

17.1.21 pm

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Date: 17 January 2021

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[0 : 0 0] well good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening those who are watching online those who are listening in on the telephone it's good for us again to come together and to worship god and we'll begin this time of worship by saying to god's praise in psalm 141 psalm 141 we'll sing verses 1 to verse 4 and then verse 8 oh lord i unto thee do cry do thou make haste to me and give an ear unto my voice when i cry unto thee we sing a verse down to verse 4 and then verse 8 but unto thee oh god the lord mine eyes that lifted be my soul do not leave destitute my trust is set on thee we'll sing these verses to god's praise and then after that stewart king will lead us in prayer oh lord i unto thee do cry do thou make haste to me and give an ear unto my voice when i cry unto thee as incense let my prayer be directed in thine eyes and the uplifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice said lord i watch before my mouth keep of my lift the door my heart incline thou not unto the ill i shoot the door to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity and with their delicate might that work iniquity and with their delicate might is let me not satisfy but unto thee oh god the lord the lord mine eyes up lifted be my soul do not leave destitute my trust is set on me let us join together in prayer our most gracious and ever-blessed father lord we give you thanks again for this opportunity on your day to be able to gather together lord and to hear of your word lord we thank you that that word is readily available to us

we thank you for david as he brings that word to us we ask that you would bless our evening as we seek to see your face lord we thank you that we have this word that is so readily available to us we think of those around the world that do not have such an opportunity to be able to to read your word to hear your word and have to do these things in secret lord we pray for them and ask that you would indeed be with them we pray for this persecuted church lord we pray for those from all corners of the earth or those that do not have the privilege and blessing that we we have here in harris lord of a minister that ministers to us lord that has been placed here by your wonderful hand lord we pray for those places in difficulty lord we think of those vacant congregations in our own lands we think of those that do not have that privilege as well lord and we pray for them lord we ask that you would place somebody there that is of your choosing lord somebody that you have called to to preach your word to step into that glorious position of being able to preach your word to share your word and to minister to those in their respective areas lord we give you thanks that as we turn each and every page we're able to see your glorious plan lord and the unfolding of your word continues to give us insight into who you are that you are indeed a sovereign god that you are a faithful god you're a loving god and there are so many words to describe you lord and we are so grateful for the opportunities to be able to read them to be able to see your salvation plan from the beginning to the end of your book lord and we pray that as we open that word this evening that we would be blessed by it lord we give you thanks for your hand in the preparation of this word this evening lord and we pray that as we hear this word that we don't hear the word of your servant lord but we hear you we hear your voice as you speak to us lord we pray for those who are going through difficulties at this moment lord we think of those especially who are grieving lord and we bring those families to you we think of this past week lord as we saw the family of effie mcsween lay their mother to rest as she passed from this life into eternity lord and we give you thanks for her life we give you thanks for her faithfulness to you and as she continued to seek your face in her life lord we pray that that would be the same for each and every person listening this evening lord that we would be able to seek your face in all that we do no matter where we find ourselves no matter what difficulties or what trials we find ourselves in that we would turn to you that we would continually turn to you in prayer that we would pray without ceasing and that we would constantly turn to you lord we pray for those that are indeed grieving we think of them and we ask that you would lay your comforting hands upon them lord we know that you're a god of comfort and you're a god that of

peace as well lord and we pray that that would indeed be their reality lord we think of those in our nation as leaders lord we think of them and as we see multiple changes we see many restrictions and decisions being made across our land we pray for each and every one of them those that you have indeed placed um in their positions lord may they be reminded that they have been placed in their positions by you lord and we ask that you would be with them that you would grant them wisdom that you would grant them discernment as they make these decisions lord that they would indeed turn to you that they would be prayerful individuals as they seek to make decisions that impact on the wider population lord we pray for um our own first minister we pray for our prime minister as well lord and across the globe those that have been placed in positions of power lord that you would be the glorious hand that leads and guides them in all that they do we pray lord for our schools we pray for those um that are homeschooling at the moment we pray for the young ones and for the teachers uh going through this difficult time at the moment lord we pray for the young ones especially lord and um as they are unable to to meet together here in church as well as they would normally we pray that you would be with them where they are that they would turn to you in their early days lord as young children they would be children of god lord and that they would grow up knowing who you are they would grow up in that wonderful relationship with you and that they would lead lives and that they would be beacons of light for you in our community here and wherever they go wherever you place them and in this world lord that you would be with them that you would strengthen them and that they would be soldiers for you and that they would be mighty warriors for you lord so we ask that you'll be with the young ones those that are listening this evening and those that are not listening this evening we think of the young and old that are not here this evening lord we think of those that have no desire to tune into these sermons or have no desire to come into your house to hear your word lord we pray that you would reveal yourself to them that you would make known to them the sin within their lives and that they would indeed repent from those sins lord and that we would see many souls saved here in harris and further afield lord for we know and that those who pass into eternity are separated by those that have a faith in you and those that have realized a truth too late lord remind them that today is indeed the day of salvation and there is no guarantee of us entering entering into tomorrow there's no guarantee of us even seeing out the end of this day as well lord so go before us just now be with david as he opens up your word to us and we ask all this with the forgiveness of our sins in the name of christ our saviour amen we'll turn now to god's word and we'll read from psalm 141 psalm 141 a psalm of david oh lord i call to you come quickly to me hear my voice when i call to you may my prayer be set before you like insects may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice set a guard over my mouth oh lord keep watch over the door of my lips let not my heart be drawn to what is evil to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evil doers let me not eat of their delicacies let a righteous man strike me it is a kindness let him rebuke me it is oil on my head my head will not refuse it yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evil doers their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken they will say as one plows and breaks up the earth so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave but my eyes are fixed on you oh sovereign lord in you i take refuge do not give me over to death keep me from the snares they have laid for me from the traps set by evil doers let the wicked fall into their own nets while i pass by in safety we'll also read a couple of short portions from the new testament matthew chapter 14 matthew chapter 14 and we'll read from verse 21 down to verse 33 immediately jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side while he dismissed the crowd after he had dismissed them he went up on the mountainside by himself to pray when evening came he was there alone but the boat was already a considerable distance from land buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it during the fourth watch of the night jesus went out to them that's the disciples walking on the lake when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified it is a ghost they said and cried out in fear but jesus immediately said to them take courage it is i don't be afraid lord if it's you peter replied tell me to come to you on the water come he said then peter got down out of the boat walked on the water and came towards jesus but when he saw the wind he was afraid and began and beginning to sink cried out lord save me immediately jesus reached out his hand and caught him you have little faith he said why did you doubt and when they climbed into the boat the wind died down then those who were in the boat worshipped him saying truly you are the son of god and then john 16 uh john 16 and we'll read from verses 27 uh to verse 33 and jesus there speaking uh to his disciples said uh the father himself loves you because you

have loved me and have believed that i came from god i came from the father and entered the world now i am leaving the world and going back to the father then jesus disciple said now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions this makes us believe that you came from god you believe at last jesus answered but a time is coming and has come when you will be scattered each to his own home you will leave me all alone yet i am not alone for my father is with me i have told you these things so that in me you may have peace in this world you will have trouble but take heart i have overcome the world amen and may god bless these readings of his word uh to us and we'll pray uh just before we come to study uh this psalm our heavenly father we thank you once more for your word we thank you as has been prayed already uh for the fact that we have this in our hands in a translation that we can understand we have the freedom and the desire to meet and to open and to meditate uh upon your word uh speak to us lord we pray may the word of god come to us in the power of your spirit and uh may we hear the voice of jesus uh calling us to find that rest and that peace uh that is found only in him we pray not only for ourselves we pray for all churches around us and across the nation and across all nations that meet in the name of jesus and who listen to the gospel of jesus christ being preached we ask lord that whatever christ crucified us preach you would add your blessing and that you would build your church and we pray for the young people who will meet after the service on in the yf gathering we ask lord that as stewart and as others prepare to speak to them that they would know your presence that they would hear your voice and lord that they would trust and walk with their creator that they would come to know christ as their savior in the days of their youth so hear our prayers minister to us this evening we pray and we ask all these things in jesus name and for his sake amen well tonight uh for a short time we're studying uh psalm 141 uh but i want to take the structure for the study from the 33rd verse of john chapter 16 which we read just a moment ago jesus in that chapter as he spoke to his disciples uh said to them in this world you will have trouble but take heart i have overcome the world so two points for this evening uh the first point is we see that there there is and there always will be a trouble in time trouble in this world and the second point uh that we come to is we we hear uh we see the promise of that tranquility that is eternal if we are in christ so first of all we see here that uh there was there is there will always be trouble in time and i was checking back actually as i uh came to the psalm this evening i was checking back uh to the date uh on which we began this this slow plod through the the psalter it was the 4th of november 2015 uh that we began to look at the psalms and so for the last uh five years now uh with a few breaks in between we've walked through uh these psalms many of these psalms of david and they take us into almost every experience of life that we can go through uh there are psalms where uh we hear the psalmist and he's on a spiritual high uh we can think of psalm 95 for example or there are psalms in the other extreme uh where the psalmist is in is on a spiritual low uh he's in the depth and our minds go to psalm 130 uh there's times that the psalmist knew peace and tranquility is is soul was calm uh psalm 131 and they were turbulent and they were difficult and they were painful times and this psalm uh psalm 141 amongst many other psalms is an example of uh that and thinking back through the psalter it seems to me that david the psalmist uh he had more of his more than his fair share of of trouble and if we look back through the psalms how many times uh do we find the psalmist in a corner under pressure uh in difficulty uh facing danger and in the the most intense extreme trouble crying out to god and the reality is what david the psalmist experienced every believer will experience to differing degrees that's why jesus took the disciples aside and said to them from the outset in this world if you're going to follow me you're going to have trouble because when we're following christ we're going against the flow of this world so it shouldn't surprise us when we experience trouble in time and i want to think about two things under this point uh the first thing i want us to consider is is what does david do when he's in trouble what does david do when he faces this particular trouble and what david does we see it from the the very beginning verse one is that he prays this as many of the the psalms are it is a prayer and in verse one david says i call to you lord

[20 : 43] come quickly to me hear me when i call to you so what does david do when he's in trouble he prays and his prayer here is not particularly eloquent certainly in the opening note of the prayer it's a desperate prayer it's a prayer that god would come quickly uh to to help him uh he's asking for god's presence i call to you lord come quickly to me he wants to know god's power in terms of his help in this situation but he wants to know more of that he wants to know god with him the presence of god with him in his troubles my mind goes to isaiah 43 where we read uh there that

in the fire and in the waves and in all the difficulties we have that promise of god who says fear not for i am with you and that's what the psalmist is asking for here he's asking that god will be with him in this hour of trouble uh the word that's used there uh where david says i call to you it's a word that speaks about a cry uh even a roar of desperation it's an emergency call uh and sometimes we get these don't we these these kind of calls sometimes we make these calls where there's no time uh for a small talk uh there's no hello how are you there's just a a desperate cry of of please help me i'm in trouble please help me and this is the kind of call that david makes to god his prayer is direct his prayer is earnest his prayers is fervent it's urgent but he makes it and god hears it and god the holy spirit has determined that this psalm this desperate cry would be left in the psalter as an example as a lesson of how we can pray when we are in this kind of a situation sometimes we sing that that well-known hymn uh have we trials and temptations and the answer is yes is there trouble anywhere and the answer is yes but we should never be discouraged take it to the lord in prayer and so that's what david does here he's not trying to to find his own solution he's not phoning some government help line he's on the line to heaven he's asking for the lord to help and he's not waiting for some eloquent uh inspiration before he presents his his prayer he just cries out and sometimes it's all we can do we just cry out to god i remember uh an elder uh who was with me in loch carron he's still in loch carron donnie livingston a godly uh prayer warrior and he found himself at one stage in his life in a dark place for a number of weeks even a few months and he said to me that during that time that time of trouble he struggled to pray all he could all he could find uh to say was was lord and so repeatedly

he would be found just just crying out lord he couldn't find any other words and sometimes that's that's all we can do we cry out the prayer is not uh comprised by the the words we formulate it's sometimes the the cries and the the calls and the sighs and the groans and the sobs of our heart that the holy spirit uh interprets and and carries to the the throne of grace and presents as our prayers and that's true of what is happening in the psalmist's life in this moment he has trouble in time uh but he cries out to the lord in prayer verse 2 he says may my prayer be set before you like insects may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice and verse 2 i think gives us an insight into how the lord receives our prayers they're like a fragrant offering that rises up to heaven they're like that fragrant offering of of insects that would be offered in the evening uh worship and that's how god sees and receives our prayers and in revelation chapter 5 and verse 8 john uh the apostle he's given us vision of heaven and he sees golden bows full of incense which are the prayers of the saints and you have that place in uh that that room where god is that throne room of heaven there is the there is the the golden bows of incense which are the prayers of the saints and so david here we see him he's lifting up his hands in prayer uh he is calling out to the lord in prayer and we see here that david's prayer is not a an unwelcome interruption to the lord's evening schedule this is not an irritant to a god who is who is busy but this is a a sweet smelling offering that the lord receives and welcomes so what's the point in application here well the point is straightforward isn't it this is yet another encouragement for us to pray god loves to hear our prayers they're like a fragrant offering that he looks for that he he receives god our father he loves for his children especially when we are in these desperate situations of need he loves for his children to cry out and ask for his help when we think about this in personal terms when we as earthly sinful parents see our children struggling we love to help them we when we see them fall we rush to their side to pick them up when they come under attack we would in a second stand in to defend them when they cry out we we hasten we we rush to their aid and if that's us who are sinful how much more does our heavenly father love to hear and answer the prayers of his children so David here he he's experiencing as he so often does trouble in time and what does he do when he's in trouble well he prays the second thing within this point is a let's look at where this trouble is coming from where is this trouble coming from that David is experiencing well listen to what he says because he tells us where this trouble is coming from verse 3 he says set a guard over my mouth lord keep watch over the door of my lips do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evil doers do not let me eat their delicacies let a righteous man strike me that's a kindness let him rebuke me that is oil in my head my head will not refuse it for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evil doers and so he goes on but David in his trouble he knows that much of the trouble he experiences it doesn't come from outside of him but it's inside of him

David's under pressure we're not sure of the cause of that pressure and that trouble in this particular psalm in this situation but we know that when we're under pressure and when we're struggling and when we're battling with various troubles we can become cynical if we're not careful we can become angry very quickly we can become embittered if we don't watch and we can speak sinful words and lash out when we incur trouble and so David who knows this temptation he prays verse 3 set a guard over my mouth Lord keep watch over the door of my lips Lane the commentator says David prays not only for God's restraint on his enemies but on himself lest he should speak rashly and bring dishonor on God and yet we know when we think about this in terms of our own experiences we know that sometimes when we are going through troubles we can keep our tongues under control and yet our hearts are dark we know that sometimes when we are going through trouble although people don't hear anything that may be offensive from our lips the Lord looks in and sees sin that is harbored within our hearts

Calvin says what a busy workshop is the human heart and what a host of devices is constantly being manufactured there Satan is always at work making suggestions with which we too easily comply unless God's spirit guards our lips and thoughts and so David prays that the Lord would set a guard over his lips in verse 3 and in verse 4 David prays do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers do not let me eat their delicacies Kidner the commentator says the thrust of this psalm is plain it's a prayer against insincerity and compromise and David knows that he is capable of it he's been there before he compromised and he was compromised by his sin with

[33 : 09] Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11 you can read about there and for a period David he goes away from God he tries to cover up his sin he lives this insincere double life until the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to strike him with the truth and so David prays perhaps with Nathan in mind almost certainly I think with Nathan in mind verse 5 let a righteous man strike me that is a kindness let him rebuke me that is oil in my head my head will not refuse it Ligon Duncan I'll give you three quotes here just as we think this point through Ligon Duncan says if we are not able to be rebuked and corrected that's a sign there's no grace in us as wicked as David sin with Bathsheba was one of the signs that grace was real in him was that when Nathan rebuked him he received it

Malcolm McLean as he applies this says clearly this verse verse 5 calls us to be straightforward with one another more importantly it calls us to be watchful over one another this watchfulness is not snooping rather it's based on loving concern the fact is we should be able to give and to take such spiritual correction we should never let personal pride get in the way of a loving rebuke and Spurgeon says David prefers the bitters of gracious company to the dainties of the ungodly he would rather be smitten by the righteous than feasted by the wicked and so David he welcomes the righteous man who may strike him with the truth if that word of truth will bring him back to where he should be with the

Lord and David here as he endures as he faces these troubles in time he sees that although there are enemies who are outside of him although there are evildoers who seek his harm and these evildoers these rulers these men of authority that are against him he prays against them in verses 5b through to verse 7 as you can read of there but the point that strikes me more than any other point in this section is that David he seems to be much more aware of the trouble and the sin that is in him than he is of the trouble and sin that's around him and I think we're taught through this psalm that the trouble that we experience in this world as God's people yes it's around us but it's also in us so we do have to be examining ourselves as

Paul called us to we do need to be those who in the words of Psalm 139 say to the Lord search me and know me and help me to know me M.

McConnell writes a wee book entitled *War* and he asks the question why did life just get harder now that I become a Christian and yet that's the reality that Jesus taught that's the reality that David the follower of God experiences here that's the reality that Paul experiences in Romans 7 he knows that civil war that's internal he says the good I want to do I do not and the evil I do not want to do this I keep on doing and so the trouble that we experience in time is a trouble that will be with us for all of time because as long as we are in this world we will be battling with sin heaven heaven is the place where that trouble will be over and for those who are trusting in

[37 : 56] Jesus heaven is the place where there is that tranquility which is eternal that's our second point final point yes we experience trouble in time as the psalmist writes of but he looks forward to a tranquility that is eternal verse eight but says David my eyes are fixed on you sovereign lord in you I

take refuge do not give me over to death keep me safe from the trap set by evil doers from the snares they have laid for me let the wicked fall into their own nets while I pass by in safety I notice for David here he's not trusting in himself not for one moment he knows himself too well to do that he doesn't he doesn't say to the lord lord will you just give me a little extra strength a wee top up to my own might then maybe with this extra boost you give me

I'll be able to overcome this trouble myself now David knows he's at an end of himself he knows that he is not able in any strength of his own to be able to deal with the trouble of time in he in faith upon the lord that's what our eyes need to be this evening on the lord remember Peter in Matthew 14 the passage we read he's on the waves he's on the sea there and as long as his eyes were fixed on Jesus he could walk steady as long as his eyes were fixed upon Jesus these trouble filled waves didn't cause him to sink but the second he took his eyes off Jesus and fixed his eyes on the waves he started to go under and he like the psalmist cries out save me and David in this psalm he knows that these troubles that are around him and these troubles that are in him he knows that they could so easily pull him under and so he does the best thing he can he fixes his eyes on the Lord and you might say well of course he does he's in prayer this psalm is a prayer so of course his eyes are fixed on the Lord but we know if we're honest that very quickly our minds and our eyes can wander in prayer we know what it's like sometimes to be in conversation with someone who's not really focused on anything that we have to say but it's just looking around the room for someone else to speak to and how often that is a picture of us in prayer you know we're saying the words we're in the posture of prayer but our minds and our eyes are wandering around the room our minds are wandering from day to day and from week to week and from task to task we're thinking about all the things that we have to do the second that we say amen but for David this prayer that he shares with us in this psalm it's real and it's sincere it's desperate and it's focused firmly on the Lord which brings him such encouragement because as David fixes his eyes on the Lord he recognizes verse 8 that God is sovereign and so if God is sovereign he knows that the trouble that he is going through David the psalmist if God is sovereign he's saying well the trouble I'm going through it's not outwith the Lord's control and that brings him encouragement to know that God is sovereign even over his troubles and as David fixes his eyes on the Lord he recognizes verse 8 that God is strong and so he can take refuge in him and know that he will be safe when he is taking refuge in the Lord and as David fixes his eyes on the Lord he recognizes that God is all-knowing and so God is able to guide his steps so that he will not fall into any of the traps and snares verse 9 or the nets verse 10 that the enemy would and has laid out for him to fall into and David with his eyes fixed on the Lord recognizes that the sovereign Lord is so powerful that he the psalmist would not even be given over to death but would pass by death in safety because the Lord that he looked to and trusted him was and is stronger than death so that was David's prayer he knows that in this world he will have trouble around him and within him but he fixed his eyes on the Lord who was able to overcome this world and save him from that trouble

David cries out to the Lord and God heard him and God answered him and came to his aid and yet we know that this prayer was bigger than David ever knew at the time that he prayed it this is a prayer that David prayed and received an answer to in the specifics of the circumstances that he was in but this is a prayer that ultimately is answered in Jesus the one who would hasten to the one who would come to this world to deal with the trouble that sin and Satan brought into this world this is a prayer that would be answered through the cross of Jesus where he would go to wage war and evil by taking it upon himself by becoming sin so that we could become righteous this is a prayer that would be answered in Christ the one who would be given over to death on a cross so that we would be enabled to pass through death's dark veil safely and know life that is eternal trouble wears us down and the sin that's within us eats away at us and the death that David in a sense feared in the psalm when we experience it in the world that we live in when we lose those who are close to us it breaks our hearts but how thankful we can be that the answer to David's prayer is found in Jesus and in his gospel how thankful we should be that we are only in this world of trouble for a short while but there is eternal peace and tranquility for those who are trusting in Jesus

Spurgeon writes this he says we are always in the field of battle we are so tempted within and so molested by foes without that we have little or no peace but in heaven we shall enjoy the victory when the banner shall be waved aloft in triumph and the sword shall be sheathed and we shall hear our captain say well done good and faithful servant we have suffered bereavement after bereavement but we are going to the land of the immortal where graves are unknown things here

sin is a constant grief to us but there we shall be perfectly holy for there shall be no means for there shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defileth what encouragement we receive as we think upon these words and as we think upon this psalm yes yes there is trouble in time but praise god there is a tranquility that is eternal that is assured to those whose faith is in christ so may we be those who are fixing our eyes and placing all of our faith in christ and we'll pray our heavenly father we thank you for this psalm we thank you once more that you're the god who loves us enough to be honest with us about the trouble that we will face in this world if we follow jesus we thank you that the gospel is not some clever sales pitch where the positives are laid out for us and the negatives are hidden but we thank you that jesus is the one who made it clear to us that we must count the cost and take up the cross if we are to follow him and yes we know that there will be trouble in time but we thank you lord that as we persevere as we remain steadfast in following christ we are promised an eternity which is full of tranquillity and peace and even as we think on this week past as we think of those who have gone ahead of us from time into eternity we thank you that when our vision when their vision was fixed upon christ as savior there is the assurance that there is that everlasting peace so bless these thoughts to us we pray comfort those who are grieving once more we ask as we are thankful for effie's life and for our witness we pray on for the family we pray on as a congregation that you would comfort us in our grief and enable us to look to the savior the resurrection and the life the god of all comfort enable us to to take hold by faith of that gospel message which gives us hope

[51 : 07] for time and for eternity and we pray all these things in jesus name and for jesus sake amen my faith looks up to thee thou lamb of calvary savior divine now hear me while i pray take all my guilt away oh let me from this day be holy thy may thy thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart my zeal inspire as thou hast died for me o may my love to thee pure woman and changeless be a living heart while life's dark maze i tread and griefs around me spread be thou my guide bid darkness turn to day wipe sorrows tears away no let me ever stray from me a sun to be a sun when end life's transient dream when death's cold silent stream shall only roll be all blessed saviour then in love fear and distress remove all then be safe above the ransom soul and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship the comfort of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore. Amen.

Sue Amen.