

He Must Increase

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read in the Gospel according to John, John chapter 3. And if we just read again at verse 30.

John chapter 3 at verse 30, where John the Baptist, he makes the confession about the Christ. He must increase, but I must decrease.

He must increase, but I must decrease. Do you know, whenever you watch an episode of your favourite weekly programme, it usually begins every episode with what happened in the previous episodes, where the new episode, it begins with a statement, previously on, previously on.

And then there's this recap, there's a summary of what's been happening in the storyline right up to this current episode. And it's given to us so that if we've missed anything, it'll bring us up to date with the story so far.

Well, that's how I'd like us to begin this morning. I want us to begin by saying previously in the Gospel of John. Previously in the Gospel of John.

[1 : 1 5] Now, the reason I want us to summarise what's been happening in the story so far is not just that if you've missed something, you'll catch up, but also because everything that John the Evangelist, John the Gospel writer, everything that John has told us so far about the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist, it now reaches its climax here at the end of chapter 3.

Because chapter 3, this is the last glimpse we have of John the Baptist before he's imprisoned and beheaded for preaching the Gospel. But you'll remember that John the Evangelist, John the Gospel writer, he introduced Jesus to us in chapter 1.

He introduced us to Jesus as the eternal Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us. But intertwined with that introduction to Jesus, there was also an introduction to John the Baptist.

Because we were told there in chapter 1 that there was a man who was sent from God. Jesus was also sent from God, but there was also this man who was sent from God whose name was John.

And John tells John the Evangelist, he tells us that John the Baptist came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him.

[2 : 3 6] And John the Evangelist, he affirmed to us that John the Baptist, he was not that light, but came to bear witness about the true light which was coming into the world.

And this was affirmed later in chapter 1 when there was this investigation committee who interviewed John the Baptist about his identity. And the investigation committee, you'll remember that they asked John, who are you?

And as the last Old Testament prophet and also the first New Testament apostle who had been sent by God as the forerunner to Jesus, John the Baptist said to this investigation committee, I am not the Christ.

And so they probed a little further. They asked, are you Elijah? Or are you the promised prophet? Or who are you? They kept asking. And John the Baptist said, I am the voice.

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord. And you know, that voice and cry, he was made known to us after John the Baptist had baptized Jesus.

[3 : 46] Because John the Baptist said about Jesus, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I baptize with water, but he will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

And then in chapter 2, at the beginning of the chapter, there was the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where Jesus there, he turned water into wine.

And John the Evangelist, he revealed to us in that section that Jesus is our bridegroom. Jesus is our bridegroom who through the cross will provide the wedding and the wine at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And then later in chapter 2, there was the cleansing of the temple. And then as we went into the beginning of chapter 3, John the Evangelist, he recorded this nighttime meeting with the temple leader, and who was a man who was a Pharisee, Nicodemus.

And it was during that confusing conversation that Jesus affirmed that the only way to be saved is to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. For Jesus said, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

[4 : 58] And except a man or woman, boy or girl, except they be born again, they cannot, they will not, it is impossible for them to enter the kingdom of God.

And then John the Evangelist, he summarized that whole nighttime meeting with that key verse in John 3, 16, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

And so as we come to the end of chapter 3, we see that the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist, it now reaches its climax.

But sadly, what's also going on here is that not everyone was happy with Jesus. Not everyone was happy that Jesus had come into the world because as we'll see, there was a complaint against the Christ.

But for John the Baptist, he reaffirms his devotion to Jesus by his confession about the Christ. And then John the Evangelist, the writer, he brings this whole chapter to a conclusion with the need to make a commitment to the Christ.

[6 : 12] And there are headings this morning. A complaint against the Christ, a confession about the Christ, and a commitment to the Christ. A complaint against the Christ, a confession about the Christ, and a commitment to the Christ.

So if we see, first of all, a complaint against the Christ, a complaint against the Christ. Now look at verse 22. We're told that after this, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptising.

John also was baptising at Enon near Salem, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptised, for John had not yet been put in prison.

So John, the Gospel writer, John the Evangelist, he brings this chapter to a conclusion by saying that Jesus and his disciples went one way, and John the Baptist and his disciples went the other way.

Because assuming that both groups were based around the region of Galilee, were told that Jesus travelled south to the Judean countryside, while John the Baptist and his disciples, they travelled north to a place called Enon near Salem.

[7 : 33] And as we're told, both groups were baptising. They were baptising people, and more and more people were being added to their number. Now, as we said before, baptism is a mark of identification.

Baptism, it doesn't save you. It has no power to cleanse you from sin or to make you a Christian. Being baptised with water is all about identity.

Baptism is all about identity. In fact, Jesus was baptised in order to identify himself as our sinless, substitutionary sacrifice and saviour.

But, you know, as a Jew, you were baptised with water when you identified yourself as a follower of a rabbi. As a Jew, you were baptised with water when you identified yourself as a follower of a rabbi.

And so, for those who followed John the Baptist, you remember John, he preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And those who were baptised by John the Baptist, they became followers of John the Baptist, where he was their rabbi.

[8 : 46] He was their teacher. They were his disciples. They were his learners. That's what the word disciple means. It means learner. But, you know, what we have to understand is that a rabbi and his disciples, that wasn't something new.

It wasn't something out of the ordinary. Seeing a rabbi with his disciples was quite a common feature of Jewish life. Because most Jewish men, they were baptised and identified themselves as a disciple of a rabbi.

And they did it by around the age of 15. And so, whenever a rabbi had a disciple, whenever a rabbi baptised some people, they became disciples of that rabbi.

They identified themselves with that rabbi. And so, those who identified themselves with John the Baptist, they would say that they were disciples of John.

John was their rabbi. And they followed John because they received John's baptism. But, you know, what's interesting is that a rabbi would usually only take on about 12 disciples at a time.

[9 : 57] That was the roundabout figure that was always used. But when, you know, when it came to the ministry of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus, they had many followers.

They had many disciples. to the point that you could say that there was almost a great awakening in Israel with the amount of people who began following them and being baptised by them.

Although, as we're told at the beginning of chapter 4, Jesus never actually baptised anyone. It was his disciples who were baptising. And yet, the evangelistic campaigns of both Jesus and John the Baptist, they were both growing and more followers were being added to their number and more disciples were being baptised.

But as the beginning of chapter 4 also highlights, Jesus' disciples were baptising more people than John the Baptist. Jesus' disciples were baptising more people than John the Baptist.

Which sadly became an occasion for competition and an occasion for complaint because the disciples of John, they started complaining against the Christ.

[11 : 14] We're told in verse 25 that there was this discussion over purification between the disciples of John and this anonymous Jew.

Now, presumably, the Jew in question was another rabbi because John the Evangelist, he often used the term Jew to refer to a teacher in Israel. And it seems that this rabbi who would only have had about 12 disciples himself, he highlights to the disciples of John who were part of this massive group, so a small congregation and a large congregation and this rabbi tells the disciples of John that Jesus has an even bigger congregation.

Jesus has more disciples than John. And you know, you can almost imagine what this rabbi said to the disciples of John. The rabbi would have come up to him and said, well, you're rabbi.

You're rabbi John the Baptist. He has many followers who have been following him all over the place to be baptized. He has lots of disciples. But he isn't so popular anymore because Jesus, he is now baptizing more people than John.

Jesus is on the top of the baptism leaderboard. Jesus is what you could call the new phenomenon. Jesus has more disciples. He has more followers.

[12 : 40] Jesus has a bigger congregation. Jesus has more members than John. And you know, this discussion between the rabbi and John's disciples, it would have inevitably created conflict and even exercised competition and it resulted in a complaint.

Because John's disciples were told that they came straight to John the Baptist and they made a complaint against the Christ. And you know, the language that John's disciples used here, it emphasizes the tension and even the hostility that they had towards Jesus and his followers.

because they wanted to demean and even demote Jesus by not even mentioning his name to John. They come up to John the Baptist and the disciples of John say, Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan to whom you bore witness, look, he is baptizing and all are going to him.

They don't use his name. They demean and they demote Jesus. because they don't even use his name. They don't refer to him as the Christ. They don't acknowledge that he is the Lamb of God.

They just say that Jesus is he and him. They demean and demote Jesus because they're jealous of Jesus.

[14 : 11] And his disciples were jealous of Jesus' ministry and that he was baptizing more followers than their John. They were jealous that Jesus had more disciples than John.

And this created conflict. It created competition. It created complaint against the Christ. They were jealous of Jesus. And as you know, my friend, jealousy steals our joy.

Jealousy steals our joy. In fact, jealousy is the sin that no one talks about. sin that is the sin that is so common in our heart and lives that we tend to overlook it.

And sometimes instead of uprooting that sin from our heart, the sin of jealousy, we feed it. We feed it and we fuel it and we allow it to fester in our hearts.

Instead of uprooting it, we feed it and fuel it and allow it to fester in our hearts. And you know, one commentator said, the Bible affirms that jealousy is a fruit of the flesh.

[15 : 23] It's an antonym of love. It's a symptom of pride. It's a catalyst for conflict and it's a mark of unbelievers. I'll read that again. The Bible affirms that jealousy is a fruit of the flesh.

It's an antonym of love. It's a symptom of pride. It's a catalyst for conflict. And it's a mark of unbelievers. And you know, just thinking about our 21st century culture, you know, there are many good and positive things about social media.

But one of the dangers with social media feeds and fuels and causes to fester in our hearts is jealousy. Because, you know, when we see people showing off all the good things, all the good things that are happening in their life, their good looks and their loving family and their beautiful children and their parties and their holidays and their skills and their money and their job.

And of course, for many people, they just see it as fun and it's harmless. But for some, it feeds and it fuels jealousy that festers in their heart.

And my friend, jealousy steals our joy because it fills us with discontentment, dissatisfaction, displeasure and disapproval of others.

[16 : 50] Jealousy steals our joy because it fills us with discontentment, dissatisfaction, displeasure and disapproval of others. And you know, that's what we see here with the disciples of John the Baptist.

They are here making a complaint against the Christ. They make a complaint against the Christ. But you know what's remarkable is that John the Baptist, he doesn't join in with them.

No, he responds by making a confession about the Christ. He responds by making a confession about the Christ, which is what we see secondly.

So a complaint against the Christ and then secondly, a confession about the Christ. A confession about the Christ. We'll read verse 27. John answered, A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

You yourselves bear witness that I said I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.

[18 : 01] Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease. You know, when it came to the disciples of John the Baptist, they were jealous of Jesus.

And they were jealous because they had allowed that jealousy to feed fuel and fester in their hearts. And ultimately, that jealousy, it stole their joy and it replaced it with discontentment, dissatisfaction, displeasure and disapproval of Jesus.

But you know, we have to remember that this jealousy, it takes place within the context of religion. This jealousy was spiritual jealousy, which is the worst kind of jealousy.

But what's more frightening is that spiritual jealousy, it has been there since the beginning. Spiritual jealousy, my friend, was in the heart of Cain when he killed his brother Abel because the Lord accepted the sacrifice of Abel.

Spiritual jealousy was present in the hearts of Joseph's brothers when they sold Joseph as a slave into Egypt. Spiritual jealousy was in the heart of Miriam and Aaron when they criticised Moses for his spiritual gifts that the Lord had given to him.

[19 : 23] Spiritual jealousy was in the heart of King Saul because David was the real anointed king. He was the man after God's own heart. Spiritual jealousy was present here in the hearts of John's disciples.

Spiritual jealousy was present in the hearts of the Pharisees and the chief priests who condemned and crucified Jesus to death. And spiritual jealousy, my friend, it was present also in the early church when there was this division in the church in Corinth because some had been baptised, by Paul, others by Apollos, some by Peter.

And because of who had baptised them, the Corinthians began quarrelling among themselves. There was dissatisfaction and discontentment and disapproval of one another and they were all saying to one another, I follow Paul.

And some said I follow Apollos. Others said I follow Cephas. And some said I follow Christ. They were overcome with spiritual jealousy. And my friends, spiritual jealousy has been there since the beginning.

And it continues to this present day. It continues to the present day. In fact, it was Sinclair Ferguson who said, the Christian church is not immune from petty jealousies and desires to have our own agenda on the top of the list and to be first.

[20 : 51] And you know, that's what's going on here. John's disciples wanted John to be first. They wanted John to be above Jesus. They wanted John to increase and Jesus to decrease.

They wanted John to be exalted and Jesus to be humbled. My friend, John's disciples wanted to lift John onto a pedestal above Jesus.

And they wanted to follow the man instead of the Messiah. They wanted to follow the messenger and put him ahead of the message. But as you know, my friend, as you know, it's dangerous to lift a preacher onto a pedestal.

It's dangerous to follow a man instead of the Messiah. it's dangerous to put the messenger before the message. And it's dangerous because it always ends in disaster.

It's dangerous because it always ends in disaster. And as you know from past experience, even in our own denomination, that is so true.

[21 : 57] It's dangerous because it always ends in disaster. And you know, for that reason, my friend, we should never have conflict, competition or complaint.

We should never have conflict between preachers. We should never have competition between congregations. We should never have complaint against other denominations. We should never put any preacher on a pedestal.

We should never follow a man instead of the Messiah. We should never put the messenger before the message. Because it will always end in disaster.

God. And you know, we can actually be so like the disciples of John, can't we? We can be so like them. Because here are the disciples of John and they were measuring John's ministry in comparison to Jesus.

And we can be so like them where we measure a man's ministry by his spiritual gifts. Or we measure a man's ministry by the size of his congregation. Or we measure a man's ministry by how many professions of faith he's had.

[23 : 01] We measure a man's ministry by how eloquent he preaches. Or we measure a man's ministry by how much visiting he does. Even in lockdown, we measure a man's ministry by the number of views he has on YouTube or Facebook.

We measure a man's ministry by his success. But you know, my friend, the word success should never be in the same sentence as ministry.

Because it's all of grace. It's all of grace. The word success should never be in the same sentence as ministry. Because it's all of grace.

And you know, that's what John had to remind his disciples. You know, that's what I was reminded when I first moved here to Barvis six years ago.

Do you know, when I was ordained and inducted, I received a card from Hector Morrison. Hector Morrison, who's currently the principal in the Highland Theological College in Dingwall.

[24 : 02] He used to be the ministering, the neighbouring minister in the congregation of the Church of Scotland here. And he wrote a card to me when I began my ministry here. And you know, there was one particular thing that he wrote in the card which has always stuck with me.

Because he said, Murdo, you will either be a sower or a reaper in your ministry. But the Lord will decide that. You just have to be faithful.

And you know, those words stuck with me. Because that's what it's all about. It's all about being faithful. It's all about God's grace towards sinful human beings.

You know, we can't measure a man's ministry by their success. Because salvation is all of grace. And that's what John is emphasising to his disciples.

He says in verse 27, a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.

[25 : 09] You know, John taught his disciples that salvation is all of grace. He taught his disciples that the gifts he possessed are all of grace. He taught his disciples that the message he preached was a message that was all of grace.

He didn't tell his disciples that it's all about your appearance or it's about your eloquence or your persuasion or your passion or your oratory skill. No, he said it's all of grace.

A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. It is all of grace. And you know, my friend, I would never stand in a pulpit or preach the gospel unless it was for the grace of God.

It's all of grace. And for that reason, we should never put any preacher on a pedestal. We should never follow a man but only the Messiah. We should never put a messenger before the message that is Jesus Christ.

Because, my friend, the gospel is a gospel of grace alone and it's the power of God unto salvation. We must put Jesus first. And as John the Baptist says, we're not to rejoice in the best man.

[26 : 24] We're to rejoice in the bridegroom who is Jesus Christ. That's what John says to his disciples. He makes a confession about the Christ in verse 29. He says, the one who has the bride is the bridegroom.

The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.

Do you know, you remember from chapter 2 at the wedding of Cana and Galilee that Jesus is our bridegroom. Jesus is our bridegroom who through the cross will provide for his bride the wedding and the wine at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

But as John says here, we're to rejoice in the bridegroom because the preacher is only the best man. We're to rejoice in the bridegroom because Jesus must increase.

Jesus must increase and every pastor, every preacher, every teacher, every Christian, every congregation, every church and every denomination, we must all decrease.

[27 : 37] He must increase, but we must decrease. My friend, Jesus must be first. Jesus must be first. It's not about our ego.

It's not about what we want. It's not about us. It's all about him. He must be first. And you know, that's the question we need to ask ourselves this morning.

Is Jesus first? Is Jesus first in my life? Is Jesus first in my life? Because my friend, Jesus must be first.

He must be first. He's not to take second place or third place or fourth place. Jesus must be first. He must be first. You know, we said earlier that jealousy steals our joy.

And joy, it's often the acronym for Jesus, others, and yourself. Jesus, others, and yourself. That's because true joy is putting Jesus first, then others, then yourself.

[28 : 43] Jesus, others, and yourself is joy. My friend, true joy is putting Jesus first. Therefore, Jesus must be first.

He must be first in my character, my conduct, and my conversation. Jesus must be first among my family and my friends. Jesus must be first among my spouse and my siblings.

Jesus must be first in my job and my joys. Jesus must be first in my church and my congregation because if Jesus is not first, we will just be like these disciples.

We will be discontent, dissatisfied, displeased, and disapproving of everyone else around us. My friend, Jesus needs to be first in your life and my life.

And the question we need to be asking ourselves this morning, is Jesus first? Is Jesus first in my life? And yes, you might say that you want Jesus to be first.

[29 : 46] But you know, there's one thing to pronounce that you want Jesus to be first. It's another thing altogether to practice that Jesus is first.

Is Jesus first? And you know, everyone loves the Sermon on the Mount. But it's in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus says to us, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the other things, all the secondary things, the third things, the fourth things, all the other things will be added unto you.

seek first the kingdom of God. And so how do we make sure that we put Jesus first in our life? How do we make sure that we live our lives in devotion and dedication to Jesus Christ?

How do we make sure that he increases and we decrease? Well, my friend, like John the Baptist, we need to make that confession about the Christ.

We need to make the confession that John the Baptist made, he must increase and I must decrease. But you know, a confession about the Christ must also be evidenced by a commitment to the Christ.

[31 : 02] And that's what we see lastly, a commitment to the Christ. We see a complaint about the Christ, a complaint against the Christ, a confession about the Christ and then lastly, a commitment to the Christ.

A commitment to the Christ. Look at verse 31. He who comes from above is above all. He who is off the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.

He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard. Yet no one receives his testimony. Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God. For he gives the spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life. But the wrath of God remains on him. So John the evangelist, he brings chapter three to a conclusion by not only reminding us that we need to put Jesus first by making a confession about the Christ, but he says we also need to put Jesus first by making a commitment to the Christ.

[32 : 23] And John, he emphasizes this by saying or reminding us who Jesus is. He says that Jesus is from above. He is from above and he who is from above is above all.

He's first. In other words, Jesus Christ is supreme. He is, and because he's supreme, he's to have the supremacy in our heart and in our lives.

And as John goes on to explain in the following verses, he says Jesus Christ is to have the supremacy because he has been sent by God. He speaks on behalf of God.

He gives the spirit of God and he's sovereign with God. Therefore, in all things, says John, Jesus is to be first. He is to have the supremacy in our heart and lives.

Jesus is to be first. And you know, that's also what Paul encouraged the church to do as well. Paul encouraged the church. He said to the Colossians that it's in Jesus Christ that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

[33 : 36] And the outcome of that is, says Paul, in all things, Jesus Christ is to have preeminence. In all things, Jesus Christ is to be first.

In all things, Jesus Christ is to have the supremacy. You know, my friend, in every area of our lives, Jesus Christ is to be Lord. He's to be first.

He's to have the supremacy. He's to be supreme. He is to be Lord. In every area of our lives, Jesus Christ is to be Lord. He's to be Lord over our character, conduct and conversation.

He's to be Lord over our family and our friends. He's to be Lord over our work and our wallet. He's to be Lord over our time and our tithing. He's to be Lord over our home and our holidays.

He's to be Lord over our health and even our happiness. My friend, if we are going to decrease and Jesus is going to increase in our heart and lives, then he must be Lord.

[34 : 39] He must be supreme. He must have the supremacy. He must be preeminent. Jesus Christ must be Lord over all. He must be Lord over all.

But you know, my friend, how do we give Jesus that place and prominence which he deserves? How do we make Jesus Lord in our life?

John says in verse 36, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Do you know, my friend, it's all about believing in Jesus Christ for salvation. Because as you know, that's why John wrote his gospel. John wrote his gospel with one passion and one purpose, so that you'll believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.

But believing, as we've said many times before, it's not about our knowledge. It's not about knowing the Bible. It's not about being brought up in church. It's not about our intellectual assent and saying, yes, I believe it all and I believe it all to be true.

[35 : 50] No, believing in Jesus Christ for salvation is about receiving Jesus Christ for salvation. And in order to receive Jesus Christ for salvation, you must make a confession about the Christ and you must make a commitment to the Christ.

In order to receive Jesus Christ for salvation, you must make a confession about the Christ and you must make a commitment to the Christ. Jesus Christ must be Lord.

He must be supreme. He must have the supremacy in every area of your life. He must have the preeminence. And you know, as John concludes this chapter, he says that the real tragedy of it all is that many who hear this gospel message, many who hear week in, week out about the fact that Jesus needs to be Lord, he needs to be first, he needs to be supreme, many who hear this gospel message, they refuse to believe.

And they refuse to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. And because they refuse to believe, they refuse to receive Jesus Christ for salvation.

They refuse to make a confession about the Christ. And they refuse to make a commitment to the Christ. They refuse to make a confession about the Christ.

[37 : 20] And they refuse to make a commitment to the Christ. Does that describe you, my friend? Someone who has heard the gospel so often, so many times, you know the message of the gospel clearly.

You've heard it clearly. You've been told that Jesus needs to be first in your life. You've been told that he needs to be Lord. You've been told that he needs to have the supremacy and be supreme over every area of your life.

And yet, you refuse to make a confession about the Christ. And you refuse to make a commitment to the Christ. But as my good friend J.C. Ryle states, he says about chapter 3, he says, That's what he says.

Do you know, my unconverted friend, is Jesus first in your life?

Is Jesus Lord over your life? Is Jesus supreme in your life? Have you made a confession about the Christ? And have you made a commitment to the Christ?

[38 : 59] Have you come to Jesus Christ in all humility, saying, Lord, you must increase, but I, I must decrease.

Make that your confession. Make that your commitment this morning. He must increase, but I must decrease.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the beauty and the wonder of the gospel, that Jesus is our Bridegroom, that he is the one who must increase, that we might decrease.

And Lord, we pray that Jesus would be first in our lives, that he would have the preeminence, that he would be supreme and have all the supremacy, that we would know him and confess him as Lord over every area of our life.

Lord, forgive us, we pray, for the times we want to be Lord. We want to be king and queen of our own heart and lives. Lord, we pray that we would be humbled, that we would be brought to our knees to say, to say like John the Baptist, he must increase and I must decrease.

[40 : 18] O do us good and we pray, watch over us we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to conclusion this morning.

We're singing from Psalm 46. Psalm 46 we're singing in the Scottish Psalter and we're singing from the beginning. And Psalm 46 is a favourite psalm of someone who used to be part of our congregation.

Sandy Murray, who was taken home to be with the Lord last Lord's Day, this was his favourite psalm. Sandy loved Psalm 46.

He loved singing that God is our refuge and our strength and an ever-present help even in times of trouble. Sandy was a man, as you know.

He came to the Lord at the age of 81. But he came confessing like John the Baptist confessed. He must increase and I must decrease.

[41 : 22] And you know, if we were to learn about anything from Sandy's life, we should learn that of that true fact that Jesus must increase in our lives and we must decrease.

God must be our refuge and our strength. So my friend, make sure he is today for time and for all eternity. Psalm 46, God is our refuge and our strength and strates a present aid.

Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make, and troubled be, yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake.

Psalm 46, to God's praise. All day. God is our refuge and our strength in space of present day.

Therefore, although the earth be moved, we will not be afraid.

[42 : 38] We will not be afraid. Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring may, and troubled be, yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake, a river is whose streams make glad, the city of our God, the holy place, wherein the Lord most high hath is abode.

God in the midst of her of wealth, nothing shall her remove the Lord to her and help her will and that right blessings in the midst of illusions and that is