

10.10.21 am The Shulemite Woman Part 1

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Date: 10 October 2021

Preacher: Scott Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody and welcome to our morning service here. Welcome to those who are watching online. We welcome Scott McKeever to our church this morning.
- Scott is hoping, God willing, to go to Edinburgh Theological Seminary with a view to entering the ministry. We've had him here before, so we look forward to hearing God's word through him again.
- And the evening service at 6pm will also be taken by Scott. With the holidays being on, various things are not happening for the next couple of weeks, so there'll be no ladies' fellowship or little fishes for the next two weeks.
- Road to Recovery continues to meet, however, in the church on Tuesday at 7pm. And then the prayer meeting on Wednesday, there we'll have Mr George Barney, who is an elder in Smithdon Free Church.
- He will preach at that meeting, and then George will, God willing, take both services next Sunday as well. So George will be staying in the manse, and George is an incredible person, so he'll be only too delighted if anyone in the congregation wishes to call in at the manse to pay him and his wife a visit.
- [1 : 2 6] And also, as with the holidays as well, there'll be no kids' clubs this Friday. So if you remember all those intimations, that'd be very helpful.
- So that's everything I have to say just now, so we look forward to having Scott leading our service, and we pray for God's blessing upon him as he does so.
- Well, it's good to be back. It's good to see you all again. Thank you for welcoming me down with you. And we pray our time would be blessed together. May we begin our worship by singing in God's praise in Psalm 34.
- Psalm 34, the Scottish Psalter. And we'll sing from verse 1 to 7. God will I bless at all times as praise.
- My mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast, and God the meek shall hear with joyfulness. Extol the Lord with me.
- [2 : 3 3] Let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord. He heard and did me from all fears deliver. They looked to him and lightened where, not shamed where their faces.
- This poor man cried. God heard and saved him from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps, and round encampathes all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.
- We'll sing these verses to God's praise. God will I bless. God will I bless all times his praise.
- My mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast, and God the meek shall heal with joyfulness.
- I sought the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together.
- [3 : 5 3] I sought the Lord. He heard and did. He heard and said, He heard and said, May we join our hearts together in prayer. May we pray to the Lord.

Our Heavenly Father, We pray that you would still our hearts in this time that we gather. We pray that you would reveal yourself to us.

We pray that you would hear your voice speaking to us from your word as a living and active voice.

A voice that we pray that we pray that we pray that we are in our hearts. Lord, may we pray that we pray that we are in our hearts.

[5 : 56] We pierce you in our hearts. And may we come to understand you with a greater understanding. Who you are. What you have done. Your Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent.

The cross of Calvary. The empty tomb. The ascended Saviour. Lord, we pray, help us to understand these things.

And what they mean for us. And the implications they have on us. Lord, help us to consider an eternal rest.

And where that shall be. Lord, we pray that we seek salvation. In Jesus Christ. The one who conquered death.

And the one who shall conquer death for us. And if we believe and trust in him, we shall say that there shall be no sting in death. We shall live. And we shall enjoy eternity with the one whom we love.

[7 : 03] The one who loved us first. We pray this for each of us who listen today. And remember all those who preach the gospel this day.

That it would go forth with power and the accompaniment of your spirit. Going as the wind blowing. As the eye does not see. But we can see the effects of it working in people.

We pray your spirit to be with us. For if it is not, all our efforts will come to nothing. Lord, we pray. Bless us in our time together.

We pray for David. As he leads the worship in our pool today. And remember Elahi as well. And his wife and family. And pray that you would be with them all.

That you would accompany them as well. And that they would know your presence with them. And likewise all preachers of the gospel who share your message today across our nation. Lord, watch over our nation.

[8 : 11] Guide our nation. Guide our leaders. Those who stand in parliament. We pray for them. Give them wisdom.

Give them understanding. The seas of the time seem to be against your word. We pray that eyes should be opened.

Ears should be here. Lord, it seems like we have largely forgotten you. As a nation. People do not see the true God.

Nor the true Saviour. They know Jesus. But only as a word to be taken in vain. We pray. That by your mysterious workings.

We pray. To revive our nation. And turn our hearts. Towards the one. Who. Will give us a new life.

[9 : 15] And give us a new path. And the path that we go down as a nation will be changed. And we will deviate from that path. And turn to us. A more sure path. Though it be narrow.

It would be sure. We pray that for each of our lives. That we walk along that path. The road to holiness. That we will be obedient to your word. Lord, we pray.

For this congregation also. That you will be with them. As our people. As they witness to those around them. Revive them in their hearts.

Lord, draw them closer to you. That we would. Have a deeper love and understanding. Of the Saviour. Whom we know. As trustworthy.

Let iron sharpen iron. Let us share with one another. What Christ has done for us. That we would be encouraged. That we would not be ashamed.

[10:15] Of the Saviour that we worship. But that we would stand boldly. And faithfully. Proclaim him. To be my Saviour.

And my God. Who will not leave me. And who has not left me. As we look over. Our lives. Whether it be long or short. Those lives.

Who have trusted. In Jesus Christ. And have given up their own ways. To follow after him. And they can say.

That he has not left me. And it gives them reason. To continue. And say. That he will not leave me. And that he will be with you.

Lord we pray. That you. Would give us each. That hope. And that future. That is everlasting. And eternal.

[11:15] Lord be with us. As we read your word. And study it. Pray you guide our thoughts through it. Keep the evil one from us. Who goes about.

Causing us all distraction. And frustration. From your way. Lord we pray. You lock him from our presence. And our thoughts this day. Shut him out we pray. That we may keep our eye on Jesus.

And we have that focus. For this time that we gather. Lord be with us. Forgive us as our sins. As we acknowledge they are great and many. And all these things we ask.

In the name of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Amen. If I could say a word to the younger ones. That are with us today.

I believe that you are allowed to come down. And sit on the floor beside me. If that's what you normally do. Just come down. And take up your seat. Where you normally sit. So this side you go to.

[12:11] Okay. Good to see you all. Come over. Come over and take a seat here. There you go.

Just sit on the carpet there. With everyone else. Do you know there's a version of the Bible. That says.

For in this tent. We groan. Longing to be done. At heavenly dwelling. Now you know. You know what a tent is. Yeah. Yeah. Did any of you go camping this summer?

Yeah. Did you go camping? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Did you enjoy it? Yeah. Yeah. And. Did you stay in a tent? Yeah.

Yeah. Would you like to stay in a tent. Forever? No. No. No. I don't have to do school.

[13:07] If you had to do school. If you had to do school. As long as you didn't have to do school. Even when it was raining. And cold. Even on the. In the. Really wild days.

And the tent would be flapping. And the tent would be soaking wet. And you would have to cook outside. Do you think you would like it? No. No.

I don't think so. I don't think I would do that. A camper van. What is it? A camper van. A camper van. No. That's cheating. No.

We wouldn't like to stay in a tent forever. Would we? No. There's lots of things that are wrong with a tent. It's okay for a wee while. But we wouldn't like to stay there forever. Our clothes would end up getting dirty.

We don't have washing machines. It would be noisy when it would be windy. It would be cold in the winter nights. You'd hear the birds. And the cows. And the sheep. And everything.

[14 : 00] And you. You probably wouldn't sleep that well. And you'd be thinking. You know. I wish. I wish. I wish I was. In my home. And in my bed. You know. You don't even. You don't even have a bed.

You know. But you wouldn't be moaning. Would you? You still moan. Do you? No. No. I don't want to moan. And your parents wouldn't be moaning either.

Would they? No. No. No. No. No. But that's. That's what the verses say. You know. In this tent. We're groaning. We're moaning. And that's what Paul is saying.

This life is like a tent. There's lots of things wrong with it. It's not perfect. You know. All of our sins. The bad things we do. They're like sins. And it just.

It just. Doesn't make it as good as we think. You know. But. God. Has provided a place. And it says after that verse.

[14 : 54] That. He has prepared a place for us. God has built a home for us. So it's like. This life. Is like a tent. There's lots of things wrong with it.

But. There's a home waiting. That God has prepared. Prepared for us. And when we go camping. We're really glad that we get home. And we can wash our clothes. And we can relax.

And we can sleep better in our beds. That's what heaven will be like. But far better. God has made this home for us. And wouldn't that be good? Wouldn't that be good?

A home. That. Where we'll sleep and rest. And we'll enjoy it. There'll be no bad smells. And. No moaning mummies and daddies. We won't have to sleep.

Won't have to sleep. There's no night in. There's no night in. There's no. There's no point in having a rest. Because you never. I think we'll have a rest. You never tired.

[15 : 51] We'll have work to do. But I think we'll have rest. We won't get tired. But we don't understand heaven completely. But whatever it is. It'll be good.

And it'll be even better on our homes. Won't it? Yeah. Yeah. So God bless you. We'll say a short prayer before we go through. Lord we pray that you would be with the younger ones.

That are gathered here today. We pray that you'd be with them in Sunday school. And we pray that you'd be with them over the holidays. We pray that they would enjoy their time away from school. As we heard.

Lord we pray. Also that you'd be with them in school. Pray that they would grow up to have lasting friendships with one another. And love one another. Lord we pray that they would ultimately come and know who you are.

And love you too. And go and enjoy a heavenly home with the one who they believe and trust in. Amen.

[16 : 47] Amen. Okay. That's you. I believe you go to Sunday school now, dear. Is it? After the singing. After the singing. Is it? After the singing. Okay. We'll do our second singing.

I'm not used to coming down here. So I might get it wrong. So our second singing is going to be the hymn. My hope is built on nothing less on Christ the solid rock.

So we'll stand. I believe we'll stand and we'll sing this hymn together. Amen. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

No merit of my own, I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.

[17 : 53] All other ground is sinking sand. When weary in this earthly race, I rest on his unchanging grace.

If there be wild and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

His vow, his covenant and his blood are my defense against the flood. When earthly hopes are swept away.

He will uphold me on that day. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

[19 : 01] All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

When the last trumpet's sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

All other ground is sinking sand.

All other ground is sinking sand.

[19 : 58] All those ground are sinking sand. Okay, we'll turn and take our reading today from the book of 2 Kings. The book of 2 Kings, chapter 4, at verse 8.

it's actually the ESV version I have so it might be slight differences from what's on the screen but you'll be able to follow it second Kings chapter 4 verse 8 let us hear God's word one day Elisha went on to Shunam where a wealthy woman lived who urged him to eat some food so whenever he passed that way he would turn in there to eat food and she said to her husband behold I know this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed a table a chair and a lamp so that whenever he comes to us he can go in there one day he came there and he turned into the chamber and rested there and he said to Gehazi his servant call this Shunamite when he had called her she stood before him and he said to and he said to him say now to her see you have taken all this trouble for us what is to be done for you would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army she answered I dwell among my own people and he said what then is to be done for her

Gehazi answered well she has no son and her husband is old she said he said call her and when he had called her she stood in the doorway and he said at this season about this time next year you shall embrace a son and she said no my lord oh man of God do not lie to your servant but the woman conceived and she bore a son about that time the following spring as Elisha had said to her when the child had grown he went out one day to his father among the reapers and he said to his father oh my head my head the father said to his servant carry him to his mother and when he had lifted him up and brought him to his mother the child sat on her lap till noon and then he died and she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out then she called to her husband and said send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys that I may go that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again and he said why why will you go to him today it is neither new moon nor sabbath she said all is well then she saddled the donkey and she said to her servant urge the animal on do not slacken the piss for me unless I tell you so she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel when the man of God saw her coming he said to Gehazi his servant look there is the Shunammite run at once to meet her and say to her it's all well with you it's all well with your husband it's all well with the child and she answered all is well and when she came to the mountain to the man of God she caught hold of his feet and Gehazi came to push her away but the man of God said leave her alone for she is in bitter distress and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me then she said did I ask my Lord for a son did I not say do not deceive me he said to Gehazi tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go if you meet anyone do not greet him and if anyone greets you do not reply and lay my staff on the face of the child then the mother of the child said as the Lord lives and as you yourself live I will not leave you so he arose and followed her Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child but there was no sound or sign of life therefore he returned to meet him and told him the child has not awakened when Elijah came into the house he saw the child lying dead on the bed so he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the

Lord then he went up and lay on the child putting his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands and he stretched himself upon him the flesh of the child became warm then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house and went up and stretched himself upon him the child sneezed seven times and the child opened his eyes then he summoned Gehazi and said call this Shunammite so he called her and when she came to him he said pick up your son she came and fell at his feet bowing to the ground then she picked up her son and went out and then may the reading of God's word be blessed to us we'll continue in our praise by singing our next hymn come holy ghost at hearts inspired we'll stand and we'll we'll sing this hymn to get together to God's praise come holy ghost at hearts 144 apostle of life and love.

Come, Holy Ghost, born moved by thee, the prophets wrote and spoke.

[27 : 03] Unlock the truth, thyself the key, and seal the sacred womb.

Expand thy wings, celestial dove, through the older nature's night.

On earth is always spirit's womb, and let there now be light.

God through himself we then shall know, if thou within us shine, and sound with all thy saints below.

The depths of love divine. Amen. Amen. If we can turn together and take us our text out of verse 9, from the passage that we read together, especially the words, look now, I know that this is a holy man.

[28 : 39] I know that this is a holy man. Today, as the Lord helps us to do so, I want to look at the life of this Shunammite woman.

It may not be too familiar to us, but we'll take her in the morning, and we'll take her again in the evening tonight. And this is the introductory passage of this lady, during the time of the prophet Elisha, and how this great man influenced her life.

And God willing, in the evening we will look at the only other record we have of this lady, and this lady that we don't know the name of, and how she was faithful in the word of this man, and she received a great grace from him.

So what can we say of this Shunammite woman as we meet her? We know very little of her prior to this passage. She is one who willingly gave hospitality to Elisha.

That's there in verse 10. She gave him food, and she says, let us make a small room with a roof and walls. She shows the care to this man, Elisha.

[29 : 54] And then, in her disbelief, she receives the gift of her son there in verse 16. But she didn't believe it.

But the woman conceived. And as we continue to read, we read that this gift given to her in the son was devastatingly robbed from her.

So what can we take from this passage? Well, I would like to look at what she gave what she gained and the grief that she experienced.

And when we look at this lady, I want to have in your mind the image of the Christian life. And specifically for the morning, the beginning of the Christian life.

And perceiving who Christ is. Understanding who Christ is. And following through in the evening, we look at the Christian perseverance and the faithfulness of the Christian.

[31 : 00] So we'll begin with the giving. We'll look at the gain. And then we'll look at the grief that was there in the son that was taken from her, but ultimately was returned. So the giving to begin with.

I'm sure you can all recall at times when you've visited someone and you're very thankful for the visit and you have been at their house and they have been welcomed.

You have been welcomed with a cup of tea or a biscuit. And I suppose there's nothing better than a cup of tea when you go. And maybe the person would not let you leave without having a cup of tea.

And they're imploring upon you, stay and have a cup of tea. Stay and have a cup of tea. It's almost that, the image that is presented here of this lady. She offers this man food and then she keeps doing so.

She's willingly giving to this man. And then she provides this place for him. She's willing in her giving. Like the image of a lovable granny or an elderly neighbor that we all know and love.

[32 : 07] This woman was considered notable in verse 8. She was a wealthy woman, likely of good reputation. And she found herself with that willingness to share what she had with this man.

In the first case, we don't know why. But regardless, she welcomed him into her house. And so through this provision that was given, we read that the relationship develops and continues.

And so does the perception she has of this man. Because now she says in verse 9 that he is a holy man of God.

Maybe worth more than just food now. And willingly, without hesitation, constructs a place for him to rest. And it says in verse 11, one day he came there and he turned into the chamber and he rested there.

I love that verse. Maybe she didn't realize what she gave to the man. But she gave him rest. And rest is precious, as we know. peace for him to lay his head down.

[33 : 29] And how basic that provision was. But this was massively significant for Elisha, who probably had nowhere else to go. Did he have anywhere else to stay?

We do not know. But we do not know how he was revived or restored in this place either. In this provision that she gave, we do not know the prayer.

She prayed under the lampstand. The meditations he made in the night hour. So what she gave was hugely beneficial for him. And we might think that it was honorable for her to do it.

She shows the man this welcome gift. And maybe we can say that, well, she acted as Christ taught in Matthew 25 to give to the hungry and to give a glass of water when we are thirsty.

But if we were saying that, we would imply that this lady was a believer to give to her brothers and sisters. But at this point, I would want to maybe suggest that she's not a believer.

[34 : 37] And I'll explain it as we go. But we can see that the workings of faith are sprouting in her. And that God is drawing her to meet this man.

From that initial contact, there is a growing of the knowledge and enlightening. It's developing slowly within her.

It's a gradual increasing. How long before she could say that he was a man of God? How long did it take her to get to that point?

I know this is a man of God. Was it weeks? Was it years? There has been a commitment in her heart willing to provide.

And she forsakes maybe the importance of other duties that she has. As she perceives now, this is a man of God. And this is often the case in our own lives.

[35 : 38] Faith working in us can take time. God will draw us by his own mysterious workings workings to a place or to someone whatever, however.

We are all different in how God will draw us to himself and how he reveals himself to us so that we may come to that place and say that this is God.

It may take many months, it may take many years before we can say that. can you say that today? Do you recognise God having worked in your life or working in someone else's life?

And can you say that this God, this is God? God how sad it would be if we had that knowledge and yet thought that we would be saved by some other means, by what we do or by what we give, other than having faith in Christ.

Many do reason like that. They give what they can in order to expect something in return and it kind of makes sense to us. But our money will not buy us any entrance into the gates of glory.

[37 : 11] No payments, whether it be money or time, will justify our salvation. Supposing we give everything we have and we strain our own soul and ourselves in faith, we will not receive anything.

We must give ourselves to Christ. We may not build a house for anyone. We may not do anything great for anyone in our lives, in our giving to one another.

And we may not understand what we have done for one another. we can do so little things that we think in our eyes and then people say, people appreciate it so much.

And in a prayerful sense, we can pray for one another as well. And we can support each other in that way by praying. And maybe we'll never truly understand what was done for the other person by that prayer.

How God would work in that person. And maybe we have felt ourselves so insignificant to make that prayer, thinking it would not of any worth.

[38 : 33] But as God hears your prayer and applies it to the person, we may never see the significance, but we pray that they would value it as it would be greater than gold, greater than anything they could ever have.

Praying for the salvation of others in our homes or others that we know within our congregations. Having that heart and love for one another. That's all we can do.

All we can do is pray. But we pray that God would hear. And that we would bring them continually in prayer before God.

See the one who perceives the man of God. I believe he will give. who perceives that Christ Jesus died. I believe they will give something.

The question is how much will they give? And how much have you willingly given? As we come in faith to Christ Jesus.

[39 : 40] What have we given? Am I willing to give everything? Have you given everything? are you someone who's given up on their own ambitions?

Who's died to themselves? Because when our hearts see Christ clearly, when our hearts perceive exactly who Christ is, we give.

and we give humbly of all that I am, because of what he has done. For we say of ourselves, without him I am nothing at all.

Without the hope that Christ has done for me at Calvary and risen from the tomb, I really am nothing because I have no hope and I have no future.

And when we perceive what Christ is truly, what he has done for us, I believe then we will be willing to give all of what we are.

[40 : 51] We will give our lives and when we give all that we are, we gain. We will gain greatly, so greatly in Christ Jesus.

What have you given? What will you gain? So let us look at gain. What does a lady gain? what happens in the case of her lady?

She gives so willingly in providing for this man. And we can read from the verse 13. And he said to him, say now to her, see you have taken all this trouble to us, for us, what is to be done for you?

Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army? And she answered, I dwell among my own people.

I dwell among my own people. What does that mean? It doesn't seem too clear for us today. But pretty much what she is saying is that she's happy and content with what she has.

[42 : 00] She dwells among her own people happily. Why does she need someone to go to the king for her? she does not wish any preferential treatment or bias from any stately authority.

In a sense, she's saying she has it all. She has her house, she has her wealth, she has her reputation. Maybe she's reasoning that she has generously given to the man of God and reasoning that maybe she's provided for herself and her future by doing so.

She's saying, I'm happy with my lot. And this is my reasoning for saying that I don't believe she was a believer quite yet. Because I do not believe that anyone who believed in God personally and had the opportunity for the request to be made for them by this man of God, the man that she perceived to be the holy man of God, would respond with, well, I'm happy with what I have.

Would you, would you say that, given that opportunity, once in a lifetime opportunity, where the man of God would do something for you?

Would you respond by saying, I'm happy with what I have and walk away? When Christ would offer to do something for you, you, is that what you say?

[43 : 38] You know Christ. You know who he is and you've heard him here many times before. But when he makes that offer to you, to do something for you, what do you say to him?

Do you say, I'm happy as I am? God. The lady didn't even mention a prayer on her behalf or wish that she would ask God to remember her household. And it's fact is quite a dangerous thing.

That we are content in our life as it is. We give something to the good of God's cause, expecting maybe something in return because of what we have done and yet lose out on salvation.

having that knowledge of Christ and not perceiving him clearly enough to understand who he is and what we are without him and what we can be with him.

We perceive him wrong. And we do not give of ourselves like we do. Even when he gave everything for you, he gave 100% of himself, for you.

[44 : 58] Christ has paid for your sin on the cross of Calvary. He willingly gave and he gave to the nails of them that would hold him there.

Can you really say as he stands in front of you today in the words of scripture and as he presents himself to you today as the man of God, the son of God, the truth that it says to us.

And he's willingly offering to you today to go to the father and intercede for you. he's given you that choice today.

What are you going to say to him? Surely you're not going to say I dwell among my own people. Surely you're not going to say I'm happy with my life because you think everything's going okay.

Many people do. Many people walk away. but thanks and praise be to our God for even though we may have said this one day ourselves, though our hearts are divided and can be divided with this world and though we do not love him as we should, he has first loved us and we may refuse his love us today, but he'll come back.

[46 : 36] He has loved us first and he will graciously redeem his people. See our Shunammite lady here.

In a sense she's blindly content, but she's not complete. She thinks she's content but she's not. And Elisha is about to make this known to her by giving her a son.

The gift of the child, having no heir to her wealth, something maybe she thought was completely unattainable for her, something, this would be miraculous, this new life that has been given and gained.

But with it she has a future, she has a hope to follow on with. and employing the imagery of the Christian believer, suggesting this child given to her that was completely out of her control, beyond anything that she thought would have been possible, using the picture, and it's not a perfect picture, but for this case picturing the child as a gift of salvation to the Christian, likewise out of her control, given to us as a gift, completely, and precious beyond anything we may have thought previously have made us content, like the lady thought she was content.

Wondrous in its revealing to us, and maybe even for some, something that you would have given up on ever having received.

[48 : 25] salvation that you don't believe you could have ever have gained. Just like this lady, she didn't believe that this child was possible.

we are not beyond salvation. We should never doubt God's ability to work, and it is according to his timing, according to his season.

And in many it is a slow and gradual process, as the catechism says, but persuasion and enabling us to embrace Christ Jesus. As we sit at his feet through his word, we pray that he will come and reveal himself to you.

But in a sense, he does not say, like Elisha, what is to be done for thee. Jesus comes and says, it is done for you.

It is done. And this is the gift that it is all done for us, if we would receive Christ Jesus, and give ourselves to Christ Jesus.

[49 : 38] For without him, we gain nothing at all. Pray that we come and receive what he gives. So let us look briefly at the grief in the time that we have remaining.

Continuing and read in verse 18 to 20. Yeah, I can just find it myself. when the child had grown, he went out one day with his father among the reapers, and she said to his father, O my head, my head, and the father said to his father, carry him to his mother, and when she lifted him, she brought him to his mother.

The child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. And she tried in all her efforts to save this child, but this child died.

And knowing the story now, we realise this child was not ultimately dead. And I suppose the picture that I painted to you before of the child being salvation does not fit entirely right here or correct with this image of the child dying.

For the salvation within you will never die. But I feel it is worthy of applying it as such because if we are truly honest with ourselves, we can say that sometimes it feels like it does.

[51 : 05] And it can appear to us that it does, and the devil will have a field day convincing you that it has. And we've lost maybe something that we thought we would never gain, and we're back to where we were.

And often it will unsettle a new believer when this happens. Maybe not in the first few months or in the first year, but as you descend from the experience of this new life given, it's an honest confession that we can feel ourselves saying that you know when I look at myself I am just exactly who I was.

And I can question was I ever saved? The child in the story was not afflicted straight away. The child was grown, it says.

There was a time before the afflictions came upon the soul. But there's a big difference from before of what she was before.

She was not content now. She had lost the son, and she was lost without the son. but it has returned her to exactly the same state she was in when she didn't have the son in the beginning.

[52 : 26] But now she sees her heart in agony because she has lost this, that she has been given. And that's what the Christian's heart is like.

When they feel like they've lost it, it agonises them. Before you got converted, you wouldn't have cared. There wasn't a concern for Christ or your soul.

But now that you feel like you've lost it, your heart's in agony, even though it's returned you to where you were.

But she knew what she had before she wasn't content. That's what I'm saying, she was blindly content. She didn't see her contentment.

or didn't see what true contentment was. She feared a part of it. She felt the anguish and in your distress can we say that it shall be well.

[53 : 31] And you might be asking such things of yourself today, but note what happens in her story. She tried herself to comfort the child, but she was unable.

Every effort on her behalf was no good, and it was not until the boy had died that she acted. And what did she do? She put him on the prophet's bed, almost committed him to the prophet and sought straight away to find him.

And this is our example too, if you are an unassured Christian. it may take a deep unsettling experience, but run to Christ.

Do not slacken the pace, that's what it says. Go to Christ. Return to him, find the one of power, the one who gave you that life, the one who gave the lady this life, she returned to the one that gave the life, the one who had the power.

Do not sit and weep over her feelings. go and seek him in the words of scripture. Do not give up until you lay hold of him.

[54 : 43] No other man will do. She did not seek the aid of her husband, nor Gehazi Elisha's servant. No other voice but Elisha would do, the man of God who had given this child.

And similarly, it must be Christ we come to, without lingering, for through him is that gift of eternal life. Fall at his feet and tell him what is wrong.

And how I wish I could restore your assurance, but I would just be as the man Gehazi. Nothing but the breath of God, the word of God, that is our revival, the Christ who died for us.

And I hope you can recall times that you have known this to be true in your Christian life. Times when you've seen a verse and it has just reassured you, a word in season to your soul.

And though we may doubt God at times, it does not mean that we forsake him. Thus Shunammite had her doubts. They followed closely with the beautiful confession of our words in verse 30 which are as the Lord liveth and thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

[56 : 16] I will not leave thee. Christian has the hard days and the easy days. And you know that the life that you had before was empty, before gaining the great grace of salvation gifted to you.

And you cannot give up on that life. There is no other like him who gives it. There is no power like his. For he gives you a hope and a future as he did for the woman.

But that hope and future is more sure than the woman's son. And they prayed to the Lord in verse 33.

They prayed to the Lord and the two of them prayed to the Lord. Christ prays for you.

And in that way each of us will be kept. And it reminds me of when Peter just before Christ died and Peter predicted that he would deny him.

[57 : 27] Christ had told him that he would deny him. And Jesus says to him, Satan has demanded to have you, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

And that's it. Delusia prays here and the soul is restored. And Christ is praying for us and he will restore us if we come to him. Sin will rear itself in death, but death is conquered by the one who prays.

Jesus conquers death. And his loving and prayerful intercession for you to the King of Kings, the Father, will enable you to say that I will not leave you.

can you say that today? That you will not leave him regardless of what lies ahead because he will not leave you.

Give all your life to him and you will gain a great grace. And so for the Christian, though we may know many griefs in our lives or grievances in our lives, at the end it is not grief at all.

[58 : 46] The Christian will experience glory, a great glory through the one who prays for them and intercedes for them and has the words of power for them, a great glory in Christ Jesus.

