jesus was in. He's just received a death threat from the most powerful man in that place.

A man with a bloody track record. Now, if you and I were told, your life is in danger, the most dangerous person in this area wants you dead, we'd probably have our bags packed and gone within half an hour.

But Jesus has no fear of Herod. And that comes through clearly in his response to Herod.

[ 49 : 38 ] He calls him a fox. Which wasn't a compliment. In that day, kings, they were very proud men.

and kings liked to have their egos massaged. They liked to be flattered. So, people often, when they talked about kings, they compared them to lions.

And they loved that kind of stuff. They puffed their chest out. Being compared to a lion was something that really tickled the kings. They loved that. But Jesus, when speaking to Herod, he doesn't call him a lion.

He calls him a wee fox. William Bartley, the commentator, says, to the Jew, the fox was a symbol of three things. First, it was regarded as the slyest of animals.

Second, it was regarded as the most destructive of animals. And third, it was the symbol of a worthless and insignificant man. So, I think it's fair to say Herod probably didn't like being called a fox.

[ 50 : 52 ] But Jesus is not intimidated by Herod. Herod is not going to chase Jesus out of this area. Herod was not going to get in the way of the work that Jesus came to do.

And so Jesus says, go tell that fox Herod. Today and tomorrow, he's not talking literal days, today and tomorrow, he says, I have people I need to see.

There are some who are demon possessed. I'm going to cast the demons out. There are some who are sick. I'm going to lay hands of healing upon them. Tell Herod I've got a schedule I'm following. And his threats will not disrupt the work and the will of my father. commentator says, Jesus took his orders from God and he would not shorten his work by one day to please or escape any earthly king.

And so we look in on this and we ask the question, how could Jesus have so much poise, so much calmness, so much courage, when under threat of death?

[ 52 : 11 ] And the answer is because he trusted his father. He knew that all things were under the sovereign control of God, his father.

And you know, if we are followers of Jesus, we're trusting him. God is our father.

And our lives are lived under his sovereign control. And so as it says in Psalm 37 in the verses that we sang, fret not.

Don't stress. Our lives are under the sovereign control of God. Does that mean that nothing bad or difficult will ever happen to us?

No, it doesn't mean that at all. Jesus would soon be arrested, he would soon be flogged, he would soon be nailed to a cross, he would soon die. Bad things were going to happen.

[ 53 : 19 ] But not because Herod or Pilate said so. Jesus' death and his resurrection was under the sovereign control of God.

So Herod's threats didn't disturb Jesus, didn't disturb that sense of calm that was seen in him. J.C. Ryle says, we ought in a certain measure to aim at having the mind that was in Christ Jesus. We ought to seek to possess a spirit of calm, unshaken confidence about things to come.

We should study to have a heart not afraid of evil tidings, but quiet, steady, trusting in the Lord. See, in this world, if we are Christians, we will face many Herods.

We're going to meet many people like Herod. The spirit of Herod is alive and well in this world today. as we sing in the Amazing Grace hymn, we'll face many dangers, toils and snares.

[ 54 : 35 ] That's the reality of the Christian life. And one day, our time in this world will come to an end. Whether through illness, whether through tragedy, or whether at the end of lots of years, our time in this world will one day come to an end.

But each day of our lives, and the day of our death, is under the sovereign control of God. It says in Psalm 139 verse 16, all the days ordained for us are written in God's book.

And until the day that God has ordained for us, we are indestructible. Ryle says, happy is that person, who can walk in our Lord's steps and say, I shall have what is good for me.

I shall live on earth until my work is done, and not a moment longer. I shall be taken when I am ripe for heaven, and not a minute before.

All the powers of this world cannot take away my life until God permits. all the physicians of this earth cannot preserve it when God calls me away.

[ 56 : 04 ] is that how we view our time in this world? Do we recognize day by day that our lives are under the sovereign control of God?

God is a massively reassuring, comforting, steadying thing to know. God is in control.

There's COVID cases on the boat. We feel the anxiety levels go up, but God is in control. We're struggling with our health, but God is in control.

Our bank balances may be going down. Our family tensions, are intensifying. We're struggling to sleep at night.

God is in control. Speak to him about it. There's so much anxiety today in the world, especially with young people.

[ 57 : 19 ] Teenagers are so anxious about so many things. things. But let's be encouraged to remember and to remind them when we have opportunity that God is sovereign.

He is in control of our lives. He loves us. He cares for us. He promises to be with us. He promises he'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us.

And when we know him as our God, we don't need to fear the headers of this world.

Our lives are under the sovereign control of God if we are trusting in him. God and although I have a fair bit more to say, I think we'll stop there today.

And let me simply extend that invitation through the gospel. Let me press on you with the zeal and the urgency that I can muster and say, trust God.

[ 58 : 56 ] He loves us. We see Jesus en route to the cross where he will do everything to save us. We see him standing on the top of a hill looking down over a people who are pushing him away.

And he says to them and he says to us with tears, trust me. Trust me with your life. Trust me with each day.

Trust me with your death. Trust me. with your eternity. And then fret not.

Don't panic when you face the herds. Don't fear when life sometimes feels like it's crashing in. But keep your eyes fixed on the one who is the ancient of days.

The sovereign, all-powerful, almighty, all-loving, gracious God. Trust him.

[ 60 : 27 ] Let's pray. our heavenly father, we thank you for your son, Jesus, our savior.

We thank you that he is the one who holds out his hand and says, trust me as your savior. savior.

We thank you that even this morning we have the opportunity to trust Christ as savior.

and yet we're conscious that even in this room there are some who are not willing. And we pray, Lord, that you would be working in the power of the Holy Spirit to break down that sinful, stubborn rebellion against the entreaty of God.

We pray that even this morning there may be someone who bows the knee to Christ and confesses that he is Lord.

We know that ultimately every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. But on the day when we meet Jesus in eternity, if we have not trusted him until then, it will be too late to receive him as saviour.

[ 61 : 59 ] Rather, we will have to face him as judge. So we pray that there will be no one who has that awful prospect to endure.

But that each of us who trust Jesus know the forgiveness of sin, the assurance of salvation, and that steadying sense of walking time, through time, with the one who is in control of all things.

And we pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen. we're going to close by singing a hymn which is a new one for us.

It's called The Ancient of Days. And Cammy's going to sing the first verse through once on his own, and then the words can be repeated, please, Mary Catherine, and we'll sing as a congregation this hymn.

And it's a hymn that really helps us to focus on the fact that God is sovereign, he is trustworthy, and we can be at peace knowing that if we know him.

[ 63 : 19 ] So let's hear this hymn sung, and after the first verse we'll stand and sing together. Amen.

Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king reigning over all, so I will not fear, for this truth remains, that my God is the ancient of days.

Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king reigning over all, so I will not fear, for this truth remains, that my God is the ancient of days.

None above him, none before him, all of time in his hands, for his throne it shall remain and ever stand.

All the power of glory, I will trust in his name, for my God is the ancient of days.

days. Oh, the dread of night overwhelms my soul, he is here with me, I am not alone, oh, his love is sure, and he knows my name, for my God is the ancient of days.

[ 65 : 42 ] though I may not see what the future brings, I will watch and wait for the saviour king, then my joy complete, standing face to face in the presence of the ancient of days.

None above him, none before him, all of time in his hands, for his throne it shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name, for my God is the ancient of days.

For my God is the ancient of days. And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.  
Amen.