

Less about Corona, More about Christ

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Date: 29 March 2020

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning if you're watching online or if you are listening in by telephone. It's good to have you and it's good for us to come together to worship God.

One or two intimations just before we begin and that's to say first of all that there'll be an evening service, our monthly Gaelic service is this evening and that should be coming online just before six o'clock tonight.

And the preacher at that service is Mr Farreker MacLeod, one of the elders here in the congregation. Also, let me just say it's possible to listen to the services by telephone.

I know most people probably will listen online but some don't have that opportunity. So there's been the opportunity created to listen by telephone.

And the number to phone is 01859 570 580. When you phone that number, you wait for 30, 35 seconds and that service should begin.

[1 : 05] And you can listen in that way. The Youth Fellowship will meet online tonight as they did last Sunday night at the usual time, half past seven. And the leaders will be in touch with YF through the group chat.

The prayer meeting this coming Wednesday, usual time, half past seven. And we will hope to connect through Zoom as we did last Wednesday. And there's details about how to do that on the Facebook page, which has been set up for this period.

If you're not able to access the Facebook page and want just to be given a guide through that, please feel free to phone me. 01859 502 618.

And I'll do my best to talk you through how to connect by telephone. And indeed, let me just say, please feel free to phone me anytime about anything.

It's a very strange thing being in the church with only one other person operating a camera. It's not easy that we're not able to be physically together.

[2 : 11] But let's take the chance to keep in touch with each other however we can. And you're very welcome to phone me at any time.

These, I think, are all the notices. So let us begin this time of worship and let us worship God and sing to his praise. We sing from Psalm 115 and we'll sing from verses 1 to verse 11.

Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thy glory take unto thy name, even for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake. O wherefore should the heathen say, where is their God now gone?

But our God in the heavens is, what pleased him he hath done. Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thy glory take.

And to thy name, even for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake.

[3 : 34] O wherefore should the heathen say, where is their God now gone?

But thou God in the heavens is, what pleased him he hath done.

There, rider, silver, rod, and gold, work of men's hands they be.

Mouths have they, but they do not speak. And eyes, but do not see.

Ears have they, but they do not hear. Nor says, but save or not.

[5 : 04] Hands, feet, but handle not. Nor walk, nor speak they through their throat.

Like them, their maker, shall and all.

On them, their trust not build. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord.

He is their help and shield. O where on's house, trust in the Lord.

That help and shield is he. Ye that fear God, trust in the Lord.

[6 : 26] That help and shield he'll be. Amen.

Now let's draw near to God in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the privilege and for the opportunity that you give to us to come before you in prayer.

Perhaps different times gathered around your word and singing your praise.

We thank you for the privilege and for the peace of God. We thank you for the God who calls us to come to him. We thank you, Lord, that you are the God who reveals yourself to us.

And even in the psalm that we have sung. We thank you that you speak to us about who you are. You're the God who is glorious. You're the God who is majestic. And we only have to look out our windows and the beauty of Harris to see the majesty of your creation.

[8 : 00] We thank you that you're the God who is powerful. The God who is sovereign, who is in the heavens. And yet you are the one who does not remain aloof from us and distant.

But you come near to us in Christ. We thank you that Jesus is called Emmanuel, which means God with us.

We thank you that Jesus is the one who has shown us in full measure the reality of the fact that God is for us. And if God is for us, who can be against us?

We thank you for the love of God, for the mercy of God that we hear of in the psalm. And we are propelled forward into the New Testament to see in great fullness at the cross of Christ.

And we thank you for Jesus who laid down his life so that we could be given life that is eternal. We thank you for your great love of us. We thank you that you're the God who cares for us.

[9 : 05] You're the God whom we are able to trust. And we pray that in these days which we find so bizarre in so many ways, these days which unsettle us and which may make us at times fearful, we thank you that we can come to you and know that you are in control, that you are sovereign, that you are trustworthy, that you see all things and that you are even working in the midst of these days to bring glory to your name and to bring things together in such a way that your people know your blessing.

So help us Lord we pray to trust you. Speak to us we pray through your word and enable us to have ears to hear and eyes to see Jesus.

We pray for those who are listening and watching in different places and different situations. We pray for those who are struggling just now, for those who are sick, for those who are receiving treatment and who need to know your healing touch and we bring them to you in prayer.

And we ask Lord that you would be at work in their lives and where it's your will that you would bring healing. And Lord we thank you that even where physical healing is not possible, your grace is sufficient to take us through each day that you have given us in this world.

We pray for those who are feeling lonely, for those who are very much feeling the reality of isolation. And we ask that you would draw near to them in a special way, that you would minister to them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 45] We pray for those who are elderly and who may be fearful as they hear reports and see articles about the dangers of contracting this virus at a particular age.

We ask that you would give to them peace and that you would give to them protection. We thank you that you are our help and that you are our shield. And we pray for our young people as well, for those who are not able to meet in Sunday school just now.

And we ask that in their own homes Lord and as they open their own Bibles, we ask that you would speak to them and that they would remember you and that they would trust you in the days of their youth.

We pray for those who have put in authority over us Lord. We ask Lord that you would give to them wisdom. We keep praying Lord that they would seek wisdom which comes from heaven.

And as we wrestle with these difficult circumstances, we pray that they may know more and more of a sense of their own inadequacy. We pray that they would be humble, that we as a nation would be humbled and that we would look to the God who is able to heal and look to the God who is able to help us.

[11 : 59] The one who is our ever present helper close at hand in times of great need. We pray for those in the emergency service, for those who work in the NHS.

We pray for those who are key workers, who deliver vital goods, who keep shops open. All the things that we need to be able to live. We thank you Lord that there are those who are continuing to work in these different service industries.

And we ask that you would bless them and that you would equip them and that you would strengthen them for the work that they are doing at this time. We pray Lord that you would continue with us now.

We ask for your help. We pray for the sense of your Holy Spirit here in this building and in every home where we come together. And we ask Lord that as we open your word that you would speak to us through it.

Encourage us, correct us Lord, rebuke us. Speak into our lives with your word which is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.

[13 : 04] Hear our prayers. Take away our sin Lord. We confess that we are sinners who stray far from you. But we thank you that you are a God who is merciful, a God who is gracious.

And a God who promises that if we confess our sin, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to purify us from all unrighteousness. So hear our prayers. Continue with us we ask in Jesus name.

Amen. Boys and girls, it's good to not see you today, but I hope you can see me on the other side of that. I have one or two things to show you.

And before I show you these things, I want you to think about this. I want you to think about this and guess each of the things I show you. What do you think they're for?

They're not the easiest things to figure. But the question is, what do you think these things are for? So I'll just come down and I'll show you it.

[14 : 03] And I'll give you five seconds or ten seconds maybe for each of them. You can shout out and guess what these things are. And then I'll tell you what they are just after that. Okay. Can you see that? A bit closer.

You can see that it's a knife. Now have a guess. What do you think it's for? well, it's obviously not a knife for splitting your butter and your toast, because it's too thin.

what do you think it's for well it's obviously not a knife for spreading your your your butter and your toasters it's too thin it's not a knife for for carving any kind of wood because it's it's not going to shatter so what do you think it's for well i'll show you this one it's for opening letters and opening letters nice and neat so there we go that's the first thing here's the second one what do you think that's for it goes like that it's a bit of it take a second i'll think about it what do you think this is for i would never have guessed this but this is actually for pulling out the little green bit on the top of strawberry i always use my fingers and i don't know why you would use your fingers but somebody has thought it was a good idea to invent one of these things and you can just slip hold on the the top of the strawberry pull it out and i'm told it does an excellent job here's the third thing any idea what that is your name is behind the camera any ideas any i haven't got a clue not a clue not a clue looks a little bit like a mini iron but i don't think you know what a major iron was but it's it's actually something that you hold like that should have brought an orange but you you you jab the the sharp bit into the orange and you push it onto the stick and it peels an orange perfectly and it peels an orange without you getting any sticky mess on your fingers so that's the thing to look at these things at first you would wonder what on earth is that for once you realize what it's for it all makes sense and you think oh that's good that's designed just for that purpose one last thing to ask you about uh what it's for and and the last thing i wanted to ask you about what's it what's it what's it for is is this and and that what are we for now that's the the question what's our what's our reason for being here boys and girls now what should we what should we be doing with our lives i think a lot of people are asking that question just now because because we're realizing as we take time at home that life isn't just about work because most of us aren't working and life isn't just all about school and getting the best grades because because there is no school just now and uh we've been told there's not going to be any exams life isn't all just about sport because we can't play any sport and even the best sports people in the world just now they've hung their boots up for a while they can't play football because we're not allowed to life's not all about money because there's hardly any shops open for us to be able to to spend money so people are are scratching their heads and they're thinking to themselves what on earth is life for so what do you think life is for well i think you know the answer to that question because you've been thinking about that in sunday school in your catechism so let me ask you a question from the catechism and you can say it back to me how and why did god create us that's the question how and why did god create us what's the answer well that's why god created us male and female in his own image to glorify him another question that you've learned in your catechism how can we glorify god and the answer is by loving him and

by obeying his commands and law so boys and girls in this strange time when we're all a bit far apart from each other it's good for us to know and it's good for us to remember that our purpose is to know god and to glorify god and how can we do this well we can do this by uh by spending time with him reading the bible because this is where god speaks to us and this is where god shows us who who he is we can spend time getting to know god as we as we close our eyes and we put our hands together and we speak to him in prayer and we can spend time getting to know god as we as we join together uh with our families as we're doing just now and worship him life can be so busy uh for lots of time that that we that we sometimes forget what life's all for but no one's busy just now we're all we're all kind of still and so in the stillness boys and girls let's pray that we'll come to know god better and that we'll glorify him with our lives because that's what we were made for and we'll pray lord jesus we thank you that you love us we thank you that you made us us and we thank you that you made us so that we could know you that we could trust you so that we could know joy in our hearts when we spend time with you and we thank you lord that you made us so that we can glorify you we pray that you would help us in our lives to to glorify you help us to to spend time with you and help us lord we pray to to obey the things that you want us to do with our lives and help us we pray to know that you are close to us and that we are safe when we are with you so be with the boys and girls where whatever they are and help them to know that you are close to them and we ask all this in jesus name amen we're going to read god's word now we're going to read two psalms two psalms and psalm 114 and psalm 115 psalm 114 and psalm 115 this is god's word when israel came out of egypt the house of jacob from a people of foreign tongue judah became god's sanctuary israel his dominion the sea looked and fled the jordan turned back the mountains skipped like rams the hills like lambs why was it o sea that you fled o jordan that you turned back you mountains that you skipped like rams you hills like lambs tremble o earth at the presence of the lord at the presence of the god of jacob who turned the rock into a pool the hard rock into springs of water and i say 115 from the beginning

not to us oh lord not to us but to your name be the glory because of your love and faithfulness why do the nations say where is their god our god is in heaven he does whatever pleases him but their idols are silver and gold made by the hands of men they have mouths but cannot speak eyes but they cannot see they have ears but cannot hear noses but they cannot smell they have hands but cannot feel feet but they cannot walk nor can they utter a sound with their throats those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them o house of israel trust in the lord he is their help and shield o house of aaron trust in the lord he is their help and shield you who fear him trust in the lord he is their help and shield the lord remembers us and will bless us he will bless the house of israel he will bless the house of aaron he will bless those who fear the lord small and great alike may the lord make you increase both you and your children may you be blessed by the lord the maker of heaven and earth the highest heavens belong to the lord for the earth he has given to man it is not the dead who praise the lord those who go down to silence it is we who extol the lord both now and forevermore praise the lord amen may god bless that reading of his word to us again we'll pray for a moment just as we turn back to his word heavenly father we again seek your help we pray that you would draw near to us as we take a few moments and meditate upon your word we confess lord that we are very much in need we are not able to see we are not able to hear we are not able to speak without the the help of the holy spirit and so we pray that the same holy spirit to inspire these words to be written would be at work in our hearts enabling us to to see and hear and understand and we pray that you would work within our hearts in such a way as to give us faith so that we would respond to your word by placing our trust in you and seeking to glorify your name because we confess lord and we acknowledge lord we rejoice lord in the fact that you are worthy of all our praise you are worthy of all glory so hear us help us we pray in jesus name amen if you could have your bibles open where you are please at psalm 114 and psalm 115 and then we'll take a few moments and meditate upon these psalms over the last few days i think it's fair to say that all of us have had uh a bit more in fact probably a lot more time uh on our hands and and a lot more time together uh if we're uh living together as families and the other night in our house the girls they wanted to to look back through some some old pictures so we we dug uh them out we connected up this old hard drive that i hadn't seen for for for a lot of years when we we started looking through these old photographs and you know how it is with old pictures uh you look at one you may not have seen it for for many many years but instantly when you see the picture you're you're transported back uh to the place that you once had been uh you you remember and you

[26 : 39] you revisit the experiences that you once had you you think about the people that you spent time with pictures do that for us they trigger a lot in our minds in our in our hearts and our emotions and psalm 114 which is where we begin is uh it's like a picture it's a collage even of of where god's people had been in difficult days and how god had had saved them and delivered them and how god had cared for his people in some of the most trying times and just like we may take out the same pictures uh every year on certain significant dates and and pour over them and and relive memories god's people every year at the time of passover they would they would take out these pictures they would take out uh these psalms the set of psalms from 113 to 118 and they would be reminded once more of of who god is and what god had had done for them over the years so i'd like to look at two of these psalms today if possible first of all we'll look at psalm 114 and in psalm 114 we see the the power of god and that's the first point just two points today first of all as we look at the whole of psalm 114 we see the power of god and it's a psalm that begins in in egypt but it begins more accurately as we see in verse one with with god's people who are coming out of egypt they're coming out of a of a land of a place uh that was foreign to them that's the the story of of verse one but the question that we that we must ask as we as we come to this psalm is uh well what were they doing what were god's people doing in egypt in the first place and we know from a wider reading of scripture that they they weren't in egypt on a holiday they weren't in egypt in any kind of field trip or excursion they were in captivity they were prisoners they were enslaved they were suffering and they were in and of themselves powerless to do anything about it so actually before we see the power of god here in this psalm we need to realize that the power of god god is set against the backdrop of the powerlessness of god's people god's people israel or judah there's the two names used there which speaks about the whole of the nation god's people they were held captive by egyptian armed forces which were considerable in might and certainly more powerful than they were and god's people they were held captive even by the geography of the place that they were in the red sea and the mountain range which were surrounding them stood between them and any hope of of freedom and they were powerless to change that so that was that was the egypt experience the sand begins with egypt and that was the egypt experience it was dark they were in captivity they were in difficulty and they were powerless to change that it strikes me that sometimes we have to go through our own egypt type experiences to come to terms with how powerless we are you know maybe this lockdown that we're currently going through is is one such experience i mean nobody

likes the circumstances we're in today we don't like the fact that we're not able to to meet together as a congregation in our in our church building uh we we feel a a sense of captivity many of us uh in our own homes uh in our own homes at this time and perhaps the the overwhelming sense that we have is is this feeling of powerlessness we can't do anything to change this in our own in our own strength we can't push back this coronavirus that seems to be sweeping our nation we can't find a cure at the moment as far as i understand there seems to be so many obstacles and there's a tangible sense of of powerlessness every time we we switch on the news and and that's not comfortable we're not living at present through an experience which is comfortable but sometimes we actually learn a lot when we're in a state of discomfort uh sometimes uh we are uh brought to learn a lot when we're reminded of our own weakness and sometimes to be in that position can be a good thing because when we know our weakness we are all the more ready to cry out to the god who is powerful and he is powerful that's the the thrust it's the whole thrust of the sun when israel were on route out of egypt in verse one and the red sea stood between them and freedom and the egyptian armies were in pursuit of them as they sought to make their their exit their exodus out of egypt god's people as they approached the sea there was there was no way through for them they were terrified we're told in in exodus 14 10 so they cried out to the lord and what happened next well god intervened and we're told that as god's people approached the sea the red sea which stood between them and that place that god would have them go to uh the sea looked and fled god miraculously he he inexplicably pushed the sea back such as god's power and you can read the whole account of that in in exodus chapter 13 and uh exodus chapter 14 we have no time to go there just now but that's the first snapshot it's the first picture that we're given of god's power he pushes back the red sea to allow his people to to travel through to the place that he would have them be and then the second picture as we continue to to focus on verse three it takes us 40 years forward in time and the the position that we find ourselves in at this point is that god's people who had been led out of egypt who had been uh led through the the red sea and who were in the

wilderness on route to the promised land they're now on the threshold of the promised land but they couldn't enter it because the mile wide fast flowing jordan river stood between them and this land that god had promised again they felt powerless again they were at a loss to know what to do so what happened next well they looked to god they they prayed were told that they consecrated themselves in joshua 3 and god heard god intervened on their behalf and the jordan which stood between them and the land

that god had promised it turned back that the river turned back again we can't understand it we don't have any scientific explanation uh to to explain it it's a supernatural powerful act of god and again you can read of the whole story in joshua chapter 3 but the the message that comes through these these two these two pictures of verse 3 and indeed the message that comes through the whole of the psalm is that our god is powerful he's able to speak a word and we're told verse 7 creation trembles mountains where six are moved they shake he speaks a word and even the sea and the rushing waters they are forced to obey because our god is powerful and when we think about these images when we think upon uh these uh pictures that were given in this psalm i think we we begin to see jesus appear because our minds uh go to places like mark 4 we see parallels there jesus and his disciples are in the boat on the sea of galilee and we're told in mark 4 37 a furious squall came up and the waves break broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped jesus was in the stern sleeping in a cushion the disciples woke him and said teacher don't you care if we drown he got up rebuked the wind and said to the waves quiet he's still then the wind died down and it was completely calm and he said to his disciples why are you so afraid do you still have no faith and they were terrified and asked each other who is this even the wind and the waves obey him and that was a it was a a good question for the disciples to be asking it was a sensible question for the disciples to be asking how was it they were thinking that that jesus was able with a word to to push back the waves of the sea and make everything calm as we see in mark 4 and if we continued on a short journey through mark we could ask the question in mark 5 how was it that jesus was able with a word to push back legions of demons and bring peace to us all and if we were to to do a tour of of all of the gospels we could ask the question as the disciples lightly did how was it that jesus was able with a word to push back any virus or any disease or any illness any condition that was attacking the people who came to him how could you do it and if we go forward a little more we must ask the question how was it that when jesus went to the cross he was able to push back sin and satan and death and hell and bring salvation

and true freedom and abundant eternal life to all who believe in him how does he have that power to save and the answer is because he is god he is god the son and we see the power of god not only in this psalm as god deals with the nation of israel but we see the power of god in an incredible way in and through christ and the question we must ask at this point is how should we respond to this powerful god and the answer according to psalm 114 is we should tremble before him that's what we're taught in this son in verse 7 that's even what the creation teaches us to do verse 7 tremble o earth at the presence of the lord now some might say shouldn't this shouldn't this today be a message of of peace and a message of comfort in these scary times and not a message that's designed to make us tremble well i would kind to that by saying this is a message of peace but if we want real peace and not some poor invitation if we want god's peace if we want deep peace real peace if we want god's salvation if we want his help if we want his healing then we need to humble ourselves we need to accept as we see in in verse 2 that he as the powerful god has has dominion over us we need to realize our own powerlessness to save ourselves and then cry out to god as israel did our god he is he is mighty to save our god is is powerful and he uses his great power not to to crush his people but to save his people he uses his great power!

to care for his people and that's how this psalm closes! we see that in the closing verses when israel are in the wilderness on this journey to the promised land and en route at this point they have no water they have no means of getting water they are distressed they are fearful but what did god do?

[42 : 24] well verse 8 tells us that he turned the rock into a pool the hard rock into springs of water and you can read the whole story of that in exodus 17 and numbers 20 but the point that has been made here is that this powerful god he's tender he is attentive to his people he knows our needs and he cares for us so in a time where there is so much worry and so much concern what are we to do?

well Peter answers that question in verse Peter 5 and verse 7 he says cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you and surely that's a great comfort for us to know that this powerful god he knows about the coronavirus he knows about Russian warships in the North Sea he knows about the concerns that we may have for our business he knows about the worries that we have over our loved ones he knows about even all the small details that keep us awake at night and he promises that he will care for us and if we know that surely with the psalmist we want to praise him surely we want to glorify his name and that's the note of the next psalm and I want to very briefly to step through the next psalm if the first psalm is given the title the power of God if we see the power of God in Psalm 114 the next psalm here Psalm 115 we could give the title to that psalm as glory to God because that's the call of the psalm it's a call to glorify God it's a call to glorify God not self not idols but it's a call to bring glory to God and I want to just ask the question a very practical question how do we glorify God with our lives and I want to suggest four answers to that question as we follow the course of the psalm the first thing we do if we want to glorify God is we tell him which I suppose is another way of saying we give him praise and that's the tone of verse one not to us oh Lord not to us but to your name be the glory because of your love and faithfulness so as the people of

God in this situation as the us of verse one unite their voices who are they speaking to well they're speaking to God the psalm it's a song it's a song of praise it's a prayer and it's directed first and foremost to God they tell God that he is worthy of all glory because of who he is because of what he's done because of all the acts of love and faithfulness that they remembered year on year so what are we taught through this verse by way of application well we are taught very straightforwardly here that in order for us to glorify God we are to we are to praise him from our hearts with our our mouths as we as we sing and as we pray as we express audibly the fact that he is worthy and as I said in the children's talk to glorify

God is a reason for living that's why we're here the shorter catechism says in question one what is man's chief end and the answer comes back man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever and let's note that our chief end our primary purpose our whole reason for living it's not to binge on Netflix box sets and I think probably people on lockdown have probably had enough of that already our primary reason for being here our chief end is not to buy more stuff because what's the point of buying more stuff if we can't even just now go outside and use it or wear it our reason for living is not to make more money because what's the point of making money if we have nowhere to buy stuff it's not all about our work because most of us aren't working just now it's not about the next holiday abroad because all these holidays are being cancelled it's not all about sport sport is done for now and so much of what we have given our lives over to has been taken away from us or rendered meaningless almost overnight and now we're asking the question why are we here everything about our lives almost has changed and we're asking the question why are we here and according to

[48 : 25] Psalm 115 we are here to glorify the God who made us and who in a sense lost us to sin as we turned away from him and yet the God who saved us through Christ at such great cost so let us be encouraged to join our voices in prayer and praise with the Psalmist let us from our hearts with our lips tell the Lord maybe for the first time as we trust him or maybe for the first time in a long time if we've wandered away from him let us tell him that he is worthy of all glory and all praise how do we glorify God with our lives we tell him that he is worthy the second thing we do here is we throw our idols and sometimes that's that we need a bit of time and space to realise what our idols are

Archbishop William Temple a minister from the Church of England in the last century said he said this when you don't have to think of anything when your mind isn't being taken to think by the environment where does your mind go what does your mind habitually go to what do you most like to think about what do you most enjoy daydreaming about what gives you the most comfort to fantasise about it's a question he asks and then he follows up by saying that's your God your religion is what you do with your solitude and maybe for us in the solitude of lockdown maybe in this stillness in this solitude the one true God has been showing us some of the other small g gods that we are allowed to come into our lives maybe in the solitude of lockdown the one true God has been showing us some of the idols that we cling on to sometimes we think of idols as statues and golden monuments but as

Tim Keller says anything more important to you than the real God is an alternative God an idol so what does the psalmist have to say about idols well to paraphrase verses 4 to 8 he says idols they're a load of rubbish their idols verse 4 are silver and gold made by the hands of men they have mouths but they cannot speak eyes but they cannot see ears but they cannot hear noses but they cannot smell they have hands but they cannot feel feet but they cannot walk nor can they utter a sign with their throats those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them again Keller says idols have no power verses 5 to 7 to give you the love forgiveness and guidance you need but paradoxically they do have the power to make you like them verse 8 Ligon Duncan a minister of the state says you become like what you worship and if you worship an idol which is nothing you will become empty and vain and be brought to nothing so what should we do with the idols that the

Lord shows us we have allowed to come into our lives well I'll tell you what we should do with them we should do the same with them as we do with all rubbish we should do the same to them as what we do with all empty packages all worthless things we throw them away we can't glorify God with our lives and keep hold of idols so we need to throw them out and in these last few days as we've gone into the isolation I think many of the idols that we cling onto actually have been prized out of our hands God has at least for a period thrown them away for us and that can be painful but we should be thankful for and we should be careful should this virus pass and should life go back to some kind of normal for us we should be careful not to pick these idols back up whatever these idols may be

William Kuyper said in the great hymn that we often sing the dearest idol I have known whatever that idol be help me to tear it from my throne and worship only thee how do we how do we glorify God with our lives when we tell him we praise him how do we glorify God with our lives when we throw out the idols that he convicts us of as he shines his light into our lives the third thing here is we glorify God by trusting him and from verses 9 to 11 it's as if the psalmist he turns the volume up to max and three times with great emphasis we are exhorted to and we are given reasons to trust the Lord verse 9 O house of Israel trust in the Lord he is their help and shield verse 10 O house of Aaron trust in the Lord he is their help and shield you who fear him verse 11 trust in the Lord he is their help and shield and you might say well that's easy for the psalmist to say he didn't have a pandemic to worry about when he was writing this he probably had an easy life he was probably in a good place just having had some victory and on the high of that victory but actually the commentators are mainly agreed that this was a difficult time for

[55 : 07] God's people when the psalm was written God's people were struggling the nations were sneering verse 2 the nations were saying to God's people where is their God and yet the psalmist he keeps his eye on God he remembers what we need to remember that the God is sovereign he is in control our God verse 3 is in heaven he does whatever pleases him and the psalmist he believes that he trusts that he keeps on trusting the Lord and if you and I want to know God's blessing the blessing that we get a flavour of in verses 12 to 15 if you and I want to live lives that are glorifying God we need to keep on trusting him we need to keep hold of that threefold promise that we have in these verses that he is our help and shield we need to know that we need to believe that we need to trust that even and actually especially in difficult times how do we glorify God we tell him we face him we throw out idols we trust we trust the Lord and finally we tell others about the Lord and that's how the psalm concludes the highest heavens the highest heavens belong to the Lord but the earth is given to man it's not the deity praise the

Lord it's those who go down to silence it is we who extol the Lord both now and forever more praise the Lord and you know the message there as we finish it's clear on earth we have a mission we have if we are God's people if we are trusting in him we have a great commission and it's to tell people about the Lord Jesus you know people have had enough bad news over these last few days I saw a post on social media just a couple of days back it was one of these messages that goes out on a timeline to everybody and the message said this it said I'm tired of seeing coronavirus posts I want to see your answers then there were some questions and I thought to myself as I glanced at it these are likely to be profound questions and here's the questions of the first few of them number one what's your favourite pie number two how old are you number three how many tattoos do you have number four have you ever ice skated and it just struck me so forcibly that at a time like this when yes we are very much rocked by the reality of bad news at a time like this when there is a sense of fear and when there is a sense of powerlessness how hopeless we are if all we have to

say is what's your favourite pie how many tattoos have you got how futile it is if our only counter to the darkness of the coronavirus is to start answering these kind of questions you know people don't need to know about my favourite pie they don't need to know about your tattoos they don't need to know how old you are and they don't need to know about your ability or inability to ice skate but people do need to know the truth about

Jesus people need to know the good news about the Lord Jesus and if we are trusting him if we are his people it's our job to tell them so let us be encouraged and challenged to talk less about corona and to talk more about Christ let us be encouraged to tell others about the Lord Jesus about his sinless life that he lived for us because we couldn't live it about his sacrificial death which he died in our place for our sin and about his glorious resurrection and the eternal life that he promises to share with us if we believe in him tell others about Jesus and may souls be saved and may God be glorified as we seek to do so okay heavenly father help us we pray as we meditate upon these songs to be to tremble before your power to be in awe at your majesty and yet we're to be almost overwhelmed with the magnitude of your grace and your care for us and of us and enable us Lord we pray to trust you and enable us we pray to give our lives over not to seek him to glorify ourselves not to seek to bring other gods into our lives but help us we pray to give our all to seek and to glorify you because you alone are worthy and we pray these things in Jesus name and for

Jesus sake Amen we'll conclude now by singing to God's praise from the hymn the well known hymn when I survey the wondrous cross when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt and all my pride forbid it Lord that I should boast saving the death of Christ my God all the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to his blood see from his head his hands his feet sorrow and love flow mingle down did e'er such love and sorrow meet or thorns composed so rich a trying where the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all so and so and so and so and and aspire

[63 : 17] Surveys the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory died My richest gain I count but lost And poor contempt on all my pride Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the death of Christ my God All the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to his blood

Sing from his head His hands, his feet Sorrow and love, lonely my God It is such love and sorrow meet For thorns can grow so rich a crown For the whole realm of nature wide That were an offering far too small Love so amazing, so divine Demands my soul, my life, my hope Amen And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father And the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all Both now and forevermore Amen