

15.1.23 am

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Preacher: Stuart King

[0 : 00] So let's come together in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, Lord, we give you thanks for this day that you've given to us.

We give you thanks so we can come together and we can come and worship and praise of your most holy name. We come before a God that is loving, a God that is sovereign, a God that is just, a God that is holy.

We give you thanks for those wonderful attributes that we see in you. We pray that as we live our lives that we would be able to live a life that is pleasing to you.

Pleasing to that God who is our wonderful creator. And we look around on a cold morning as we see in the beauty around us, your wonderful handiwork, Lord.

And we pray that as we do, we're not coming complacent when we open our doors or we open our windows. That we don't be complacent about the beauty around us. That it reminds us each and every day of who you are.

[0 : 57] That you are indeed the one that is our wonderful creator, Lord. And we pray that we would indeed continue to glorify you. And that we would glorify you as well, Lord. And as we seek to see your will done on earth as it is in heaven, we would strive to do what is pleasing to you, Lord.

We know that each and every one of us here and each and every one of us online have fallen far short of what would be pleasing to you, Lord. Yet we know that when we see that wonderful thing through your glorious scripture, we see that salvation plan that was instituted before time.

That was fulfilled by the sending of your only Son, him who knew no sin, who became sinful, Lord. And we pray that as we remember that, that we're not forgetful of the brutality of what happened at the cross.

That each and every one of us here have our fingerprints and the nails on that cross, Lord. And we remind ourselves that we have sinned as well. Although we were not there at the fall, we have very much contributed in our own lives.

The sin in our own lives. And we pray, Lord, that you would set it upon our hearts for those of us that have not been able to repent of the sins in our lives. To turn away from a sinful life.

[2 : 11] To turn away from the things that we do that we know are wrong, that we know are far from you, Lord. So we pray that you would indeed reveal yourself to us. We pray for those who are unable to be with us today.

We pray for those particularly who are sick at this time and unable to come into your house, Lord. We give you thanks that you are indeed a God of comfort. That you are the God that will comfort them, Lord.

And if they are on their own, that you would indeed be with them as well, Lord. And that those who are grieving as well at this time, we bring them before you. We bring those before you who are dealing with significant grief in their lives, Lord.

Those possibly who have a recent grief and those who have grieved in years past, Lord. We know that the feelings of grief and the struggles that we have don't go away quickly, Lord.

And that they linger with us. So we know, Lord, that when we come to you, we come to that all comforting cause. That we can be encouraged to know that when we do that, we are able to be comforted in the valleys.

[3 : 13] And we're also able to be comforted when we're in the high places, Lord. When we're on the mountain tops. And when things are going well, we know we can turn to you. There are no instances in our lives where we cannot turn to you.

When things are going well, we turn to you. Knowing that you are a God that's near to us. You're not a God that's distant. You're not a God that we cannot turn to. You're not a God that doesn't hear

our prayers.

But not only do you hear our prayers, Lord. You answer them. And although we may not always understand the answers to our prayers, Lord. We give thanks knowing that you are the all-powerful, all-knowing God.

And although we, as we say, we may not understand, we know that when we come to you, that powerful knowing God knows best for us. Knows what's best for us in our lives. And we give you thanks for that, Lord.

We pray for our own minister. We pray for David in Newst. And we give you thanks for him. We pray that he would indeed be blessed in the congregation David in Newst. And that he would indeed bless that word as it's preached to us.

[4 : 11] We pray for congregations like you that are vacant at this time across our islands and across the country. We pray for those vacant congregations, Lord. And ask that you would set it upon the hearts of young men to come into the ministry, Lord.

To share the gospel. To go out to these places. We see our nation is darker than it has been in many recent years, Lord. We are a nation that was once well acquainted with you, Lord.

But that is no longer the case. We see so many corners of our nation that are dark places. Dark to the gospel, Lord. And we pray that you would bless our denomination as it seeks to plant churches across our country.

We pray that you would bless those respective areas. And indeed, the gospel would flourish there, Lord. That people would see that the gospel is something that is good. That it is indeed the good news.

And it would change the hearts, Lord, of those in the respective communities, Lord. So we bring before you those vacant congregations. We think of the congregations in Target here where your word is being preached, Lord.

[5 : 16] We ask that you would bless them. We ask that you would bless Christ crucified as priests, Lord. We pray that you would indeed bless those congregations. And you would bless that word as it goes out. And that you would indeed sow the seeds, Lord, in the hearts of those hearers this morning, Lord.

So we pray, Lord, that you'll go before us. That you'll be round us. That you'll keep us. And that you'll forgive us for all of our many sins. In Christ's most precious name we pray. Amen. Okay, boys and girls, I'm going to ask you to come forward.

I'll move this. Okay. How are you all?

Just good. Is that all? Are you glad to have a week where there's going to be no strikes and you can get a full solid week of work? No. What? I'm not. Well, I can assure you your parents can't.

Anyone who's unhappy is delighted. They'll be back to a full week of normality. I want to ask you, just put your hands up if this is true. Have you ever said something and after you've said it, you've thought, oh, I wish I hadn't said that.

[6 : 24] That was straight in there. That was a quick one. Have we all said something and we thought, oh, no, I shouldn't have said that. Yeah? Oh, no, you said it this morning, come on. I think we all have.

We've all said something and we think, oh, no, I wish I hadn't said that. So I'm going to need two helpers. Does that really work? Two people to help me. If you don't mind, put your hands up if you want to help. Emily's first.

Nobody else wants to help? Oh, don't worry, you're not going to get it. Okay, I'll start with Emily. So, can anyone tell me what this stuff is? Any guesses, Miriam?

Toothpaste, yeah. So I'm going to get you all to the fucking brush now. You're not brushing it. What I want you to do, Emily, you can come up first. What I would like you to do, Emily, is take this toothpaste.

This is yours, so apologies. I would like you to take the toothpaste and put it onto the paper plate. And I didn't see you on there to make sure I was uncleaning this week, so apologies if this goes wrong.

[7 : 23] Okay, put it all out onto the platform, please. Carefully. Fantastic. That'll do, that'll do. Okay, great. Okay, so can we all see your toothpaste on the paper?

Yeah? So, Michael, you've got a really easy job now. So I'd like you to put this back in. Will you come up? Back in? Yeah. Nice. So you take your time, and you can put it.

Oh, nice. I'm going to step ahead or something. You can't get a spoon, no, you can only remain here. Wait, so... Emily did it just like that.

Oh, my word, what's going on? Ah, okay. So, okay, we'll just leave it back in. So, how you did Michael get on there?

Can we all see? Yes, good. Fantastic. Just put the street back. Wonderful. There's an issue there, isn't there? No, no, no. So... So... The reason I brought this as a bit of an example to is, what did I say at the beginning about saying something that we can't, that we wish we hadn't said?

[8 : 37] We've all had situations like that, haven't we? Where we've said something and thought, oh, no. And it reminded me of this toothpaste, which is now a little unusable thing, you both. Thank you, Julie.

Thank you. So, it reminded me of something that we all do and we've all done, but it's something I think we need to remind ourselves not to do. And it's we need to be really careful with our tongues and our minds, what we say.

I think every one of us here, grown-ups in the world, will probably think of times where they've said something and thought, oh, I wish I hadn't said that. And once it's out there, can you get it back in? No. No? What, like, similar to the toothpaste? And it's, I'm sorry. So, you can apologise for it and you can try and correct it, but you can't take it back and think it's never been out there, can you? It's always going to be out there.

And it's something that we all need to remember. So, whether you're in school, whether you're at work, whether you're at home sometimes, we need to be really careful about the words that we say. And we need to be really careful about how we use them.

[9 : 37] But there's a passage in Proverbs 21, 23, and it says, whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. So, keeping your mouth and your tongue, what do you think that means?

Just put it in your pocket? Just take your mouth and your tongue, stick it in your pocket and keep it hidden? No. No? What does it mean to keep your mouth and your tongue? To keep it shut? To keep it shut? To keep it shut? Not always to keep it shut.

But at times we have to speak, we wouldn't be able to do anything if we just had our mouths closed the whole time. But it's about thinking about what we do, thinking about what we say. Whenever we are about to say something, in the back of your mind think, what impact is this going to have?

And it's the same when it comes to sharing the gospel with people. We need to be careful how we do it. Because we're to try and blend souls, not arguments with people. So we don't want to get in a massive argument with somebody about the gospel.

If it ultimately pushes them away, we need to try and blend people's souls. And it comes as a real encouragement to you, to remember, to keep an eye on your mouth. Think of the toothpaste. When you're about to say something, think of the toothpaste.

[10 : 43] The smell is probably going right to your brains at the moment. Think of that toothpaste when you're about to say something. Think of what the impact is going to be. Is this another mess? We can't fix this.

We can't fix it. We can maybe tidy it up and make it a little bit better than it is at the moment. But it's out there. And we need to remember to watch our words and be careful with what we do. So we put our hands together.

We'll say a wee short word of prayer just now. Lord God, we give you thanks for the young ones of the Lord. We pray for them, Lord.

And ask that as they go to Sunday school today and as they go each week, we pray, Lord, that they would learn more about who you are, that they would seek to live a life that is pleasing to you, Lord. In the days of their youth, that they would turn to you, that they would seek to live lives that are guided by you, that they would trust you in all things, Lord. That they would turn to you in the difficult times.

[11 : 39] They would turn to you in the positive times, Lord. And that they, along with all of us here, Lord, would watch our tongues. We would be careful with the words that we use. For we know that the words that we use and the words we say can be so damaging.

They can also be so encouraging and uplifting. And we pray, Lord, that as we speak, as we speak the gospel, as we share our word in season with those around us, that it would indeed be seasoned well, Lord.

That it would not be something that is pungent and that seeks to drive people away, Lord. That we would seek to win souls in our arguments. We seek not just to be right, but to share your word, to share it in a loving way, Lord.

As we see throughout Scripture, we see your son particularly sharing that word, Lord. Sharing it gently as well, Lord. As well as times of righteous anger, Lord.

So we pray that we would remember to watch our tongues, that we would keep them, and that we would know indeed, that we would keep ourselves out of trouble with those who keep their tongues and keep their mouths, Lord. So go before each and every one of us here, Lord.

[12:40] Be with the young ones as they go out to Sunday school. And we pray for the teachers as well, Lord. We give you thanks for them. We thank you for the sharing of your word and the sharing of the sending of your only son.

We would have a good time for each and every one of us, Lord. So go before us, surround us, keep us from all evil, Lord. And forgive us for all of our sins. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Okay, we're just going to sing now.

We're going to sing again. This time, God's praise in Psalm 95 in the Psalter. Psalm 95, verses 1 to 7. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

Come, let us, everyone, a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation. Let us, before his presence, come with praise and thankful voice. Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise.

For God, a great God and great King, above all gods he is, the depths of the earth are in his hands, the strength of hills is his. To him the spacious sea belongs, for he the same did make, the dry land also from his hands as its form had first to take.

[13:43] O come and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all and on our knees before the Lord, our maker, let us fall. For he is our God, the people we of his own pasture are. And of his hand the sheep today, if he his voice will hear.

So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 95 to God's praise and we'll stand to sing. Amen. O come, let us sing to you, Let us sing to you, Let us sing songs to Him with grace

And make a joyful noise For God a King, God a King Abba, Abba, Abba, God He is Just all of the earth are in His hand The same for bells is His To Him the Spirit shall see beyond For He the Savior came That I, our Lord, so from His hands

Is for my first day O come and let us worship Him Let us be done with all And all the peace before the Lord And with the rest of all For He is our Lord The people we Of His own passion And all His love And the sheep today

And His voice will hear As the young ones head out to Sunday School If we could turn in our Bibles In the Old Testament To the book of Exodus We've got a couple of readings This morning The book of Exodus in chapter 19 And we'll read into Chapter 20 as well The book of Exodus chapter 19 And we'll read from the beginning On the third noon After the people of Israel Had gone out of the land of Egypt On that day They came into the wilderness of Sinai They sent out from Rephidim

[18:04] And came into the wilderness of Sinai And they encamped in the wilderness There Israel encamped before the mountain While Moses went up to God The Lord called to him Out of the mountain No sorry The Lord called to him Out of the mountain Saying Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob And tell the people of Israel You yourselves have seen What I did to the Egyptians And how I bore on evil's wings And brought you to myself Now therefore If you will indeed obey my voice And keep my covenant You shall be my treasured possession Among all peoples For all the earth is mine And you shall be to me A kingdom of priests And a holy nation These are the words That you shall speak To the people of Israel So Moses came And called to the elders Of the people And said before them All these words That the Lord had commanded him All the people answered together And said All that the Lord Had spoken We will do And Moses reported The words of the people To the Lord And the Lord said to Moses Behold I am coming to you In a thick cloud That the people may hear

When I speak with you And may also believe you forever When Moses told the words Of the people To the Lord The Lord said to Moses Go to the people And consecrate them Today and tomorrow And let them wash their garments And be ready for the third day For on the third day The Lord will come down On Mount Sinai In the sight of all the people And you shall set limits For the people All around Saying Take care not to go up Into the mountain Or touch the edge of it Whoever touches the mountain Shall be put to death No hand shall touch him But he shall be stoned or shone

Whether beast or man He shall not live When the trumpet sounds A long blast He shall come up To the mountain So Moses went down From the mountain To the people And consecrated the people And they washed their garments He said to the people Be ready for the third day Do not go near a woman Or a wife In other translations On the morning of the third day There were thunder and lightning And a thick cloud On the mountain And a very loud trumpet Glast so that all the people In the camp trembled

Then Moses brought the people Out of the camp To meet God And they took their stand At the foot of the mountain Now Mount Sinai Was wrapped in smoke Because the Lord Had descended on it In fire The smoke of it Went up like smoke Of a kiln And the whole mountain Trembled greatly And as the sound Of the trumpet Grew louder and louder Moses spoke And God answered him In thunder The Lord came down On Mount Sinai To the top of the mountain And the Lord called Moses To the top of the mountain And Moses went up And the Lord said to Moses Go down and warn the people Lest they break through To the people To look And many of them perish Also let the priests Who come near to the Lord Consecrate themselves Lest the Lord Break out against them And Moses said to the Lord The people cannot come up To Mount Sinai For you yourself warned us Saying Set limits around the mountain And consecrate it And the Lord said to him Go down and come up Bringing Aaron with you But do not let the priests And the people Break through To come up to the Lord Lest he break out Against them

So Moses went down To the people And told them And God said All these words Saying I am the Lord your God Who brought you Out of the land of Egypt Out of the house of slavery You shall have no other gods Before me You shall not make For yourself A carved image Or any likeness Of anything That is in heaven above Or that is in the earth beneath Or that is in water under the earth You shall not bow down to them Or serve them For I the Lord your God Am a jealous God Visiting the iniquity Of the fathers On the children To the third And fourth generation Of those who hate me But showing steadfast love To thousands Of those who love me And keep my commandments You shall not take The name of the Lord your God In vain For the Lord will not Hold him guiltless Who takes him in vain Remember the Sabbath day To keep it holy Six days you shall labour And do all your work For the seventh day Is a Sabbath To the Lord your God On it you shall not Do any work You or your son Or your daughter Your male servant Or your female servant Or your livestock Or the soldier Who is within your gates

For in the six days The Lord made heaven And the earth The sea And all that is in them And rested on the seventh day Therefore the Lord Blessed the Sabbath day And made it holy On your father And your mother That your days May be long In the land Of the Lord God Is giving you You shall not murder You shall not commit adultery You shall not steal You shall not bear false witness Against your neighbour You shall not covet Your neighbour's house You shall not covet Your neighbour's wife Or his male servant Or his female servant Or his ox Or his donkey Or anything that is your neighbour's Now when all the people Saw the thunder And flash of lightning And the sound of the trumpet And the mountain smoke The people were afraid And trembled And they stood far off And said to Moses You speak to us And we will listen But do not let God Speak to us Lest we die Moses said to the people Do not fear For God has come to test you That the fear of him May be before you That you may not sin The people stood far off Where Moses drew near To the thick darkness Where God was Amen And we will If we return now To our second reading

[23 : 07] In 1st Kings I'll maybe come short I'm just conscious of time If we go to 1st Kings Chapter 18 And instead of reading The whole chapter We'll maybe start from Verse 17 If that's ok So 1st Kings 18 Starting at verse 17 When Ahab saw Elijah Ahab said to him Is it you You troubler of Israel And he answered I have not troubled Israel But you have And your father's house Because you have abandoned The commandments of the Lord And followed the Baals Now therefore Send and gather all Israel To me at Mount Carmel And the 450 prophets of Baal And the 400 prophets of Asherah Who eat at Jezebel's table So Ahab sent all to the people of Israel And gathered the prophets Together at Mount Carmel And Elijah came near to all people And said How long have you go limping Between two different opinions For the Lord is God Follow him But if Baal then follow him And the people did not Answer him a word Then Elijah said to the people

I Even I only Am a I'm like a prophet to the Lord But Baal's prophets Are 450 men Let two bulls be given to us And let them choose One bull for themselves And cut it in pieces And lay it on the wood But put no fire on it And I will prepare The other bull And lay it on the wood And put no fire on it You call upon the name Of your God And I will call upon The name of the Lord And the God Answer And

the God who answers By fire He is God And all the people answer It is well spoken Then Elijah said To the prophets of Baal Choose for yourselves One bull And prepare it first For you are many And call upon the name Of your God But put no fire to it And they took the bull That was given them And they prepared it And called upon The name of Baal From morning until noon Saying O Baal Answer us But there was no voice And no one answered And they looked around The altar that they had made And at noon Elijah mocked them Saying Cry aloud For he is a God Either he is musing Or he is relieving himself Or he is on a journey

Or perhaps he is asleep And must be awakened And they cried aloud And cut themselves After their custom With swords and lances Until the blood Gushed out upon them And as midday passed They raved on Until the time Of the offering Of the ablation And there was no voice No one answered No one paid attention Then Elijah said To all the people Come near to me And all the people Came near to him And he repaired The altar of the Lord That had been thrown down Elijah took twelve stones According to the number Of the tribes Of the sons of Jacob To whom the word Of the Lord came Saying Israel shall be Your name And with the stones He built an altar In the name of the Lord And he had a trench About the altar As great as would contain Two seers of seeds And he put the wood in order And cut the bull in pieces And laid it on the wood And he said Fill four jars with water And pour it on the burnt Offering and on the wood And he said Do it a second time And they did it a second time And he said Do it a third time And they did it a third time And the water ran around the altar And filled the trench Also with water

And at the time of the offering Of the oblation Elijah the prophet Came near and said O Lord God of Abraham Isaac and Israel Let it be known this day That you are God in Israel And I am your servant And that I have done All these things At your word Answer me O Lord Answer me That this people may know That you O Lord Are God And that you have turned Their hearts back Then the fire of the Lord Fell and consumed The burnt offering And the wood And the stones And the dust And lighted up The water that was In the trench And when all the people Saw it They fell on their faces And said Lord he is God The Lord he is God And Elijah said to them Seize the prophets Who failed Let none of them escape And he seized them And Elijah brought them Down to the brute cushion And slaughtered them there Amen And we'll stop the passage there Bless the word to us Before we come back To explore those two passages We'll just sing now In Gaelic Psalm 72 Psalm 72 It's the first two verses

Well the first three verses In the first two stanzas Of Psalm 72 The Lord thy judgments Give the king His son thy righteousness With right he shall Thy people judge Thy poor with uprightness The lofty mountains Shall bring forth And to the people peace Likewise the little Hills the same Shall do By righteousness So we'll sing These verses in Gaelic And we'll stay seated To sing TheyORT the caregivers Thank you.

[28 : 19] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 49] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[35 : 19] Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you.

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

Thank you.

[37 : 43] Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you.

[40 : 57] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. to give thanks that it is indeed God that's sovereign, not any one of us here. We also see at Sinai, his holiness is evident in the Ten Commandments that he gives to the Israelites, as they're meant to help them live in a way that is pleasing to God, and it also separates them as a holy people.

It separates them from those around in pleasing God, they're set apart as a holy people. I think it's a crucial lesson for us to learn with this visible manifestation of God and the revelation here at Mount Sinai.

Its recognition of God's holiness is so important to us, to remember his holiness, but also how that reflects on how we live lives that are holy as well. The Sinai Covenant also underscores the special role of the mediator.

The Lord declares his intention to descend and speak directly so that the people might fear and trust Moses forever. Just read verse 9 of the passage we have there. And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you forever.

[43 : 05] So Moses here is clearly the mediator and ultimately points us to the importance of that role which we'll look at slightly later on when we think of a mediator. Finally, when we look at Mount Sinai, we see a wonderful promise being made.

Maybe it doesn't often jump out of the page to us as a promise, but one of the commentators was at the server anyway by Ebony Zererskin, and I'll just read it, there's a few lines, I'll just read it as he wrote it, but it reminds us of the promise that we read here in Exodus 19.

He says, God not only speaks forth his own glory and transcendent being, but he speaks over himself unto us as our God. Here is a promise, yes, something more than a promise.

God doesn't come and go on his promises. He's not yea or nay. He doesn't make one promise one day and retract to another. No, it's always yea and amen. And that's something that should bring each and every one of us to our knees when we think of our Creator.

We've got a world around us, and I'm sure we've all witnessed it ourselves, that it's ever-changing. The goalposts continue to change. You go back a couple of decades and one thing means another thing.

[44 : 11] Gender means another thing now. The world is so changing, and it's turning away from God, but we've got a wonderful blessing and promise here knowing that God is unchanging. He is entirely unchanging.

No matter what he says in the book that we read, he's not going to turn away from that. He's not going to change his mind. And it's something that we ought to glorify him, continue to glorify him in his joy and forever as we read in the Catechism.

But it's something that we ought to be grabbing a hold of and remembering that he is an unchanging God. And that's something that we ought to be reminded of. Now, I'll just concentrate. If we move forward to Mount Carmel, in 1 Kings chapter 18, which we read.

I want us to just consider a little bit, what does Mount Carmel now tell us? We've seen that Mount Sinai shows us the sovereignty of God, the power of God, the love, his promise, his holiness.

So what do we see when we look at Mount Carmel? Is it just the same? Is it the exact same references that we have? Or is there something more that we look at when we consider Mount Carmel? So just in summary, if we look at the passage that we read in 18, the passage tells us the story of his confrontation between the prophet Elijah and the prophets of the small-gay God Baal on Mount Carmel.

[45 : 28] The chapter begins by describing a drought in the land of Israel that has lasted for three and a half years. Elijah goes to the king, Ahab, and tells him the drought is a punishment from God because of Ahab's idolatry and disobedience.

Elijah then challenges the prophets of Baal, the god worshipped by Ahab. And many of the Israelites are contested to prove who is the true God. The prophets of Baal set up their own altar and called upon their god to send fire to consume their offering.

But as we read, nothing happens. There was nothing here. There was no voice, no response.

Nothing happened. Elijah then sets up an altar to the Lord, douses it with water, and called upon the Lord to send fire and consume the offering.

You see fire falling from heaven and consuming the offering. And the people fall on their faces and declare that the Lord is God. Elijah then is the prophets of Baal arrested and executed, and the drought comes to an end.

So when we see this passage in 1 Kings chapter 18, it's so important, such an important chapter in the Bible. Much like we saw in Mount Sinai, it demonstrates again the power and the sovereignty of God.

[46 : 35] In this case, though, it's over other gods as well. It's not just power and sovereignty in that situation, but it's power over all other gods.

And it's a reminder of the importance of faithfulness and obedience to the one true God. And it illustrates the dangers of idolatry and the consequences of turning away from the true God. And if we think it lights us back, we don't need to come back in the Bibles too, but it lights us back to what we read in Exodus chapter 20 when we look to the commandments. You shall have no other gods before me. We see so evidently here that you shall have no other gods before me. And we see it worked out. And it's something we need to remind ourselves. It might not be a god like Baal. Don't distance yourself from this passage by thinking, well, I don't worship another god out there.

But what do we worship in our lives? Is it our careers? Is it our bank balances? We need to think in our own lives, what is it that consumes our time? We're 24 hours in the day. How much of it do we spend directed to the Lord?

[47 : 37] Or how much do we spend on our phones? Or whatever that passion may be, these are our idols that we ought to be. Mindful of. And we also see so importantly in verse 37 of this passage in 1 Kings 18.

Verse 37 tells us, what's it? Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.

The human act of repentance isn't possible without God's divine grace. We see there that you have turned their hearts back. It's not anything I can do. It's not anything any one of us can do.

It's God's divine grace that allows that to happen. John Wesley says, let them feel so powerful a change in their hearts that they may know it's your work, God.

Back unto you from those who have revolted. None of us here, none of us online, none of us in this world are fit for salvation on our own, none of us, none of us are able to attain salvation in and of ourselves if it wasn't for the Lord and his divine grace.

[48 : 42] Dale Ruff Davis summarises this passage here in this Mount Carmel contest by saying, it proves not only that Yahweh is truly God, but that he is truly gracious. He's not only the real God, but the reconciling God.

Yahweh's buyer is both an overt proof that he is God, but also a subtle invitation. And that's something we should grasp today. And this is an invitation to us to turn to God and to turn to the Lord that is loving in all that we see around.

But what else do the events of Mount Carmel tell us about God and his attributes? You see that he's powerful, he's all powerful, he's all loving, he's the creator and sustainer of the universe.

These attributes are essential to understanding who God is and how he relates to us. With God being sovereign, holy, just and loving, it's also evident both in what we read in Mount Sinai as well as here in Mount Carmel.

His power and his faithfulness are displayed as he sends down fire here on Mount Carmel from heaven. Defeating the prophets of Baal and showing the Israelites that he is the one true God.

[49 : 51] His justice is also on display in this event as the prophets of Baal are unable to produce any fire and are shown to be false prophets. In all these events, God's sovereignty, power, holiness, justice and love are present and specifically to those who witness them.

And here in North Harris, as well as we read and consider the words in this passage, it's evident to us that he is indeed the true God. These attributes serve to demonstrate God's authority, his perfection and his moral character, his fairness, his righteousness and his deep, deep love for us. When we think about the attributes of God, I think it's, it's helpful to dig a little bit deeper as to what it means when we think of these attributes. And it's probably sending shivers to him, I'm seeing Duncan, when we were doing the Saturday course a few years ago now.

There was an essay we had to do on divine simplicity, which will give a shiver to your spine first when you hear about divine simplicity. But what it effectively means is that God is not made up of

parts.

He's not a compounded being. He is simple. He is all that God is. Sorry, all that is in God is God. So divine simplicity, in essence, when we think about the attributes of God, so the lovingness, the power, his mercy, his grace, his holiness, his love.

[51 : 09] When you think of those things, he's not the sum of these things. He is these things in their entirety. These attributes are not compounded and make up the person of God. No, he is each one of these in its entirety.

And the Dutch theologian Herman Babbink said, God is everything that he possesses. He is everything that he possesses. And we think of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Chapter 2 says there, it's but one living and true God who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, with a body, parts, or passions.

So we see that he is all of these attributes that we consider when we look at God. It's not that he occasionally is loving or he is every couple of months we see that he is merciful.

No, he is these things all the time in their absolute entirety. So finally, as we come to a close, I want us just to fast forward to another hill. Not in our Bibles, we don't need to go there in our Bibles.

[52 : 09] But it's finally at Calvary. We think of Calvary. Calvary. God's love, we've spoken about, is on display in its most evident and powerful way. Where we see Jesus willing to give up his life for the sake of humanity, offering the possibility of salvation to all who believe in him.

Calvary, also known as Golgotha, is the hill where Jesus was crucified. And as we sign at the beginning of the service, I'll just read the first verse of that hymn. There is a green hill far away without a city wall where the dear Lord was crucified who died to save us all.

Oh dearly, dearly has he loved and we must love him too. And trust in his redeeming blood and try his works to do. The light between these three mountains at Sinai, Carmel and Calvary or Golgotha lies in the events that took place on them and the impact that these events had on those who witnessed them.

Mount Sinai was the mountain where God gave his laws to the Israelites, setting them apart as a holy people. Mount Carmel was the mountain where God again showed his power and faithfulness to the Israelites by defeating the prophets of Baal.

Mount Sinai was the mountain where Jesus died and was resurrected, offering salvation to all who believe in him. But God's love is not just a feeling or an emotion as we might understand love, but it's part of his very nature.

[53 : 28] We read in John 1 verse, 1 John 4, that are saying that anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. This verse emphasises the fact that love is at the very core of who God is.

And for those among us who are online who are not yet Christian, God's love is also unconditional. Meaning that it's not based on our actions or our worthiness or anything we can attain in our own lives.

If it was, then not one of us seated here today would measure up. Not one. And in Romans 5 verse 8 it says, But God shows his love for us in the world. We were still sinners.

Christ died for us. And it demonstrates the fact that God loved us even when we were at our worst. And sent his son to die for us as a sacrifice for our sins.

Now we saw briefly earlier that Moses was that mediator for the Israelites. But when we consider Christ at Calvary, he is our greater mediator. And it's my prayer that we all find strength and guidance in the mountains of the Bible.

[54 : 28] And it may point us towards a closer relationship with God. I want to leave us just with the verses of verse 21 of 1 Kings 18. We need verse 21 just now.

I want to just very briefly consider this just now. Verse 21 tells us, And Elijah came near to all people and said, How long will you go limping between two different opinions?

How long will you go limping or stuck between two different opinions? Each one of us here will be leaving this building making a choice. We'll either make a choice between these two opinions.

Either we are trusting in the Lord, that loving, powerful God who sent his son to die for us. Either that, or we're content in saying, Not yet, or maybe later.

And I want to remind you that there may not be a later to rely on. None of us are guaranteed to see tomorrow, let alone see out the rest of this day. Today is the day of salvation.

[55 : 28] And it's my opinion that none here will let the day pass without making right with the loving, powerful, sovereign God that we see so clearly in the mountains and hills of the Bible.

And I'll conclude this morning or this afternoon with something that David said at the end of his service last week. He says, As we sing that new song, as we sang in Psalm 95, As we sing that new song from within our hearts, God is glorified.

And when we do, the people around us begin to see something of the glory of God that we see. This draws them to him. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Seek a clearer view and a closer walk with God. Because he alone is worthy of our praise. Amen. And may the Lord bless you. Very brief reflections towards us just now. We'll say a short word of prayer before we complete the song.

Our gracious and ever-blessed Father, we give you thanks for the words which we see before. We give you thanks that when we look to the mountains and to the hills scattered throughout the Bible, we see wonderful attributes.

[56 : 40] We see wonderful attributes of our God. the love, the power, the sovereignty, the holiness, the justice, the grace, the promises. And we see so much, Lord. And we pray that as we go away from your house today, that we will contemplate these words, that we'll meditate upon them, that we'll chew upon these words.

We'll ask, what do they mean to us? What do they mean to teach in every one of us here today, Lord? For we know that you are indeed that loving heart. We see that love so evidently in the sending of him who knew no sin, who became sin for us.

Lord, we give you thanks for that gift. All we need to do is to receive the gift. You don't require anything of us. For you know, and we know ourselves, that there's nothing we can do to attain salvation.

So we give you thanks for your power, your sovereignty. And we give you thanks for the cross, Lord. And we pray that you would be with each and every one of us now, Lord. And that we would, when we leave this place, Lord, that we contemplate those two stuttering opinions.

Are we trusting in you? And we seek to live a life that is pleasing to you. Are we in the camp, and we say, later, or not yet, knowing that that time may never come.

[57 : 44] So be with us just now, Lord. Forgive us for all of our sins. In Christ's precious and glorious name we pray. Amen. We will conclude our service today by singing. Psalm 1-2-1.

In the Psalter. The Psalter version. Psalm 1-2-1. I, too, the hills will lift my eyes. From whence hath come my name. My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made.

By foot he'll let not let slain us. Well, he slumber that he keeps. Behold, that he keeps Israel. He slumbers, not nor sleeps. The Lord he keeps. The Lord thy shame. And my right hand doth stay. The moon by night he shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day. The Lord shall keep thy soul he shall. Preserve thee from all hell. Henceforth thy going out and in, God keep forever will.

So we'll sing Psalm 1-2-1. Let's praise. And we'll stand. Amen. I, too, the hills will lift my eyes.

[58 : 47] Thy from west. My right hand doth come my name. My city cometh from the Lord, who have not earth admit.

Thy he through to your Lord, thy five faith.

And my glory have not known. And my Savior'll come my FEAR of might. Behold thee, thou give'st Israel, he slumbers nor crossly.

The Lord, he keeps the Lord thy shade, all thy right hand doth say.

The moon by night, he shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day.

[60 : 07] The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall preserve thee from all hell.

Hence, Lord, I know in thou standing, God will keep forever alone.

Amen.