

18.7.21 am

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Date: 18 July 2021

Preacher: Gerald White

[0 : 00] Good morning everybody, both in the church and watching online. We welcome you to our morning service.

We have the privilege of having Reverend Gerald White preaching to us today. He ministers in Edinburgh and is involved with 20 schemes.

The evening service at 6pm will be taken by Scott McLeod, who is looking to apply for the Free Church Ministry. He's getting experience preaching in different congregations at the moment.

The prayer meeting on Wednesday is at the usual time at 7.30pm online via Zoom, to which all are invited and strongly encouraged to attend.

That prayer meeting will be taken by Angus McKellar. Next Sunday, the service is at 11am. Roddy McKenzie will be leading the morning service.

[1 : 02] The evening service at 6pm will be in Gaelic and taken by Angus M. McLeod. Invitations will be going out for those services early on next week.

I'm aware that the government is relaxing its social distancing requirements for meetings, etc. Over the next period of time, we're probably making some adjustments, but not too quickly or too radically.

But we will be making adjustments to allow more people to attend as we go along. While our minister is away, if anyone has any pastoral care requirements, please speak in the first instance to one of the elders.

Our neighbouring ministers and our neighbouring ministers are available to give support if that is required. Those are all the intimations. So I just ask if Gerard would like to come forward now and lead the rest of the service.

Thank you.

[2 : 29] And be able to sing God's praises. So we can do that this morning. We're going to sing our first hymn. Our first praise. And then I'm going to pray for us. So please stand if you're able. Euph simplesmente.

Do you know the truth? Yeah. Welcome home. Let's go. Thank you. Thank you.

Creation holds together by the power of your voice. Let the sky declare your glory.

Let the land and seas rejoice. You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man.

And your cry of love brings out across the land. You left the gates of angels. Came to seek and save the lost.

[3 : 44] And exchanged the joy of heaven for the anguish of a cross. With a prayer you fed the hungry. With a word you stilled the sea.

Yet how silently you suffered. That the guilty may go free. You're the author of creation.

You're the Lord of every man. And your cry of love brings out across the land. With a shout you rose victorious.

Resting victory from the grave. And ascended into heaven. Leading captives in your wake. Now you stand before the Father.

Interceding for your own. From the tribe and tongue and nation. You are leading sin and soul.

[4 : 49] You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man. And your cry of love brings out across the land.

Amen. We're going to come to a time of prayer now.

Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father we do pray for this congregation.

That you would bless them. Make your face shine upon them. We pray the psalm of David. Where he talks about the good shepherds. And you King Jesus.

We know that for those here this morning. The Lord is our shepherd. We know that if he is our shepherd. We shall not want. We're thankful that you. Make us lie down in green pastures.

[5 : 57] Those green pastures of your promises. Within your words. That restore us. You are the one that lead us. Besides still waters. You are the only one that restores our soul. You lead us in the paths of righteousness.

Not for our name's sake. Not for our fame. Glory or renown this morning. But for your name's sake. Some of us this morning. Feel like we're walking through the valley.

Of the shadow of death. But we know that with you Jesus. We will fear no evil. For you are with us. Your rods and your staff. They comfort us.

And it is you that prepares a table. Before us. Before us. In the presence of our enemies. You anoint our heads. With oil. Our cup overflows.

We know that in Jesus. There is every spiritual blessing. Surely goodness and mercy. Shall follow us all the days of our lives. And we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[6 : 57] God. We also pray for David marrying the kids. And we thank you for them. We pray that over these next three weeks. They would rest well.

It is tiring. Leading. Especially in the last 18 to 19 months. Where we've seen such unusual circumstances. But they're circumstances that are in your hands God. We pray for them.

That according to the riches of your glory. You may grant them to be strengthened. With power through your spirit. In their inner being. So that Christ may dwell in their hearts.

Through faith. That they being rooted and grounded in love. Over this holiday. May have strength. To comprehend. With all the saints. What is the breadth. And length.

And height and depth. And to know the love of Christ. That surpasses knowledge. That they may be filled. With all the fullness of God. God bless them. On their holiday.

[7 : 54] And we pray for those of us. I heard the other day. That there was a funeral. And for some of us. Have been struggling with mental health. Throughout lockdowns. And COVID. Over the past year. I pray that we would remember.

The promise of Psalm 46. Verse 1. That God is our refuge and strength. He is a very present help. In time of trouble. You are always near.

You are always present. You are always our only help. In times of trouble. I pray that you would help us. Not to look to anything else. This day. But we would look to Jesus. Our refuge and strength.

That would build our lives. Upon the rock of ages. God we pray for our community as well. This island has seen historical blessings from your hands. Of revival.

We pray that you would bring revival again. We pray that you would raise up faithful men and women within this church. Who will stand on the truth. And declare the truth.

[8 : 50] We pray that you would lead us to weep for souls in our prayers. We pray that you would help us and give us courage. To go to the lost souls.

With the good news of the gospel. That's the hope. That they so desperately need. We pray that you would help us to walk in the paths of righteousness.

Flee from sin. Run to Jesus. And we pray that this morning you would bless our time together. That we would get a very real word from heaven. That we would see marvellous things from your word.

In the precious name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Okay. I'm going to have a children's talk now. And before we do just have a little talk about Hope Church Bingham and 20 Schemes.

Obviously you know Anna McRae. She's my spiritual mum. And she has been such a blessing to me since joining 20 Schemes three years ago. I'm married to Mourner.

[9 : 50] And we've got three lovely kids. Noah, James and Faith. And I've been the pastor of Hope Church Bingham since October 4th. When we launched as a local church. Launched in lockdown and COVID.

And it was a very stressful time. But the Lord has blessed us. He's been good to us. We've seen five new members. And we've seen a baptism. We've got another baptism on the way. So the Lord's been very merciful to us.

And just to give you a bit of context about the scheme in which we serve. The estate or the local area where I serve. 0.4% would say that they're Christians. And within that area there is Catholic churches.

So you can probably half that percentage to 0.2%. As we know that the Catholic gospel is not a saving gospel. So that is a little bit about the scheme.

It has great drug addiction. Alcohol addiction. Abuse. In fact we moved from Nidgeri into Magdalene. And we would hear stuff going on. We would see deals in the street.

[10 : 52] And this is a hard place to reach. It was very different to the church that I'd come from previously. Just outside London. It was a church revitalization. We were there for two years.

Very middle upper class. I would say it was actually harder to declare the gospel in a middle upper class area. Because they had their castle. They had their BMW.

They had their 2.5 kids. And they were fine. Whereas in the scheme. It seems as though everyone's searching for something. They're searching for drugs. Hope in alcohol.

Hope in seances. Ouija boards. Hope in mysticism. Crystals. Buddhism. You name it. And so there's real low hanging fruit.

And I find it a lot easier actually to interact with people within those areas. Because they're open to spiritual stuff. So yeah. Pray for them. At the church. As I said we've been growing.

[11 : 47] But it's not always easy. There's obviously big pastoral situations that go on. And often within these circumstances. What is sanctification actually looks like backsliding.

Someone going on a binge drink on the weekend. When that was their life for 15 years. Is actually sanctification. It's growth in grace. So do pray for us. Some prayer points would be pray for mature believers to join us.

There's a lot of young believers there. Pray that God would raise up mature godly elders. At the moment it's just myself. I have a pastor in training. An elder in training. And really I want a plurality of elders.

I need to be held accountable as well within that. So yeah. Do pray for us in that. And pray for souls to be saved. So. Children. I've got some things here for us.

I don't have David's slides. Or anything like that this morning. I wasn't that well prepared. But as I was walking through. This beautiful island. I was greeted with some amazing sights.

[12 : 46] We don't get that in the concrete jungle. Of Edinburgh. It's not like London. But it is still a concrete jungle. Compared to this. And this morning we're looking at Ephesians 3 verse 20.

And the main thing that I want you children to remember. As you go away from this time this morning. Is to him who is able. To him who is able. To him who is able.

To him who is able was something that was. Reminded to churches in their prayer meetings. They're reminded as they came before the throne of grace. That we are praying to a God who is able. We aren't able.

We aren't able to move mountains. We aren't able to change sinners hearts. We aren't able to help ourselves get through a hard time. It is God who is able. And so Paul.

In Ephesians 3 verse 20. He's just been talking about these big truths. These great truths. That hopefully your Sunday school teachers. And your parents are teaching you. But there's a truth of the Christian faith.

[13 : 42] That every one of us should know about. That we have been saved from spiritual death. And been brought back to spiritual life. That we were once lost. And now are found.

We were once far off. And have been brought near. We were once divided. And now united in Christ. These are amazing truths. That we shouldn't take for granted. And so he's in the nick.

He's in prison. He's been in jail for a long time. He doesn't moan about his circumstances. But he points this Ephesian church. Time and time again. To this great God. That is able. And Paul.

In Ephesians 3 verse 20. Says. At the end of all of these great truths. He doesn't say now. Please pray for me. Come to me. Help me. He says. Now to him. Who is able to do far more abundantly.

Than all we ask or think. According to the power. At work within us. So he turns to God. And says. To him. Who is able. When I was walking through.

[14 : 39] The hills recently. I can't remember where it was. Morna. Do you know where it was. That little path. With the eagle. Outlook. Does anyone know. There's like a little path. You can walk on.

It's about. Three kilometres. Mountains either side of you. And there's like an eagle's. Lookout spot. No one know. What is it. Okay.

I'll take your word for it. But we went there. And it was amazing. I literally. I looked at all of these mountains. And I'm in my element. It's like Bear Grylls. You know. I look at this stuff.

And I'm in awe. I mean. Never take it for granted guys. The island that you live on. I walk through there. And I'm like. Wow. To him who is able. To him who is able. To make these things. I go. To the beach.

And it's like. I'm at the Maldives. You know. Other than the weather. I'm there. And it's blue. Blue sea. It's crystal blue sea. Amazing water. The kids are loving it. And I'm saying. To him who is able. You know.

[15 : 34] I picked up this. Little rock. There's these. Better ones at David's. Where they're like eggs. They're like Easter eggs. And I've been looking for one of those. If you can tell me after the service.

Where I can find one. I'll be forever grateful. But this was the best I found. It's a square one. A little bit eroded. But I looked at these things. And I was like. Wow. To him who is able. To make this.

And the heaven here. I know I'm a bit of a geek with all this. But. You know. I'm walking past. I'm seeing all these. Things kids. Like this little flower here. Yellow. Amazing colours. You know.

I see this bit of heather. That's. Purple. Pink. You know. A bit of. I don't know what that is. A bit of a leaf my kid found. But. This one here. Pink. White. Just.

It's not one thing. You know. God could have made one thing. And we'd be in awe of him. But he's made tons of types of heather. And I'm walking past all these things. I'm going. Wow. To him. Who is able. And then in God's word.

[16 : 31] It's not just in creation. That God created all these things out of nothing. But in God's word. When Moses. He's being chased. By the Egyptians. He's got the Red Sea before him. He's stuck. He's turning around.

And he's thinking. I've got these Israelites here. I'm trying to lead them through this hard time. What am I meant to do? And he looks to the God who is able. God parts the Red Sea. And they move through.

And you read these instances in scripture. And they're not just history for us. So that it's knowledge in our head. But it should sink to our hearts. And go. Wow. God's able. God's able. God's able. When you look at the cross. You couldn't even imagine that stuff up.

Could you? If you had all the time in the world. To think of your own salvation. You'd think. I have to do this. I have to do that. I've got to do these things. To be saved. And yet in scripture. You see the virgin birth.

See Jesus live a perfect life. You see him suffer. Get beaten to the point. Where he can't even be recognized. And he's pinned on that cross. For our sin. And then he's raised again. Three days later.

[17 : 26] And you're like. To him who is able. That's beyond what I could ask. Beyond what I could imagine. You know. With us it's impossible. When we look at creation.

God's words. You know. These things should lead you children. To know that God is able. To save everyone at your school. You ask your grandparents.

And your parents. About the revival. God is able. To save everyone at your school. Pray for that. He's able to save everyone. In your town. In your village.

In your family. He is able. God is able. To grow your faith. God is able. To forgive your sin. Even your worst sin. Even your most ugliest sin. He is able.

To forgive you of it. And God is able. To help you. Boldly tell others. In your school. About Jesus. I get scared. When I'm at the front. Like this. Believe it or not. You know. New church.

[18 : 19] New faces. New people. And new kids. I'm sure get scared. When you're at school. And you're thinking. How I talk to these people. About Jesus. He is able. To give you courage. The apostle Paul.

Asked for boldness. You ask for boldness. And he'll give it to you. And God is able. To help you. When nobody else can. There's this little story. You won't.

You may not know the guy. He's a guy called John Patton. He was a Glaswegian. Went out to the out. Hebrides. It was. Wasn't this. Hebrides. It was like a. Cannibalistic island. And. It was gruesome.

You know. That island was filled. With people that didn't trust in Jesus. Believe in Jesus. In fact. They would kill someone. And eat them. That's how bad it was. But they needed Jesus. When John Patton.

Saw the great commission. He knew that it was. To go to the ends of the earth. The most. Uncomfy places. The most. Out of control places. And he tells this. Little story.

[19 : 14] Of his. Mum. Mum. Um. Um. His mum. Was a great praying woman. And he was massively influenced by. Her. And I'll say these things. And then we'll finish. Because otherwise it's going to become the sermon.

But. He tells this story. And it was a family of eleven. And his mum. And they were starving. It wasn't like. The Tescos. In Lewis.

That you drive to. Or the co-op. And you get some food. Uh. They were. Out of supplies. Bare cupboards. Bare table. Hungry tummies. And there was eleven of them.

And the mum. Seeing that there. Was no food. On the table. In the cupboards. She was led. To pray. She said to them. Look. Come down. Come down. Let's pray together. Let's pray.

To the God who is able. And as they went upstairs. She had told them. That God would. Provide. Everything that they needed.

[20 : 11] For the next day. And the next day. Being moved by God. And not knowing anything. About the family circumstances. John's granddad. Sent a present. To his daughter.

To John's mum. He sent a bag of potatoes. Flax seeds. Basically like your porridge. And all that sort of stuff. Oats.

Homemade cheese. Plenty of food. For this large family. To survive on. So John's mum. Seeing these children. With wide eyes. Like Christmas morning.

Wow. Look at all of this. That we've got. She gets them on the knees. And she says. Oh my children.

Love your heavenly father. Tell him in faith. And pray. And prayer. All your needs. And he will supply your wants. So far as it shall be.

[21 : 06] For your good. And his glory. So why am I saying all this. Paul is in the worst situation. He's in jail. He's in prison. He could have been tempted to give up.

Maybe that's you this morning. Adults and children alike. Maybe you just want to give up. After this rough. Last year that we've had. But Paul is reminded. As he looks at everything.

God has created. Everything. God has said. Within his words. He's reminded that he is bigger than everything. He is king overall. He is in control. At holiday club recently.

We sung about the God of wow. And as we read the Bible. As we see creation. We see those hills. Those mountains. The sea. The heather of all different colors.

May we be reminded to pray. To the God of wow. To the God who is able. When we pray to this big God. Let's bring big prayers. Not safe.

[22 : 07] Easy little prayers. Because he is able. I'm going to pray for you children. And then I think you're. Heading off to Sunday school. Let's pray.

Living God. What a gift. These little ones are. Help us to be good stewards of them. Within the home. As we catechize them. As we do memory verses with them. As we just point them to Jesus.

Through the word. As we read these verses. Of inspired scripture. We know that these aren't our words. But they. We know that they are yours. They are powerful. They. Pierce the hearts.

Of. Unbelievers. They convict. Believers. And they remind us. And they comfort us. That God. In our moments. Of weakness. We are reminded that you are able.

You are able. To answer our prayers. More than what we could ask. More than what we could imagine. Or think. And so I pray. That as these little children. Come to you in prayer. Throughout the day.

[23 : 10] On their knees. Or standing up. Or walking around the village. Or the town. Or in the hills. That they would come to a God. Who is massive. Who is able. To answer their prayers.

And may they pray. Big prayers. That lead to revival. Within this land. And on this island. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Okay.

I think. Are the little ones staying for the next hymn. Or are they away? Okay. Alright little ones. Off you go. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. And.

Please would you stand for our next hymn. O Lord.

All that I do desire. Is still before thine eye.

[24 : 21] And of my heart the secret grows. Not hidden are from thee.

My heart doth pot incessantly. My strength doth quite decay.

As for my eyes that wanted light. Is from me gone away.

My lovers and my friends to stand.

At distance from my soul. And those who stand.

[25 : 36] I live that well. Can children and kind be for you.

I live that seek my life. I live that well. I live that well.

Who seek to do me wrong. Speak things mischievous and deceit.

He might a children all day long. But as one death.

But as one death. That he eared not. I suffered all to pass.

[26 : 43] I ask that dumb man did become. Whose mouth not open.

Whose mouth not opened was. As one that hears. Not in his mouth.

Not in his mouth. Are no reprues at all.

For Lord I hope. In thee my God. Thou'll hear me when I call.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[27 : 49] Amen. Amen. And we'll go into our next hymn. Psalm 38. And we'll go into our next hymn.

Psalm 38. These are the words of the living God.

Oh Lord, rebuke me not in your anger. Nor discipline me in your wrath. For your arrows have sunk into me and your hand has come down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation. There is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head like a heavy burden.

They are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness. I must be bowed down and prostrate. All the day I go about mourning.

[28 : 54] For my sides are filled with burning and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and crushed. I groan because of the tumult of my heart. Oh Lord, all my longing is before you.

My sighing is not hidden from you. My heart throbs. My strength fails me. And the light of my eyes is also gone from me. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague.

And my nearest kin stand far off. Those who seek my life lay their snares. Those who seek my hurt speak of ruin and meditate treachery all day long.

But I am like a deaf man. I do not hear like a mute man who does not open his mouth. I become like a man who does not hear and in whose mouth are no rebukes.

But for you, oh Lord, do I wait. It is you, oh Lord, my God, who will answer. For I said, only let them not rejoice over me, who boast against me when my foot slips.

[29 : 56] For I am ready to fall. And my pain is ever before me. I confess my iniquity. I am sorry for my sin. But my foes are vigorous.

They are mighty. And many are those who hate me wrongfully. Those who render me evil for good. Accuse me because I follow after good. Do not forsake me, oh Lord.

Oh my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, oh Lord, my salvation. Amen. I'm going to sing our next hymn now.

Please stay. Amen. Light of the world.

You step down into darkness. Open my eyes. Let me see. Beauty that made it's hard to adore you.

[31 : 13] Hope of all our lives spent with you. I am to worship. Here I am to bow down.

Here I am to say that you're my God. You're altogether lovely. Altogether worthy.

Altogether wonderful to me. King of all days. Oh, so highly exalted.

Glorious in heaven. Oh. Humbly you came to the earth.

You created. All for love's sake became poor. Lord. I am to worship. I am to worship.

[32 : 13] I am to worship. I am to worship. I am to worship. Here I am to bow down. Here I am to say that you're my God.

You're altogether lovely. Altogether worthy. Altogether wonderful to me.

Altogether wonderful to me.

Amen. Here I am to say that you're my God. You're altogether lovely. Altogether worthy.

Altogether wonderful to me. Amen.

[33 : 26] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Let's pray and ask for God's help before we look at his word. Living gods, we are so thankful for the fact that we get together here this morning, come under your word and listen to these amazing truths.

And I really pray that we'd see marvellous things from your word this morning. And I pray that what we don't know, you would teach us. And what we need, you would give us.

And we just pray that you would move and power upon our hearts. We pray that if there are those here that don't love you at the moment, that don't trust you as Lord and Saviour, that they would. By the power of your Spirit, I pray that those here that are believers but are in sin would be convicted to the core this morning.

That they would know that it is ash to a needy soul. That it is salt water to those that are thirsty. And I pray that it would lead them to confess that I'm a sinner.

[34 : 32] I need your forgiveness this morning. I pray that they would run to the arms of grace and be reminded of your mercy and grace that is readily available for those that confess their sin to you.

I just pray that this would be a great comfort to us this morning. And it would remind us of how great our sin is. But also how great your mercy is. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. So I wonder if you've ever messed up your life completely. You might be holy this morning and just say, No, do you know what? I've had quite an easy life. But I can tell you I have messed up my life at times.

I've made really bad decisions that have led to really awful consequences within my life. I look like I'm 16, I'm 33. But, you know, in those years I've made some real doozies, some real mistakes.

I wonder if you can think back to that time in your life. Maybe it was last night. Maybe it was 20 years ago. Try and think of a time where you were so burdened with your sins, so wracked with this guilt of what you had done before our holy gods.

[35 : 41] Maybe it was that gossip. It happens within churches, believe it or not. But maybe it was that gossip. Maybe you had a little whisper to someone that led to another whisper. Maybe it was that one drink that turned into a drunken night.

Maybe it was that violence. That lie that led to another lie. That porn or that one night stand. Whatever it was, Psalm 38, believe it or not, is written by a guy that knows what it's like to make a mess of your life.

But the Psalm isn't just for those that fall into serious moral sin this morning. It's also for our daily Christian living. You see, there's this pattern of confession and consequences and conviction that goes on within Psalm 38.

And we know that as Christians, even our best days are going to be riddled with sin. Even our holiness can lead to a bit of pride in our life. And David reminds us of how to approach God when we're at the end of our rope.

When we have sinned, when we realise we've sinned. And this Psalm, if you look down at verse 1, just above verse 1 in Psalm 38, above it you'll see a title in your Bibles.

[37 : 01] I think it depends on what translation you've got, but you'll see this title. A Psalm of David for the memorial offering. And that's part of the canon of Scripture. It isn't a bit you should miss out within the Psalms, but it's a bit that you should look at and go, Ah, this is what it's talking about.

It's written by David. It's a Psalm of memorial or remembrance. And it's there to remind us of how to approach God. It's there to remind David of what he's done.

And it's also there to remind God, Listen God, don't forsake me in my sin. Help me. Be merciful to me. And within this chapter you'll see the progression of conviction of sin right at the beginning.

You'll see this consequence of sin where he gets ill and all of his family and friends leave him. You'll see his confession of sin. I'm a sinner.

I've made a mess of my life. And then you'll see right at the end David's confidence of salvation and the grace and mercy of God. We don't know for sure what sin David had done, but a good guess is that it's probably referring to the affair that he had with Bathsheba, to that serious moral failure.

[38 : 16] Slept with his best mate's wife and then had his best mate killed on the front lines. He used his position to change that guy's life. I mean, here was King David, God's chosen king, a guy that had known the roughness and the harshness of life.

Being a shepherd boy, he'd fought off bears and wolves and lions, you name it. He was the youngest within his family of brothers and he would have been probably picked on as the little boy is within the family.

And he'd been elevated to this great, powerful position. The king of all Israel. And yet he got confident in his Christianity. He got cocky in his Christianity.

He got complacent. When he was meant to be out on the battlefield, on the front lines, battling the enemy, he was there at home, having a kip, chilling. Maybe he was watching Amazon, I don't know, but he was chilling, he was relaxing.

And then it leads to this affair. It leads to this murder, this manipulating of his power.

[39 : 24] I don't know if you've seen the series Line of Duty. Mauna and I really like that series. It's quite a cool series. It's about bent coppers, basically. It's police officers that use their position to manipulate things and move people out of the way.

And that's what David did in his position. He manipulated. And he got this guy killed and he used his position to have an affair with Bathsheba.

But now David feels what he has done. As we read that passage, we know that this isn't a guy that is being flippant, has some sort of worldly sorrow about what he's done.

This is a real conviction that he has. A young believer at Hope Church Bingham, whenever we do a one-to-one together or we do a Bible study, a men's Bible study, and something from God's word challenges him, he'll say this, Oof!

Oof! Gerald! I feel that. I feel that. Oof! I feel that. And here David is saying, Oof! I feel that. I feel what I've done.

[40 : 29] And here God's arrows of discipline sink into him in verse 2. For your arrows have sunk into me and your hand has come down on me.

He feels God's hand laying heavy upon his life, so heavy that he can't turn away from what he's done. He can't ignore it any longer. He's convicted. And he says in verse 3 that this is because of your indignation or all of this is because of your righteous anger against me.

And in verse 1, he cries out like a son to a father. O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. David knows that God hates sin.

I mean, this guy's a theologian. He's the psalmist of Israel. He's the golden boy. He knows theology. He knows that God hates sin. He knows that God's anger and wrath burn against it and in fact are being stored up for the day of judgment where like a dam they're going to be broken down upon anyone that doesn't repent and turn to Jesus.

It's before this holy God that he is pleading, has this relationship with him. Deal gently with me, God. I deserve to be wiped off the face of the earth. Hopefully you know that this morning, that you deserve to be wiped off from the face of the earth.

[41 : 51] Yet God's been merciful to you. But we need to remember that when we do feel God's discipline within our life, Proverbs 3 verse 12 tells us that God disciplines the ones he loves.

That's important. The ones he loves. Just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights. We may not feel like it at the time, but God's discipline is a gift and a mercy of God.

It takes wayward sinners who have wandered off the narrow way and it lovingly brings them back onto that path that they're men to walk. That way of righteousness. Instead of the good shepherds, rod and staff, that I mentioned in the prayer earlier on in Psalm 23, being seen as this symbol of abuse, it's actually seen as a comfort to David in that Psalm.

Your rod and your staff comfort me. In fact, God's discipline, in fact, after God's discipline, David in Psalm 119 verse 67 says, before I was afflicted or before I was disciplined, I went astray.

But now I keep your words. That's the purpose of discipline. To bring us back on the way that we should walk. It's to teach us to flee sin and run to Jesus. You know, when I was a kid, I swore at my dad.

[43 : 16] I wouldn't say what I said, but it was awful. My dad's old school. He's 80 now. He's an old school guy. His dad was an old school copper and the way that he was disciplined was quite ferocious.

And my dad gave me the biggest hiding I'd ever had that day. He really did discipline me. Not in an abusive way, in a very controlled way. And do you know what?

I'm thankful for that. As I look back on that now, I'm thankful that my dad disciplined me. Because if he didn't, I would grow up in life thinking, I could say whatever I wanted to anyone. I could cuss you out in the street and not think that there was ramifications or consequences for that sin.

I would have been a loud mouth. I would have been rude. I wouldn't have respected my elders. And yet in that moment of discipline, he corrected me and led me on the way that I should walk. At the time, was it pleasant?

No. It was horrendous. But afterwards, I'm thankful for it. As Hebrews 12 verse 11 says, for the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant.

[44 : 23] But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. That's the purpose of discipline within our lives. In fact, in Romans 1, I'll give you some verses here.

You can write them down if you're a note taker. But Romans 1 verse 24, 26, 28, we see this repeated phrase. As these people, as sinners, are growing in sin, making up new ways to sin, celebrating others who sin, God gives sinners over.

That's what he says. He gave them over to their sin, their evil desires. But for those he loves, what does he do? He disciplines. Instead of walking in their sin, they would flee from it.

They would see that sin leads nowhere good. And that they would return to him as David is doing in this psalm, as David is teaching us through God's words.

So to feel these arrows convict us of sin, to feel that piercing our heart and going, oof, I feel that. I feel that, God. That is a gift and a mercy.

[45 : 32] And many in life can ignore their sin and grow numb to the evil things they do. Oh, I'll have a binge drink this weekend. Oh, I'll just slap my wife around or I'll say a few harsh words to her all the time and I won't feel that way.

I'll lie about that sister in the church. I don't know what it is within your life, but maybe that's you this morning. Maybe you've grown numb to your sin.

I pray you feel it this morning. I pray that you say, oof, I feel those piercing arrows. I pray that you would feel God's hand pressing upon you now.

You know, what's happening here is God is grabbing David by the scruff of the neck like you would to a dog after he's bitten the chair leg and you say, that's the mess you've just made.

Feel it, own it. That's the mess. That's what's happening in these first few verses and this is where David starts and this is where we need to start, whether our sin is small or great this morning.

[46 : 35] We need to start by going, oof, I feel that. Against this holy God, I feel that. Please be merciful to me, a sinner. And then notice how David doesn't look for someone else or something to blame in verse 1, does he?

He doesn't do what I used to do before the headmaster at school and go, it wasn't me, it was someone else. I remember this example when I was at school there was this stink bomb that was let off.

I don't know if you have it now, but there was this little stink bomb that was let off and I turned to someone else and I said, no, it wasn't me, it was him. I didn't own it. And here David in Psalm 38, verse 1 says, O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.

He's not saying don't punish me. He's not saying I don't deserve this. It was someone else. It was my circumstances or my feelings. He owns it.

He doesn't do what Adam and Eve did in Genesis 3, verse 12 to 13. You remember that little conversation that they have with God? God sees them in their sin, he confronts them. Here's Adam's cop-out answer.

[47 : 45] The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate. You can imagine him, can't you, just pointing to her. Then what about Eve? Well, she's no better either.

The serpent deceived me and I ate. You know, she's pointing, he's pointing. Rather than saying, it's me, they're saying it wasn't me, God.

David doesn't blame his circumstances. He doesn't say, do you know what, it was late on Friday night and Bathsheba, well, she was all perfumed up and we just somehow fell into bed with one another. No, he doesn't say that.

He didn't try and justify the murder of his best mate as self-defense or anything like that. No, under a deep conviction of sin, in verse 1 to 8, he points to himself and he says, I'm the problem. I'm the problem.

Verse 3, he says, there's no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation. There was no health in my bones because of what? Because of my sin. That's what he says.

[48 : 51] David acknowledges that he's in this physical, mental and spiritual mess because of his sin, not because of anything else. In fact, in verse 4, he's so conscious and aware of the spiritual issues going on that he says, my iniquities have gone over my head like a heavy burden on my back.

They're too heavy for me. David's sin had built up like a wave over his head until it overwhelmed him. As a kid playing down at Bournemouth Beach and then if you know Bournemouth, right on the south coast, couldn't get any further south, you'd be in the channel.

But I used to love swimming in the sea. I was a beach baby. That was me. My wife's a country bumpkin. She loves that. She loves going out into the mountains, the hills. For me, it's the beach.

So when I saw your beach, I was in love straight away with this island. But I used to love playing in the sea, diving beneath the waves, surfing, bodyboarding, you name it.

And then one day, I was greeted with a shore dumper. I don't know if you have it up here in Paris, but it's basically where it catches you. You think, oh yeah, I can make it in before the waves break.

[50 : 02] But as I was coming in, it smashed me to the ground. It dragged me out to sea under the bottom and my back and everything was just ripped on the sand and the rocks. And I'd underestimated the power of these waves.

I hadn't considered their power. I was playing around in them one minute and then I was overwhelmed by them the next minute. And the same was true for David in this passage.

One minute he's playing with sin, the next minute he's overwhelmed by sin. That's what sin will do with you. It's nice for a minute and then it's overwhelming. In Psalm 40 verse 12, David says, My iniquities have overtaken me and I cannot see.

They are more than the hairs of my head. My heart fails me. Sin leads nowhere good, church family. I don't know you guys very well but I know my own heart.

I know that I'm drawn to sin. I know that I love that little taste of sin but then its taste is always bitter afterwards. And David's overwhelmed by it. It's become like a burden on his back.

[51 : 13] It's not liberating. It promised freedom. It promised life. It promised greatness. But it led to slavery and bondage and a burden on his back again.

Like Ezra in Ezra 9 verse 6, David can say, For my iniquities have risen higher than my head and my guilt has mounted up to the heavens. You think how big those mountains are as you walk through that way.

I don't remember how you pronounced it earlier but the eagle's nest, I'm just going to call it that, is going through there and those mountains are huge and my sin's bigger than that. It was this weight upon David.

And often when I was working as a support worker before ministry, I was working in a wet house and we were dealing with alcoholics and drug addicts and there was a couple of prostitutes there as well that we were caring for.

It was a place that was really broken. It was a messed up place. And as I was sitting before someone, they would be crying, it would be an older man or a young woman and I would say, how did you get to this mess?

[52 : 21] How did you get to this point in your life? And they would say, well I'm drinking, I'm sticking myself with the needle, I'm sleeping with these guys because of the mess of my past, because of that person in my life, because of how I was raised up, because I was beaten or because I was abused or because I was in the orphan care system.

Maybe you make excuses for the mess you're in like this. Well David reminds us here in this psalm of remembrance that when we sin and are convicted by it, let's be quick not to pin the blame on others or circumstances, but instead be quick to own our sin and act like Christians, not like the world.

Maybe I should say that again, let's act like Christians. Even if it's embarrassing, we have to bring it up. Guys, if you're struggling with something online, talk to someone about it.

Better to talk to someone about it than it grow into an affair. Let's be quick to own our sin and act like Christians.

In fact, if you want to know that the Holy Spirit is working in your life, then ask yourself, how do you respond to sin? Do you get defensive when someone challenges you? Maybe it's a one-to-one or someone in your home group, Bible study group, or maybe it's your wife or your husband.

[53 : 44] How do you respond when you get challenged about sin? Do you hide your sin? Quickly delete the web browser. Do you hide the bottles?

Do you delete the text? Do you blame others? It wasn't me, Gav, it was them. Do you blame your circumstances? I had a really hard day at work.

I need now quite a lot of drink just to help me get over it. Or that person really cheesed me off and now I'm going to just gossip about them. Or under conviction of sin, do you quickly own it?

Do you put your hands up and like David, say, because of my sin. But only does David acknowledge that he's in a situation because of his sin. Have a look at verse 5. He says, it's because of his sin in verse 3, but also my wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness.

At the time, we think sin is clever, don't we? We think we're an absolute lad because we've worked the spiritual system, we've managed to jump the fence of God's word. We've somehow justified the reason why we've just done what we've done.

[54 : 56] We think it's the wisest choice in the world and we justify it. Like Adam and Eve in the fall, we think that God is holding out on us and what we've been missing out on will now make us happy.

But here, David reminds us that sin makes you stupid. It makes a fool of you. It makes a fool of me. Ever sin and afterwards think, how could I have been so stupid?

I've had those times. How could I have been so stupid? How could I have done that? Well, David knows how you feel. The reason sin comes about in our lives is because we have listened to the voice of folly and not the voice of wisdom.

Just have to read the Proverbs. Walk in the way of wisdom, Proverbs says. In fact, Proverbs 1 verse 7 says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Fools despise wisdom and instruction. For a moment, like me, as a kid, with my dad, we forget who our heavenly father is.

[55 : 58] We forget who our great master is. And we despise his wisdom and his instruction and we chase after foolishness. Why?

Proverbs 12 verse 15 tells us, it says, that the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. If you forget that we are stupid sheep who need to be led by the wise shepherd, then we will make foolish decisions in our lives that leads to sin.

I mean, this is quite blunt language. I come from a scheme, so, sorry. But David warns us. He warns us. He says, don't be fools. Don't be like me.

This all came about because of my foolishness. But like Solomon says, be wise and fear the Lord. If you fear the Lord this morning, you'll be kept from making foolish decisions and making a mess of your life.

And then David also understands that there are consequences for his sin. And he sees that and he shares it in verse 5 to 20.

[57 : 15] I won't read it all out, but we see that it leads to sickness. His wounds stink and fester. There's no soundness in his body. He's burning from the inside out. His friends leave him.

In fact, when he trips up and falls into sin, they love it. They laugh at him. They make a mockery out of him. And his family leave him. There's consequences for our sin.

I remember growing up, people at school would wonder why they got an STD when they would sleep around with everyone. I remember alcoholics in the wet house months before they died wonder why they were turning yellow with jaundice and their kidneys were packing up.

Why is this happening to me? There's consequences of sin. Proverbs 6, verse 27 tells us quite clearly, can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burnt?

It's that image of someone putting a bit of, we had a fire pit on a couple of days ago. It's like getting an ember from that and putting it in your jacket and then walking around thinking you're not going to get burnt.

[58 : 20] No, you'll get burnt. As one old pastor helpfully puts it, if you play in the devil's garden, then expect to be burnt. As a kid, when I played with fire and matches, expect to be burnt.

Many times was I burnt as a kid playing with matches. David reminds us that there's these consequences of sin. And for David there's three. I won't go into them all, but I'm just going to share them with you.

The first consequence of sin is that he gets sick almost to death. We see it in verse 5 to 8 and verse 10. My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness.

I'm utterly bowed down and prostrate. All the day I go about mourning. For my sides are filled with burning and there's no soundness in my flesh. I'm feeble and crushed. I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

My heart throbs. My strength fails me. And the light of my eyes is also gone from me. So he gets sick. The second is that his family and friends leave him.

[59 : 25] They want nothing to do with him. It's as if David has this awful plague. I mean, you forget coronavirus, you forget masks and social distancing.

These guys wanted nothing to do with him. They wanted to bolt. They wanted to go. So verse 11. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague and my nearest kin stand far off.

And then the third is that his enemies see his sin as an opportunity to attack him and accuse him and rejoice over him because his foot has slipped into sin. We have to remember that David is on the enemy's most wanted list here.

He is this king of Israel and there are those like in politics today that are watching and waiting for him to trip up so that it can be on the front page news in the morning.

They were looking for him to make a mess of his life. Verse 12, 16 and 20. Those who seek my life lay their snares. Those who seek my hurt speak of ruin and meditate treachery all day long.

[60 : 30] For I said only let them not rejoice over me who boast against me when my foot slips. Verse 20. Those who render me evil for good accuse me because I follow after good.

Many of us still live in the consequences of our sin this morning. I know I do but maybe you have a criminal record and maybe you can no longer pursue the job you wanted.

Maybe you can no longer drink because it leads somewhere stupid. Maybe family and friends have left you because you used to be a liar and abusive and violent. Maybe people as with Paul in Acts 9 verse 26 are still afraid of you because you used to beat them up.

I don't know you look like a friendly bunch to me but you know what it is in your heart. Whatever it may be we have to realise that sin will have consequences.

When we are about to sin let's think of the consequences and remember as Romans 6 verse 23 says that the wages of sin is what? Death. It's death.

[61 : 38] It may be wrapped up like a little sweet that you get at Christmas and it looks tasty and it looks brilliant from the outside but it will always lead to a bitter aftertaste. Always. Recently I spoke with a church member on a walk.

We do our one-to-ones on walks through that lockdown period and he had eaten this awful curry and it led to a really bad sickness. You've probably been there yourself at one point or another.

And I said when's the next time you're going to have a curry? He said oh I can't even look at it again. I can't look at another curry again. And we need to have that response to sin after a really bad experience with it.

I can't look at sin again. I can't go back there. I know where it leads. But as we see David within this instant knowing that his sin leads to sickness and these bad circumstances have to be clear that bad circumstances in your life and sickness are not always God's discipline.

I don't want you going out of this place thinking oh no my friend's got cancer. Sin. Or oh no I've got a cold. It's sin. No it's not always that. In this instance it is. We have to look at Job.

[62 : 53] In Job 1 verse 1 we see that he was blameless and upright one who feared God he turned away from evil this was the man that we should all seek to be. And yet experienced every loss you could imagine under the sun except death.

In Psalm 38 everything that David is going through is because of God's heavy hand upon him in discipline and David's sin and foolishness. And because of this he's convicted it leads him to some responses we can all remember in our own conviction of sin that we are the problem that it's our sin and our foolishness.

But one of these responses is found in verse 9. Oh Lord all my longing is before you my sighing is not hidden from you. David looks up to heaven in his mess he's not totally depressed that he just keeps his eyes at his feet but he looks up in his mess in his brokenness.

When I was an intern at an Anglican church I think it was 2014 we would have in the liturgy a prayer of confession and we used to say this before whom all hearts are open all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid.

And it was this helpful reminder for me as I came to God in prayer reminding myself of the sin that I committed that week even that morning God sees all my sin and mess he sees it all what others may not see God sees not only that but he sees all my suffering and all my tears because of it he isn't there mocking at us like those enemies he isn't there laughing because we slipped up he's there with us with tears others may not know about our situation this morning they may not even care but God does that leads us to trust in God afresh to loosen our grip on that sin that just hurt us and grab on to Jesus again it reminds David to look to the promise keeping God of heaven who sees all our tears all our longings all our sighs and always hears the prayers of the repentant no matter how far they've fallen and secondly in verse 15

[65 : 19] David after praying to God about his physical and his emotional struggles he looks up to heaven again and says that whilst all this is pressing around me God whilst the waves overwhelm me I will wait patiently for you to answer me Lord in you will I put my hope I will wait for you my great deliverer to rescue me verse 15 but for you oh Lord do I wait it is you oh Lord my God who will answer there is no hope in anything else this morning it's not in family it's not in your friends it's not in the created things but it's in the creator God and it's in him that you should hope it's in him that you should wait for mercy in fact in Psalm 37 verse 34 David gives the advice to us to wait for the Lord that's what he says in the previous chapter before this great sin he says wait for the Lord and now here we see it's a man who follows his own advice

I will wait for the Lord but that's hard for us isn't it because we have our microwave meals we like quick fixes in particular men we love quick fixes we love quick answers to our problems we get impatient and yet David says wait wait on the Lord wait on the Lord in prayer guys leave the outcome to God be persistent in prayer and then David thirdly gets to the point where this discipline of God has led to conviction of sin I feel that and understanding that sin leads to awful consequences in his life an absolute mess and now in verse 18 he says I confess my iniquity I am sorry for my sin the purpose of God's discipline in our lives as I said earlier is to get us to the point where we flee from sin and we run to

Jesus it's to humble us in our pride it's to lead us to confess I'm sorry for my sin not a worldly sorrow with some Christian language attached to it oh I'm sorry God forgive me a sinner and then we just go back to it the next day it's not a sorrow where we have a little pity party about our circumstances and the mess that we're in which leads to no change in our lives but it's a true repentant sorrow that leads to a turnaround in our lives like the prodigal son returning from the pigsty to the father's hug true repentance like David describes here leads us to be men and women who like David in 1 Samuel 13 verse 14 are described as men and women after God's own heart that's who we want to be this morning that's where repentance should lead us but how as we finish now but how could David in verse 1 in verse 9 verse 5 and verse 18 approach God in light of how much he had messed up his life how could he do it and maybe we could ask ourselves the same question this morning how could we approach God how can we approach God when we've made such a mess of our lives look at verse 21 to 22 do not forsake me oh Lord oh my God be not far from me make haste to help me oh Lord my salvation we see a verse or two verses like that and we're reminded again of the grace and mercy of God we are in this covenant relationship with an amazing God he is our

God my God David says and it's to that God that we look this morning for grace and mercy when we know that we've fluffed up our lives when we've messed it up the Bible is clear that for those who confess their sin like David for those that wait upon the Lord they will be saved they will be forgiven 1 John 1 verse 9 says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and purify us from all unrighteousness Jonah 2 9 salvation belongs to the Lord when we look out of ourselves for hope for forgiveness for grace and mercy we will find it in God alone David couldn't demand God's mercy he couldn't claim it as a right he couldn't work it or earn it he simply asks in these last two verses God have mercy on me it's only on the basis of the blood of Jesus on that rugged cross that any of us can come before

God and ask for mercy Luke 18 verse 13 describes this man who is broken in his sin but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but he beat his chest saying God be merciful to me a sinner and here's the good news for those who love Jesus and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning there's not going to be a day in our lives where we will cease to sin we will always sin unfortunately and yet the great blessing and trusting in Jesus is there won't be a day where God ceases to be merciful to us won't be a day if you're in sin this morning if you're ashamed of your past if you're feeling overwhelmed by the conviction of sin then don't keep your distance from God anymore don't keep looking down Jesus came for sinners not good people maybe like the tax collector you can hardly lift your face to heaven knowing the things that you've done this week remember

[71 : 26] Jesus came down from heaven he suffered on that cross he bled and he died on the cross and three days later rose again knowing all the things that you have done and will do and yet in Psalm 37 verse 28 we read the promise that God says he will not forsake his saints he won't forsake you Jesus was forsaken on that cross so that we would never be forsaken in our sin and sent to hell that's a promise that he wants you to be reminded of this morning at times we can cry out like David in verse 21 do not forsake me Lord please don't forsake me my heavenly father will point to Jesus on that cross or he'll point to the empty cross really and he'll say I've never forsaken you just look to that cross and it leads us like David in verse 22 to say oh Lord my salvation

I'm going to pray for us and then I think we're going to sing our next hymn heavenly father we thank you for your words we thank you that it is a comfort to us we know that as sinners we have been made saints in Jesus and that in Christ when we stand before you heavenly father we stand before you not in our sin and mess and brokenness but we stand before you in the righteousness of your son Jesus we know that our sin this morning has been removed as far as the east is from the west that you have washed us whiter than snow that you have dropped our sin into the deepest ocean and have forgotten it I pray for those of us this morning that are in sin that we would feel the conviction of your word this morning that it would quickly lead us to confess our sin to you to repent of it to turn around away from it and say goodbye to it and run to Jesus would you comfort all of us that where sin runs deep your grace runs deeper help us to remember the beauty of Jesus and not the ash of these things that will fade help us by your spirit in Jesus name

Amen please pray to the Lord the Almighty the King of creation pray sheltered see under his wings yes will gloomily sustain hast thou not seen all that his needful have been granted in what he ordained praise to the

Lord who doth prosper thy work and defend thee surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee ponder anew what the Almighty can do who with his love doth befriend thee praise to the Lord who left all that is in me adore him all and life and breath now come with praises before him let thee amen sing from his people again gladly fully we adore him amen shall we say the grace together the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore amen amen amen amen as men