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Date: 20 October 2024

Preacher: Reverend Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 00] Good morning everyone and welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to a number of visitors who have joined us today. We have the privilege of having Reverend Kenny I. MacLeod leading our services today and we're very grateful for him coming down from Lewis and spending time with us.

The intimations have been up while you've been sitting and waiting. I don't think there's anything in particular I need to say from them. Just to say that this evening's service we are planning on going ahead.

The weather doesn't seem to be as bad as has been forecast. Kenny's a brave man. He's willing to stay on for the rest of the day. We'll meet again at 6 as usual.

We pray for God's blessing upon Kenny as he leads us in worship this morning. I'll extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning and we pray that we'll indeed know the blessing of God in our time of worship.

So we're going to begin by singing in the first psalm, psalm number 1. This is from the Scottish Psalter, psalm 1. That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

[1 : 39] He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields its fruit, and his leaf fadeth never. And all he does shall prosper well.

The wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro. Psalm 1, the whole psalm, that man hath perfect blessedness.

Psalm 1, the whole psalm, that man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, who unmeditated on his law day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields its fruit, and his grief fadeth never.

And all he does shall prosper well. The wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to, and fro, in judgment therefore shall not stand, such a just ungodly are.

[4 : 26] Not in the assembly of the just shall wicked man appear.

For why the way of godly man unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked man shall quite be overthrown.

Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, we give thanks for being able to praise you this morning, because you are worthy of all praise and honour and glory.

It is one of the things that is commanded of us in your word, because we're told that whoever praises you glorifies you, and it is the chief purpose of our existence in this world.

Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And so we pray that we might be in the habit of praising you, because there is no end of reason to give praise and honour and glory to our great God.

[5 : 54] We are often slow to do so, just as we are slow to return thanks. How often we pray and ask you for things, and you so often answer, and yet we're often slow to return thanks.

And so we pray that that might not be the case, that we might be in the habit, that it might be our daily practice of praising and giving thanks to our God.

We pray to bless us here today, every single one of us, according to our own particular needs. We all are different personalities, different characters, and we all have our own different needs.

For some it might be very pressing today, for others it might not be so much. But we all have our own needs every single day. And you're the God who has promised to supply us according to the

different needs that we have.

And so we pray that we might have that faith that looks to you, that faith that trusts you, that faith that believes in you every single day. And help us to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own understanding.

[7 : 08] And that in all our ways that we will acknowledge you, knowing that you will direct our paths. We pray to watch over us as we wait upon you. We pray for hearing ears and understanding hearts.

We have to confess, Lord, so often when we come to church, that we can be guilty of not really paying attention to what the word says. Hearing but not listening.

Where the word goes in, but it doesn't really take root. So we pray, Lord, that today will be a day where we will give full attention, and that your spirit will apply the truth with power into our hearts.

We need you at all times, and we are not dependent upon any human resources. We are utterly and altogether dependent upon you. Whether it is in the singing, the reading, the teaching, the preaching, in whatever we do, we are dependent upon you.

And Lord, we give thanks for the praise here. It is so encouraging to hear. And we pray that you will encourage your people here. And we pray for visitors who are with us today, and ask your blessing upon them as well.

[8 : 18] And we give thanks for gospel bonds, that wherever we meet with those of like mind, it's a wonderful thing to meet those who desire to seek and to know the Lord.

And so we pray your blessing upon everybody. Pray for those who are ill and unwell, and there is always sickness around at this time. And we pray for those who might be undergoing treatment or waiting for it, or likewise with surgery.

We commit to your care and keeping. Pray for those who are heavy hearted, those who mourn, those who are grieving. We ask, Lord, that you will help them, and that you will comfort broken hearts.

Pray for our young. We give thanks for them. And Lord, we pray that in a day where there's so many challenges, that you will watch over them, and that the instruction that they get when they're young will stay with them.

Your word tells us, train up a child in the way they'll go, when he's old, will not depart from it. And so may we lay hold upon these promises, as we seek to teach our young people in the way of the Lord.

[9 : 25] Pray to bless us nationally and internationally. We pray for all who have rule over us, whether it's in Westminster or in Holyrood or locally in the council. Ask, Lord, to give wisdom and direction that our leaders will not depend entirely upon their own human wisdom, but that they will look to you.

And even when they don't look to you, we still pray that you will impart divine wisdom so that we will be led in the right way. Lord, we pray for this world that is hurting, for so much cruelty, so much hatred, so much bloodshed, so much anger.

Oh Lord, we long to see people lay down their weapons and people come to live in harmony one with another. And we know that ultimately the only one who can bring that ultimate healing is Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

And we pray, Lord, that your peace may flood into particularly the places that today it looks almost impossible, but that you would indeed turn conflicts into places of peace once again.

We ask then that you will do us good, that you will bless us as we wait upon you, and ask that you will forgive us and cleanse us from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

[10 : 46] Amen. Just a wee word to the young folk here. You and I know that crossing the road can sometimes be quite dangerous.

Because we often don't think it is, and we often just, I suppose, take a chance, and we just nip out, but we shouldn't. And there is what is termed a green cross code, which tells us how to cross the road.

It tells us where to think, where to stop, and where to look, and where to listen. Four things. So the first thing we do is we think, well, where's the best place to cross a road?

Well, you wouldn't cross it at a junction where there's one road coming this way and another crossing that way. That would be really, really dangerous. So you've got to think, right, where's the best place to cross the road?

And once you work that out, you stop, and then you look and you listen. You look right. It's not enough to listen, because, you know, today there are, it might be a bicycle, it might be an electric car.

[11 : 55] So you've always got to watch out, because crossing streets can be very, very difficult at times. I was at the great privilege of being at, taking part in Lauren and Pim's wedding, and that was in Amsterdam.

And I have never, ever, ever seen such busy streets, because there's bicycles, and more bicycles, and trams, and cars, and sometimes there are six lots going at the same time.

It's incredibly busy. But the one thing I will say is, they're really chilled drivers. I never once heard a horn blow.

How different to our cities, where there's constant beep, beep, beep. But everything is just, it's so, you really, really have to pay attention. But even here, we have to pay attention.

So we've got to stop, we've got to think, we've got to listen, and we've got to look. And we look right, we look left, we look right again, and if it is all clear, and only then, we cross.

[13 : 05] But you know, we've got to take this green cross code, just not for crossing the road, but coming to church. Because we've got to do, exactly the same thing.

We've got to come into church, and we stop. And it's great, that we have a time to, stop from everything else, and spend this while, focusing upon God. And then we've got to think, and think about, what God is saying to us.

And we've got to look, and we've got to listen. Because listening, is so, so important. There's a wee version of the Bible, tells us that faith, when we come to believe in Jesus, faith, comes, by listening, by hearing.

And hearing from God's word. And again in the Bible, we're told to look, look unto me, and be you saved. Look to Jesus.

That's what we're all asked to do. In fact, there's loads of things in the Bible, telling us to look. Because our understanding of God, becomes even greater. When I was a wee boy, and I still remember this, probably about, four years of age.

[14 : 17] And, it's one of my earliest memories. Is my mum, I might have said this before, taking me out, and I was born, a wee place, Ardell, near Kaila Lacholch.

And back then, there was absolutely no streetlights, anything around the house. And on a clear night, you could see the stars, just, everywhere. The whole sky lit up.

And I still remember her telling me, God made, every single star there. He knows, the name of each one, and he counts them. And I still remember thinking, wow.

But that's what it tells us, in Psalm 147. He counts the number of the stars, and he names them, one by one. So, you know, these things, that were taught, when we were young, and the heavens, were told again, the heavens declared, the glory of God.

So we should be looking up, looking out, look, but above all, stop, think, listen, and look, to Jesus. So remember that. Remember your safety, on the road.

[15 : 22] But I also, remember this, about the Lord Jesus. I'm going to sing again, this time, in Psalm 92, from Sing Psalms 92a.

Psalm 92a, from Sing Psalms. Although the wicked, spring like grass, the foolish do not see, that all who flourish, in their sin, will die eternally.

But Lord, you are forevermore, exalted very high. All evil doers, will be crushed, your foes, will surely die. You made me strong, as an ox, with oil anointed me.

I've seen my enemies, defeat, and I've heard them flee. Like palms, and cedars flourishing, the righteous, all will be, and planted, in the house of God, will grow, abundantly.

Verses 7, to the end, Psalm 92a, Although the wicked, spring like grass. Amen. Although the wicked, spring like grass, the foolish do not see, that all who flourish, and their sin, will die eternally.

[16 : 56] But Lord, you are forevermore, exalted very high.

All evil doers, will be crushed, your foes, will surely die.

You made me strong, as any ox, with oil anointed me.

I've seen my enemy defeat, and I have heard them flee.

Like palms, and cedars flourishing, the righteous, all will be, and planted in the hearts of God, will grow, abundantly.

[18 : 22] So when all days, they still bear fruit, they will be fresh, and strong.

They will proclaim, the Lord is just, my rock, who does no wrong.

Let's turn to read God's word now, in the gospel of Mark, chapter 4. Mark chapter 4.

Mark chapter 4. And we read from the beginning of the chapter, through to verse 20. Mark chapter 5.

Mark chapter 5. Again, he began to teach beside the sea, and a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat, and sat in it on the sea.

[19 : 27] And the whole crowd was beside the sea and the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables. And in his teaching, he said to them, Listen, Behold, a sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil.

And immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched. And since it had no root, it withered away.

Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil, and produced grain, growing up and increasing, and yielding thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

And he said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

[20 : 33] And he said to them, To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God. But for those outside, everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see, but not perceive, and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

And he said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word.

And these are the ones along the path where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan immediately comes, and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground, the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.

And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while. Then, when tribulation or persecution arises, on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

[21 : 50] But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. We're now going to sing in Gaelic, in Psalm 52. We're going to sing the last two verses of the psalm.

Psalm 52, the last two verses, NINGNING!

NING! CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

[25 : 03] I am lost on a cup of tea.

I am lost on a cup of tea.

And we find Jesus teaching this large crowd that are gathered by the seaside. And he was teaching in parables. And he says in verse 3, Listen, behold, a sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, and we read there of the different things that happened with the seed that fell.

And at verse 8 he says, And he said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Now Jesus taught many things by parables. I think it's one of the things that we, when we think of Jesus and we think of his teaching, we automatically think of the parables.

[26 : 44] And that's one of the great things. There were wonderful messages conveyed to teach spiritual truths. But side by side with his teaching, you will find very, very often Jesus asking, indeed commanding us to listen, to pay attention, to hear.

That's how we find at the very beginning of verse 3, as he says, listen. He's going to tell these parables and he says, listen.

And in fact, the word hear, which means listen, the word hear, I think it's around about 13 or so times in this particular chapter. And far too often, we're guilty of not listening, not hearing what God says.

And probably there's nowhere that we're more guilty of not listening to what God is saying is actually in his own house when we come to church. Now we live, obviously, we live in a very frenzied world.

We live in a world that's demanding so much of us all the time. Everybody's in a hurry. And people will always say, I don't have time for this. I don't have time for that. But it's so important that we take time to listen to God's word.

[28 : 02] Because as we said, faith, which is absolutely key to our coming to accept Christ, faith comes by hearing.

And hearing by the word of God. It's through God's word. As God's word is read, God's word is sung, as God's word is preached, as God's word is prayed, as God's word is shared.

It's through this that people come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it's important that whenever we gather as we do like today, that we do listen to what is being said.

And this parable involves this sower who goes out to sow seed. And Jesus shows us that when this, and the sowing, of course, of the seed is the word of God.

This seed here is a parable of the sowing of God's word. And that four different things happen when God's word is being sown, and God's word is being read, or God's word is being preached.

[29 : 02] And so, as we said, hearing is absolutely essential. John Bunyan, in his other classic, besides Pilgrim's Progress, which is the one that everybody knows, he has another book, Holy War, which again is a wonderful book.

And in it, there are double guards, double amount of guards at the ear gate. Because this is the number one place where Satan will try to stop the entry of the good seed in the ear.

And I know that we live in a very visual age, and a very fast-moving age, and the age of sharp, moving images, and so much is taught in this way.

But we must always remember that God's word is timeless, and God says it's by the hearing of the word. And so it's important that we don't ever lose sight of this, the importance of reading and preaching.

And, you know, sometimes you might say to yourself, you know, I would love to ask people to come to church. And how thankful you are here.

[30 : 10] You have a lovely church, a lovely setup, and a very, very welcoming church. And it's a wonderful place to bring people who might just be visiting, or people that you might say, I want to ask them to come for the first time.

It's a great church to do that, too. But sometimes we say to ourselves, well, I'll ask them to come to church, but church seems kind of, compared to all that happens in the world, all the sort of the glitz and glamour and all the spectacular of the world, church seems so very kind of tame and ordinary. Because all that goes on is a bit of singing, a bit of preaching, a bit of reading, a bit of praying. And it's just, you see, I don't know how they deal with that sort of thing.

But the fact is that it's through this very thing that God works in people's lives. This is the method that God, the God who is our maker, the God who is our saviour, this is the method.

This, above all, is the means that he has provided for people to come to faith and people to be built up in their faith. And, of course, that's what we pray that we might indeed know today and experience.

[31 : 23] And we've always got to remember, also, that we need to get into the silence to hear the Lord. Again, we think of this hurried frenzy day. Make time every day to read God's word and to pray.

It's key to your development. It's key to salvation. It's key to everything. And it's in the silence. Yes, we can hear God's voice. We can hear him and his word in many places.

But it's often in the silence. You remember Elijah, when Elijah ran away from Jezebel. And God was dealing with Elijah and restoring him. Elijah was way up in the mountain, in a cave.

And remember, there was a great fire. But it tells us God wasn't in the fire. And then there was an earthquake. And it tells us God wasn't in the earthquake. And then he heard this still, small voice. And it tells us God was there. It was in the stillness, in the calm. And that's often the way that God still works, in the stillness, in the calm.

[32 : 25] And so that's what we pray, that we will all indeed know that in our own heart. So we see the sower. And we see here, very simply, that the first lot of seed that is sown, we see the birds coming.

And as the seed is scattered, the birds come and they take the seed. And you and I, we all know what it's like. If you're putting down grass seed, putting down any seed, you will have the birds. And I think it's one of my very earliest recollections of seeing a man sowing seed. It was probably just about the age of four in a field. And he had a big basket in front of him.

And he was scattering. And there were just so many birds. And I thought he was just feeding the birds. I was thinking, what a nice, kind man this is. But he was scattering the seed. And that's a picture of exactly what Jesus is saying.

That Satan will come to try to take away, to pluck away the seed of God's word as it is being sown in your heart.

[33 : 29] As it is being sown today. And he's a master of doing that. And so often, when we come to church, as I said, we zone out.

It's not deliberate. We don't come to church and say, right, you know, the moment the preacher starts, I'm out. That's not, we don't come with that particular intention. But it happens. It happens. And I know that sometimes when people can be tired and there's a crowd of people together and the place is hot, I know it can be easier maybe to nod off. That does happen. But we also know that Satan, the evil owner, is about.

And he's trying to take that seed away. And he will bring loads of different thoughts to your mind during a service while the sermon is going on. Many a house build has been, it's started in God's house.

Many a plan for holidays. Many a plan for the future. All these things happen during the service. And then they hear, oh, let us pray. Oh, my word. Where is it? But, you know, Satan's a master of doing that.

[34 : 35] Because he knows that once our mind is away, it's gone. Unless something will all of a sudden come to grasp our attention. And so that's what he does.

He's at us all the time in this way. But again, sometimes if he doesn't get us that way, he'll still get us in other ways. And he'll maybe, he'll bring you during the service to begin to doubt something about the character of God.

Or the reality of God. Or the nature of God. Just that's his old temptation in Eden. Did God say? Did God? Did God? Did God?

Did God? Is there a... Don't be surprised if you come to church and you will actually have an atheistic thought come through your mind.

And you might be saying, I wasn't thinking like that before. That's Satan. He's coming. He'll do anything to try to prevent you focusing upon the truth. Or else he may say to you, okay, well, he's beginning to see you're really listening.

[35 : 41] And you say, oh, yep, this guy's listening. This girl's listening. I'm going to... And he'll say to you, yep, that's good. That's fine. But hold on. Wait till you get home and sort things out.

Don't do anything rash just now. You're taking that on board. That's fine. Leave it for again. He will do anything and everything to prevent you coming and bowing even here right now and saying, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

I need you. So that's the first thing that we see here. And then the second one is the stony ground here. And we see that this seed that is sown on soil initially looks okay.

But the problem is that right underneath the soil there are layers of rock. And the problem is that as soon as the seed goes down, it begins to spring up very quickly.

And you think, oh, that's good. But then it withers because it can't take proper root because there's just this complete layer of rock underneath. And Jesus tells us sadly that some hearers are like that as well.

[36 : 49] That they begin to, that there might be an emotional response for a moment. And they say, oh, this is great. And they come out and it seems to be that they've been converted, that they're Christians.

And then very quickly they fall away. The very first sign of trouble or difficult challenges or things like that. And they're gone. John Bunyan in the Pilgrim's Progress gives a very clear picture of this type of person.

Remember when Christian left the city of destruction. And they were calling him, come on, come on back. Where are you going? He was making his way to the celestial city. And they sent two people after him, obstinate and pliable.

And when Christian began to tell them of his journey, of his journey of faith in Christ, obstinance, I don't want to listen to any more of that.

And he just went straight back to the city of destruction. But as Christian began to talk about heaven and the glories in Christ, pliable.

[37 : 53] Tell me more. Tell me more. And he was joining on with them and pliable seemed to be on the journey. And they were busy talking and all of a sudden they fell into this huge bog, this deep marsh.

It's called the Slough of Despond. And, oh man, they were really struggling in it. And pliable was, oh, I'm out of this.

And he manages to get himself back and he comes out the way he fell in. And he says, that's me done with that. But Christian works his way all the way through.

Pliable is like this type of passion. That there's an initial response. But as soon as the first challenges or troubles come, they're gone. And it's a really sad picture that the Lord Jesus gives here.

Because Jesus tells us he has no pleasure in those who draw back. Those who draw back from the faith. And you and I know that the Christian life is full of challenges.

[38 : 55] It's full of blessings, but it's also full of challenges. It's ups and downs. But we shouldn't be surprised. Jesus said that. In this word you'll have tribulation. But be of good cheer, he said.

For I have overcome the world. The person who has really come to faith will say, even when the challenges and the difficulties are there.

I wouldn't go back to where I was. I've tried all the other roads. And I know that this is the right road.

I might not be the best Christian. I might have my faults and my failings. But I know in whom I believe. And this is the way I'm going. And that's the way it is for the Christian.

Yes, it's not always just plain sailing. There's challenges. There's good days. There's bad days.

There's days we doubt ourselves. But still, on we go.

[39 : 53] Because the good seed has actually gone in down deep. And then the third we see is where the seed falls among thorns. And again, this is a very sad one.

Because here it seems that there's good soil. But it's full of weeds and full of thorns as well. And the seed goes down and seems to be taking fruit. But then all these weeds and thorns and things, they begin to choke it.

So that the seed doesn't bring forth fruit. And Jesus is showing that this is one of the warnings in this. That you can hear about the Lord and say, Oh, you know this.

I really need to have the Lord. I need the Lord as my Savior. And so there is this. It seems like this commitment to the Lord Jesus.

But then all the things of life begin to crowd in. The to-do list. The things that we have to attend to. The many things that take up our day-to-day life.

[41 : 02] And our work and our family. And all good things. Blessings. But things that can begin to relegate. And choke. And we find that we've kind of lost our way.

And we're really beginning to struggle. And the fruit is being choked here. And so we've always got to be careful that the cares of this world don't block out our need of Christ as a Savior.

Because it's the most important thing that we have is our never dying precious soul. And that's why Jesus says, Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And all the other things will be added to you. Because nothing is worth, there is nothing worth gaining that you might lose your soul.

There are those things in life that you say, this is my priority. This is what I've got to deal with.

Above anything else. At the end of the day, there's only one thing that is all important.

[42 : 08] And that is your soul in relation to Jesus. But then we see lastly that the good seed falls on good ground. And so here's the one who hears the word and receives the word gladly.

And it's important because this is a person who has heard the word. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. I remember when I was younger, there was a minister in Skye, Kenneth Mackay.

He was a minister in Struan. He was from South Lauches. And he always, during the service, he would shout during it, often when he'd be preaching in Gaelic. He would just keep shouting that.

And I used to think, what on earth is this about? But you know, he had a point. Are you listening? Are you listening? Because far too often we're not.

Because that would kind of bring people up short again if you've drifted off. Are you listening? You'd say, yeah. So he had a point in what he was doing. And that's what Jesus is saying to us.

[43 : 09] The importance of listening. So here are people, and the word of God comes and takes root in our heart. And it's so important to lay hold upon this because you and I have to give an account, not only of everything that we've heard, but what we've done with what we've heard.

But here we find that the word of God takes root in the heart. And there are two great evidences that the word of God has taken root in the heart. That this is genuine.

This is real. This is the proper. This is a real deal. First is that you continue in the faith. That you continue in the faith. Jesus says elsewhere, the one who perseveres to the end, the same will be saved.

In other words, it's an indication of your salvation. No matter what comes into your life. No matter what happens. That you're still following. And maybe for some of you today as Christians, it's just purely a marvel of grace and grace alone that you're still following.

Because you look back and you think, there were many times that you could have been totally derailed. Many a time you were tempted to go bad. Many a time that you were maybe tempted to give up.

[44 : 29] But no. You're still following. Despite all the bruises and the bangs and the ups and the downs, you're still following. And that's evidence of the reality of this faith that has taken hold of your heart.

And the second evidence, of course, is that there's fruit. That they will bring forth fruit. That their seed fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing, yielding thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

You see, it's by its fruit that you know a tree. Like, for instance, a plum tree won't produce apples. Plum tree will produce plums.

Apple tree will produce apples. So it goes. The Christian will produce fruit. And what is a fruit? Well, the clearest definition we have is in Galatians, where it tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

These are things that should be in evidence in a Christian's life. Not just on Sunday in church. Not just on Sunday in church. There should be in evidence in a church. There should be in evidence in a home, at school, at work, in the community, wherever we are.

[45 : 50] This is a fruit that should be in evidence in a church. This is a fruit that should be in evidence in a church. That should be in evidence in a church that should be demonstrated in our day-to-day contact, in our day-to-day relationships, in our workplace.

And you and I know that there are times that that's where we're really tested in these things. Often tested at work. And I'm sure us Christians, there are many a time you go finish at the end of the day and say, oh, you know this.

I let the Lord down today by the way some of the things I said, by the reactions that I had. I didn't demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in the way that I should. But when you acknowledge that and confess it, that's good.

That's what the Lord wants us to do. Of course the Lord wants us to be always living in constant, perfect obedience. But we can't. And he knows we can't. That's why he sent Jesus Christ.

But when we go wrong, we've always to come back by way of confession to him. So there will always be the fruit bearing. But it also shows us that not everybody bears fruit at the same level.

[46 : 53] Because some are 30, some are 60, and some are a hundredfold fruit bearers. There are some Christians that are way up there. Their life is just blossoming.

You know, you cannot spend any length of time with them. But you realize this is a really committed, dedicated Christian. There's something about their character, about their way.

It just speaks all the time. And then there's others, and there's 60-fold. And then there's others that are 30-fold. There are some Christians, and maybe they're more content with just a little faith, and a little zeal, and a little courage, and a little of this.

But there's still Christians. But I believe that the 30, 60, and 100 varies. And that some days, the 60-fold Christian can be down to 30.

And some days, the 30-fold Christian might be up to 60. That they're different at different times, different seasons. That we're bearing a different amount of fruit.

[48 : 00] But the all-important thing is that we're bearing fruit to the glory of God. That's what counts at the end of the day. That's what God is looking for. As he looks at you and me, he's looking for that fruit in our life that speaks of the seed having gone down deep into our heart.

I pray that every one of us will know the reality of this good seed having been embedded in the very depth of our being. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray to bless us this day.

And we give thanks for your word and for all that it brings to us. We pray that we may lay hold upon this truth. And that it may go down deep within us.

We pray that we might not be like some of those that we read in the parable who didn't want to hear any more. But that we might indeed want to know a deeper meaning of it.

Watch over us. Take us to our homes safely. And be with us spared in the evening service. Protect and watch over and guard and take everybody here and back home safe and sound. Watch over us, we pray.

[49 : 09] And take away our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 126. Again from Sing Psalms, 126, the whole psalm.

When Zion's fortunes God restored, it was a dream come true.

Our mouths were then with laughter filled, our tongues with songs anew. The nation said, the Lord has done great things for Israel. The Lord did mighty things for us, and joy our hearts knew well. Restore our fortunes, gracious Lord, like streams and desert soil. A joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil. The man who bearing seed to sow goes out with tears of grief, will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest sheath.

Old Psalm 126, when Zion's fortunes God restored. When Zion's fortunes God restored, it was a dream come true.

[50 : 28] Our mouths were then with laughter filled, our tongues with songs anew.

The nation said, the Lord has done great things for Israel.

The Lord did mighty things for us, and joy our hearts knew well.

Restore our fortunes, gracious Lord, like streams and desert soil.

A joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower's toil.

[51 : 26] The man who begs free to sow goes out with tears of grief, will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest sheath.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.