

Fear the Lord

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. And those who are visiting with us especially are welcome to the service this morning.

This is usually the point where I would say after the service there's tea and coffee. But today we've decided not to have tea and coffee just with all the risks and the advice that comes through.

We're not going to have tea and coffee after the service today. And although I will go to the door, you don't need to be scared of me. I'll bump elbows with you if you want or I'll give you a smile.

But I won't force anyone into a handshake so you don't need to be alarmed by that. The only other thing that I want to just highlight in connection with the measures that are in place is that the community lunch which was scheduled for this Tuesday, largely as the older people in the community who attend, we've decided not to have that either this week.

So there'll be no community lunch but the rest of the intimations as you see there I think will carry on as usual. So apart from the fact that I'm noticing that next Sunday it says the evening service is at 6.30.

[1 : 17] I don't quite know why that is but the evening service won't be at 6.30 next week. The service will be at 6 o'clock as usual. And I hope to take both these services, God willing.

I did have one more intimation, or maybe a couple more there. Hats and neck warmers for the sailors. The sailors outreaching in the River Garden are looking for knitted hats and neck warmers. Knitting patterns are available at the door. So please note that. And the final thing is just to say a word of thanks to those who helped and those who gave and came to lunch yesterday for the cafe at the community centre.

The amount that was raised for Moldova was £820. And if there is anyone who didn't get the chance to go and who wants still to donate, there's still a chance to do that.

So you can see Teenie or you can speak to Teenie and she can direct you on from there. Let's close our eyes, let's bow our heads and let's unite our hearts as we come to God in prayer.

[2 : 27] Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for this opportunity that you've given us again to come into your presence and to come in worship.

And we pray that on this Lord's Day we would be in the spirit of worship. We have minds which can become cluttered with many things. We live in a world which is busy and which can be fraught at times.

We can have anxieties, we can have cares. There are burdens that we sometimes carry that often we shouldn't. And we know that we can take our eyes off the Lord.

And we confess that. And we pray that you would forgive us for that. But we thank you that as we gather here this morning, we gather with that invitation, with that command to lift our eyes from ourselves and from this world.

And fix our eyes upon the God who is the maker of heaven and earth, the sovereign God. We thank you that as we sang, you are the God who controls our destiny.

[3 : 49] Jesus commands my destiny. We thank you that if we are in Christ, we have a security. We have a hope. We have a steadiness which should mark us out from those who are of this world and who are not trusting in Jesus.

We thank you for the gospel message which we have sung. The fact that God so loved us that he himself came into this world and lived for us a life without sin.

We thank you for the gospel message.

So we thank you for the life of Jesus, the perfect life of Jesus lived in our place. We thank you for the death of Jesus. The death that takes away our sin when we are trusting in him.

We thank you that he paid the wages that our sin deserved. And we thank you that he is the one who rose from the dead. The one who ascended into heaven and who stands at the right hand of God.

[5 : 23] The one who takes hold of our prayers and shapes them and moulds them. So that when we cannot find the words to say or when we say things wrong, our prayers are corrected and shaped and presented perfect before the throne of grace.

And we thank you that we are able to sing this morning. In Christ alone, my hope is found. Our hope is not in ourselves.

Our hope is not in the authorities of this world. Our hope is not in our financial security. Our hope is not in our health.

Our hope is not in our own plans and schemes. But our hope is in Christ. And we pray that we would know that settling security of being able to sing that.

We pray for those today whose hope is not in Christ. Some who may be here. Many who may be outside of here. And we ask, Lord, that in days which are all of a sudden very uncertain, we pray that people would look to Jesus, the one who is our rock and our salvation.

[6 : 40] Be at work, Lord, we pray. And help us, Lord, in these days where there is alarm and where there is anxiety, to cast all our anxiety and all our cares upon the Lord, because you are the Lord who cares for us.

We pray for those at this time who are in authority in our land. Those who have decisions to make. And the decisions are weightier than usual at this point.

We pray, Father, for wisdom for them. We pray that you would humble us as a nation and those who are in authority, so that we would seek your face and we would look for the wisdom that you have promised you will give liberally when we ask.

We pray that as a nation, even as we see the example in the States today, we pray that as a nation we may turn to you and we may cry out to you in times which are troubling.

We pray, Father, for those who are not with us this morning, some who are struggling with sickness, some who are struggling with infirmity and who are housebound, some who are anxious about their own vulnerable state and their health and in their state of age.

[8 : 00] And we ask, Lord, that although they're not here with us, that you would draw near to them, that you would minister to them in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that you would protect them and watch over them in these days.

We pray for those in Harris House and in care homes across the island where there will be fewer visitors in and where there isn't the opportunity to go in and have worship at this time.

And we pray that you would draw very near to the residents in these places and to the staff and, Lord, that you would minister to them. We just commit these days to you, Lord.

We commit ourselves to you. And we pray that you would be at work for your glory, for the good of your people, and for the salvation of many souls.

Hear our prayers. Take away our sin. Go before us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Look at this.

[9 : 14] Even the boys and girls today, they're not coming all the way forward. Now, I told you that some of you were going to be on the screens this morning, didn't I?

I told you that, but I'm not going to do that because everything about today kind of changed late on last night. So we'll save that for another day. Nothing going to be on the screen.

But I thought I would begin today by asking you, what's everyone talking about just now? Pardon? Coronavirus.

Everybody is talking about coronavirus. You put on the news. You look at the front page of the papers. You go into the shops.

I was in Stornoway yesterday. And usually when you go into the shops in Stornoway, they say, oh, the weather's not very good today, is it? And they didn't even talk about the weather. They talked in every single shop.

[10 : 16] What do you think about what's going on with this coronavirus? That's what they were saying. And people are talking about what it is and how we can be safe and how the doctors can fight against it and how we can manage it.

Wouldn't it be great? Does it make you a bit nervous, the coronavirus? No, that's good. Don't go to school, John Roddy.

You'd have to get homeschooled. Did you hear that? John said then you'd have to get homeschooled. Well, here you go. The politicians are getting advice from the Sunday school here as to how things should be.

But wouldn't it be great, boys and girls, wouldn't it be great if there was a cure that was discovered this morning for the coronavirus and all you had to do was just go to a special place, maybe a doctor's surgery or something, in the village that you were in or the town or the city that you were in and just all you had to do was say, please can I have the cure?

And people who were sick, when they took the cure, they'd be instantly well. Wouldn't that be a great thing? That would be a great thing, wouldn't it?

[11 : 50] And we can pray that hopefully that will happen soon, that there'll be a cure. But the Bible talks about sickness, doesn't it? And it talks about sickness, a bit in our bodies, but what kind of sickness does the Bible talk about most?

Sickness in our what? Miriam? In our hearts. That's right. And what's the virus, what's the sickness that attacks our hearts called?

Katrina? It's called sin. Is there a cure? Yes. And what's the cure, Katie?

Jesus is the cure. He can cure us of the sickness in our hearts. And how does he cure us? Well, what did he do, first of all, to cure us?

Where did he go to take our sin away? Where did he go to take our sin away? Lois. He went to the cross. That's what we remembered last weekend.

[12 : 58] But if we want to have that cure, if we want to have our hearts made well, we know Jesus has done everything to make that possible, but how do we get the cure?

Do you want to know? You trust him. You trust him. And put it another way. How do you get the cure? If somebody said, what does that mean, Jono, to trust Jesus?

How do I have my heart made well? How do I get that? What would you say to somebody if they said that? If you want to have your heart made well, if you want to have your sins forgiven, if you want to have the hope of everlasting life, what do we have to do?

What do we do? Well, yeah, we... And how do we do that? How do we... Katrina? How do we do that?

Alistair? We pray. And what were we doing when we pray? We're just asking God. We're asking Jesus to take the sickness of our sin away and to give us his everlasting life.

[14 : 11] We're asking him just to touch our hearts and to make us well. How many people have that heart sickness that the Bible talks about?

Yeah, Katie? Everybody. And Jesus is the cure. So how many people... If the coronavirus had a cure this morning, do you think everybody that had the coronavirus, do you think they would just stay in their homes and say, oh, can't we bother going out today?

They'd go rushing to the place for the cure, wouldn't they? And if everybody has heart sickness and has sin in our hearts, do you think everybody would rush to Jesus and ask for the cure?

Why not? Yeah. Isn't it sad that every single person can be made well in our hearts and yet there's so many people who say, I don't know if I believe that.

I don't know if I can be bothered coming to Jesus. Maybe I'll come to Jesus when I'm older, but not today. And when we stay like that, our hearts are in danger.

[15 : 35] We are in danger because we need to be made well. There's a man that Jesus met with in John chapter 5 and he was struggling.

And do you know what Jesus said to him? He came up to him and he said to him, do you want to get well? And Jesus says that to us.

Every time we meet here, every time we open the Bible, every time we come to Jam or Connect or Sunday School, YF, Church, then in the good news of the gospel message, Jesus says to us, whether we're young or whether we're very old, he says to us, do you want to be well?

If we come to him and say, yes, Lord Jesus, touch my heart, take away the sickness of my sin, give to me the cure and his promise, he won't push any away, but he'll make all of us well.

So let's be boys and girls and men and women who say to Jesus, I want to be well. We'll preach this now, will we? Lord Jesus, we thank you for the message of the gospel.

[16 : 55] It is good news. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you took the sickness of our sin into your own body when you went to the cross. And we thank you that your promise is that if we will simply come to you in prayer and ask for you to take our sin away and ask to give us the everlasting life

and health that you're able to give us, we thank you that we're promised that you will give that to us. And when we have that, we thank you that we have no one, we have nothing to fear. And when we see people stressing about different things in this world, we thank you that if we have Jesus, if our hearts are safe, we are safe forever.

So help us, we pray, to know that in our own hearts. Help us to know Jesus. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, boys and girls, for listening.

Well, we're going to see remember to be praying for them as they go. If we could turn in our Bibles, please, to Mark, to, not Mark, Psalm 112, please.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Psalm 112 we read the whole of the psalm praise the Lord praise those servants of the Lord praise the name of the Lord sorry let me start again I'm in Psalm 113 praise the Lord blessed is the man who fears the Lord who finds great delight in his commands his children will be mighty in the land the generation of the upright will be blessed wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures forever even in darkness light dawns for the upright for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man good will come to him who is generous and lends freely who conducts his affairs with justice surely he will never be shaken a righteous man will be remembered forever he will have no fear of bad news his heart is steadfast trusting in the Lord his heart is secure he will have no fear in the end he will look in triumph on his foes he scattered abroad his gifts to the poor his righteousness endures forever his horn will be lifted high in honor the wicked man will see and be vexed he will gnash his teeth and waste away the longings of the wicked will come to nothing amen and may God bless that reading of his word and in a moment we'll sing from Psalm 112 and who's presenting

[20 : 13] Farrakhar? is it yourself? just this is a warning for you more than for anybody else we're singing Psalm 112 everything changed about the sermon late on last night so Farrakhar may have a different praise in his mind Psalm 112 verses 7 and 8 we'll sing in a few minutes but before we sing in Gaelic we will pray together and Callum will come and lead us in prayer in Gaelic please P subscribers to hear the story Those who really want a person to go switch.

But there we have to pray for meditation but do not let us pray for the anti Bluetooth connection. Ask for less and more to do, we have to get him on the outside doing work, but we have to try to do it to God's Matsuiar.

faith greatly ism content it's okay.

God of nothing was my ko But we are taking that okay let me You find them is through the covenant, no covenant, even in one of those.

Many facing molecules of faith and faith, although theologians in my face have been Psalm 112, the psalm we read, and we'll sing verses 7 and 8 of the psalm.

[23 : 17] 7 and 8 of Psalm 112. When he shall evil tidings here, he shall not be afraid. His heart is fixed, his confidence upon the Lord is stayed.

His heart is firmly established, afraid he shall not be, until upon his enemies he his desire shall see. These two stanzas to God's praise. We'll remain seated to sing in Galat.

Psalm 112, the psalm we read, and we'll sing in Galat. Psalm 112, the psalm we read, and we'll sing in Galat.

Psalm 112, the psalm you read, and we will sing in Galat. Psalm 112, the psalm we read, and we'll sing in Galat.

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SONG PLAYS If I could ask you now please to turn to Psalm 112.

And have it open in front of you if you're able to. As we go there let's pray again for a moment.

Our Heavenly Father we thank you for your word. We thank you that you don't leave us to think up our own words. But you have given us your word. And we thank you that we live not by bread alone. But by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And so we pray that you would help us to read. Help us to learn. Help us to mark. Help us to inwardly digest your word.

[27 : 41] That our fears may be allayed. And our faith may be firmly upon Christ. We pray that you would help us Lord.

And that you would be with the young ones next door. That you would be working through their teachers. And helping them to see the security of being in Jesus.

And we ask Lord at this time. When they see the news. And we know some of them get worried about things. Help them to look to you. And we pray that they would know no fear. As they trust in you. So help us Lord we pray. We pray for other churches around us. Who meet as we do. For the Church of Scotland. And for the Pre-Presbyterian Church here. And the Episcopalians as they gather on the main street. Wherever the gospel of Jesus is preached. We ask Lord that you would add your blessing. That you would build your church. And we ask all these things in Jesus name.

[28 : 39] Amen. Things today are a little bit different.

In the sense that. I don't often take a text. Rather than a chapter to preach on. But today I want to fix on a text.

We'll consider the chapter. But I want to fix on a text. And I don't often. In fact I think only once. Before in 12 years of preaching.

Have I abandoned a sermon. That's been prepared. And printed. And sitting on my desk ready to go. At 11 o'clock the night before I'm due to preach it. But that's what I felt compelled to do.

Last night. And so if I look like a man who's only slept for two hours. That's because I am. So the text I want us to take this morning. The text that I couldn't shake from my mind.

[29 : 43] Last night. And I believe is for us. Today. Is Psalm 112. And verse 7. Where it says. He will have no fear. He.

She. They. Will have no fear. Of bad news. This is a week that's been absolutely dominated by bad news.

It began with news reports of the coronavirus. And we were hearing about the turmoil. And the alarm that it was causing. In places that were fairly distant from us.

We heard many reports about Asia. And China. China. And Italy. And places that seemed quite far removed from us. But as the week went on.

Things escalated. And the news reports that we were hearing and reading. Seemed to increase day by day. And as they increased.

[30 : 45] They seemed to get closer and closer to us. And by the end of the week. On every channel. On the front page of every newspaper. Dominating all our conversations.

Whether online. Or in real life. Was this coronavirus. It's bad news. You know.

Some people are saying. It's the worst news to have. Hit us for. For generations. And there is a tangible sense of fear. That's sweeping the nation.

Even in Stornoway. Yesterday. As I said to the children. Every person I met. None of whom I'd ever met before. Had nothing to speak about. Other than the coronavirus.

And how this might impact us. There's a sense of fear. That's sweeping the nation. But the point the psalmist makes.

[31 : 43] In this psalm. Is that. That same fear. Should not shake the believer. Father. After. So Psalm 112. You could say.

Is an antidote. To this. Kind of fear. Which is. Stifling. the place at this time. And if you are here this morning and if you're a believer at such a time as this, in such a place as this, there's great opportunity for you and I to show the difference that Christ makes in a life.

Whilst everyone else panics and stresses and threats, there should be a steadiness about the believer.

Not that we should be unwise and dismiss and set aside sensible advice, but we shouldn't be in panic mode.

We shouldn't fear bad news. Our lives shouldn't be marked by that worldly fear. John Wesley, a man, a minister, who wrote many of the hymns that we still sing.

[33 : 10] His early years in ministry, I've told you before, they were a total disaster. And the reason they were a total disaster was he wasn't a Christian. He was trained in theology, he was highly religious, but he wasn't a Christian.

And probably the point at which he came to realize that was when he was on a boat on the high seas. And he'd experienced, along with the rest of the crew, three intense storms.

And there was news of a fourth storm that was coming. It was starting to hit them hard. And he was absolutely petrified. He was in fear of his life.

But alongside him were a group of German believers. believers. And he couldn't help but see that they were totally at peace.

And although they were being shaken around with the rest of the crew, they were at ease. They showed no signs of fear. There was a calm about them.

[34 : 20] And when they came out the other side of the storm safe and he spoke to these believers, he asked them, were you not scared?

Were your wives, were your children, were these little ones, were they not scared? Because we were that close to losing our lives. And they answered, in all honesty, no, we weren't scared. Why would we be scared? And that was the point at which Wesley realized that they had something he didn't have. And he began to seek God at that point.

Truly. And two years later, he committed his life to Christ. And after he did that, his whole perspective changed.

His whole demeanor changed. He went from a man who was fearful to a man who was fearless. As a Christian, Wesley in his journal was able to say this, I have never known more than 15 minutes of anxiety or fear.

[35 : 27] Whenever I fear, whenever I feel fearful emotions overtaking me, I just close my eyes and thank God that he is still on the throne, reigning over everything, and I take comfort in his control over the affairs of my life.

And Wesley, he became known for this. He was fearless in life. And he was even fearless when there was the threat of death.

And when somebody asked him about this absolute fearlessness that he had when death came close, he said this, he said, I am immortal until my work is done.

And he had this perspective. God has numbered his days. God has prepared good works for John Wesley to do in advance.

And he will not leave this earth until that day is reached and these works are finished. And until then, he says, I am immortal. Wesley was someone who became a good example of an individual who had no fear of bad news.

[36 : 48] And the question today I want us to think through for just a few minutes is, how can we become those who have no fear of bad news?

And the first point, first answer to that question is, we need to be people who fear the Lord. It's about having a rightly directed fear.

Verse 1 says, Praise the Lord, blessed, happy is the man who fears the Lord. And it used to be a phrase that was well known.

When people spoke about Christian people, they would often refer to them as God-fearing people. You watch old films and you listen to the commentary on how they address those who are believers.

They would say, well, he's a God-fearing man, they're a God-fearing family. That was a well-recognized, it was a well-known and well-used phrase. But rarely would we hear that phrase used today.

[37 : 56] We don't hear of people who are God-fearing men and women and boys and girls. And we have to ask the question, why is that? And I think the answer in general terms is because our view of self has got bigger.

And our view of God has got smaller. we've become people who have allowed self to grow out of all proportion and God has shrunk in our mind's eye.

And certainly as a country, I think it's fair for me to say we have lost our fear of the Lord. God and when we lose our fear of the Lord, we stop praising the Lord.

And as a nation, we've stopped praising the Lord. And when we stop praising the Lord because we have no fear of the Lord, we no longer enjoy the blessing of the Lord.

God. And that's certainly where we are today nationally. And maybe it's where some of us today are personally. And if we're there and if God is showing us even in this state of alarm that we're in, that we have not a proper sense of the fear of God, what do we need to do?

[39 : 28] Well, we need to repent. We need to repent and ask for forgiveness for that.

And we need to pray that God will help us to rediscover that fear of God. And that fear is not a negative stifling fear that causes us to withdraw and drives us away from God.

The fear of the Lord that is referred to in this verse is a sense of awe and reverence. It's an overwhelming sense of the power and greatness of God.

It's an attitude, it's an emotion which causes us as we see his greatness and our smallness and our sinfulness to fall on our knees and come in humility to him.

And nationally and personally we need to do that. One commentator, James Montgomery Boyce says, the fear the Bible is talking about is best described as profound reverence.

[41 : 02] That is, we are to revere God or stand in awe of him. On the other hand, says Boyce, we should not dismiss the idea of fear too easily for in many respects God is truly terrifying.

God is holy, majestic, forceful and frighteningly opposed to everything that is unholy or would seek to diminish his glory.

We cannot, says Boyce, take God lightly. Matthew Henry says that those who fear the Lord are such as stand in awe of God and have a constant reverence for his majesty and deference to his will.

The happy man is he that fears the Lord. See, the world, the devil would have you believe the opposite.

And yet, we see the misery of a nation that has drifted far from God the one who fears the Lord, who has God in his proper place, is one who can be happy, settled, even in the midst of national emergencies.

[42 : 36] See, when we lose that sense of awe and reverence for God, when God becomes small and tame in our mind's eye, when we lose our fear of the Lord, and that sense of how vast and powerful he is, then we begin to fear other things that we shouldn't fear.

When God shrinks, our problems grow, fear other things that come and we become unstable and shaky and insecure because our God is too small and our God is not too small.

And yet, it's only as we come back to the Bible, often, only when we are driven back to the Bible through the trauma of circumstances that we are reminded of the fact that our God is not small.

He is the almighty, sovereign, all-powerful God. He's the one that we should fear.

I remember my brother-in-law, Neil Lachey, seeing one of his school jotters from primary school. And he was asked to write a story along with the rest of the class on what he was scared of.

[44 : 12] So he thought about it for a while, scratched his head, and then he wrote five words on the page, I am scared of nothing.

And he got on with drawing a picture of a tractor. You know, the Christian, the one who sees God clearly should be able to say, I am scared of nothing.

Because our God is a great big God, as the children sing. I remember as a little boy, fearing no one. I used to think I was Rocky Balboa, I was invincible. And I thought that until one day a bigger boy pushed me, and I realized he was a lot stronger than me.

My whole perspective changed. You know, we have a God who is not able to be pushed over by anyone, or anything.

[45 : 18] nothing. And so, if he is the one who is holding us, we should be able to say, I'm scared of nothing. The psalmist said that in Psalm 27, and the psalmist was a man who experienced problem after problem and attack after attack.

He didn't have an easy life. And yet, he's able to say, when attack is encroaching on him, in Psalm 27, the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid when evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

Spurgeon said this, he who fears God has nothing else to fear. We should stand in such awe of the living God that all the threats that can be used by the proudest persecutor should have no more effect upon us than the whistling of the wind.

[46 : 43] if we are to have no fear of bad news, we are to rediscover, if we have lost it, our fear of the Lord.

The second point here, the second reason that we should have no fear of bad news is that we are not only able to stand back in awe as we look to God, but we are able to be those who find delight in him.

Verse 1 says, praise the Lord, blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. love, and when we think about this in terms of our experience and many of the mistakes that we've made in our past lives, our past life, love, I think it's reasonable to say that

many of the fears that come our way, come our way because we have drifted from God, we've drifted from his word, we've stopped praying, we've stopped reading the Bible, and fears take hold of us and get a grip of us, very often when we've for a season been looking for delight in places other than in God.

See, the devil is a master of illusion, he's the original magician, he's able to take something that is ugly and brutal and poisonous and present it to us in a beautiful, safe, and glamorous way. His speciality is luring us in with the promise of satisfaction and the thing that we're grasping at, and yet when we grasp it and we take hold of it and we taste it, we're empty.

[48 : 55] The hymn writer puts it really well, he says, I tried the broken cisterns, Lord, but the waters failed, even as I stooped to drink, they fled and mocked me as I wailed.

We pick up broken cisterns, we pick up leaky glasses, the devil says, look at that, you'll get satisfaction from that, we pick it up and the second we pick up these broken cisterns, the water, whatever the portion is that he's put in, it's draining out of it, there's no satisfaction, we never pick up a broken bucket to drink out of and expect to be satisfied and yet the devil puts broken bucket after broken bucket in our way and we pick it up and as we pick it up we almost hear the devil laughing at us, he's the one who is the master of delusion, he's the one that would have us spending our lives looking for delight in every broken cistern and every false promise that he can make but the reality is that there is no delight that is deep and lasting other than the delight we find in the Lord and in his commands there are people, likely even people who will be sitting here this morning and they would say to follow

God's way, to obey God's command is such a miserable life, how awful that must be, I'm free to do what I want any old time, not like these Christians Christians who are bound to these commands and yet we know those of us who are believers those who are Christians that when we are wayward we are miserable when we're finding looking for delight in other things we are utterly miserable and empty but when we're walking close with God when we're seeking to obey him because we love him our lives are full our hearts are full we're satisfied we're at peace Spurgeon who's writing of the believers says holiness is his happiness devotion is his delight truth is his treasure he rejoices in the precepts of godliness yes and delights greatly in them so the one who has no fear of bad news is the one who fears the lord who's living in reverence and awe of god and who isn't looking every other place for satisfaction and finding none but who is daily picking up god's word getting on our knees in prayer and finding satisfaction and joy and delight and peace in him that's where we're steadied that's where we're settled that's where we're secure the same hymn writer that I quoted said now none but christ can satisfy no other name for me there's love there's life there's lasting joy lord jesus found in thee if you want a testimony of that listen to what julian said last saturday night she spoke honestly about the joy of of trust in christ and then the barrenness of a period where she drifted and then the renewed joy of being brought close again as we drift from god we lose our delight we lose that wholesome satisfying joy that's found only in god and the further we drift the more suffocated we are by fears is that not true the further we are from god the more fears are strangling us so we have the encouragement here we have the corrective word for us here that we are to find delight in the lord and as we do so our fears shrink they may not be removed entirely there may be things in our lives which are kept there thorns in the flesh which trouble us but which we bring to the lord day by day in prayer and he gives us the grace to handle when we are finding delight in the lord our fears shrink and even in the face of bad news we're not shaken so we're to fear the lord we're to find delight in the lord the third thing here is we're to follow the lord's way and i'm not going to go into any great detail here the psalm begins in verse 1 with how the believer is to be blessed we've all heard it said that god blesses us in order that we will become a blessing so where are we

as believers to seek to be a blessing as we follow the lord's way we're to be a blessing in the home and in the family that's verses 2 and 3 his children will be mighty in the land the generation of the upright will be blessed wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures forever Spurgeon says he who fears god and leads a holy life is as a rule doing the best he can for the future advancement of his house what our children need for us more than anything else it is not for us to give them the best education and the best gadgets and the coolest clothes and the greatest opportunities in this world our children need for us from us to for us to live holy lives you want to do the best for your children you want to be a blessing in the home you and

I and I start with me we need to be those who are living holy lives not just standing on the platform but behind closed doors we're to be a blessing in the home and in the family we're to be a blessing in society look at verse 4 even in darkness light dawns for the upright for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man one of the commentators says darkness refers to moral decline we're in an age of moral decline and in an age of darkness of that nature we are called to be those who are gracious and compassionate and christ like we read there about the righteous man the only righteous man who ever lived was Jesus and if we are to be a blessing in society we are to seek to live lives which are more like Christ it's God's will for us Romans 8 we are saved we are justified so that we will be conformed to the image of the son and that's where and how we can become a blessing we're to be a blessing in the home and in the family we're to be a blessing in society in dark days we're to be a blessing in normal working life good will come verse 5 to him who is generous and lends freely who conducts his affairs with justice it's sad to say that I think most of the people that I've met with in pastoral ministry who have fallen away from a position of walking at one time close with

[57 : 45] God into a position of back sliding most of the times that they've fallen away it's because in the workplace they have worked alongside those who have professed to be Christians and whose life has been far removed from Christ and we are called to be a blessing not just in the four walls of the church but in the office in the surgery in the distillery on the fishing boat in the croft in the hospital we're to show people Christ wherever we are in our normal working life and we are called to be a blessing in poverty verse 9 he is scattered abroad his gifts to the poor his righteousness endures forever his horn will be lifted high in honour you know if God has blessed us verse 2 and 3 with riches and wealth if God has given us gifts then he has given us gifts not so that we will clothe ourselves and present ourselves and live like kings and queens he's given us gifts so that we can share we can bless those who are in poverty the psalm says

Eveson emphasises the generosity of the godly person towards the poor and this is a psalm that points us to Christ who though he was rich became poor he took our sin upon himself so that we could be made rich in him so Jesus says to his disciples as we read it in Mark and we hear it echoed in this psalm he says to his disciples back then he says to his disciples still today follow me don't just have an experience with me don't just have a Damascus road encounter don't just have some kind of an episode where you can stand and give testimony to something that happened a thousand years ago which made an impression on your life he says to us if you're my disciples follow me be a blessing in the home be a blessing in the workplace be a blessing in society be a blessing to those who are poor and who are struggling and you know if we are following the Lord if we are finding delight in the Lord if we are fearing the Lord we have no reason to fear bad news no one and nothing should cause us to fear now note in the psalm here it doesn't say we will not have bad news the believer like the unbeliever will have bad news to deal with as we go through our lives in a fallen world and you don't need me to tell you that but we have no reason to fear bad news no one and nothing not corona not cancer not war not natural disaster not even death need shake us when we are trusting in Christ the righteous man who triumphed over all his foes and shares his triumph his victory with all who are trusting him surely verse 6 says the psalmist he will never be shaken he will have no fear of bad news verse 7 his heart is steadfast trusting in the Lord his heart is secure verse 8 he will have no fear in the end he will look in triumph on his foes the new testament version of it is Romans 8 31 if God is for us who can be against us and the answer it is no one and nothing so we have no one and nothing to fear if God is for us but as I finish what about those who do not have God for them what about those who do not fear the Lord what about those who do not find delight in the Lord what about those who determine day by day that they will not follow the

Lord's ways what about them what should they fear well they should fear not just the coronavirus which attacks the body but they should fear the virus of sin which attacks the soul and which if left untreated leads to hell so the final point here and it's just a word is a word to the unbeliever fear hell because that's where the psalm finishes verse 10 says the wicked man will see and be vexed he will gnash his teeth and waste away the longings of the wicked will come to nothing that's the warning the warning that the psalm finishes with it's not my conclusion it's the psalmist conclusion this is

[65 : 02] God's conclusion through the psalmist he doesn't follow our etiquette to finish on a positive note he fires a torpedo warning here this is a warning that Jesus picks up and amplifies

because time after time after time after time after time Jesus warns of that place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth that place called hell it's a place that's to be feared more than any coronavirus but praise God it's a place that can be avoided if we will turn from sin turn from going our own way and trust in the Lord

Jesus who laid down his life who descended into hell so that we could be saved let's pray our heavenly father we pray that you would give us eyes to see that you would give us ears to hear and that you would give us hearts which are responsive to your word forgive us Lord for our fear of so many other things and our lack of fear of you forgive us Lord for the fact that we often say the opposite of what John the Baptist prayed so often we say may self increase and may Christ decrease in our lives forgive us father for that enable us we pray to be those who repent who rediscover our fear of God and who find delight in the relationship that is offered to us in the gospel and give us Lord we pray the strength the grace to be to not just know your blessing but to be a blessing in the world that you have put us so that others would see the beauty of Jesus and others would hear through us the good news of the gospel and also that others would hear through us the warning of the danger of hell for those who do not turn to Christ give us the courage we pray to tell these things in an age that has lost sight of you and has lost grip on these eternal truths and we pray these things in Jesus name Amen